



Top Scores #18: Requiem for a Dream & Clint Mansell

Description



Clint Mansell

If you are a film enthusiast you will have surely seen *Requiem for a Dream*, the 2000 American drama directed by Darren Aronofsky. The film stars Ellen Burstyn, Jared Leto, Jennifer Connelly, and Marlon Wayans.

The film follows the main characters's battle with drug addiction and its impact on their psychological and physical states, as they become imprisoned in a world of desperation. As the movie progresses, we see our four main characters fall into a pit of chaos as their deterioration leads them down a path of

delusion.

The movie daringly drenches itself in the world of addiction, touching on themes around the fragility of humanity, loneliness and avoidance of reality.

The film was critically acclaimed and highly praised not only because of its visual style and direction but also for its astounding editing, cast and **music**.

The man who took upon himself to score this challenging and dark film was Clint Mansell.

Clint Mansell

Aronofsky met Mansell while trying to raise money for his debut film *Pi*, when mutual friends introduced them with the hope that Aronofsky would give Mansell a chance to score the film. Aronofsky recalls going to meet him and asking what was his favorite score and he “expected something really pretentious like John Williams or something like that” and was met with Mansell telling him that his favorite score was “*Halloween*” by John Carpenter. Aronofsky, thinking that was a pretty cool answer, then asked him to write the title track, as a first test to see if it would work out. A couple of weeks later Mansell delivered and Aronofsky gave him the gig. After being very satisfied with Mansell’s work, Aronofsky hired him to score his second film; *Requiem for a Dream*. Mansell has scored every subsequent Aronofsky film with the exception of *mother!*.

Clint Mansell is an English musician and composer who has been making music since 1981. Before diving into the world of film scoring Mansell was part of indie and industrial rock band *Pop Will Eat Itself*. They were very active during the 80s, then broke up, then got back together from 1995 until 1998, then broke up, then got back together in 2005, then broke up, and FINALLY got back together for good in 2010 and have been making music ever since. Hey, we all have complicated love stories.

Mansell has been very active as a film composer since he got his debut in 1998. He now has 40 feature-film scoring credits under his belt, as well as television, short films, videogames and trailers.

All of this success does not come easy, Mansell is very dedicated to his craft. In an interview in 2016, Mansell was asked about the process of film scoring, and he revealed that he does not like a lot of film music because it feels more like “wallpaper”. He is a self-described “method-composer” because he likes to immerse himself in what he is doing. He begins by doing research into the themes of the movie, so he can properly portray the energy, emotions, and current state of mind of the characters and their stories. He says that he sometimes feels like a sculptor when they say “the sculpture is already in the stone, I just have to get it out”; he feels like the music “is already there, he just needs to listen and find it”.

His research process often includes reading, watching documentaries, interviewing people that went through similar situations, or “just learning”. His process must be very effective because Mansell always achieves what he wants all scores to do: add just enough to the story to become another character, help immerse the viewer in the story and pull them closer to the protagonists.

You can listen to the *Requiem for Dream* score here: