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**CRACK THE CODE!**  
**WRITING MUSIC FOR**  
**FILM, TELEVISION, AND VIDEO**  
**INSTRUCTION COURSE**

**MANUAL #2**

**EXPERIENCE**  
**Developing the Craft of**  
**Writing Music to Picture**

by **MICHAEL BENGHIAT**

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# **CRACK THE CODE!**

## **WRITING MUSIC FOR FILM, TELEVISION, AND VIDEO INSTRUCTION COURSE**

### **MANUAL #2: EXPERIENCE/ Developing the Craft of Writing Music to Picture**

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Michael has been a freelance composer for over 12 years, and has scored television and film programs such as Tarzan: The Epic Adventures, Feed the Children, Treasure Island, Devotion, Shadow of the Dragon, Buck Naked Arson, and Soul Survivors. He has scored dozens of television and film productions for clients including Disney, Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen, Time/ Life, Pacific Theaters, Nickelodeon, DIC, and Disney Channel. He has also scored hundreds of commercials and promos over the years for clients such as: NBC, ABC, CBS, Paramount, MGM, Mitsubishi, Pizza Hut, Activision, Blue Cross, Apple Computers, Bell South, Wienerschnitzel, Sport Chalet, and J.C. Penney. He has also had over a dozen songs published and recorded.

Michael also is a recording artist with over 15 CD's in the relaxation/ massage/ new age genre. He has scored music for a Billboard #1 Chart program, written cues that have had over 1,000,000 performances, and cues that have never seen the light of day. Such is the life of a working composer.

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### HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

Welcome to the writing section of the course! We will first cover some initial information on scoring music to picture, and then we will proceed to the 10 writing lessons where you will develop your composing skills. All ten lessons involve scoring to picture. Included with this course is a set of 2 CD-ROMs, which contain the Quicktime or AVI videos you will need for the lessons. We have also included a VHS copy of the movies with SMPTE timecode on channel 1 for those of you not working on a computer-based system.

If you are using the movies you should copy both CD-ROMs to a hard drive rather than work from the CD-ROM itself. Most CD-ROM drives cannot read the movies fast enough, and this will slow down the performance of your computer.

Included in your course is a personalized critique of each of your lessons. After you conclude each lesson, you will make and send a MP3 to your assigned tutor for a personalized critique of each of your compositions.

#### LABELING YOUR MP3s

When you do send your MP3s for review, please name each MP3 with the course, lesson number, and your initials.

Use **FTV** for the Film, Television, and Video course

Use **CP** for Commercials and Promos

Example: **CP1ABC.mp3** (Commercials/ Promos Course Lesson 1, ABC should be your initials).

If you have multiple versions, label them as a,b,c, etc. For Example: **CP1aABC.mp3**, **CP1bABC.mp3**.

Be sure to include your name in the email, phone number, and attach the MP3 to the email.

Please include a “2 pop” in your mp3 or audio file that starts two seconds before your cue starts, and include the SMPTE number the 2 pop falls on. This will enable us to easily sync your music cue up correctly.

**Send your cues to your tutor’s email address.**

### YOUR TUTOR

You should have already received an email from us as to who has been assigned to you as your tutor, with his/her email address. If you did not receive this or do not have this information, please send an email to:

[michael@crackthecodemusic.com](mailto:michael@crackthecodemusic.com)

Please put “need tutor assignment” in the heading, and tell us who you are, your contact info (email and phone number), and which course you are working on - the Film/TV/Video course or the Commercials/Promos course, or both. If you are taking both courses, we may assign you a different tutor for each. We will then contact

you and provide you with your tutor information.

### LESSON CRITIQUES

Once you submit an mp3 of your lesson assignment, within a few days we will email you a critique of your work, outlining your cue's effectiveness, and giving suggestions for improvements. A good cue works creatively, musically, and sonically. Our comments will focus on the actual creative content, the audio sonic quality, the quality of samples and sounds used, and any other factors that affect the cue's effectiveness. You do not need to send video, or try to create a Quicktime movie of the video and audio. We will sync up the mp3 with the video in our studios. Please send mp3s only.

### WHERE DO I GET AN MP3 ENCODER?

There are many programs that let you make a MP3 from an audio track. **Bias Peak** is a very popular program. **Soundjam** is another, and you can get a free encoder/ player at [www.soundjam.com](http://www.soundjam.com). Apple also offers the **iTunes** software on their Operating System 10. You can also go to Google or Yahoo and enter "free mp3 encoder" and find several encoders.

Also check out this website, [mp3-converters.com](http://mp3-converters.com), at: <http://www.mp3-converter.com/encoders/> for lots of useful information on how MP3s work and links to download encoders. Each software has its own method for making MP3s, so please consult the manual or instructions with the program.

If you do not have internet access and/or cannot make MP3s to send via email, you can receive critiques



by mailing a CD to your tutor. This will slow down the process of getting critiques but it is available. Just contact us and we will give you mailing formation as to where to send your lesson tracks.

## **STUDIO TECHNIQUES FOR SCORING TO PICTURE**

### **SETTING UP A TEMPLATE**

As we discussed in Manual #1, most composers set up a number of templates in their sequencer in order to have a palette of sounds to work with for different styles. For example, almost every composer I know has an orchestral template in his or her sequencer that corresponds to patches on their synths and programs on their samplers. Setting up a template in advance will save you a great amount of time, which you'll be thankful for on very short deadlines. Be sure to set up different templates for different kinds of projects, such as orchestral, pop/ rock, ethnic, techno, etc.

Some composers have over 200 sounds ready to go in their orchestral template. This is necessary for serious orchestral scores with many different instruments and timbres. If you do a lot of orchestral work, then devoting whole samplers to just one instrument family - say strings - is not uncommon. Strings and all their idiomatic phrasing and techniques require many different sounds to be available at once. Having your favorite drum sounds, pads, basses, etc. available at once is a huge timesaver, as opposed to loading in sounds for each project. No matter how you decide to work, remember to keep some sampler memory available for project-specific sounds.

## **SET INITIAL CONTROLLER VALUES**

As part of a template, we recommend printing MIDI volume (controller #7) and pan information on Measure 1, and any other data you normally use. Try setting controller #7 to 90, insuring that volumes are loud enough, but there is some room to increase them as needed. Set your sequencer software to chase MIDI events.

## **MIXING BOARD TECHNIQUES**

These days, many composers set all of their mixer's faders in a straight line, usually at 0db. They mix their music in their software, printing MIDI volume, pan, and expression information as they go, and use the board only for EQ adjustments and effects levels. There is a huge advantage to this: You can readily work on numerous cues at once (which is common) and have the freedom to come back to a cue and have it basically mixed as you last left it.

This approach took me awhile to get used to, but I wouldn't work any other way now. For many years, I never printed MIDI volume, and I mixed everything on the board. Coming back to a cue I worked on days ago or weeks ago would require sometimes an hour or more of mixing to get the balance I originally had.

In the course of a job, if there was a revision on a cue I had done days ago, it was sometimes really hard to get the same mix and sound as the original cue. This got to be very frustrating.

Now I can go back to a cue I worked on a couple of years ago, and have the track basically where I left it.

That has proven invaluable to me many many times now.

The only things that may change are the EQ settings and the effects setting and levels on each track. But more and more, composers are using the effects and reverbs inside their sequencing software, and using virtual instruments and samplers. This way, everything is saved within the file. As we've discussed, some composers are eliminating their mixing board altogether and doing everything inside the computer.

Important: Keep a note of all sounds, loops, synth patches, and effects used for a cue in the project's file. If you need to come back to a project months later, you will avoid the problem of trying to remember what loops you used, or what synth patch you used for that great bass line.

## **SCORING TO PICTURE:**

In writing music for film and TV, getting it done and on time is one of the most important elements for success. A composer who misses deadlines will not be a successful composer.

Over the years I've learned something about the process of writing music on demand. Sometimes cues come out great, and you wonder later how you managed to come up with such a good cue. Other times something just did not gel and the cues just come out OK. Occasionally you will listen to one of your cues for a project and wonder what you were thinking writing a dog like that.

Remember, you will be writing thousands of cues over the years. Not every one will be an inspired work. That's OK. You want to do the best you can do in the given time. The more you work, you tend to get faster and work more efficiently. Your quality level will rise just from experience. Things you know work well – sounds, chord progressions, arrangement techniques, etc. - become part of your repertoire. And if you continue to learn and grow, your arsenal of techniques and skills will also grow and add more dimensions to your music.

Becoming a successful composer is really a process. It is a blending of artistic talent, business knowledge and expertise, and people skills. It takes awhile for these things to develop, and this course is a great step forward in developing those skills.

## **HOW DO I START?**

In Manual #1, we ran through a typical composing session. Here again are the steps to follow:

- Open up a template in your sequencing program that most closely matches the type of music you will be writing. If you have not yet set up a template, it is worth spending a couple of hours doing so.

- Do a Save As, and save this template with the name of your project, so you do not overwrite your template. Better yet, if you click once on the template file's icon, and select Command + I (Get Info), and then select Stationary Pad, you will not be able to save to this file. You will automatically get the Save As prompt. This is an extremely handy way to avoid erasing your templates.

- Import the video and use your program's "Copy video audio to audio track" function if you want to create an audio track.

- Make sure your sequencing program is set to the proper frame rate (for the movies we provide in this course, set your frame rate to 29.97 DF (drop frame)).

- Set up the video start so that measure 3 is the start of your first cue. Each sequencing program is different, so you may have to refer to your owner's manual to learn how to do so.

- Set your initial tempo. I usually set measure 1 to 120BPM. I then set a new tempo at measure 3 where my cue will start. Even if my cue's tempo will be 120 BPM, I have the two tempo settings. This makes things easy if I forget and need to change tempos later.

- Determine the tempo of the cue. Some composers go through the video and use their program's Marker or Hit Point function to mark spots that need to be hit. After doing this, they use the program's Tempo functions to help find the best tempo for a cue. Again, please see your program's manual for details. Other composers just basically start writing and adjust as they go.

- Start writing. Refer back to any temp music from time to time, and also any notes from the director, producer, or client. It's easy to crank away for an hour or two pursuing an idea and then realize that you are going off in a tangent that doesn't match what the client wants.

### **TIPS BEFORE YOU START WRITING**

Successful composers take different approaches to starting a score. Some just jump right in and start writing. Others sit down and listen to stylistically related music for ideas before they start writing. Others sit down and try to write or develop themes for characters, or an overall sound for a show. Before you start, try turning on the TV and checking out shows related to your project. Try renting a movie with a score related to yours. If you read music, get some scores and study them.

If you have never written a techno cue before, listen to a whole bunch of techno cues and figure out what they are doing. What kind of sounds do they use? What are the drums doing? What kind of chords are typically used? Is it pretty simple arrangement-wise, or are there all sorts of inner parts and countermelodies? What scales or rhythmic patterns are being used?

Sometimes if you don't know what to write for a cue, just put some music on from your CD player and play it against the video. See what works. Sometimes you can come up with something that you would never have done otherwise using this approach

The Internet is great for finding all sorts of examples of music, and mostly for free. Go to **www.megatrax.com** and take a listen to their demos. They are a music library with cues available for listening (and licensing) in many styles. Turn the TV on and listen to the music in commercials while watching your video. This can be really effective because commercials these days encompass so many styles of music. You may find something that works really well, something you wouldn't have thought to have tried writing.

However you come up with ideas, it doesn't matter. The important thing is to write. By writing, even if you start playing around with "Jingle Bells", you start to get in the creative flow.

## **DEALING WITH WRITER'S BLOCK**

Everyone has had this dreaded affliction at one time or another. You sit and stare at a blank page (or blank computer screen) and just go blank. You start to feel like everything you write sounds the same, and you



are just not happy with anything you come up with. You get frustrated and the more you get frustrated, the less you concentrate on writing. It is a vicious circle.

The key to overcoming writer's block is to realize that writing (or any creative endeavor) has two distinct modes. These are the creation/ creative mode (left brain) and the editing mode (right brain). The creative comes when you are writing or composing and feeling free to create. Your mind is 100% on creating. The editing comes after the initial creative burst, when you go back and change things, rewrite, rework, fix mistakes, or otherwise improve your creative work.

**The key is to be only in creative mode when you are writing, and shut off completely the editing mode.**

The reason why writer's block comes about is that while you are composing, a little voice inside you is commenting on your work.

"That's awful" it says. "You call yourself a composer?"

Or you hear inside your head: "That's not very good. You should be able to come up with something better than that!".

"No wonder I don't have any work right now. I must really suck"... the voice continues. Now you feel depressed about your talents and skills. Many people are not even aware this voice is yelling out at them.

You need to shut up this voice until later, when it's helpful. All it is doing now is killing your creative drive and confidence, and you end up with nothing. All successful creative people have learned to manage the

two modes.

Here is a great technique that helps solve this problem: Sit down to write and don't care about anything but writing for the moment. Forget about fixing sloppy playing or bad notes or using a bad synth sound. Forget about writing that "perfect" cue. Just write - it doesn't matter what. Write an atonal version of "Jingle Bells". Work on something for a few minutes completely unrelated to the project at hand. Decide for 10 minutes you will write a piece a la Chopsticks. Or figure out on piano an Aerosmith song. Or write a hip-hop version of Girl from Ipanema. It doesn't matter what you do. You are kickstarting your creative process, and removing the editing process from ruining the creative process. The editing is for later. Remember, you need something to edit before you can edit! The editing and correction is for later. Just play and write, and play and write some more for at least 10 minutes. Forget about mistakes - just keep writing. What you come up with does not matter, as long as you have written something - at least 8 bars.

What happens after this 10 minute exercise is that you have gotten the creative juices flowing again, and you have banished the editor. If I'm stuck, I'll start writing anything, or start playing anything on the piano. I'll practice Hanon exercises, I'll get out a book of songs from the 40's, Christmas carols, anything. I have found many times that I've moved from my atonal "Jingle Bells" cue right to the cue at hand I'm supposed to be working on, and I didn't realize it right away. Over the years I have used this technique so much that now I rarely have writer's block. Try it and see if it works for you.

**KEEPING UP WITH DEADLINES**

Experienced composers break up their scoring assignments into a specific number of minutes they have to do each day, and you should too. By doing this, you avoid getting behind and having to do an all-nighter (or worse, 2 in a row!). You can actually have a life during a job if you can keep to the schedule. An important fact also is that once you are working and it's flowing creatively, you tend to write more minutes than you expected to that day.

Most experienced composers can write 5-7 minutes of music cues a day, if they have set up a template ahead of time with sounds, and have a clear direction of what they are doing. Scoring animation projects can slow this down to 4-5 minutes a day, but with deadlines looming, 10 minutes a day can be achieved if you really focus and crank. If you don't have a choice and the producers need it tomorrow, you will just have to get it done.

It's often said that people underestimate themselves. I believe that under the gun, people can and will do great things, pushing themselves past their own self-imposed limits. Once I had been writing 6 to 8 minutes a day for a television series, and I was basically working all the time. If you had told me to up my output to 11 minutes a day, I would have said it was impossible. But after a three day 33 minute marathon because of a deadline (I actually got some sleep too) I was amazed I had done it. Six minutes a day after that was like being on vacation!!

I was also very pleased with what I had written. I had come up with some really nice themes and melodies. I didn't even remember really writing them - they just

kind of came out. That's what can happen in a state of absolute focus. While mixing, there was very little I needed to rewrite or change. In a state of total concentration and focus, your brain just says: "No time to mess around - let's go!" And your creative side goes to work.

Now it's time for you to get to work!

# PART 1

## FILM SCORING LESSONS

Legal Disclaimer: You cannot use the videos supplied with this course for distribution or duplication on a video demo reel, or for posting on a website. However, the music tracks you compose for the lesson plans are 100% owned by you, and can be used in any way you choose.

## **SMPTE TIMECODE BASICS**

Timecode is always given in the following format:

**Hours: Minutes: Seconds: Frames**

(There are 30 frames in a second)

Example: 01:22:05:14 is 1 hour, 22 minutes, 5 seconds, and 14 frames.

Video for television is 29.97 frames per second (FPS). All the video clips you will work with in this course are at 29.97 DF (drop frame)

**Be sure to set your sequencing programs frame rate to 29.97 DF. This is very important.**

# LESSON 1:

## FILM SCORING: SUSPENSE CUE

**Style:** orchestral/ percussive

**Length:** 2:46

**Scene description:** This is a scene from a movie where Antonio Sabado Jr's character sneaks into a warehouse looking for evidence against the commander. He is interrupted in his search and is forced to hide until the soldier leaves.

There is no dialogue in this cue, so music really has to provide all the emotion and suspense.

The scene starts with a kiss right at 1:00:00:00. Your cue should begin around 01:00:01:15, in the middle of the dissolve from one scene to another. When working with a dissolve between two scenes, you do have a bit of

latitude on where you start the music, but it works best starting the cue as soon as you can see the new scene in the dissolve.

Note: Please reference the SMPTE timecode numbers in the bottom center of the video. Occasionally you will get video with all sorts of timecode windows running. These refer to other takes, cameras, shots, etc. Ignore everything but the big window burn code in the lower center. This same big window burn is used throughout all the lesson videos.

The director's music notes are below. In real world situations, many times you will not get SMPTE location notes down to the frame. The director usually gives musical direction as the film goes by, so they are not frame accurate. If you are in the spotting session, you'll be writing furiously as you go through the film and you won't have time to get the exact times. All you can do is get as close as possible, and fine tune them once you start work. For this first lesson, however, I have notated the exact timecode numbers.

01:00:01:15 – cue starts. Give a sense of urgency and action through 01:00:27:18, when he drops down.

01:00:27:18 - once he drops down, cue should reflect stealth and quiet tension.

01:00:41:13 – sting or change on blood stain

01:01:01:07 – change cue on briefcase

01:01:12:00 – gate –someone approaching (sound is not on audio track)



01:01:17:20 – shot of victim’s stuff – accentuate

01:01:22:17 – soldier approaches

01:01:29:29 – Antonio hears someone coming – puts away files – music builds – urgency, tension

01:01:43:03 – soldier enters – continue tension through 01:02:45:05 when the door shuts; final chord of cue here

01:02:48:15 - cue tail out

### SCORING NOTES

This kind of film clip will many times have an orchestral based score, with percussion or percussive loops added for drama or grit.

A good starting point for this cue is to give the opening of the cue some energy, maybe a simple pad type of track with a fast rhythmic percussion undertone. Start trailing off the percussion when he drops into the room at 01:00:27:18. The cue here should be less intense, but continuing the tension and a hint of danger. Many times changing the percussion by making it sparser and sparser helps the cue to maintain continuity, but change feel as needed.

At 01:00:27:18, once he drops down, the cue should reflect stealth, quiet tension, and danger. Be careful not to make it too scary or too dangerous sounding. More often than not, “less is more” in this type of scene. Don’t be afraid to use silence. Silence can be one of the most effective methods of expressing emotion. Instead of the usual cliché sting on some element,

sometimes no music or just a single string note is the most effective solution.

Once the soldier enters at 01:01:43:03, the cue should change, not drastically, but enough to reflect a bit more danger.

Once the soldier is in the room, the scene runs a little over a minute while he pulls the briefcase out, puts some files and stuff inside, and replaces it in the crate. All this time, Antonio is hiding and watching. There is almost no sound, so the music will keep the tension going. Again, you do not want to make the music too big or it will sound heavy handed. Try cutting back your music track to minimal elements; maybe a little percussion and low strings.

At 01:02:45:05 when the door shuts you should wrap up your cue. Have your cue tail out and end around 01:02:48:15.

**SUBMITTING YOUR LESSON DEMO  
FOR CRITIQUE:**

After you have finished the lesson, create and send an MP3 for review. Please name each MP3 with the course, lesson number, and your initials.

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Use **CP** for the Commercials and Promos course

Example: **CP1ABC.mp3** (Commercials/ Promos Course Lesson 1, ABC should be your initials).

If you have multiple versions, label them as a,b,c, etc. For Example: **CP1a ABC.mp3, CP1b ABC.mp3.**

Be sure to include your name in the email, and attach the MP3 to the email.

**Be sure to put a 2 pop before the cue starts,  
and provide the start time in your email when  
you send the cue to your tutor.**

**Send your cues to your tutor's email address.**

# LESSON 2:

## FILM SCORING: DRAMATIC CUE #1

**Style:** piano/ strings/ acoustic gtr, etc.

**Length:** 3:31

**Scene description:** There are actually two separate scenes to score in this film clip. The first starts at 01:04:05:00. Here, the characters Willie and Janie begin to resolve the problems they have. Then at 01:05:20:16 characters Grant and Becca discuss their relationship, and Becca learns that Grant has known all along her secret – that she started the arson fire that has landed them in the park ranger’s custody. They also begin to heal their relationship.

The director in this instance did not give any notes. The composer (me) was left to do what I thought was appropriate.

## **LIVE PLAYERS**

Because the first scene is the type of scene that benefits from a natural sound like an acoustic guitar, let's address the issue of using live players. You may be asking yourself "I don't play guitar. Can't I just use a sample? I don't want to hire a player for this exercise!"

Sure, this is an exercise for a course. You are not doing a paid job where you have a budget to hire a player or two. But one of the purposes of this course is to get you to experience what you will encounter in the real world. You will have to pay musicians to play on your cues. Spending a little money is part of the game.

But more importantly, you want your cues to be effective, sound great, and be an accurate representation of what you can do. Some composers I know have taken orchestral cues they scored for a project on synths, and spent a few thousand dollars getting them recorded with real orchestra, sometimes working with orchestras in Israel or Hungary. They do this just for their demo reel. They see it as important enough to have the real thing on their reel, because they are competing against other composers who have a lot of great sounding real orchestra cues. There is a difference, and high level directors and music production people can tell.

So back to your dilemma, I would recommend that you do whatever is best for the cue. If you like the cue, you can use it on your demo reel. Having a bunch of cues all done with MIDI is fine, but having real players adds a

whole extra dimension. It will start to place your music ahead of the pack.

In cases like sampled sax or solo violin or sampled nylon string guitar, they always sound terrible and lack emotion. Most of the time using sampled versions of these instruments just kills the cue. Do what is right for your music; in the long run it will pay off big time. And anyway, hiring a good player should not set you back more than \$100 to \$150.

### **SCORING NOTES**

OK, back to the cue at hand. I am going to give you some freedom to work with this cue. Here are some suggestions though:

Start the cue around 01:04:33:15 after his line “It’s a really good idea”. Something light – maybe a simple piano line or acoustic guitar. It has to convey emotion, and as discussed above, a real instrument and a real player probably will be your best choice.

Overall, I think this cue should be pretty sparse. Less is more in a scene like this. The music cannot be heavy or it will detract from the scene. Also, the cue should not call attention to itself. The acting was good and can carry the scene even without music. So your job is really to subtly underscore the emotions of the scene (hence the term underscore).

At 1:04:51:00 Janie talks about how she gets a sign that she maybe needs to change. The cue should change here; maybe get a bit bigger. There should be some kind of hold over her line “You need to practice” at 1:05:18:00 and through his puzzled expression. Usually in this case

you want some kind of chord that is unresolved. This is not usually the tonic chord ( In the key of C major the tonic chord is C major). It's quite common to end on a F major chord or a G suspended chord if the cue is in C major. You don't have much time after her line though, because the next scene starts right away. The cue can tail out over the next scene.

The second part of the cue starts at 1:05:20:16. You have two options when scoring this scene:

1) The previous cue hangs over a few seconds and there is no music until around where Becca says "Because it's not your problem, Grant" at 01:05:41:13.

2) The previous cue hangs over a few seconds, then continues into the new scene. The new cue should be different, but not greatly. If you had been scoring the whole film, you may have had themes for each character that you could have brought back in some fashion for this scene.

I would tend to go with scenario #1 above, but you can try either one for this exercise.

At Becca's line "Because it's not your problem, Grant" at 01:05:41:13, the music should start to build in emotion. Keep it simple throughout her crying scene. Maybe some light strings or piano/ guitar.

On Grant's line "I love you" at 01:06:13:13 and her reaction through 01:06:15:28 (before she speaks) you can experiment with either dropping out the music or letting it play through the emotional peak of the scene.

At 01:06:28:06 Grant tells her "I know you started the fire!". This is a pivotal line in the movie. Throughout the film the characters had all been interrogated by the ranger about the fire in the woods that was started by a flare, and you had seen what happened from each

character's point of view. Up to this point all their stories were more or less plausible. You didn't know who started the fire.

At 01:06:30:00 the real story comes out, in a quasi-flashback manner. At 01:07:07:15 you saw how the flare thrown by Grant caused the bush to light, as was talked about by Janie in the previous scene. She took it as a sign from God to get her act together.

This whole scene from 01:06:30:00 through the dissolve back to Becca at 01:07:13:07 needs music. You can have fun with this, as it has elements of mystery, intrigue, and finally resolution of the riddle of who started the fire.

After the dissolve at 01:07:13:07 you can experiment with having no music through 01:07:27:11 where Becca says "I'm sorry". Music could work here but it might be more effective having silence after the previous music section. I would come back in around her "sorry" line at 01:07:27:23 and continue to the end of the scene. The scene ends a little abruptly in my view – they should have let the shot of them hugging last a bit longer.

It is OK to have the cue tail out into the next scene after their hug. Watch any movie and see how the composer deals with cue tail outs. Rarely does the cue have a hard break into a new scene. When it happens it tends to be in action sequences and is done for additional effect.

In fact, it is informative to watch a movie strictly listening for and noting where the composer comes in and out of scenes. Sometimes it is not where you think it would be. Sometimes in an emotional scene the music starts to fade in as the camera pans in closer to a character. Other times it's notable that there is no music,



or it is mixed very low. Spend a half hour doing this - it's time well spent.

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# LESSON 3:

## FILM SCORING: DRAMATIC CUE #2

**Style:** orchestral/ African percussion

**Length:** 1:27

**Scene description:** This is a clip from a Tarzan movie. Tarzan is talking to his gorilla friend Kala, and is lamenting the fact that she is caged and should be free. Tarzan cannot help her at that moment. One of the bad guys sneaks up on them and shoots Tarzan. We see Tarzan fall and Kala screaming with anger and anguish as the scene fades out to black.

The director provided no notes other than score the whole scene from the scene change at 01:08:01:03.

**SCORING NOTES**

You will hear music in the background on this cue's audio track. Sometimes composers get the video with temp music mixed in. You never want this to be mixed in with the dialogue, because you want to be able to take it out while you work. But sometimes that is what you get sent, so you are stuck with it. I purposely included this because this is another thing you will come across in real world scoring. The music does get louder at the end – you hear a African percussion track into the act out. You can listen to the temp music as a guide as to what the director was looking for, but do something better.

**SCORING NOTES**

You could start on the guy's reaction to Tarzan not being there at 01:08:01:03. Or you could start on the dissolve to the moon at 01:08:03:25.

If you listen closely you will notice that the temp music starts on the moon dissolve. This is one of those situations where the director put the temp music one place, but you determine it may be better to start somewhere else. I usually start the cue where I think it is most effective, and let them know about my change. If the director does not like it, do not argue. Just change it back to match the temp track's start. Generally, on things like this, they usually defer to the composer's judgement.

The mood overall is mysterious with a hint of danger. You get the feeling something is going to happen. At 01:08:36:02 you see the gun appear. Increase the foreboding and tension gradually. When you see the gunman appear at 01:08:50:08, the music may step up

another notch. It shouldn't be overly melodramatic; it should still be understated. The temp music has hardly changed.

At 01:09:10:10 you hear the gun's hammer click and Tarzan turns around. You could either drop the music out, hold a single string note, hold some kind of tension chord here, have some kind of harmonic or melodic progression, etc. There are many solutions to the problem; try different approaches to see what works for you. Once you hear the shot and see Tarzan fall, the track should go full blast. Be sure to add African percussion here as it is part of the show's theme and sound. Continue like the temp music until the fade out. You can hear the african percussion in the temp quite clearly at the end.

### **DEALING WITH ACT OUT FADES**

“Act Out” means that the scene has ended, fading to black. Make sure you are out with all reverb tails and notes by 01:09:28:15. Any music hanging over this will be cut and will sound chopped when broadcast. They go from black straight to commercials, so you have to be completely out. I generally try to have my last hit or chord end about one second before the black. This is generally enough time to let reverbs and effects fade out enough to sound natural. During the final mix of a show, the engineer at the post production house will do a fast fadeout to black of all audio. This helps the music not sound chopped off, even if your cue runs a little long. But always try to make sure your reverb tails are already fading out by this point. On a slow cue you may have to end the cue even earlier.

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# LESSON 4:

## FILM SCORING: ACTION CUE

**Style:** orchestral/ percussion/ electric guitar

**Length:** 5:40

**Scene description:** An evil army commander and his enlisted soldiers are about to go after a victim and they have given him a one minute head start.

**NOTE:** This cue is R Rated. There is quite a bit of profanity. If this offends you then skip this lesson. Otherwise, load in the video and let's go!

This is a long cue – almost 6 minutes long. An orchestral palette and fast percussion always works well in this type of movie and especially in this type of action

cue. Many composers use percussive loops in layers or analog synth ostinato patterns with filter sweeps along with orchestral writing. This gives the tracks a modern and contemporary edge that directors love to hear in their films. Some use of distorted electric guitar could work well here also.

The popular CD-Rom set **Distorted Reality** has many great percussive loops that work especially well for this type of cue. The **Virus** synthesizer is a popular synth choice for adding textures and filter sweep patterns, as is the software program **Reason**. Reason is a fabulous bargain at somewhere around \$250 retail, and offers a lot of bang for the buck.

## SCORING TECHNIQUES

There are some tried and true techniques you hear all the time in action cues. Many composers write a two to four bar phrase, and modulate it through different keys. For example, start with four bars in C minor, then 4 bars in E flat minor, then 2 bars in F sharp minor. The key is to not make it predictable. If you have a melody, vary it with the modulations, or have a different melody in each key, or change the orchestration with each one.

Another effective device is to hold a pedal note and change the harmony above it, using modal harmony. For example, hold a low C in the bass, and make up a progression with C major, D major, E flat major chords over this C pedal. Or alternate chords a tritone (flat 5) apart. For example, C and F sharp chords. Experiment with these techniques and think of new and interesting ways to incorporate them into your writing.



**SCORING NOTES**

The cue begins around 01:10:05:00 after the commander says “Let’s go get a trophy!”. Start off big and keep the drama and intensity going as they hunt him down , and as you see the victim running.

Around 01:10:18:106 the cue should drop in intensity. Maybe pare the percussion down, or drop out a layer. It should still have some drive, but no real melodic activity while the soldiers have their dialogue. On the commander’s line “Let’s go” at 01:10:47:14 bring back the cue at full intensity.

The victim is now scared and running for his life. The music should add to the anxiety and reflect his life or death run. Continue until around 01:11:17:00.

Here, he stops and reads a note. We begin to realize one of the soldiers is a buddy and is trying to help him. Maybe the music changes slightly or lets up a little here. At 01:11:33:00 the victim hears his assailants approaching, and starts running again. Continue with a fast powerful track.

At 01:11:45:17 one of the soldiers grabs him, but it turns out to be his buddy (Antonio) trying to help him. Some kind of sting or hit may work on the grab, but the cue should quickly decrease in tension once it’s not life threatening. Continue with the underscore. I would still keep some pulse going, but the cue should be pared down. Maybe something like a previous section but now without melody, and in a new key.

At 01:12:49:00 one of the bad soldiers finds both the victim and the helpful soldier. The good soldier does not realize this until 01:12:54:26.

From here the music should change and reflect more danger. Maybe go down to not much more than low strings.

At 01:13:33:05 a fight break outs. The cue should be going full blast now, lots of hits, accents, percussion driving, etc. At 01:14:18:14 the bad soldier is choking the good one. The cue should now start some kind of build. The big moment comes at 01:14:37:06, when we see that the good guy has pulled a grenade's pin from a grenade the bad guy is carrying. You could have a music stop, pause, or freeze on the bad guy's realization of what is going to happen, then continue with a final build to the explosion at 01:14:40:21. Carry the last chord to the end of the video clip.

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# **PART 2**

## **TELEVISION/ VIDEO SCORING LESSONS**

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# LESSON 5:

## TELEVISION/ VIDEO SCORING: OPENING TITLE THEMES

We are going to work on two different :30 themes. One is for a travel show, and one is for a documentary type special.

### LESSON 5A: :30 THEME FOR TRAVEL SHOW

**Description:** Theme #1 is a :30 opening for Eye On Travel. Vivid graphics and effects lend the music to a pop/ rock/ world/ ethnic type flavor. Loops, electric guitar, drums, bass, and synths would all work well.

## SCORING NOTES

Start your cue at 1:16:00:02. The segment fades up, so you will be starting in the black. Because the timecode base is **29.97 drop frame**, there is no timecode number of 1:16:00:00. It skips from 1:15:59:29 to 1:16:00:02. 29.97 drop frame timecode drops two frames every minute, except at the ten, twenty, thirty, etc. minute marks. Starting two frames in is the first frame. There is no dialogue or voiceover during this segment. There is, however, a rock track featuring an electric guitar melody with the video. This is the actual theme music cue used in the show.

Stylistically, you can approach a cue like this in many ways. Personally, I would go with a pop/rock groove with a world flavor; that is, using ethnic instruments within a pop/rock track. This would support the visual aspects of the video. While the producers chose this rock track for the show, I think having more world flavor would also have worked well, maybe even better.

Take a listen to the track accompanying the video. Notice how the music starts with an opening melodic theme, goes into a second section, goes to a third section with a guitar riff, and then reprises the opening theme at the end.

For this lesson, let's use an A-B-A form. First, come up with a memorable melodic theme for the opening, which will be your A section. Start your B section at 1:16:03:09 when the Eye of Travel logo begins to break apart. At 1:16:25:23, when the Eye of Travel logo starts to fly back in, bring back your A section theme. Like the track, make this end theme bigger, or change the

orchestration or arrangement. On the temp track the melody is played an octave higher.

Once your basic structure is in place, how do you approach the visuals? The track is more of a music bed with a theme melody at the top and end. There really isn't anything in the track that is hitting any of the visual aspects, except for the Eye on Travel graphic. The producers liked this approach enough to use it, but here are two alternates you should consider:

1) You could have some kind of melodic element that changes as the West, North, East, and South graphics fly in and out.

2) You can try to have some melodic elements over the different visual pictures: the Eiffel Tower, the camel, the pagoda, etc.

Your closing A section theme should come back in around 1:16:25:26. Make sure your last hit or note is about 1 second before the fade out; that is, it falls around 1:16:29:00. The cue should be completely out by the time it fades to black at 1:16:30:00.

**LESSON 5B: :30 THEME FOR DOCUMENTARY  
TYPE SPECIAL**

Theme #2 is for a TV special on troubled kids. This show has more of a documentary feel. A dramatic orchestral based cue would work well, but I will leave the style, sound, and arrangement up to you on this one.

**SCORING NOTES**

This theme opens the show, and does have some voiceover. Start the cue at 1:17:00:04 as it fades up from black.

The show is dealing with kids in crisis, so the music has to sound serious, but not depressing. It should not be too heavy. One way to approach it is to open dramatically and gradually become more hopeful. At about 1:17:18:00 the voiceover changes to say how you can help your kids having trouble. This would be your transition spot to a more major key and hopeful sounding section. Continue this up to the Soul Survivors graphic.

You may want to have some kind of swell or hit starting when the Soul Survivors graphic begins to come up at 1:17:23:02, up to when the Soul Survivors graphic comes on full screen at 1:17:23:25. A swell to a hit may work best because the graphic takes 23 frames ( a little more than 2/3 of a second) to come on full. A cymbal swell is a composer's typical tool here, in conjunction with a tympani roll crescendo (a roll that fades in).

From 1:17:24:00 to 1:17:29:00 you may choose to have some kind of melodic motif or melody appear that complements the hopeful message. The cue should have its final chord or notes around 1:17:29:00.



The host's next segment does not have any music, so you can run your theme music tail out long. I would be out of the cue by 1:17:33:00 or so. Make the cue tail out sound natural.

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# LESSON 6:

## TELEVISION/ VIDEO SCORING: FITNESS INFOMERCIAL

**Style:** dance/techno/ hi energy

**Length:** 3:05

**Video description:** This is an infomercial for a video exercise system. It is fast paced and features many people who have gone from overweight to slim and fit.

### SCORING NOTES

This lesson will require a number of short cues. The VHS videotape has the voiceover (V/O) on one channel, and no temp music. The Quicktime movie, however, has the voiceover and temp music mixed on the

left channel, and the right channel is voiceover only. For the following discussion on the temp music, please reference the Quicktime movie version.

Take a listen to the video clip's temp music. Part of the composer's job is to see why they use certain music for the temp, figure out what they like about it, and give them a better version of it. When I talk with a client after viewing a show like this, I always ask what they liked about the music they put in. What follows are the client's notes about the temp music, and/ or my suggestions to the client.

From 1:18:00:02 to 1:18:29:00 there is a U2 type guitar-based track. What the producers wanted was an inspirational type track, but this one just does not have enough energy to fit the visuals. I recommended starting with a hi energy dance sound and staying in this realm throughout the program.

Also, at 1:18:26:10 the music should underscore the Bodies in Motion graphic that comes in. This cue should then end and transition to the next.

From 1:18:29:00 to 1:18:58:10 the dance track is the right feel, but the temp track is boring - there is nothing going on. This new track should continue through all the testimonials up to 1:18:58:10.

At 1:18:58:10 there is a mini commercial for the product and we get an intro to Brenda, one of the hosts. It would be better to have a new cue or new section start at 1:18:58:10, unlike the temp music which just continues through here.

At 1:19:16:00 where the QuickFit logo flies by we meet Brenda. The temp music changes here also.

Starting at 1:19:29:25 we meet new people who give more testimonials. The temp music track continues

through this section, but again, a new piece or section might work better. You could bring back the previous cue used for the first testimonials section, maybe with a different arrangement.

At 01:20:20:15 the music should pick up, maybe bringing in some kind of overall theme used earlier.

One aspect of the temp music that is effective is the fact that it has almost no melody. This works well because it does not fight with any of the dialogue. In the final mix, if the music detracts at all from the dialogue they just bury it so you can hardly hear it. Your best bet is to have melodic patterns embedded in the chords, or have short melodic licks. Having long lyrical melodies on solo instruments like sax or electric guitar during testimonial type sections does not usually work. However, in the opening segment you could have some kind of melody that plays up the inspirational uplifting feel.

Always play back your music with the dialogue and be cognizant of any melodic elements fighting with the dialogue for attention. Be careful of them not being in the same frequency range and competing. Maybe you will need to mix any melodic elements lower than you might have if the track was going to be heard on its own. Another solution is to assign any melodic parts to lower pitched instruments.

At 01:20:35:05 to 1:21:02:21 we have a mini commercial within the infomercial. The temp music here has more of a rock guitar/ Van Halen feel to it. This cue should have a different sound than the other tracks. I like the energy of the Van Halen track, but its rock feel doesn't quite work in conjunction with the rest of the music. I would stick to the hi energy dance feel through-

out the program. This cue should continue to 1:21:02:21 where we see Gilad leading a group. Although our lesson and video clip ends shortly after 1:21:02:21, another hi-energy cue would start here and continue on.

### **DELIVERY OF MULTIPLE CUES**

In actual jobs with many short cues done to picture, most composers traditionally like to deliver on DA-88. They alternate the tracks on Tracks 1-2 and 3-4 of the DA-88 so the cues can overlap each other as they come in and out, and everything is locked.

Nowadays, most post production houses mix on Pro Tools. Composers now just deliver all the stereo audio files on CD-ROM, with notes on each cue's SMPTE timecode starting number. **Always note the start of the actual music, not the start of the digital audio file.**

If you are using a computer-based system, you should print each cue on alternating audio tracks in your sequencer. By the end of the assignment you will be able to run the video and hear each cue transition into the next. If you are using a stand-alone recorder or workstation, then you will have to print each cue separately.

For your critique submission, you should select all the cues together and bounce or export them as one big cue if you can. If not, you can send the individual cues with SMPTE start numbers. **Again, always note the timecode start of the actual music, not the start of the digital audio file.**

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# LESSON 7:

## TELEVISION/ VIDEO SCORING: EPISODIC DRAMA

**Style:** orchestral/ futuristic

**Length:** 1:15

**Video description:** This is an opening scene from a sci-fi episodic show. The show is a mix of drama and dark comedy. Two cops are investigating a scream, and discover a guy in an alien costume.

### SCORING NOTES

The producers want the music to be dark and menacing. Even in a show like this with comedic undertones, they want to stress the surreal brooding side.



This cue is your chance to use all those weird patches on your synths that you never use – the ones with names like Alien Rattle or Outer Space, Outer Mind. Have fun!

## SCORING NOTES

The video starts at 1:22:00:02 – but start your cue at 1:22:00:04. The music should be dark, more effects or sound design than music. Think ominous low strings, metallic cluster sounds, atonal pads, etc.

The point of this lesson is to avoid tonal chords and melodies. Come up with something alien, mysterious, ominous, and non-melodic. **Think in terms of sound textures, not in terms of harmony and melody.**

At 01:22:17:28 the cops hear a sound and whirl around, guns ready. Play up the added tension to 1:22:23:00 or so. Another scream (you don't hear it) comes at 1:22:26:22 and they whirl around again. Underscore this also, and increase the tension as they approach the door (through 1:22:39:00).

When they bust down the door at 1:22:39:16 the cue should change as you see the alien. Continue through 1:22:59:00 where the cop starts to take off the mask. Try some kind of unresolved chord or musical effect through when we see it is a guy in an alien suit (1:23:02:23). The cue should change once again here to the end at 1:23:15:00. The show's opening title theme comes after the scene goes to black at 1:23:15:11.

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# LESSON 8:

## TELEVISION/ VIDEO SCORING: EPISODIC COMEDY

**Style:** retro futuristic

**Length:** 4:46

**Video description:** This is the pilot episode for a futuristic comedy show. In this opening segment we meet Ricky Rocket and his quirky family.

### SCORING NOTES

The producers do not want wall to wall music in this show. They want the music to emphasize the family's wackiness and play up certain moments. They

also want the music to reflect the futuristic yet 1950/1960's decor and visual style. Less is more in this kind of show. There will be a laugh track filling a lot of the dead spaces.

The problem you have is that the show is terrible, and the acting is really bad. Your job is to try to make it seem a little better than it is. As you may guess, this pilot never saw the light of day in production. I wonder why.

### **WORKING WITH CHARACTER THEMES**

For this kind of show, come up with a short melodic theme or motif for each character (Mom, Dad, Sister, and Ricky). Use this as your basic material throughout the show – manipulating and twisting and turning the ideas.

A theme does not have to necessarily be a melody. It can be an instrument, or a rhythmic element. It should be something identifiable once you hear it again. Make them short and catchy.

### **SCORING NOTES**

The producer's spotting notes were pretty brief. They just basically give you cue in and out times. It is up to you, the composer, to figure out the best thing to do for each segment. The scenario is: you have come highly recommended for this assignment, so they are eagerly awaiting your score. You need to deliver your score demo in three days. The pressure is on!

Your assignment is to give the show a modern, yet retro 1950/1960's sound. See if you can find some unusual instrument sounds or styles that may work.

Maybe a futuristic Esquivel lounge sound would work (If you don't know who Juan Garcia Esquivel is, go to Google). Or a score that is like Leave it to Beaver meets the Jetsons. Instrumentation-wise, an orchestral approach is what would traditionally be done with a show like this. Woodwinds, especially bassoon, usually plays a prominent role in comedic passages. Pizz strings, harp glissandos, string portamento runs, etc. are all typical tools of the trade. Maybe use this as your base and add other instruments to come up with an unusual sound, one particular to this show. This show does not look like other shows, so it should not sound like other shows.

Overall, each section should not be solid music. Leave space for each little section to breathe. You will probably find that just one instrument playing a few notes is all you need for certain sections.

Coming up with an unusual sound palette is one half of the battle in pleasing the producers in a show like this that has a very strong visual style. Make your score stand out from all the other music you hear. If you can do that you will be on your way!

## **PRODUCER'S NOTES**

The producer's timecode numbers are approximate. Unlike previous lessons, I will leave it to you to determine the exact timecode numbers to start and stop each cue. My notes are in parentheses.

In at fade up at 1:24:08:00 - out around 1:24:15:00 (Come up with a quirky opening theme 7-8 seconds long. This should be Ricky's theme. You can tail it out longer past 1:24:16:00).

In 1:24:25:00 - out 1:24:34:00 (Mom's theme, then Ricky's theme)

In 1:24:34:00 – out 1:24:51:00 (Dad's theme)

In 1:24:51:00 – out 1:25:12:00 (Sister's theme)

In 1:25:23:00 - out 1:25:45:00 (Ricky opens his present.)

In 1:25:47:00 - out 1:26:09:00 (You can do a fun playful version of Dad's theme here. At 1:25:53:00 make sure the music follows Dad's footsteps walking. Play up him opening the door in his face.)

In 1:26:15:00 - out 1:26:40:00 (You have quite a few little scenes to work with. Play up the comedy.)

In 1:26:50:00 - out 1:26:59:00 (Play up the comedy; Mom and Dad's themes)

In 01:26:59:00 - out 1:27:26:00 (Play up the excitement of getting a new present)

In 01:27:35:00 – out 1:28:12:00. (Play up comedy)

In 1:28:15:00 - to act out at 1:28:54:00 (Try to use and interplay all four of their themes here.)

In on “We'll be right back” graphic at 1:28:54:00 - to out at 1:28:58:00 (Fun version of Ricky's theme.)

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# LESSON 9:

## TELEVISION/ VIDEO SCORING: ANIMATION

**Style:** various

**Length:** 4:20

**Video description:** This is the opening segment from the popular animated series Sabrina and the Teenage Witch. This video will require a number of cues in different styles.

This lesson will be solid music. This type of animated show is usually wall to wall music (which is great from a royalty point of view!). It is best to write a number of shorter cues and string them together at the end into one big cue when you submit it for critique.



## ANIMATION SCORING

For many animated episodic shows, once you land the job, the producers have you start by coming up with character themes like we did in the previous lesson. Once they approve your themes you just start writing. You then have a deadline every two weeks or so to deliver a certain amount of music.

Many of these shows are done on a quasi music library basis. This is the production company's solution to a lack of time in production. Animation companies typically subcontract the actual animation out to companies overseas, especially in Korea. They are able to get the work done much less expensively than in the U.S, but it takes longer. Because of the long time lag composers many times do not get video to score to. They often times just get **storyboards**, which outline the scenes. Sometimes these are the same storyboards the animators get. The composer will get the timings from the storyboards. If they are lucky and there is time, composers score the first few shows that are animated, and then provide a library of cues. Producers will ask for a number of scene specific cues, such as a chase scenes, as well as many different versions of character themes in different styles. The composer will also sometimes provide a "toolkit" of different hits, stings, and other short cues in many keys.

Usually, a **music editor** hired by the production company "scores" the show from the library. He or she will choose the cues for scenes from the library and use the toolkit to help with act outs and other transitions between cues.

## SCORING NOTES

Animation scoring is among the most time intensive scoring work. Most experienced composers are having a good day if they score 5-6 of minutes of music a day. And that is a long work day!

To get a lot of hit points to fall on beats, you will probably need to incorporate many tempo changes throughout the lesson. In a scene like this it is not uncommon to have 20-25 different tempo changes within a few minutes of time. I always try to have the downbeats of cues fall on a measure downbeat, and I adjust the tempo from that point onward to make sure visual elements I need to hit fall on beats, either quarter notes or eighth notes.

Animation producers love to see all the little things scored - (footsteps, falls, gestures, expressions, etc.) Be sure to hit all the major ones.

Cue 1 starts at 1:30:00:14. Start your cue just as you start to see the picture coming up from black.

At 1:30:15:26 be sure to score the bugs falling down the rope.

At 1:30:32:24 change the cue to reflect the bug's dangerous position.

1:30:38:00 to 1:30:50:00 During this talking section between Sabrina and her friend you can just create some filler music. At around 1:00:50:00 change the cue to reflect a little rivalry between them.

At 1:31:11:15 score the bug's climb back up the rope.

At 1:31:24:14 through 1:31:31:12 it's basically filler. Do what you feel is appropriate. At 1:01:31:13

through 1:31:35:29 add a bit of tension to reflect the rivalry.

At 1:31:36:00 through the scene transition at 1:01:49:00 have fun with the scene. Create some kind of music effect through the transition.

From 01:31:49:21 to 01:32:18:16 the music has to carry the scene. You can have fun with some musical sound effects on the foot tapping, faucet dripping, etc. Make sure the cue reflects the cat's increasing frustration and annoyance, yet is still comical.

From 01:32:18:17 to 01:032:40:09 there isn't much going on that needs music. But because the producer's want wall to wall music, make this section light, sparse, and somewhat humorous.

At 01:32:45:17 we need a musical effect on the letter. Continue with a cue that has some "Wizard" flavor and sound.

At 01:33:05:24 start a new cue. It should be fast and fun, maybe with an Arabian Nights flavor. Be sure to play up Stonehenge, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, The Eiffel Tower, etc. with appropriate colors and instruments. You might decide to keep a basic track going through this whole scene and change orchestrations, or have different cues that reflect each scene. The cue ends with the transition at 01:94:16:09. Let the cue tail out over the next couple of seconds.

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# LESSON 10:

## TELEVISION/ VIDEO SCORING: ANIMATION/ ACTION

**Style:** hi energy/ techno/ rock

**Length:** 2:27

**Video description:** This scene is from an Japanese anime series that is dubbed into English. It features great graphics and a lot of action.

The dialogue on this work copy is not final, and as is usual at this stage, there are no sound effects. Composers rarely receive video with finished sound (final dialogue and sound effects) when working on animated projects. Notable in this clip is that it is almost all solid high intensity action.

**SCORING NOTES**

As this is the last lesson in the course, I'm going to make the notes short and let you get right to scoring it as you see fit.

Stylistically, this cue could be orchestral with techno elements, or with rock accents. You could also do some kind of frenetic dance cue with metallic hits. Since you've written quite a few orchestral based cues so far in this course, try something different. Maybe go for a rock based techno track. I'll let you decide what you want to do with it. The only requirement is that it should be fast and big sounding. Use your biggest sounds and make the cue sound huge. This should end up being a great cue for your reel. Don't skimp on this one – you have the chance to go all out on this one and write a killer cue.

Start your cue at 1:35:15:22 on the dissolve to the schematic. You have about 10 seconds for some kind of build before the real action starts at 1:35:25:25. After this point it's solid action.

At 1:37:24:16 the robots are trapped. At this point you can drop out some of the instruments, but keep a pulse and the tension going throughout their dialogue. End your cue with a whoosh or effect at the white dissolve at 1:37:41:15.

Well, you've made it! Congratulations on completing all the lesson assignments. I'm sure you have found these course lessons challenging and rewarding. The experience you have gained doing these lessons has been a major step in preparing you for the real composing world. Good luck!!

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