Richard’s Suggestions for a Successful Submission

Thanks for your interest in the workshop. It is a very special experience for emerging film and television composers and I’d like to make sure you have the best possible chance of being selected.

We receive around 300 submissions each year. There are a number of people who will be reviewing your materials. Showing consideration for these people is the best way to get noticed - for the RIGHT reasons. Our volunteer judges, who are working film & television composers, have at least 14 submissions to review and grade and they have their regular work and their personal lives.

Choose your music wisely.

Try to envision a composer–judge listening to your submission. It would be a mistake to think of this person sitting at home with a glass of wine and nothing to do but relax and enjoy your music. It is far more likely that they have a few minutes in their studio while waiting for some files to upload on their current project. If you program your best writing in track 3 at about 2 minutes into that track, it may well be missed. Let the judges know that you can write, don’t attempt to entertain them. This is not recreational listening for them.

Much of what we hear might very well make good film music, but not in the context of this workshop which is primarily focused on the use of an acoustic orchestra. Strive to demonstrate your ability to write for a full orchestra and not just rhythmic or textural samples with a unison melody over the top.

Here are ten things I suggest you consider:

• The files should be well produced with nice fades rather than abrupt cutoffs.
• Volume levels should remain constant from one track to the next.
• Be realistic in your choices. A cue from a film may work brilliantly with the picture but, by itself, be a little dull. You, as the composer, may be envisioning the scene each time you hear that cue but the judge will not.
• The ability to write like John Williams or Hans Zimmer is more of an educational exercise than a way to impress the judges. Show as much of your own writing and good dramatic skills as possible.
• Don’t “borrow” from well known composers. Especially film composers! Remember, film composers are judging your submission and someone is sure to recognize that piece as “sounding a lot like......”
• Use primarily orchestral cues - either acoustic orchestra or emulation.
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- Workshop participants are required to write their own orchestrations. When presenting a submission using orchestral emulation, make sure all the parts are playable. That is, not only utilizing the proper range of each instrument but realistic in the sense of being playable by a human being.
- It is best to avoid using a number of cues from the same film or project. We are not as interested in how you develop thematic material as we are in your range of genres. Show a variety of styles using the orchestra.
- Name your cues with a descriptive title which indicates the emotional quality or the style you are trying to achieve with the music.
- Pay close attention to the time limitations for each track submitted.

I wish you the best of luck with your application to this workshop and with your career in music.

Richard Bellis - Host & Mentor