Two Notes & A Rubber Shark

By Andy Sankey

Music for the moving image is something most of us take for granted, paying little notice until it does not work with the scene or moment and many people associate this with film scores. The earliest form of this has been around since silent movies with a pianist improvising in real-time in a theatre sometimes known as Micky Mousing, with the aim to support and reflect the tempo and mood of the visual image being shown.

The importance of the musical score for a film or a game, which now employ the same level of scores or music in some cases, is important from minimalist pieces, *John Carpenter* for example or the inspiration for the title of this article the motifs of *John Williams* to full classical orchestral arrangements to enhance the experience of the audience, visually, emotionally and in some cases geographically taking the viewer to and from moments in the film or location of the scene.
The aim is for the music to work and support the director's intention, melodically and harmonically, and connect with the audience, the objective is to meet the deadlines and not destroy the film, game, or intention. This can sometimes be difficult and why directors like to work with composers who are able to understand and communicate musically the intended outcome. When this partnership works well, they tend to continue working together whenever possible, *Williams and Spielberg, Burton and Elfman* for example. This is without taking into consideration title themes, codes and conventions, expectations, and deadlines which you will pleased to know I will not be going into in this article.

I will be exploring music education with composition and engaging with composition briefs, the visual, not just the moving image. Including the use and importance of research in context of the composition, inspiration, and techniques I have adopted and used within my compositions and education to enhance and develop students' awareness of music publishing and synchronisation.

Publishing and synchronisation

Getting a publisher or publishing deal and creating a diverse portfolio of compositions is an important first step, a diverse range of styles will widen opportunities for your work to be used. There are various ways to publish your compositions and to engage with a global audience, in fact the internet and various platforms have enabled self-publication to be very easy. Although this is good in some respects it has made it more difficult to become recognised and to monetize your work. This is where a publisher is useful, publishers that specialise in synchronisation music (music used for moving image, idents, adverts, soundbites etc.).
A publisher will want a sample of your work which is why creating a diverse portfolio before approaching a publisher is important. Be careful to read the contracts carefully and get advice and guidance before signing any contract, for example is it an 'exclusive' or 'non-exclusive' publishing contract agreement? What percentage will the publisher be entitled to on successful publication? You will find the Musicians Union a very useful resource for definitions of terms, specimen documents and

agreements, legal advice, and guidance. Before you can sign with a publisher you will need to be a member of PRS for Music.

PRS for Music – What We Do:

We pay royalties to our members when their work is performed, broadcast, streamed, downloaded, reproduced, played in public or used in film and TV. We support them by influencing policy, supporting, and hosting awards and events, and investing in new technology to ensure we're fit for the digital music age.

Once you are a member of PRS (one off payment for life) you will be issued with a 'IPI/CAE' number, this is an international identification number assigned to songwriters and publishers to uniquely identify rights holders.

- *IPI stands for: Interested Parties Information*
- *CAE stands for: Composer, Author, and Publisher*

Research and realisation

Researching previous works from artists will give you a good idea of what and how to start or structure your composition, syncronisation publishers will normally have a website where you will be able to audition the music from artists within their library.

Analysing music being used (TV, games, films etc.) by developing listening skills will help inform your compositions in response to compositional briefs and creating music generally. Listening to the musical melodic and harmonic structure of others will also help understand the context and application including style, tempo, key signature, timbre, dynamics.

Understanding the social political, historical and audience demographic are also important when composing music for synchronisation, composing a fast heavy rock track for a cruise ship advert would not be suitable for the subject and probably the target audience, it will always be dependent on what the producers are looking for and are not always obvious and, in some cases, subjective. My advice to students has always been to be versatile and accommodating, creating diverse range of music compositions and listen to a wide range of music to widen knowledge and experience including classical music which has a complex timbre and structure to evoke emotions and relate to and communicate with the audience. Vivaldi Four Seasons is a good way to introduce yourself (and students) into this genre. Although Baroque (not strictly classical) people will have various sensory experiences of the four seasons, and ask the question doe the music relay the seasons in an audio format?

Inspiration, tips, and tricks

As a published composer there are a few tips, and tricks I have learnt through the years:

- Composition length – Compositions should be no more than two minutes in length
    - Create mixes of 15, 30, 60 seconds
- Compositions should have a start middle and end
- Export individual stems (stem are the individual tracks) it will help the producer and editor
- Recycle everything, save work, never delete anything

        - If publisher rejects your work (which they will) it does not me it is bad, just not applicable to their library or compositional brief, they rarely give feedback.
        - What is not right for one maybe right for another
        - Use non-exclusive publisher to store work that is not used or rejected Sentric Music for example has increasing ‘digital’ foot fall and better to be out there than on your desk-top where no one can hear it
- Use visual stimulus for inspiration and/or scoring music, flowers for example have a start, middle and end point…
- Use generative synthesis to start a composition, many applications available, Bloom by Brian Eno is a good example
- Music concrete and soundscapes are a good way to employ the sensory experience and sounds into your compositions

Extended links and reading

Delia Derbyshire, BBC Radiophonic Workshop

Kendall Wrightson, An Introduction to Acoustic Ecology

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