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# Scoring The Screen: The Secret Language Of Film Music



## Synopsis

(Music Pro Guide Books & DVDs). Today, musical composition for films is more popular than ever. In professional and academic spheres, media music study and practice are growing; undergraduate and postgraduate programs in media scoring are offered by dozens of major colleges and universities. And increasingly, pop and contemporary classical composers are expanding their reach into cinema and other forms of screen entertainment. Yet a search on reveals at least 50 titles under the category of film music, and, remarkably, only a meager few actually allow readers to see the music itself, while none of them examine landmark scores like *Vertigo*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Patton*, *The Untouchables*, or *The Matrix* in the detail provided by *Scoring the Screen: The Secret Language of Film Music*. This is the first book since Roy M. Prendergast's 1977 benchmark, *Film Music: A Neglected Art*, to treat music for motion pictures as a compositional style worthy of serious study. Through extensive and unprecedented analyses of the original concert scores, it is the first to offer both aspiring composers and music educators with a view from the inside of the actual process of scoring-to-picture. The core thesis of *Scoring the Screen* is that music for motion pictures is indeed a language, developed by the masters of the craft out of a dramatic and commercial necessity to communicate ideas and emotions instantaneously to an audience. Like all languages, it exists primarily to convey meaning. To quote renowned orchestrator Conrad Pope (who has worked with John Williams, Howard Shore, and Alexandre Desplat, among others): If you have any interest in what music 'means' in film, get this book. Andy Hill is among the handful of penetrating minds and ears engaged in film music today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Undoubtedly the most important book on film scoring since *On the Track*. --Derek Gleeson, Director, MA in Scoring for Film & Visual Media; Pulse College Dublin You MUST read this in the ever-growing pantheon of books on film music, this one is very special. While most analytical books are written by academics, Andy was right there in the thick of things as a member of the Disney music department, while the majority of the scores in the book were actually being recorded. Not to mention, it is so alive with his mad passion for film music. --Christopher Young, Film Composer With his book *Scoring the Screen*, Andy Hill has made an important and truly invaluable addition to an all-too-barren landscape of great literature about great film music. He presents his case that the finest composers to have worked in film over the last eighty years have contributed genuine masterpieces of music and drama to our culture. A film score must excel at both to be successful, and this is so beautifully illustrated in Hill's elegant prose. From the selection of scores discussed to the cues within them, and the musical phrases and bars highlighted, I read the book from a very personal point of view. Having produced new recordings of *To Kill A Mockingbird* with Elmer Bernstein and *Patton* with Jerry Goldsmith and examined these and other scores in great detail with the composers themselves, I found myself very moved by Hill's like-minded analysis. Part of the film composer's art is in fact to conceal the effort and the intellect that goes in to the creation of their scores. Hill thankfully lifts the veil. I am thrilled to see such a rare spotlight illuminating the artistry behind these masterworks. --Robert Townson, Film Music Producer (*Varèse Sarabande*)

ANDY HILL (Nashville, TN) is a Grammy Award winning motion picture music producer. From 1987 to 1996, he served as vice president of music production for Walt Disney Pictures. He developed and directed, from 2006 to 2011, the MFA in Music Composition for the Screen at Columbia College Chicago and oversaw the launch of the MA in Scoring for Film, Television and Video Games at the international campus of the Berklee College of Music. He is an industry advisor to the MA in Film Scoring at Pulse College, Dublin.

A great read. It's the definitive authority on both classic and modern film music, and a must have for any fan of film music looking for a nuanced analysis of some of history's greatest scores.

This is a must read for anyone with an interest (either personal or professional) in film music. Andy

Hill analyzes film cues from 15 classic film scores, ranging from Bernard Herrmann's timeless *Vertigo* score and Elmer Bernstein's unforgettable *To Kill a Mockingbird* to *The Matrix* by Don Davis. The key cues from each of these soundtracks are thoroughly analyzed from a traditional musical standpoint (harmony, voicings, orchestration, etc.) and, maybe more importantly, how they help tell the story of the film. You don't need to be a music scholar to understand everything, but I would recommend playing along on a piano or another instrument (or transcribe the music excerpts to a music engraving program) to fully appreciate the discussion; and look at the scenes from the movie, and listen to the soundtrack if they are published. Printed film scores are not usually available to the public so these are important resources. Andy Hill has worked in Disney's music department as music supervisor for many years, so he brings a great deal of practical perspective and experience to the table.

There are not many books written about the craft of film scoring, and none of them come close to the depth and breadth of *Scoring the Screen*. Andy Hill has a gift for breaking film scores down to their component parts, pinning down what makes them tick, and reassembling them with new and remarkable clarity. From the classic masterpieces *Vertigo* and *The Untouchables*, to groundbreaking new works like *The Matrix* and *Perfume*, Hill uses score excerpts to emphasize a film score's function in supporting the narrative, and its unique capacity to take a story from the mundane, to the mythic. Going through the book as Hill recommends (with the score, the film, and a keyboard) brings both sonic and visual detail to Hill's astute observations. Indispensable for new and seasoned composers alike, this book should be in every studio.

I will be switching to this textbook for my film scoring class. If you are looking for a book of substance that discusses film music itself and scoring choices in detail rather than "how to have a career," then this is the book for you.

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