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Film scoring is original music written specifically to accompany a film.

The sound track of a film would include the scored music, of course, but would also include dialogue, sound effects and sometimes pre-existing music. The film's rough cut is watched by the director and the composer who then divide the it into beats which are called - Cues. The composer, then would write music in order to support and enhance the dramatic narrative and the emotional impact of the different cues and scenes. The music could be performed and recorded by an orchestra, a band, instrumental soloists, choir, vocalists or synthesisers. (Savage, 2008)

Film scores encompass an enormous variety of music styles: Western Classical, Jazz, Rock, Pop, Ambient etc...depending on the nature of the film they accompany. Since the invention of digital technology and audio sampling, many modern films have been able to benefit from the use of digital samples that imitate the sound of live instruments. Some scores are created and performed wholly by the composers themselves who use music composition software, synthesisers, samplers, and MIDI controllers. (Anderson, 2008)

I've been a professional musician for the last 20 years and always had a passion for composing. I've composed many songs for stage musicals, TV/Radio commercials and opening themes for TV shows, but never really had the opportunity to compose for a film or any sort of moving visual media.

In this project I would like to explore and research the film scoring industry as well as challenging myself with composing music for different movie excerpts in various genres in order to create a professional demo reel and then promote and market myself.

Although I have the experience of composing to lyrics, where the story and the mood are already laid out and very clear to me, when composing to visual material, sometimes unspoken, the challenge would be to figure out the psychological development that the director intended and how I should enhance, support and even create the appropriate atmosphere.

My main aim in this project is to create a portfolio of work that demonstrates my ability as a composer and producer of film music. After completion, my secondary aim would be to prepare a professional EPK package in order to send it to agents, film makers, directors and websites that promote composers of film and commercial music.

In order to know more about the tactical side of film scoring I found a highly recommended book - On the Track: A Guide to Contemporary Film Scoring by Fred Karlin, that covers everything from the nuts-and-bolts of timing, cuing, and recording through balancing the composer's aesthetic vision with the needs of the film itself. (Dolan, 2016)

I chose to get some inspiration from some of the leading composers in the field; I signed up with [masterclass.com](https://www.masterclass.com/), which is an online education platform where viewers can access tutorials recorded by experts in various fields. I watched Danny Elfman and Hans Zimmer's Masterclasses. (Elfman, 2020)(Zimmer, 2020)

Danny Elfman is an American composer, singer, songwriter, record producer and actor. He first became well known as the singer-songwriter for the new wave band Oingo Boingo in the early 1980s, (O'Neal, 2014) and has since garnered international recognition for writing over 100 feature film scores, as well as compositions for television, stage productions, and the concert hall.

In 1985, Tim Burton, the director, who was a big fan of Elfman's band, invited him to write a score for his first feature film Pee-Wee's Big Adventure.

Elfman was initially apprehensive because of his lack of formal training and having never scored a film before, but after Burton accepted his initial demo of the title music he became more confident and did the whole movie.

After that film, Elfman was lucky enough to compose some massively successful films with his friend Tim Burton such as Batman, Nightmare before Christmas and Edward Scissorhands, to name a few. (Collette, 2015)

Elfman's approach is very artistic and he has a unique sound and style which he would always bring to his compositions. He is extremely organised by following a calendar which he creates in order to hit the deadline for a film.

His software and sound design abilities are quite poor and he would only use a computer in order to create a demo version for his music. The final recordings would usually be done by a live orchestra.

Elfman loves to collect percussive and peculiar instruments and explore with them in his compositions. He is not a professional instrumentalist and because of the untraditional way that he plays the instruments he creates a unique and signature sound. Further more, as Elfman is a self taught musician who isn't a scholar in music theory and doesn't have the time to orchestrate, write or deal with the sound of the recordings, he uses the help of a professional team comprising of live musicians, sound engineers and an orchestrator to help him with the creation of the final product. (Elfman, 2020)

Hans Zimmer is a German film scoring composer. Since the 1980s, he has composed music for over 150 films. His works include The Lion King, for which he won the Academy Award for Best Original Score in 1995, Pirates of the Caribbean series, Interstellar, Gladiator and many more. A lot of Zimmer's music integrates electronic music sounds with traditional orchestral arrangements in order to get a bigger and epic sound.

When writing music for a film score, Zimmer starts by thinking of a musical theme as a conversation or as a set of questions and answers. (Tyers et al., 2007)

In his MasterClass, Zimmer tells that he usually composes in the key of D, especially D minor, and sticks to it because it's an easy key for him to play and score. (Hans Zimmer's Tips for Film Scoring: How to Compose Musical Film Scores, 2020)

He believes in carrying long conversations with the director, as well as learning, analysing and delving deeply into the story before even starting to compose. Most composers would start writing the music after the film is shot, but Zimmer would start writing as soon as he's familiar with the story. Like Elfman, Zimmer creates a Sound Palette in order to create his demo, but unlike Elfman, many of his synth creations would stay in the final product.

Zimmer is very much into technology he relies on the computer and plugins as his major tools for creation: Zimmer will start composing by setting a metronome. "The click is steady, reliable, and serves as your grid as you map out the pace of the drama". Zimmer used to watch a scene, then turn the picture off to write, and turn it back on to see if his composition and the scene matched up. Nowadays, after so many years of experience, he's able to identify common BPMs;

He mentions that 80 BPM is a great starting point, as it is seductive but easily fits with faster paced scenes. 60 BPM is a bit slower and easier to get more profound, whereas 140 BPM is a bit more energetic and dancy. (Zimmer, 2020)

Both approaches are very intriguing, creative and require a lot of patience, preparation and extensive research. These approaches allow to develop the confidence to experiment and come up with new sounds and original compositions.

I feel that I connect more with Zimmer's approach, as I also like to experiment with synthesisers as well as using the software and plugins as the main tools for the composition. I will be using my Logic Pro as my DAW and will be using (just like Zimmer and Elfman) a pallet of classical instrument sounds as well as some electronic sounds that would come from analog synthesisers. Moreover, I'm intrigued by working with a live orchestra but for this project, due to my limited budget, I intend to hire solo live musicians that play classical instruments. I do know how to write and orchestrate but I have limited experience, therefor I will have to brush up on my orchestration skills through reading *The Study Of Orchestration* by Samuel Adler. (Sealey, 2016)

I would also want to sample some interesting sounds, like Elfman does, and incorporate them into my composition in order to have a more original sound. One more technique that I'd like to try is Zimmer's click and tempo one; I'll watch a scene, would try to challenge myself with what tempo would fit that scene, turn the picture off, compose music, turn it back on and put things in place to fit the scene mood changes.

In my demo reel, I would like to show versatility by composing different excerpts from films in various styles of music, which would hopefully make me more employable. In order to achieve that, I need to either find complete un-scored films or just un-scored scenes from films or, alternatively, find scored scenes and turn the sound down in order to edit in my own music. The challenge in turning the sound down is that I lose the dialogue, the sound effects and the foleys that are part of the scene. There's a way to get "rid" of the original music of a scene and stay with the dialogue by using Premiere (which can be hired on a monthly basis and cost only £19.97 per month). In Premiere, the default setting for handling a 5.1 audio track is to consolidate all the channels to one track, but then I can modify the audio channels to contain 6 tracks that I can separate out and isolate the center channel that contain the dialogue. Though I might still lose some of the sound effects and foleys. (Lieu, 2017)

A simpler way to go about it would be to find scenes without dialogue or to search online for un-scored scenes or trailers. After some research, I've found movies on IMDB, that have been intentionally made and released without music, such as *No Country For Old Men* (2007), *Beyond The Hills* (2012), *Rope* (1948) and many more. Hopefully, I'll find scenes in these movies that I can relate to in order to score. Instead of downloading full movies I can use QuickTime to screen record, and record only scenes that I want to compose the music for. Furthermore, lately, I have been watching quite a few British TV series and have noticed that the music would usually appear when there is no dialogue. In that case, I could just mute those scenes and put my music instead of the original.

Both Elfman and Zimmer spend a few days thinking and preparing a pallet of sounds to work with for the composition. I use Logic Pro for my music and although I've got quite a few sound banks (Spitfire, Native Instruments and more), I feel that my classical orchestral bank isn't up to par. Apart from a major upgrade to that library I want to get some midi controllers that would help me to create a more realistic and dynamic sound when I play orchestral sounds. In film scoring, in order to engage the viewers, the dynamic range of an instrument is crucial. Elfman tells in his masterclass that one of the directors was extremely worried with one of the music cues that Elfman sent him after creating it on his computer with a sample bank, stating that the music doesn't have the right mood and warmth needed; but once they went into the recording studio and the live musicians started to play the same music cue, the director had a big smile and loved the piece.

Zimmer, on the other hand, uses a lot of synthesisers, and spends more time on programming sound and tweaking its filters as well as running it through weird arpeggiators in order to create the final sound and mood.

In regards to the development of an individual sound; working for many years in the Israeli music industry, I've accumulated a lot of experience in composing middle eastern music. I think that by mixing classical and pop music, that I'm also well experienced in, together with lines, sounds and instruments from the Middle Eastern genre, would give me that unique signature sound. For that, I would hire Oud, percussion and Arabic violin players who are experienced in this style. Except for hiring individual musicians, I intend on doing the rest of the work myself in my recording studio i.e. playing, programming, mixing and editing.

As a music production student at Tileyard, I have learnt and practiced Marketing, as well as creating an EPK. This aspect of the business is still one of my biggest weaknesses, as I'm not comfortable selling and marketing myself. I'll have to overcome this hurdle by further exploring this side of the business, looking for websites that deal with film scoring in order to promote my music, and hopefully get some help from my mentor, who also writes for films and commercials.

One site that I have discovered is shootingpeople.org which is a great place to start with. It's a community site for independent filmmakers, which can help directors, producers and musicians meet online, collaborate and grow together within the film industry's working market. (Shooting People, 2020)

Finally, to make sure I'm in the right direction, once I have roughly finished each composition, I'll send them to colleagues and Tileyard students and teachers, in the hope to get some feedback. My mentor, as mentioned, is a professional commercial and film composer, and he would definitely be a success "sensor" for me. Ideally, if all goes well and I feel confident enough with my work, I'll put it out on the professionally designated online platforms and ideally will be getting job enquiries.

Now, more than ever, in the age of Corona, most people are at home and no performances or gigs are taking place. Normally, I would be constantly on the road gigging yet now I have the opportunity to stay put and get back to developing the creative side of my musicianship.

This is the best time to start writing music from home, especially for films, computer games, commercials and such.

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