



Top Scores #7: Cliff Martinez, College, Kavinsky & â??Driveâ??

Description



Our **TOP SCORES** selection of 2011 could be none other than **Nicolas Winding Refn**'s iconic film ***Drive***. The neo-noir thriller starring heartthrob **Ryan Gosling** became an instant classic, thanks in large part to a soundtrack of two equally strong halves; one part nostalgic 80s synth-pop songs, and the other tense ambience from a former **Red Hot Chili Peppers**' band member.

Centred around a Los Angeles getaway driver, a doomed love affair, and an ultra-violent struggle between good and evil, *Drive* is neon-lit and ultra-stylised, with most of the film's key moments hingeing on five pre-existing songs chosen by Refn. These Eurosynth-styled songs – by **Kavinsky & Lovefoxxx** ('Nightcall'), **The Chromatics** ('Tick of the Clock'), **Desire** ('Under Your Spell'), **College** featuring **Electric Youth** ('A Real Hero'), and **Riziero Ortolani** featuring **Katyna Ranieri** ('Oh My Love') – act as a mini compilation and introduce the distinctly nostalgic underground world of *Drive*. 'Nightcall' and 'A Real Hero' became ubiquitous overnight, and the latter triumphs as the soundtrack's most memorable song. The evocative collaboration of Canadian duo Electric Youth and producer College works as a mantra for Gosling's unnamed Driver character and a symbol of his benevolence.

Even with these standout songs front-loaded in the first half film, *Drive*'s overall sound would be an entirely different experience without the chilly, ambient synthesiser score of **Cliff Martinez**. The Bronx-born, Ohio-raised musician had initially moved to L.A. in his early 20s, where he dove headfirst into the Californian punk scene. He drummed with several bands, most notably on the first two albums of Red Hot Chili Peppers.

Martinez once said in an interview, 'When you're a drummer looking at a **drum machine**, you're looking at your own obsolescence.' It's this pragmatism that led him to embrace digital technology for programming and composition, resulting in atmospheric and ambient electronica made with software synths like Omnisphere, and arranged in Ableton Live. Martinez has written scores with his signature dark and brooding aural arrangement for a range of cult films, most notably in collaboration with director **Steven Soderbergh** on ***Sex, Lies and Videotape***, ***Traffic*** and ***Solaris***.

The retro cool factor of *Drive*'s soundtrack was especially amplified by the positive buzz of the **Twitter**-verse, and the compilation quickly reached the #4 position on **iTunes** charts. The ultimate hipster honour came soon after, when the soundtrack was exclusively released in cassette format, through retailer **Urban Outfitters**.

Revisit the *DRIVE* soundtrack, below:

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