STAR TREK: INSURRECTION
TRACK-BY-TRACK ANALYSIS

1. Ba’ku Village

Jerry Goldsmith’s score for STAR TREK: INSURRECTION follows well-established tradition by opening with Alexander Courage’s inspiring fanfare from the original STAR TREK television series. The fanfare rises gracefully through shifting harmonies to culminate in a warm major chord, interwoven with noble statements of Goldsmith’s insurrection theme. Next, a dancing harp figure leads into a lovely pastoral theme on solo oboe for shots of the quaint Ba’ku village that open the film. Flute and strings soon take up the theme, accompanied by French horn, but the idyllic tone shifts upon the revelation that the villagers are not alone: from a holographically camouflaged “duck blind,” a team of Federation specialists and gruesome Son’a observers monitor the unsuspecting population. A muted horn line over ominous timpani and piano figures distantly recalls Goldsmith’s Federation theme from STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE, while also evoking his dark conspiracy motive from the 1977 film CAPRICORN ONE.

Skittering electronics and fierce statements of the insurrection theme break the tension as a mysterious interloper in a Federation invisibility suit begins to raise a commotion. The theme continues to punctuate Goldsmith’s signature mixed-meter action writing (the alternating bars of 6/8 and 5/8 here will become a recurring device throughout the score) as the fugitive struggles with his pursuers and, with a dramatic flourish, removes his helmet to reveal himself as the android Lt. Commander Data (Brent Spiner). Undeterred by his evident physical damage, Data becomes fully visible and uses his phaser to expose the hidden blind. Crashing chords and a rain of pitch-bending electronics mark the failure of the Federation
A cloaking device, followed by odd synthetic tones as the bewildered Ba’ku react to the sudden appearance of strangers among them. The film then transitions to an exterior shot of the U.S.S. Enterprise, engaged in a diplomatic mission, and the cue closes with a statement of Goldsmith’s stalwart march theme from STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE—which doubled as the main theme for STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION and was used by Goldsmith in all five of his STAR TREK feature scores.

2. Out of Orbit / Take Us In
The Son’a leader, Ahdar Ru’afo (F. Murray Abraham), arrives in the Ba’ku system, which lies in the middle of an isolated and hostile region known as the Briar Patch, accompanied by Federation Admiral Dougherty (Anthony Zerbe). But Data has commandeered a shuttle and refuses to allow them to approach the planet. Propulsive settings of the insurrection theme drive the short cue that accompanies Data’s attack.

Meanwhile, Captain Jean-Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) has been informed of his old friend’s apparent malfunction, and is en route to Ba’ku. As the Enterprise traverses the Briar Patch, the music shifts into tense chords over the same mixed-meter pattern that accompanied Data’s attack on the duck blind. A brief statement of Goldsmith’s Klingon theme from STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE appears in response to a report from Lt. Commander Worf—conveniently on leave from his posting at Deep Space Nine—before the cue concludes with a brassy finale for the Enterprise’s arrival at Ba’ku.

3. Come Out
Picard appeals to Ru’afo and Dougherty to let him go after Data. The insurrection theme sounds grimly in low reeds as he promises to terminate the android, if necessary. Piano enters and the theme moves into brass as Picard and Worf set out in an Enterprise shuttle and attempt to get Data’s attention. The ploy works: Data’s ship swoops in amid bursts of brass and rapidly pulsing electronics, with the insurrection theme weaving in and out of the score as the android engages in a tactical battle with his pursuers.

4. In Custody
Picard distracts Data with a song (“A British Tar” by W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, from the 1878 comic opera H.M.S. PINAFORE) while Worf links their ships. The score abruptly launches into a breakneck passage for racing strings and emphatic brass, with soaring variations of the insurrection theme from horn and trumpet. The cue winds down as Worf succeeds in shutting down Data.

5. Warp Capability / The Planet / Children’s Story
Picard, Dr. Beverly Crusher (Gates McFadden) and Counselor
Deanna Troi (Marina Sirtis) beam down to the Ba’ku village, where they discover that the Starfleet personnel trapped on the planet by Data are safe and free to leave. Glowing chords convey an intimate, quasi-spiritual quality as Picard learns from village leaders Sojef (Daniel Hugh Kelly) and Anij (Donna Murphy) that the Ba’ku are a warp-capable culture who have rejected technology. Tender reeds introduce the film’s placid love theme—the simple device at the core of this theme (a descent to the tonic from a major third, followed by a leap of a fifth) corresponds to the quest motive that Goldsmith first introduced in STAR TREK V: THE FINAL FRONTIER and reprised in FIRST CONTACT. Within each Goldsmith-scored TREK film, this idea resonates with the search for purpose and meaning—in this case, the Zen-like meditations of Anij and their effect on Picard.

The love theme returns in a gentle, synthesizer-enhanced setting as Picard returns to the Enterprise and finds himself staring down at the planet below. When Data is reactivated and reveals a gap in his memory, he and Picard beam down to speak to the last person Data remembers encountering: a young boy named Artim (Michael Welch). Delicate lines for harp and oboe play alongside ethereal chords as Artim agrees to lead them—along with a party of Ba’ku including Sojef and Anij—to a remote dam where he was playing the day Data went berserk. This last cue is only partially used in the film.

6. The Holodeck
The group reaches the lake, and quizzical electronics play as Data walks underwater to locate the source of some unexplained neutrino emissions. A peaceful flute setting of the insurrection theme underscores Data’s encounter with a fish—but resolute brass take up the theme as he lowers the water level to reveal a cloaked vessel in the center of the lake. Hollow electronics usher in a passage for pulsing flute and shifting, misterioso chords, while the group begins to explore the structure. The music darkens subtly as Picard realizes that they are onboard a Federation holoship, designed to mimic the village—a ploy to remove the Ba’ku from their planet without their knowledge. (The seventh-season NEXT GENERATION episode “Homeward” concerned a similar plot device, although to much less nefarious ends.) The cue closes with an explosive passage featuring the insurrection theme as Picard’s group fends off an attack from Son’a spies.

7. How Old Are You / New Sight
That evening, Picard begins to notice signs of renewed physical vitality. A brief cue comprised of pensive chords plays as he returns to Anij and asks how old she is. (Tracked material from “The Holodeck” replaced this cue in the film.) In an unscored scene, Anij and Sojef explain how the Ba’ku fled their original war-torn world hundreds of years ago, and how the unique metaphasic
radiation from the planetary rings of their current home keeps them eternally in the prime of life.

Afterward, Picard and Anij go for a pre-dawn walk to discuss the lure of perpetual youth. Goldsmith demonstrates his finely tuned instinct for dialogue scenes, moving subtly from a reprise of the love theme into more somber tones as Picard reflects on the “darkest chapters” in human history. When Picard pauses to examine a tapestry, the cue transitions smoothly into a new theme that represents both literal and metaphorical “new sight”: an aspirational melody, rising ever higher across large intervals before floating gently down again. Low-key, numinous music underscores Anij introducing the concept of a “perfect moment.” The cue continues to unfold in this vein, weaving in both the love theme and the “new sight” theme alongside delicate electronic accompaniments, as Picard bids Anij farewell and winds up watching the sunrise with his (heretofore) blind chief engineer Geordi La Forge (LeVar Burton), whose eyes have wondrously regenerated. This passage ends with the debut of Goldsmith’s resistance theme: an evolution of the more compact insurrection theme, used to emphasize the resolute heroism of Picard and his crew. This initial statement was dialed out of the film; it would have played for a shot of the Enterprise in orbit, ominously outgunned by the Son’a fleet.

8. Lost Ship / Prepare the Ship
Picard confronts Ru’afo and Dougherty, leading to a forehead-splitting tantrum from Ru’afo—whose skin has been cosmetically stretched to the breaking point in an effort to appear younger. Over pulsing, low-register piano, a threatening horn line forms—presaging the more developed Son’a theme that will debut in “Not Functioning.”

Dougherty reveals to Picard the Son’a plan to harvest metaphasic radiation from the planet’s rings, which promises incalculable benefits for the Federation but would leave the planet uninhabitable for generations. Music reenters soberly as Picard asserts that by destroying the Ba’ku culture, even for a greater good, they are betraying the deepest principles of the Federation. (The opening of this cue was modified with some looping in the film.) Slowly, the music builds toward a portentous passage that includes a fleeting quote of Goldsmith’s quest motive from earlier films as Picard, left alone, removes his rank pips and prepares to defy Dougherty’s orders.

9. As Long as We Can
Data, Worf, Crusher and Troi elect to join Picard and travel to the planet to defend the Ba’ku, while La Forge and Commander Riker (Jonathan Frakes) agree to pilot the Enterprise out of the Briar Patch (whose unique properties prevent subspace communication) and appeal to the Federation Council. A staunch line for brass broadly suggests the resistance theme, while bookending a
statement of the “new sight” theme. The cue’s sweeping, bombastic finale plays as Picard and his friends descend to Ba’ku using the captain’s yacht (a vehicle developed for the NEXT GENERATION television series, but never actually used on the small screen).

10. Not Functioning / Send Your Ships
As the Enterprise crew sets up transport inhibitors and leads the Ba’ku out of the village toward sanctuary in the mountains, Son’a ships attack. Following a dynamic opening that features the insurrection theme, Goldsmith finally unveils his aggressive Son’a theme in full force: a sprawling, dour melody that reinforces the barbarity of their actions.

Ru’afo, realizing Picard’s plan, persuades Dougherty to allow him to intercept the Enterprise before it can escape the Briar Patch. A grim statement of the insurrection theme precedes a transition to the planet, where Picard leads the displaced Ba’ku through the foothills. Pensive lines for horn and oboe play over pizzicato strings as Data engages Artim in conversation.

11. Growing Up / Wild Flowers / Photon Torpedo
Sparkling synthesizer accents and the gentle harmonies of the love theme convey wonderment while Data and Artim discuss the nature of childhood. This prepares the way for the melody to appear in full, passing between winds and strings as Picard and Anij take time out to appreciate a “perfect moment” by a waterfall. (The statement is shortened in the film.) Meanwhile, Ru’afo’s ships reach the Enterprise and the menacing Son’a theme underscores the “universal greeting” of a photon torpedo.

12. The Drones Attack
Shots of Son’a drones harassing the Ba’ku alternate with the assault on the Enterprise. The cue opens with a fierce 7/8 passage, dominated by the Son’a and insurrection themes. The material eventually moves into the mixed-meter pattern from earlier cues, with the Klingon theme briefly popping up for Worf reveling in the battle. The latter portion of the cue, focusing on the plight of the Enterprise, stresses the resistance theme with forceful settings for brass and strings.

13. The Riker Maneuver
As Riker prepares to execute a daring maneuver involving the ship’s nacelles, Goldsmith slowly builds suspense with orchestral and electronic layers, together with a slow-burning variation of the insurrection theme. A thrilling passage for the ensuing explosion momentarily relieves the tension—but back on the planet, a Son’a hunting party catches up with the Ba’ku exodus. Goldsmith continues to press the churning action forward while the Ba’ku take refuge in mountain caves. The music slows briefly when Dr. Crusher and Picard pause to note a mysterious tricorder scan, then ratchets up the intensity with furiously racing strings and declamatory brass.
14. Stay With Me
Picard rushes to Anij, injured in a cave collapse, with bleak figures for low strings accompanying his cry for help. An emotional statement of the love theme unfolds as he pleads with her to remain in “this moment” until Crusher can stabilize her. (This cue is partially tracked in the film with “Wild Flowers.” The following scene, where the Enterprise crewmembers and Ba’ku leaders are discovered and captured, tracks material from “The Drones Attack.”)

15. The Same Race
The captured insurrectionists are taken to Ru’afo’s ship, where Picard reveals to Admiral Dougherty what he learned from Crusher’s scan: that the Ba’ku and Son’a are the same race. Ru’afo is the leader of a band of exiled rebels, and the Federation has inserted itself into a blood feud. A wandering, ascending line for woodwinds underscores this gradual epiphany. Dougherty soon loses his resolve and privately confronts Ru’afo about ending the mission. A stern rhythm (dialed out of the film), laced with pulsing electronics, explodes into the insurrection theme as Ru’afo becomes violent. He slams Dougherty into a face-stretching chair and murders him, the music intensifying with a terrible crescendo.

16. The Collector
Ru’afo takes charge and orders the deployment of the collector—a machine that will, in the process of mining the planet’s rings, kill the innocent Ba’ku who remain on the surface. A suspenseful escalation of timpani and strings leads to an inexorable statement of the Son’a theme as the device unfurls and begins to move into position.

17. No Threat
Picard successfully appeals to the conscience of Ru’afo’s second-in-command, Gallatin (Gregg Henry, who later guest-starred on STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE), even as Ru’afo prepares to launch the collector’s injector module. Against a backdrop of low strings,
figures for timpani and piano adorn a threatening low-register line. The insurrection theme returns alongside more mixed-meter action as Picard coordinates an apparently futile attack by Data’s shuttle. The music softens, then swells with a touch of dark majesty as Ru’afo watches the injector deploy into the planet’s rings. But the villain soon realizes that something is wrong. Ponderous bass figures and shifting minor chords underscore the revelation that Data’s attack was only a diversion: the Son’a bridge crew have been surreptitiously beamed into the holoship—the same trick they had planned for the Ba’ku—and the injector never actually deployed.

18. Tractor Beam
Picard, Worf and Gallatin secure the holoship (now containing Ru’afo) with a tractor beam. The brief scene unfolds without music in the film, but Goldsmith originally wrote and recorded a short cue based on the resistance theme.

19. The Healing Process (revised)
Ru’afo manages to beam aboard the collector, where he hopes to launch the injector module manually. Deliberately paced, lopsided rhythms build suspense, and as the score’s tonal center ascends chromatically, the resistance theme begins to form. Picard follows Ru’afo, and they exchange verbal barbs and phaser fire as Picard attempts to initiate the collector’s self-destruct sequence. Meanwhile, Worf battles Ru’afo’s men and the Enterprise races in from the Briar Patch. These sequences shift musically between exciting action—spotlighting the insurrection theme in its most developed form—and highly charged passages that recall Goldsmith’s music for the cosmic mysteries of previous TREK films, shot through with portentous strings and brass. The Enterprise arrives just in time to rescue Picard from fiery destruction, with a gripping deformation of the Son’a theme playing in compound meter—first in penetrating brass, then in strings with a stark brass counterline. (This entire track is actually a revised insert, meant to replace only a portion of the longer original version of the cue. In the film, the insert is followed by a substantial pause, after which the original composition picks up at around 4:20 into its runtime. This assembly presents the revised insert first, followed by the original cue in its entirety.)

20. The Healing Process (original)
An earlier cut of the film, screened for test audiences, featured a very different climax. Picard manages to disarm the collector so that its injector launches harmlessly into the planet’s rings. But Ru’afo does not abandon the module and dies of overexposure to the metaphasic radiation—which radically de-ages him in the process. The studio ultimately deemed this not exciting enough and asked for a more traditional slam-bang finale. The shape and content of Goldsmith’s original composition resembles what wound up in the finished film, albeit somewhat more concentrated. The most significant difference is the buildup to the climax, where swirling religioso strings and artificial chorus would have accompanied Ru’afo’s fatal devolution, terminating in a volcanic quote of the insurrection theme.

Following this, the Ba’ku and Son’a begin the process of reconciliation, and Picard enjoys one last walk with Anij. All three of the Ba’ku themes return: first the “new sight” theme on flute, then the love theme on oboe, and finally a warm reprise of the Ba’ku village theme from the opening cue. At last, the Federation officers beam back up to the waiting Enterprise, with grandiloquent statements of the insurrection theme serving as a fitting sendoff.

21. End Credits
Goldsmith’s end credits for INSURRECTION follow his customary practice of sandwiching film-specific material between bold statements of the march from STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE. Here, the opening verse of the march yields to an elegiac
statement of the insurrection theme, briefly quoting the “new sight” theme before transitioning into fulsome statements of the Ba’ku village theme. The march returns for a rousing finale.

BONUS TRACKS

22. Ba’ku Village (alternate ending)
This alternate excerpt from “Ba’ku Village” features additional piano figures for the secretive observers, and significantly different material for Data’s exposure of the duck blind: in place of the film version’s aggressive brass, Goldsmith employs descending string lines for a hypnotic, quasi-mystical effect. The synthesizer presence is also notably more subdued in this version.

23. The Holodeck (alternate opening)
For this alternate excerpt from “The Holodeck,” atmospheric electronic swells replace the more active, quirky line heard in the opening bars of the film version.

24. Growing Up (alternate)
In the revised final draft of the screenplay, dated March 12, 1998, Data’s conversation with Artim during the Ba’ku exodus is slightly prolonged when Artim attempts (without success) to start a game of tag. This coincides with a version of Goldsmith’s cue for the scene that includes a slightly extended ending.

25. Tractor Beam (alternate)
The chief feature of this alternate is the addition of a prominent synthesizer bass line. Greater emphasis is also placed on the low brass that underpins the resistance theme. Neither version of the cue appears in the film.

—John Takis