

## **MAKE MONEY WITH YOUR MUSIC IN FILMS**

By Phil Johnson

Licensing your music into films is a great extra income stream for you as an independent artist. But, as with any other aspect of the music business, you have to go through the learning curve and networking process. My experience with film licensing, just like everything else, revolves around whom you know.

Your first (or tenth) licensing deal probably won't be the next Hollywood blockbuster, but that's ok. There are a zillion independent films that need and want your music. No, you won't be immediately rich and famous from having a song in an indie film, but you will probably get paid, and you'll get some good exposure. Remember, a good long music career is not built on one big hit. It's built on a series of small projects and successes building to bigger ones.

With that in mind, independent films are a great place to start. So where do you begin? Well, sites like Versus Media, Film Music Network, and Taxi are a good place to start, but it's hard to rely on a steady income from people you've never met. Also, something I've learned recently from a couple of music supervisors, is that follow up on your package is not required, nor particularly appreciated. So you really are relying on your package and your music being picked out of the pile. However, the listing services will give you access to projects you may not have known about otherwise. They are, therefore, a good investment.

An even better way to hook into independent films is to go out and meet film people. As musicians we tend to get stuck in our own little world (hanging out with musicians, going to music workshops and events, etc.). You must take your product to the people who need it instead of waiting for them to come to you.

A great place to start is Indie Club. This is a worldwide organization of independent filmmakers, actors, crew, and everyone else. Find your local chapter through the IndieClub.com website. Where I am, San Francisco, we have the country's largest chapter. Join their discussion list and introduce yourself as a music artist. Go to their meetings and get-togethers. When I went to my first Indie Club meeting, I was one of two music artists in the room. The cries of "We need you!" were not just the voices in my head (this time). That room full of independent filmmakers was looking for good music that they could license and still stay within their budget.

I scored my first licensing deal within an hour. Two songs in the same film, one I'd already written, the other to be written specifically for the movie. My tactic was simple. Ask them about their latest project. They'll be happy to tell you about it, I assure you. They'll ask what you do. Tell them, but don't exaggerate. I explained that I had not yet written for films, but just came to see where I fit in. This particular filmmaker then explained to me that he couldn't find a particular song for this one scene he was working on. I told him I'd be happy to custom write it for him. And there it was. I was being paid up front to write a song.

For the new song, the director arranged for recording time at the local recording arts school where his sound editor was studying. This was fortuitous, and not necessarily normal. Most other projects I have to record myself. Because I kept the copyright for the song (which you should always try to do), I was able to release the new song on one of my future CDs, which put more money in my pocket.

And, as a topper, I was able to perform at the premier and sell more CDs there as well. I got all that just for showing up to a meeting and talking to people. I made a few other deals at that meeting too.

So the moral of the story is to just go where filmmakers are and talk to them. Besides Indie Club, I'm sure there are other film clubs and organizations in your area. Find them and make yourself a part of them. Get to know everyone, and you have your tunes in the movies in no time!

Phil Johnson and his band Roadside Attraction know that life just isn't that serious, and there's always someone more screwed up than you. And they've got the songs to prove it. Hear all about them at

<http://www.RoadsideAttraction.com>.

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## The Contract

When a producer hires a composer or lyricist to write a song for a film, the compensation as well as the rights of all the parties are set forth in a commissioning agreement. These contracts typically state that the producer employs the composer or lyricist to write a song within a stated period of time in accordance with certain ideas and instructions supplied by the producer. A due date for a demo record is set forth in the agreement, and the producer almost always reserves the right to make any changes. Upon delivery of the song, the writer receives an initial fee (for example, \$25,000 for a song; \$2,500 for the lyrics) as well as a guarantee of additional future compensation in the form of songwriter royalties which are contained either in the body of the agreement or attached as a separate schedule (i.e. 50 percent of mechanical income earned from record, tape and CD sales; a set rate for sheet music; 50 percent for any synchronization income from the uses of the song in television series, other motion pictures, or advertising commercials, etc.). The writer also normally receives screen credit for the composition. In consideration for the writing fee, the writer usually grants all rights to the producer (with exception of his or her share of royalty income) under an employee-for-hire or work-for-hire contract.

### **Songwriter Royalties**

A list of all the standard songwriter royalties will always be made part of the contract. This is so regardless of whether the contract is a "work for hire" or a standard songwriter or songwriter co-publishing agreement. These include the writer's share of performance, synchronization and mechanical income, sheet music and folio income, digital download income, foreign income, etc. If the writer is also the record producer of the song as well as the recording artist, artist and producer percentage royalties will also be negotiated and set forth in the contract.

The producer owns the worldwide copyright for the entire term of copyright protection. The typical grant-of-rights provision signed by composers gives the studio the exclusive right to publish the composition, to make and sell sound recordings, to execute all licenses regarding the use of the work, to change the work, to combine the work with other works, and to transmit the work by any means now available or to be available in the future.

The cue sheet is the cornerstone of all royalty payments for a film. Considering the amount of music used in most films, this cue sheet is usually completed within 30 days after theatrical release, but depending on the producer and available staff, it can be longer.

<http://cuesheet.net/>

**CueSheet** is the confidential bulletin listing Film, TV and other media projects requiring soundtrack music, composers, songs, library music, cues or idents, etc. It is despatched twice a month (by e-mail only) to a selective subscriber base consisting of music publishers, record labels, music supervisors, composers, songwriters or their managers/agents. We have researchers based in London and Los Angeles who check out the music requirements of the latest productions, which we list in as much detail as possible, along with director/producer credits, cast, plot, synopsis if provided, etc.

Currently, most of our listings are for film/TV productions based in the USA/Canada or UK/Ireland, along with occasional requests from Europe and other global markets. Companies providing listings have included such names as the **BBC, Carlton TV, Catalyst, Channel 4, Granada TV, Imagine Entertainment, Fox 2000, Fox Searchlight, Nickelodeon, Paramount, TouchStone, Universal Pictures** and numerous independent music supervisors. To list information in CueSheet is free of charge to industry professionals.

**CueSheet** was acquired in November 2001 by [SongLink International](#), the highly regarded songplugging newsletter which has been providing leads to the music industry since 1993. We pride ourselves on providing accurate, reliable and time-sensitive information, providing cuts and placements to scores of satisfied subscribers over the years. If you represent any type of music catalogue (master rights or publishing), or are a freelance composer or other music professional, you should consider subscribing to CueSheet, as you never know where that next opportunity might come from.

Delivered twice-monthly by e-mail only, CueSheet is available by annual subscription to Music Industry Professionals only.

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**CueSheet Subscription Rate:**

**3 months: £150 / US \$234.00 - 1 year: £495.55 / US \$773.00**

## A SAMPLE OF RECENT LEADS

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### FEATURE: 'AGENT CODY BANKS'

(MGM/Splendid Pictures/Dylan Sellers Prods/Maverik Film Co., U.S.)  
Directed by Harald Zwart ("One Night at McCool's," Hamilton") and produced by Dylan Sellers ("Passenger 57," "The Replacements," "Valentine"). The film stars Frankie Muniz ("Big Fat Liar," "Deuces Wild," "Dr. Doolittle 2"), Angie Harmon ("Law & Order," TV, "Good Advice"), Hillary Duff ("Cadet Kelly," "Human Nature"), Darrell Hammond ("Saturday Night Live, TV," "Blues Brothers 2000") and Judge Reinhold ("Beverly Hills Cop," "Ruthless People," "Family Plan"). Maverick Films are among the producers. Set for a Summer 2003 release this \$20 million budget movie unusually went from writing into production in barely 5 months. SYNOPSIS: The film is about a teenager, Cody Banks (played by Muniz as a pint-sized operative), who is recruited by the U.S. government to be a special agent that they call upon when they're faced with a mission that can only be accomplished by someone who wouldn't normally be old enough for such a mission for another ten years or so. SEEKING: This kid's adventure will have music content that is very much contemporary hit radio orientated (CHR) so labels with premier releases should target this film.

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Send your submissions to: *(Full contact details provided)*

### TV SERIES: 'SECOND GENERATION'

(Oxford / C4, UK)  
2 x 90 mins. Director: John Senn; Writer Neil Biswas. Executive Producers Mark Bently and Nick Kent. This contemporary drama will shortly begin shooting in London and India. SYNOPSIS: The story revolves around the lives of two Asian families in the UK and India. The screenplay is original but is said to have been influenced by Shakespeare's King Lear. SEEKING: A composer is required for this project who can deliver the atmosphere and feel of the sub continent while at the same time showing the musical influences as they pertain within the English culture. The show will be broadcast on Channel 4 in the new year.

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Send showreels/CD's to: *(Full contact details provided)*

### TV SERIES: 'THAT WAS THEN'

(Touchstone Television, US)  
Executive-produced by Jeff Kline, Dan Cohn and Jeremy Miller and written by Cohn and Miller, this 60 minute drama debuts in September on Friday nights at 9 PM on ABC. The show stars Jeffrey 'Hey Now' Tambor (Double G), Bess Armstrong (Mickey), Andrea Bowen (Zooney), James Bulliard (Travis),

### URBAN FEATURE \*Urgent\*

(US )  
Los Angeles music supervision company working on a new urban feature film with distribution in place. SEEKING: numerous contemporary Rap and Hip-Hop songs and tracks. Music must be master quality, sample free and ready for immediate one stop licensing of master and sync rights with no hassles (ie., no unavailable writers/publishers, etc. Compensation: License fees to be negotiated. Submission format by mail ONLY - no mp3's, internet downloads or site visits, no press kits, photos, bios or credits are necessary.

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If interested, send contact info, music on CD, and all publishing and master rights information via regular mail or overnight to: *(Full contact details provided)*

### TV COMMERCIAL: 'ROYAL MAIL' \*UPDATE\*

(UK)  
Royal Mail is the national postal service of the U.K. and their commercials tend to have major coverage and high profile - the last one featured Elton John! Tracks with lyrics as opposed to instrumentals now URGENTLY required for consideration. SEEKING: "We're looking for a track with lyrics to reinforce the message that Royal Mail 'delivers' for businesses. It's quite a broad phrase so lyrics don't have to be too literal, as long as they're relevant." e.g. WE COME THROUGH/WE GET THINGS DONE/WE MAKE IT HAPPEN/WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE/HERE IT COMES/IT'S HERE/WE MOVE IT/WE GET THINGS MOVING/THINGS COME TOGETHER WITH US/WE'RE WITH YOU/WE'VE MADE IT/WE'RE ON TIME. The action in the ads shows plenty of activity and movement throughout so there is a definite heartbeat.

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Please send your considerations A.S.A.P. (the deadline is early next week, anything received later will be disregarded) and mark the package "Royal Mail Ad." to: *(Full contact details provided)*

### TV SERIES: 'GIRLSTUFF/BOYSTUFF' \*UPDATE\*

(Decode Ent. / Animage Films, US/Canada)  
Animated series by production co. whose credits include 'Undergrads', 'Angela Anaconda', 'The Zack Files'. SYNOPSIS: 'GirlStuff/BoyStuff' eavesdrops on six young teens who have been friends forever. The gang are exciting, funny, witty and chic. Tween version of 'Friends'. SEEKING: **UK ONLY TRACKS** - Upbeat, positive, pop/rock (a la No Doubt, Blink 182, Barenaked Ladies etc). Independent artists OK.

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Please send one CD (max) or link to your music on-line Contact: *(Full contact details provided)*

Tyler Labine (Danny Pinkus), Brad Raider (Greg), Tricia O'Kelley (Sophie) and Kiele Sanchez (Claudia). SYNOPSIS: Travis Green is about to turn 30 and his life couldn't be worse. He lives with his parents. He's a door-to-door door salesman. And the longtime love of his life is married to his brother. His descent into loserdom dates back to a fateful and humiliating week in high school, and Travis wishes for nothing more than the chance to do it over again. Be careful what you wish for! Travis wakes up the next morning 16 again, with a chance to re-write history. The results of his tinkering save a life, destroy a marriage, and lose Travis the most precious thing in his flawed life. Now, he'll have to stay in high school until he figures out how to fix things.

SEEKING: For dramatic effect, the modern day show uses flashbacks to the 1980's as one of its plot devices, so therefore 80's music will be featured.

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Send your considerations to: *(Full contact details provided)*

#### **FEATURE: 'POLYESTERDAY'**

(Little Italy Films, UK )

Produced by Michelle Giacobbi and directed by Carole Giacobbi. The film has attracted a very impressive cast including Salma Blair ("Legally Blond"), Jonny Lee Miller ("Trainspotting," "Dracula 2000," "Mansfield Park"), Peter Fonda ("Ulyee's Gold," "The Limey," "Easy Rider"), Sean Bean ("Lord Of The Rings," "Ronin," "Goldeneye" ), David Hardy ("Lord of the Rings," "Black Hawk Down," Tom Bell ("The Krays," "The Feast of July," "Wish You Were Here," "Let Him Have It") and Dame Diana Rigg ("The American," "Parting Shots," "A Good Man In Africa"). The movie is due to start shooting in August. SYNOPSIS: Judith Parrish, a young, single woman bored with her unremarkable job and a series of dead-end romances finds her entire life spun in a new direction when she is accosted by the man who, since 1969, has been in prison for the murder of her father. Ricocheting from today's Manhattan to the Manhattan of the late 1960's, Polyesterday follows Judith as she discovers the characters and places that impacted her father's life, and ultimately, she finds, have impacted her own. Judith has always known that her father, Julian Eden, was a photographer for Rolling Stone, an all-around Bon Vivant, a fixture of Manhattan's pop scene at the end of the 60's. But he was killed before she was born and Judith has no real memories of her own. The only concrete piece of him left behind is his powder blue 1968 Triumph TR4, which Judith has inherited. Philip Glass, the murderer who accosts her, convinces Judith that he in fact had nothing to do with the crime. Glass is not only innocent, he tells hers, but also he was a dupe in her father's scheme to bilk a major record label out of millions of dollars. And now Glass wants his cut. The very fabric of Judith's reality is torn by this revelation. What really did happen to her father? And who was he?

SEEKING: A good composer/writer is needed to write the score. Someone along the lines of Portishead/Hooverphonic/St Etienne/Dot Allison/Goldfrapp... Due to funding restraints the composer has to have a Canadian passport (and be originally from Quebec!). Ideally they need to be based in London as that is where Post Production is

#### **FEATURE: 'CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE'**

\*UPDATE\*

(Little Wing, UK )

Produced and directed by John Deery. The film stars Academy Award winner Brenda Fricker (The War Bride, Resurrection Man, My Left Foot) and Jason Barry (Titanic, Man and Boy, The Last of the High Kings). SYNOPSIS: This contemporary feature is about a young man who's learning to become a priest in the Vatican and his struggle and turmoil with the issue of celibacy. Music is still being sought but the focus has been re-evaluated with a move away from the U2 style previously mentioned. The music budget is limited and the music supervisor is keen on new contemporary artists maybe from independent labels who have new acts that need exposure.

Obviously this does not preclude "name" artists but the budget is minimal so be realistic.

SEEKING: Songs in a folk/rock vein and feel in the style of The Blue Nile, Sheryl Crow. Another musical reference point would be the softer/acoustic side of REM along the lines of "Everybody Hurts". The deadline is approaching so they are keen on submissions as soon as possible. CD's only.

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Please send your submissions to: *(Full contact details provided)*

#### **FEATURE: 'SONG FOR A RAGGY BOY'**

(Subotica Entertainment, Ireland)

Directed by Aisling Walsh. (The Magdalen Laundry(TV), Forgive And Forget (TV)) and the production team of Tristan Orpen, Dominic Wright, John McDonnell and Kevin Byron Murphy. Cast: Aidan Quinn (Benny and Joon, Legends of the Fall, Haunted), Iain Glen (Lara Croft: Tomb Raider, Beautiful Creatures, The Young Americans). Also featuring Marc Warren and Simon Bendix. SYNOPSIS: Ireland, 1939. Father Damian, the principal of St. Jude's Reformatory School appoints Franklin, former soldier with the International brigade in the Spanish Civil War, to the school as the only lay teacher, although the Bishop and most of the other Brothers are against it. Franklin's teaching methods are diametrically opposed to the Brothers'. While the latter headed by Brother John, the prefect, revert to verbal and physical abuse, Franklin tries to build up a relationship based on trust with the boys, discovers their hidden talents and teaches them to read and appreciate poetry. Mercier, an exceptionally talented boy helps him with this task. Intercut with the development of Franklin's relationship with the boys is a series of flashbacks of Franklin's involvement in the Spanish Civil War, where he falls in love with Rosa who gets killed as a war prisoner. On Christmas day, Brother John organises the beating of two boys who are brothers, who have broken a rule of the school. With Franklin's help Mercier prevents this violence. Some weeks into the New Year, Brother John, intent on finding out why Franklin has decided to come and teach at St. Jude's (he believes Franklin to have a Communist agenda), beats Mercier to death. The story ends with Franklin believing that after Mercier's death, if he were to stay on as a teacher at St. Jude's, he would be an accomplice to Mercier's murder. He resigns, intent on joining the English troops in WWII. But as he stands in the school yard one of the boys who had a learning disability recites a poem that Franklin taught

taking place.

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Initially send email for the attention of \*\*\*\*\* marking it "Polyesterday/Cuesheet" to: *(Full contact details provided)*

**TV SERIES: 'LOL'**

(SMG TV Productions, Scotland)

New comedy series for children, 10 x 30 minutes.

This show (formerly known as GFI) is being made for Nickelodeon and is currently in pre-production for broadcast later in the year.

SEEKING: A composer is being considered for this children comedy sketch show. Therefore music need to be "light, happy, upbeat". No calls.

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Please send your showreel CD's to: *(Full contact details provided)*

**TV SERIES: 'HEARTS OF GOLD'**

(BBC, Wales UK)

Taken from one of the many novels written by Catrin Collier. This is a two-part adaptation that is set in the 1930's and is a love story set against the background of the struggles between the social classes. 2 x 90 mins

SEEKING: The production is looking for a composer. No returns and no calls please.

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Send showreels/CD's to: *(Full contact details provided)*

**TV SERIES: 'BOSTON PUBLIC'**

(David E.Kelley Productions in association with 20th Century Fox, U.S.)

Currently stars include Jon Abrahams (Zach Fischer), Chi McBride (Steven Harper), Anthony Heald (Scott Guber), Sharon Leal (Marilyn Sudor), Fyvush Finkel (Harvey Lipschultz) and Nicky Katt (Harry Senate).

SYNOPSIS: If you thought being a student was hard, try being a teacher! From the award winning David E. Kelley (Ally McBeal, The Practice). This series explores the personal and professional lives of teachers and administrators at a mid-size high school in Boston. "Boston Public" gives an up-close, behind the scenes, dramatic and sometimes comedic look at life at Winslow High with the focus on the constant battle to create an atmosphere with "teaching" as the primary gal. Series premiered on Fox in October 2000 and has proved popular. Now in its 3rd season.

SEEKING: Looking for a contemporary song about Valentines' Day or being a Valentine. Must have this in the lyric. Could be either male or female vocal. Genre/Style can be either pop, R'N'B, hip hop. Scene involves female students selling flowers. Strictly no calls or emails. They will contact you.

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Send CD submissions to: *(Full contact details provided)*

**INDIE FEATURE: 'DOG MIKE'**

(Bauer Films, US )

Indie film due to be released around February 2003.

Veteran producer/director Wayne Bauer is producing, directing and starring in this one as well. This is a suspense, who done it, action film, based on the real story of a hardnosed detective, centered

him. The boy then runs to Franklin and hugs him

Franklin knows he can never leave St. Jude's.

SEEKING: Music that captures the period of time with "dark themes". We are talking about Ireland in the late 1930's. May be composed or music recordings of the period.

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Send your CD showreels or recordings to: *(Full contact details provided)*

**TV SERIES: 'THE DEAD ZONE'**

(USA Network, US )

Weekly series in its second season, starring Anthony Michael Hall (61\*), Nicole de Boer (Rated X), David Ogden Stiers (Lilo and Stitch), Chris Bruno, Kristen Dalton, and John L. Adams.

SYNOPSIS: The show is centered around the character Johnny Smith (Hall) who after recovering from being a coma for six years, finds that he now has amazing psychic powers, which allow him to see into the lives of anyone, he touches.

SEEKING: All tempos & all genres, but primarily wants singer/songwriter tunes.

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Submit to: *(Full contact details provided)*

**STUDENT FILM: 'MICHELLE'**

(Bournemouth Media School, UK)

Producer \*\*\*\*\*'s putting together this short film which is about to go into post-production.

Student film makers today are "the filmmakers of tomorrow" so this could prove a useful starting point for budding musicians/composers.

SYNOPSIS: Michelle is a single mother of three with her own business. She is also suffering from terminal cancer and manages somehow to juggle the amount of work she has to do. An emotional, yet powerful journey that focuses on the inner strength of someone whose outer strength is slowly dying.

SEEKING: The film is very elegant in its camera style - slow pans, on detail and no froth. Michelle the character speaks with emotion, and actuality sequences are very atmospheric. The producer is looking for a piece/s of music that create mood, can build emotion and establish new surroundings. Being a small student film there is no budget but this could be good exposure for the music considering how much more profile and focus there is toward the student film making sector. Mark packages, "Cuesheet".

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Please send your submissions immediately to: *(Full contact details provided)*

**TV SERIES 'QUEER AS FOLK'**

(Showtime, U.S.)

The third season of the Showtime hit series, 'Queer As Folk' is due to air early in 2003. Q.A.F. is a drama centered around the lives of a group of gay men and lesbians living in Pittsburgh, PA. It focuses on their careers, relationships, ambitions, and loves. It's not West Hollywood; it's working class America. It's an unapologetic celebration of life in all it's varied forms. Note: CD submissions only please and no material returned.

SEEKING: Groovy electronica, gay house, Dido type eclectic pop, and club material, of all tempos. Note: All songs submitted must be from commercially released CD's.

around a Great Dane who is dognapped.  
SEEKING: All tempos of bluesy sax, and muted trumpet smooth jazz instrumentals in the style of Bill Conte, John Williams, etc. Also, need something very sexy sounding for the femme fatale's theme music; as well as appropriate theme music with a Mancini type flair with some reference to dogs. Film cues okay too. Note: Absolutely, NO love themes, please! Also, interesting in finding a COMPOSER to help score the whole film as well. Note: Deadline: Dec. 31, 2002. Submissions must be on CD and of master quality. S.A.S.E. for return.

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Apply to: *(Full contact details provided)*

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Submit to: *(Full contact details provided)*

#### **TV PILOT: 'TRAVEL THAILAND'**

(Quicksilver Productions, Canada)

An MTV-style show, a mix between 'Lonely Planet', 'Survivor' and has the excitement & sex appeal of 'Wild On'. The TV pilot was shot in Bangkok and focuses on the nightlife of the red-light districts where prostitution, drugs and alcohol run rampant. An English host (a mix between Robin Leach & Ian Right) walks us through the underbelly of Bangkok and shows us how things really work in Thailand.

SEEKING: We need music composers who can create the musical score for the show. We need background beats for interviews, upbeat exciting stuff for action sequences, cool techo for transitions, and neat sound effects for graphics. In short: we need good music that is not copyright restricted. Some vocals are okay, but we mostly need a non-vocal score. Asian-style and western-style music are both acceptable. Real instruments or MIDI is fine. Basically anything goes...as long as it sounds professional and is highly produced. Mail a demo reel on CD only (no DAT tapes please).

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Apply to: *(Full contact details provided)*

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