

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is Paul Dougall and today I will be giving a presentation on Dramatic Scoring. I chose to do my presentation on dramatic scoring for a few reasons. First off, many of you probably don't know, but I am a songwriter who writes pop songs for voice and either piano or guitar. I don't do much with these songs because I don't have the confidence to show them to a lot of people, but there are very few things I love to do more than write songs. I have recently been experimenting with composing pieces that are non-commercial in style to further advance my composition skills. However... commercial music for some reason still has a much larger appeal to me than most non-commercial music. Modern movie scores are one of the few genres that both: uses complex compositional techniques, and yet, still give off a fairly strong sense of commercial music. **NEXT SLIDE**

I want to start my presentation with an interview with one of my favorite composers. I'm sure many of you will recognize the name. **PLAY VIDEO STARTING AT 00:16** (It's a game. I'm playing some sort of musical chess here).

Hans Zimmer is one of the greats in the world of film score composing... and when it comes to dramatic scoring... **NEXT SLIDE**

that's what most people think of. Composers and block buster films. However, there is a lot more to the process than just composing **CLICK** and dramatic scoring covers more than just movies. **CLICK** There are three main categories that make up the vast majority of the dramatic scoring world: movies, tv shows, and video games. First we will start with Movies. **CLICK** Earlier I stated that there is a lot more to the process of composing a soundtrack than just the composing itself. **CLICK** Obviously the first step is hiring a composer. Lots of famous soundtrack composers have an agent who markets them for commercial use... but how does a composer get big enough to be picked up by an agent? Many composers either start out as an arranger or orchestrator... OR... they are lucky enough to become an assistant or apprentice to a composer. Many composers take on assistants and apprentices to help them complete the massive amounts of work they have to do in the short span of time that they have. Many times ghostwriting occurs, which is where a composer gets little to no recognition for their input or contribution on a piece by another composer. However, these composers do get experience and they get something to put on their resume. Once a composer builds up a large enough portfolio and reputation, they apply for jobs in lower budget movies and eventually work their way up to getting an agent and making their way to the movies that you go to see in theaters.

Next comes spotting. Spotting is when the director, music editor and composer all sit down to watch the film for the first time. At this point in the process, all the filming for the film is done, however, usually only a round or two of editing has occurred. They identify the important turning points in the film and decide things like what kind of mood they wish to portray in a particular section and which sections they think should be left without music.

Then, after the composer has watched the film numerous times, he begins the actual process of writing the music. Most of the writing usually cannot be done until the editing process is complete because of the way the music has to align with specific actions and scenes. It is because of this that composers often face strict deadlines which can be as short as a couple of weeks!

It is because of these strict deadlines that many composers hire other people to either arrange or orchestrate their music. Many composers also often hire someone to do what is known as “copying the music.” For those of you who don’t know, copying is merely the act of putting all the music into a music notation software and making sure the score looks nice for when it is printed.

Shortly after the composition is complete, recording begins. The recording is usually done live on what is known as a “scoring stage.” These scoring stages are large facilities that have room for the entire orchestra and also have a large screen that projects the movie so that the conductor can conduct to it and stay in time with what is occurring in the movie.

The final step in the process is the mixing. Audio engineers, also known as “mixers” adjust the sound levels for the dialogue, sound effects and music in a series of dubbing sessions. They also digitally adjust any cues and cut offs that are slightly off set from the film. Once this is done, the process is complete. **CLICK**

As you could probably tell from my explanation of the process, the composer is not the only person involved with the dramatic scoring process. **CLICK** Now... many of these positions I either already explained earlier or they’re quite self explanatory with the exception of the last two: the music supervisor and the librarian.

The music supervisor is the person behind the scenes when music that is not original is used. Music supervisors tend to play a larger role when it comes to TV shows rather than full length films. This is largely because TV shows typically have smaller budgets than films of a similar merit. Since most TV shows have

numerous seasons that can consist of upwards of 20 episodes, TV shows also have a lot more footage that needs music. Rather than hire a composer to write music for every single episode, most television series use commercial music. The music often comes from lesser known bands and independent artists because the cost of license music of a more well known artist will be more expensive. Using lesser known artists allows the studio to offer less money because they are also offering the artist widespread exposure. Ever since the radio became dominated by well known and overplayed music, many musicians looking for exposure now find TV shows to be the much better option in today's day and age.

But where does the music come from when it's not an original score and it's not commercial music? This is where the librarian comes in. Now I'm sure all of you have heard of a librarian before, however, librarians in the dramatic scoring industry have a quite specific role. These are the people who run production music libraries which are filled with lost cost recorded compositions typically created by composers who use a MIDI studio. This is the music most commonly used in documentaries, educational films, soap operas, and business videos. **CLICK**

As I just discussed, a TV show can use original music, license commercial music, grab their music from production music libraries, or use any combination of the three to get their music, but, as I stated earlier, the most common for TV is synch licenses. One of the most important factors in negotiating a synch license is whether or not the song is going to be a "needle drop" or an "on camera." A "needle drop" is when a song is added after the filming process while an "on camera" is when the song is played during the filming. On camera's tend to be more prominently featured and because of this... they cost more. Other things that play a factor in licensing deals is the importance of the scene they are used in and whether or not the song plays a functional role in the show. If a song is used in the climax of the season finale or is the song that the characters sing along to for an entire episode, it is going to cost a lot more than if it is a song that is played in the background of a restaurant scene. And now the final major portion of the dramatic scoring industry **CLICK** ...video games.

Now... I do not know how many of you play or have played video games in the past, but the video game industry is growing and is expected to grow even faster in upcoming years. **CLICK** This chart shows the predicted Compound Annual Growth Rate for the different forms of media in the United States leading up to 2020. The only categories beating out video games are the internet and advertising. Video games are expected to grow more than radio, cinema, tv and video combined. **CLICK** "Grand Theft Auto Five" made \$800 million within 24 hours

after being released, making it the largest release day for any form of entertainment ever. Not only that, but the game cost \$266 million to make... to give you an idea of how much that is, that's more than any movie has ever cost to be made with the exception of "Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides." Now composing music for video games is significantly different from composing music for movies and TV shows... unless of course the music is going to be used in a cinematic scene or a loading screen. **CLICK** The challenge that video games present that movies and TV shows don't... is that video games are interactive. A composer doesn't know exactly how long it is going to take the player to complete a level or beat a boss. So then how does a composer go about writing music for video games? The answer... **CLICK** is musical blocks.

Many video game composers use a common formula for writing video game soundtracks where they write different blocks of music that each have their own function. The most commonly used musical blocks are intros, loops, transitions, stingers and tags. Intros are used to set the mood for a certain scene, area, or level as they player enters it. Loops are designed to repeat numerous times while the player engages in neutral activity. Loops are known as the "workhorse of the gaming industry" because of how often they are used in most video games. A transition is used to add intensity to a loop as a character nears something of significance such as an enemy or target location. Stingers are used to emphasize an important action occurring in the game and tags are used to have the music come to an end as a level is completed or as a character exits an area. Now when it comes to the business of composing for video games **CLICK** there are many similarities to composing for any other form of media, however, there are also some key differences. **CLICK**

The first main difference is that many video game scoring positions are often "work for hire." This means that the composer signs away all rights to the music to the game developer or publisher. Another large difference is that video game composers receive no performance royalties **CLICK**. In the United States, the playing of a game is not legally considered a "performance" and because of this, the composer cannot receive performance royalties. In some countries however, a video game download is actually considered a performance and, therefore, royalties can be received in those countries. While the TV and film composing market is dominated by freelance composers, many video game companies **CLICK** hire full-time employees to compose their music. Companies such as Blizzard, Bungie, Electronic Arts and Microsoft get a large portion of their compositions from employees. The nice things about being an employee vs. a freelance composer is most companies provide their full time composers with

typical full time employee perks such as bonuses, 401Ks and paid vacations.  
**CLICK**

Here is my list of 10 websites. The ones marked with the asterisks are the three I found most interesting. The first is an article about the process of composing music for video games. The second is an interview with a professor at the Berklee School of Music where he discusses the future of film scoring. And finally the third website is an interview with an extremely successful music supervisor who discusses what it is like to find music for TV shows. **CLICK**

Here is my contact information. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to contact me. I hope you enjoyed my presentation and I hope you have a wonderful day. Thank you.