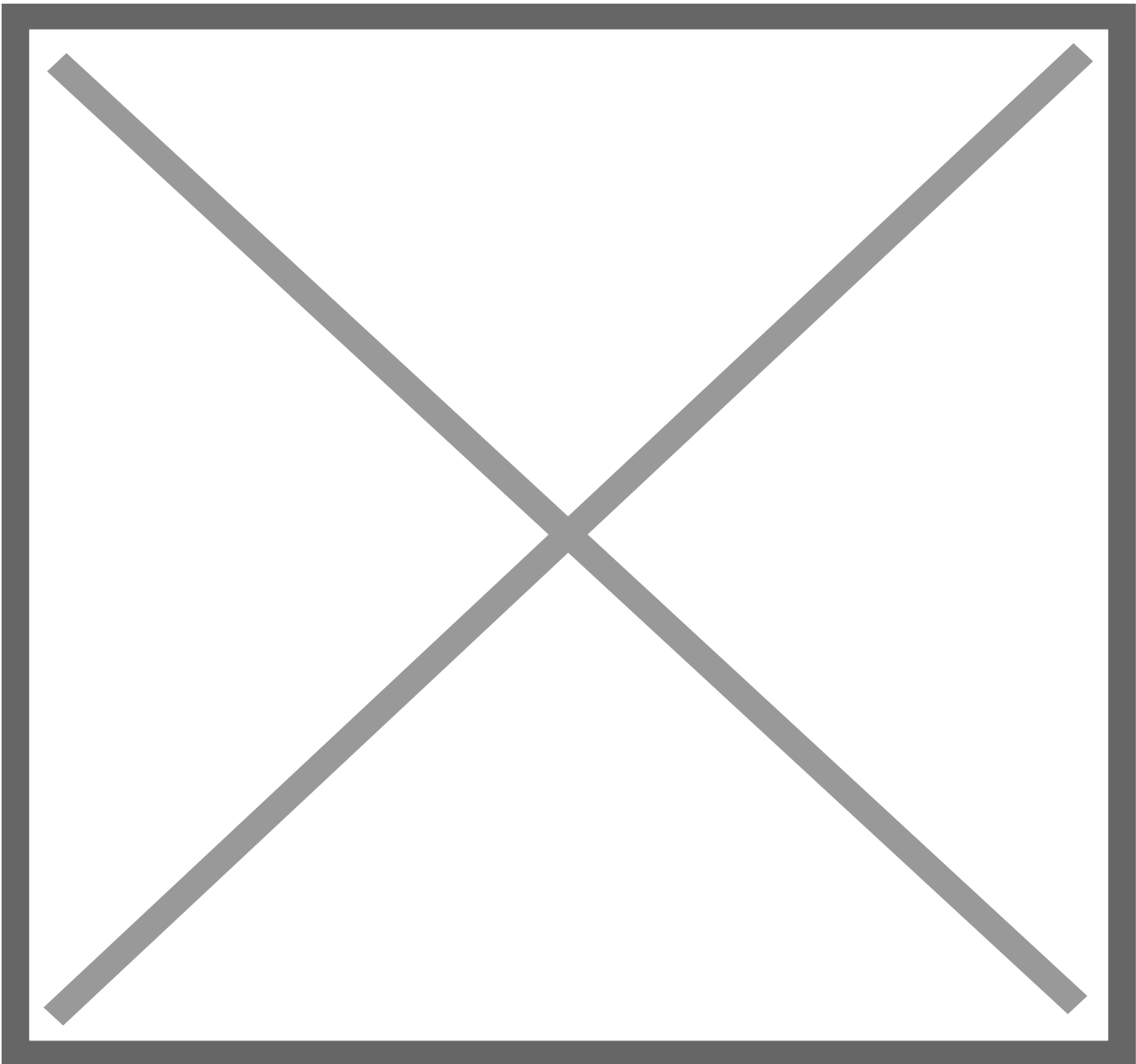




Artists and Musicians Making Strides in Film Scoring

Description



Alongside touring and releasing albums as an artist or part of a band, more musicians today than ever before are making the leap into working on film — either through writing and creating original music for a film score or working as curators of a film soundtrack. Working on film can be very rewarding task for musicians; the [film soundtrack](#) has the ability to make a piece of music iconic and the creation of original music for a film score can demonstrate the diversity of an artist or a band.

Musicians Who Work on Films On the Side

Aside from having their music featured on the soundtrack of a film, some musicians choose to score film music as a side project to their own music.

Such examples of artists and bands that have dabbled in film scoring include the French duo Daft Punk's first ever film score for the "Tron: Legacy" (2010) film, My Bloody Valentine singer Kevin Shields's BAFTA nominated soundtrack for "Lost in Translation" (2003) and Radiohead guitarist Jonny Greenwood's Grammy nominated score for "There Will Be Blood" (2007).

Perhaps one of the most noteworthy musicians currently working on film scoring alongside his music career is Nine Inch Nails frontman Trent Reznor. Reznor has worked on three of director David Fincher's film scores: "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo" (2011), "Gone Girl" (2014) and the Academy Award winning "The Social Network" (2010). It was the latter that would see Reznor win multiple awards, including a Golden Globe Award and an Academy Award for "Best Original Score".

Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross "Hand Covers Bruise"

For Reznor the move to film scoring was a rewarding challenge away from the day-to-day life of touring in a rock band. Speaking to the [Hollywood Reporter](#), Reznor spoke of the tiring nature of touring. He said: "I was tired and I felt like I had taken my shows as far as I wanted them to go" and film scoring turned out to be "a refreshing change of pace". While film scoring was a fun break for the artist, Reznor has gone on to tour and write more music with Nine Inch Nails, however, not every musician has made film scoring a side project in their music career.

Former Musicians Who Now Score for Films Instead

Sometimes the move to film scores and soundtracks becomes more than just a side gig. Some of film's best-known composers and scorers are former musicians who have made the move from band musicians to full-time film composers.

Take for instance film-composer Danny Elfman. Elfman first released music as the lead singer of the rock band Oingo Boingo in the late 1970s until the 1990s, prior to focussing predominantly on his work as a film composer.

Elfman's move from musician to film composer was facilitated by a close working-relationship with director Tim Burton. Elfman wrote his first film score for Tim Burton's directorial debut "Pee-wee's Big Adventure" (1985) and went on to compose almost all of Burton's soundtracks, including for the films "Batman" (1989), "Beetlejuice" (1988), and "The Nightmare Before Christmas" (1993).

Danny Elfman Sings Jack Skellington from "The Nightmare Before Christmas" (1993)

Aside from his work with Burton, Elfman went on to write various TV theme songs, including "The Simpsons" and "Desperate Housewives" themes.

For Elfman, composing for film and TV was more enjoyable than being in a rock band. Speaking to [The Guardian](#), Elfman explained that working in film scoring is more exiting for him, he said: "In the middle of writing a score, I'm so happy to be creating rather than playing the same songs night after night. I hate repetition."

Certainly Elfman's film scores would lead to more recognition, including Academy Award nominations, Emmy Awards, and a Grammy Award for the "Batman" theme.

Similarly, film composer Cliff Martinez has a similar back-story. Prior to working on scores for films such as "Solaris" (2002), "Contagion" (2011) and "Drive" (2011), Martinez was an established rock musician, playing drums for the likes of Captain Beefheart and the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

Cliff Martinez "I Drive"

For Martinez the move to working on film and TV was precipitated by a desire to be involved in creating something original. Speaking to music magazine [Fifteen Questions](#), Martinez found that "writing to a picture created unique musical structures and allowed for more originality and diversity than the music [he] was hearing in clubs and on the radio". It was this fascination with different musical structures than would lead Martinez to abandon his rock career and start writing film scores instead.

Some musicians then prefer to make the move from being in a band to film scoring a permanent one, seeing the film industry as an opportunity to be more creative, try out different things and continually work on something new.

Curation of Film Soundtracks

Alongside film scoring and composing, even more popular bands and musicians than ever before are being appointed as soundtrack curators, which makes use of their expertise and connections within the music industry.

Unlike the score, the soundtrack does not have to contain original music written by the artist, but can include a compilation of various artists and be released alongside a film score. Curating a film soundtrack showcases the artist's diversity, but can also, according to magazine [Toronto Film Scene](#), help to target the film's key audience. For instance, as the case of the curated soundtrack for 'The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part I' (2014) demonstrates.

The teen-artist Lorde curated one of 'The Hunger Games' films in 2014, in a move that the magazine Toronto Film Scene calls 'ideal'. Lorde's fans match the film franchise's key demographic. Certainly for promotional reasons, having a pop star curate the film soundtrack was a smart decision in targeting younger audiences.

Furthermore, as a rising pop star, with many famous friends, Lorde was also able to bring in a [vast number](#) of diverse musicians into the project. The final production included collaborations and original music from the likes of Grace Jones, The Chemical Brothers, Kanye West and Haim. Lorde's influence and prestige made the soundtrack an event in itself, called a 'marketing companion and brand-extender' by movie website [Film School Rejects](#), due to its popularity.

John Legend 'Roll, Jordan, Roll'

In other cases, artists were inspired to curate albums for films that they felt a personal attachment to. Academy Award winning film '12 Years a Slave' (2013) was accompanied by a curated album by R&B singer John Legend, who told [Entertainment Weekly](#) that he was inspired to be involved in curating the soundtrack because he felt a deeply personal connection to the film's story. The album

“Music from and Inspired by 12 Years a Slave” featured original music from film composer Hans Zimmer, as well as original songs from artists John Legend, Chris Cornell and Alicia Keys.

Curating film soundtracks can therefore make use of an artist’s popularity amongst key audiences, it can bring a diversity of other musicians and artists onto a project, with the help of an artist’s network and influence, and it can be a rewarding and inspiring project for artists.

Why Are Artists Working on Film Scores?

With many [lists](#) out there charting the greatest ever artist led film scores, there’s no denying that musicians are making huge strides in film composition. For filmmakers and artists, collaborating on film scores is worthwhile. Artists have the chance to work on something different and new, a project that can be very rewarding and even lead to career change. On the other side, filmmakers can benefit from the influence and networks of artists, as well as work with new and differing creative perspectives.