

# CULMINATING EXPERIENCE

## THESIS PAPER

*“A Year Like No Other”*

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Master of Music in Scoring for Film, Television and Video Games - 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Berklee – New people, surroundings and notable mentions**

It is impossible to accurately quantify how much coming to Spain to study at Berklee has changed my life. Prior to coming to Spain I was fortunate to have nailed down accommodation and had a sense of excitement. On the other hand as I had arrived in Valencia I was notified that I was fired/relieved of my duties on a feature film I had been scoring a month before. I was determined to use this as motivation and not let it deter me or affect the amazing year of growth and development I was about to have. While being fired for the second time seemed like something significant, it would only serve as a minor blip during my year at Berklee.

I would like to take the time to thank the many amazing mentors, teachers and Berklee faculty who I am indebted to. They are all top-notch working professionals whom have all helped me get to where I am today. The countless hours, feedback and mentorship you've provided are greatly appreciated. We are privileged to learn from incredible composers, orchestrators, conductors and people. I've thoroughly enjoyed how much this program has pushed me to improve my composition, orchestration, conducting, and personal skills. While I am confident in my ability I know that the learning, studying, lessons and development do not end after I graduate. Berklee has empowered me to strive towards my dream of scoring films, orchestrating and writing music for the rest of my life.

I'm excited for the future, to face new challenges and hope I can make all of my new mentors proud. The current circumstances have empowered me and instilled a stronger determination to achieve my dreams as a screen composer. At the risk of sounding overly dramatic, I strongly believe that attending the Scoring for Film, Television and Video Games

program at Berklee has changed my life. In the pages to follow I will share specific situations that further exemplify this sentiment.

## I. BACKGROUND AND TECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL

Prior to coming to Berklee I came from a classical background in both Western and Indian music. I played in bands and during private instruction we focused on instrumentation, analysis, production and composition. Following this I had scored features/shorts and worked as an assistant for composers in New York and Los Angeles. My duties were largely compositional but they also involved orchestration, administration and technical duties. I was fortunate to have works featured on certain networks and different streaming services but wanted to grow more and Berklee was the perfect program. My composing career to that point had led to some credits and writing in many different genres. I was a Sibelius turned Finale user, Cubase and Logic were my main Digital Audio Workstations for MIDI. For Mixing or editing audio I was using Pro Tools or Nuendo. Like many composers, I started by writing at the piano using pencil and paper. Often I would hum and use my voice or sounds around the house to find certain ideas that compliment the piano harmony.

When I worked as an assistant I was primarily using Cubase to writing additional music/orchestrating based on a sketch, composing a new cue entirely, creating a template for projects, fixing technical issues e.g. servers/hardware/software and dealing with Directors/Producers in spotting sessions. This proved to be good experience that I leaned on greatly during my time at Berklee. It helped that I was already familiar with tight deadlines and writing lots of music in a short period of time. While the professional world did prepare me for the magnitude of this program, there is a lot of music to write. During the program there were some tough moments, at least a few times I questioned my ability to be able to write that amount of music. I can say that the majority of the program was manageable but

challenging. My mentors, family and desire to complete the program and develop, pushed me through these difficult moments.

Another thing which helped prior to coming to Berklee is my knowledge of music and film which contributed to my understanding of how to best utilize these new tools. I had studied scores, films and composers from 1920 till now. Having a great passion for orchestral music and film in general also plays a big role in giving me enough will. Studying the music of greats such as Miklos Rosza, Bernard Hermann, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Max Steiner, Dmitry Tiompkin, and Franz Waxman. In the classical world Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Joseph Haydn, Richard Wagner, Franz Schubert, Frederic Chopin, Franz Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Mozart and of course Beethoven. Iconic film soundtracks like Psycho, Gone with the Wind, the original Blade Runner and plays like the Nut Cracker have contributed towards my understanding of narrative. I have also studied and enjoyed the work of many film composers. Composers such as; John Williams, Hans Zimmer, Alexandre Desplat, Ramin Djawadi, Danny Elfman, Mychael Danna, Christophe Beck, Henry Jackman, Heitor Pereira, Michael Giacchino, Lorne Balfe, Steve Jablonsky and A.R. Rahman among many others.

Paying attention to the narrative of a film and how the Director wants this to be expressed through music can be difficult. There is a line between being musically expressive and serving the Directors vision in a scene. Prior to attending Berklee I was not focused on nuances such as camera movements. I was more interested in narrative and dramatic scoring which is a very reactive approach that works but doesn't allow you to use music as a strong storytelling device. I was intrigued by the challenge of learning the Berklee way and standard of doing things at a professional level, fully aware it was much better than my approach. This was one of the reasons that I was excited to come study at Berklee. I remember having mentioned to Alfons Conde during my entrance interview that I had a lot to learn with the

passion and desire to develop my craft further. That sentiment has not changed to this day, and I have learned a lot while attending Berklee. I've heard the saying that "the more you know, the more you have to learn". I can understand what this means because learning will never stop in life and music.

## II. DP, MIDI AND SCORING TO PICTURE

One of the main lessons of this year was to understand that technology was supposed to be used as a tool rather than a musical limitation. This is a sentiment that Conducting and Video Games teacher Sergio Lacima has mentioned more than a few times. When I was introduced to Digital Performer it was clear that learning this DAW would be another interesting challenge I'd encounter during this program. Multiple faculty members and many of my friends use Digital Performer to orchestrate or clean up MIDI. I was largely unfamiliar with how intuitive or MIDI friendly this software is for composers during projects or the revision process. The biggest challenge for me during this process of learning Digital Performer was the routing and signal flow because other DAW's do this for you. Digital Performer felt like the Reason of MIDI DAW's. In Reason, users actually click on cables to create signal flow or perform specific audio processing. We are very fortunate that we could be taught Technology and Electronic Dramatic Composition with Vicente Ortiz Gimeno. He has worked on some of the biggest films in the world like *Klaus* and *Minions* working for industry greats like William Ross and Heitor Pereira. I've learned so much from Vicente in terms of discipline, working technically, professionalism and employing a light sense of humor in life. As an educator, Vicente explains concepts so well that it's almost impossible not to understand. His technical, orchestral and musical command is at such a high level that I was impressed on a daily basis. When I first met Vicente I thought he was amazing and a Sibelius ninja who I would learn a ton from. I was extremely inspired in conversations I had with him about his experience assisting, working in LA and the industry as whole.

During my time in the program it was great to hear about scores that Vicente has contributed towards either by composing or orchestrating. His works along with other faculty have been nominated or in contention for awards such as Oscars, Emmy's, Goyas and film festivals. Generally speaking, it's amazing for me to see my colleagues, mentors and friends nominated for such honors.

In our Music Technology class with Vicente we were asked to do three assignments that completely changed the way I look at composing. The first was to create a mockup of Aaron Copeland's "*Fanfare for the Common Man*", then Ravel's "*Pavane pour une infante défunte*" and finally scoring a cue from the *Lego Ninjago* movie, based on the sync points he provided. The faculty has gradually prepared us for upcoming assignment by keeping the coursework closely related. Prior to this animation project we had scored cues for live recordings in different genres. Cues such as *Gran Hotel's* the Kiss, along with other assignments gave us specific hit points as a guide. The *Lego Ninjago* cue was an animation, which requires a definite tempo range. Learning to use the search tempo feature in Digital Performer was extremely helpful yet tedious. At first it was difficult to use because as Vicente mentioned in class, it's always better to be between 1-4 frames late on a sync point rather than 1 frame early. This was due to the fact that you don't want to be telling the story to the viewer before the narrative does. Using this function was definitely a challenge because while the search tempo hit some spots it was weak in others so I had to adjust things accordingly. It was like trying to make sure the puzzle pieces fit together for the final image. Once I finally did that composing the music was the simple part because I had my road map and just needed to drive the car to my destination.

Excerpt from *Pavane pour une infante défunte* by orchestrator and composer Maurice Ravel



The excerpt above by Maurice Ravel requires sounding like 2 horns. Using Vienna libraries were really helpful to do that and also allow you to select accurate dynamics and numbers in the patch. This assignment taught us about the importance of not quantizing the melody 100% according to a grid because then it doesn't feel as musical as the original piece. Allow for human pacing so that the integrity and phrasing of the piece is maintained. You can then rely on MIDI CC 1 (Modulation) to add some more expressiveness to the phrase and further shape the line. Samples are recorded for each dynamic layer in Vienna (pp, mf, f, ff, fff, etc) instead of being duplicated. It's important not to just use a two-horn patch but to use a solo patch as a separate performance to create the illusion of a small horn ensemble.

I remember being given the task to create a mockup of Copeland's "*Fanfare for the Common Man*" which is a fantastic piece but quite difficult to emulate with samples. Another new challenge was being introduced to Vienna Synchron Player, which I had never used, but had experience with Vienna Instruments. I layered Cinebrass and Vienna together to try to emulate the sound as Vicente advised. He mentioned that it is always good when you have a melodic line to have a separate performance. The reason for this is so it provides the true illusion of ensemble. This is a concept I have incorporated into my compositions to solidify a line. I learned so much from this assignment and although it was I had done mockups before of much larger orchestral arrangements this proved to be difficult. Never would I have thought that programming Copeland would be more taxing than programming the main title of *Superman*.

Excerpt from *Fanfare For The Common Man* by composer Aaron Copeland

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the beginning of 'Fanfare For The Common Man' by Aaron Copeland. The score is written for Horns (Hn), Trumpets (Tr), and Trombones (Tbn). The Horns part is in the first staff, with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. The Trumpets and Trombones parts are in the second and third staves, respectively. The music features a prominent melodic line in the Horns, supported by the Trumpets and Trombones. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'f marc' and 'f marc'.



This excerpt by Copland is a great example of how Vienna libraries can be used effectively for an orchestral piece while maintaining the sound of the brass section (four horns, 3 trumpets, three trombones, and tuba). You may need to layer using more powerful libraries for the desired sound but if your goal is to create exactly what is written on the page in terms of number of instruments, dynamic layers, realistic attacks/releases, human dynamics and articulations (e.g. marcato, staccato, etc) then I think Vienna is a great place to start. It is also a great learning tool to hear how various numbers of an orchestra sound so that you aren't as surprised during the recording session when it comes to the perceived weight of your sound. This can also result in you orchestrating differently and approaching registers of the respective instruments in a different manner.

As a composer and orchestrator I have strong admiration for Maurice Ravel and Claude Debussy so I was thrilled when I saw our next assignment would be "*Pavane pour une infante défunte*". This was a piece that seemed simple and eerily similar in timbre and orchestration to many of the Alexandre Desplat cues we'd been asked to study for conducting. I learned a lot from the orchestration of the piece and how timbres can be blended or processed. In addition to this in Sergio Lacimas conducting class there were instances in Alexandre Desplat's music where instruments were processed to the point of being almost unrecognizable and functioned more as effects. The phrasing in this piece is especially beautiful at such a slow tempo it makes such an impression on listeners and is an iconic piece.

Another assignment I remember from Vicente's class is programming Adagio for Strings. It is difficult to accurately recreate this piece with samples because it benefits so much from live players. I learned a lot from both of these projects and it really pushed me hard to try and emulate the sound. While I have a lot to learn, I'm very confident that I have improved my craft enough where if I had to do this again it would be a much smoother

process. It was an incredible experience and test in score study, scoring, ear training, programming and arranging.

### III. RECORDING SESSIONS

From the very first recording session, we were required to prepare the conducting, Pro Tools session and a mockup. Preparing a mockup for everything I've composed at Berklee has been good practice and has helped me a lot before I enter recording sessions. It's necessary to give extra thanks to Pablo Schuller our teacher for Recording, Mixing and Editing. He taught us to prepare Pro Tools sessions, industry mixing principles and gave us production tips and standards. When I started in the Fall there were multiple mistakes with my Pro Tools sessions. These mistakes included certain settings, printing clicks, big counter, and preparing tempo changes. I learned from every experience and got better after each recording and assignment. Coming into this program if I knew I would incrementally improve consistently I would have been content. From there I can push towards specific goals and objectives to get to my next destination.

The first few recordings were with local players from Valencia. They involved recording 3 clarinets for Lucio's Narrative Analysis class and then a woodwind quartet as part of Orchestration for Alfons. Both of these recordings served as great opportunities to learn about my body language when conducting, orchestrating and preparing for recording sessions. Lucio's assignment had specific sync points of time code we were instructed to hit and Alfons recording was based upon a literary concept. This was a nice contrast between writing to picture vs. writing to a script or concept. It was almost a baptism by fire, we were thrown into situations and you either sink or swim. While I was less than happy with the first two recordings, I knew there was a learning process involved to learn how to swim. With this in mind I bought into the process and learned how to do things the right way at Berklee.

Throughout our classes our Program Director Lucio Godoy has done a fantastic job integrating the course work with our recordings so things remain relevant and consistent. We know what we are expected to do, when it needs to be done and we have help from relevant coursework in order to prepare for the recording. Our Conducting and Advanced Conducting class with Sergio Lacima has also made me more aware. During recording sessions it is important to appear confident, in control and sure of yourself in front of players. Numerous classmates have pointed to the sentiment of orchestral players judging you after playing two bars as a negative thing. I don't necessarily think of this as a bad thing because rightly or wrongly you have the chance to make an impression quickly. It's kind of similar to how we meet new people or when people meet us they formulate judgment and have preconceived notions, which is normal. One sentence I'll always remember from Sergio's class is "Put your ego in your pocket. It's always about the music, if it makes the music better then do it and remember that the client is always right". To a degree I was aware of these principles but it was nice to see Sergio echoed this sentiment.

While samples and mockups can give composers an idea of how their music will sound when recorded, in this instance they did no justice to the live experience. During recording sessions, dealing with time management and pressure was definitely a challenge to navigate. I especially noticed this in pieces that were more complex rhythmically or had passages that were difficult to read. A long time ago I learned that if an orchestra or musicians don't play the piece properly, the composer is usually the reason. I had a few experiences where certain passages weren't notated correctly or were difficult to read due to changing meters, tempo changes or conflicting accidentals. For this reason I have learned to pay attention to my writing instead of just assuming that an orchestra can play whatever you write. Lessons that I have learned involve having a high level of music preparation, allowing time for tempo changes, preparing friendly parts and a score that is easy to follow for the

conductor. In the professional world “time is money” and while I had no issue with being given 18 minutes I saw it as if we are given a budget. When we are to go and work in the real world we will be given a budget, so it’s important to focus on things that are important and learn to let certain things go in the interest of time. I had run out of time on more than a few occasions on different recordings, due to poor music preparation or time management. This served as an amazing lesson that I will never forget. I strived after each recording to write what I wanted to write, what served the scene and what the players and conductor could interpret with minimal reservation.

I remember an instance of a Budapest recording for a scene from “*Gran Hotel*” called *The Kiss*, which was originally scored by our Program Director Lucio Godoy. Everything was going great until it came to the kiss, which was the most important part of the cue. I had the right approach in using a crescendo glissando, which worked up to the kiss, however I underestimated how much rhythm would affect this moment to progress. In my score I had notated 16<sup>th</sup> note glissandos which seemed to take away from the moment and didn’t work for the orchestra either. Lucio, having produced scores for many films in his career, suggested we augment the notation by doubling the note values and shifting things over to work with the scene. This wasn’t a thought that had crossed my mind and while it is not what I wrote, it is a nice compromise and I was grateful that I had such leadership there to help me handle the situation. This was another good lesson, I noticed how different fast/glissando sampled string passages can sound in comparison with live players.

The final Budapest recording of the Fall was my strongest and biggest moment of the semester. We were told to choose between *Paella in NYC* a rooftop romantic comedy in Brooklyn and a historical film with a scene called *Frozen Horses*. We were given the option to pick both but warned that we needed to manage our time properly. This was a challenge I welcomed and decided to do both, which required a lot of work. In Lucio’s Narrative

Analysis class he asked for someone to volunteer to check their mockup and I wanted to get some feedback so I raised my hand. Lucio after listening to the cue said while the comedic moment was good the rest didn't fit the cue as well. After listening to the cue Lucio mentioned that the comedic moments were fine but the rest didn't work as well. I decided rewrote both cues, did the mockup and prepared the parts the same weekend. My goal was to apply a romantic comedy vibe that employed harmonic textures and dynamics that plane in and out to create a different sound. During the recording session, Lucio seemed to be impressed with the composition and while I was quite happy to see this I knew I had to keep working.

After Fall semester had ended I was really excited for the Spring semester because of how much I had grown as a composer, orchestrator and person. The next recording was the Brass Quintet with Alfons Conde. I remember playing a sketch of my Brass Quintet in conducting class and I also recall that it was not well received. Nevertheless, I persevered and rewrote the entire piece from 9 am to 3 pm the day it was due from scratch, preparing parts, pro tools session, mockup and score. The memory of waking up at 7:30 on Sunday and not having anything written that I was ready to record was daunting, motivating and inspiring. Looking back at the assignment I still faintly believe that when you think of the raw literary concept, the piece I wrote before was a better fit.

The day of the recording was an interesting change because we were to record in the Palau building, which is acoustically and architecturally beautiful. I had prepared the conducting well and was sure this would be one of my best conducting performances and recordings to date. The session went very smoothly and I was grateful for the leadership of Alfons Conde and Pablo Schuller to guide me through the recording process. There were fewer mistakes in my Pro Tools sessions and I could see myself improving in many different ways.

Our next recording with Budapest was in Orchestration under the leadership of Alfons Conde. He had been sharing inspirational compositions of his from movies like *Nōdo* as well as other amazing orchestrational works by industry greats. Some of these names include James Newton Howard, Hans Zimmer, John Williams and Jeff Atmajian. One piece that stood out was a cue from *Peter Pan*, composed by the legendary James Newton Howard and orchestrated by Jeff Atmajian. We were then instructed to choose between a few different cues from different movie genres e.g. animation, horror, thriller, etc. Ultimately I chose the 100m Dash scene from *The Incredibles*, a popular animated film scored by acclaimed composer Michael Giacchino. The day of the recording I was worried about a specific passage in my score but I was sure it worked narratively with the scene and was musically interesting. When they recorded the cue in Budapest the passage in question proved to be difficult and I remember there being many different hiccups in the performance. Like all of the other recordings I was able to create a hybrid score that I layered with some live performances and some samples in order to achieve the full sound required. I am grateful for all the experience and things that I have learned from live recordings. I remember Lucio Godoy saying, “Those who struggle the most, always learn the most” more than a few times. This was definitely comforting, so I was happy to embrace learning and struggling during my process.

My final recording with Budapest was generally a positive experience. Due to coronavirus we didn't have the chance to go to Budapest in order to conduct the recording. The scene we were told to score was from the movie *Pancho*. The challenge with *Pancho* was hitting all of the sync points while being musically relevant. Lucio has mentioned that the Director did not want a huge orchestral sound. While this is an epic sword-fighting scene, there are only two people fighting. My approach involved going more comedic, diabolical, and using breaks in action to prepare the next sequence while keeping listeners in suspense.

When I heard the mockup and how the music works with the scene, I was quite content and even felt a bit accomplished. It was a scene with many hit points similar to *Lego Ninjago*. Another factor is all the mixed meters that I had to employ in order to hit certain moments in the scene. I don't usually use so many 7/8 or 9/8 bars unless I am trying to hit something or the music justifies this meter. This was a technique I recalled learning from Vicente because this is how he hits things in animation and during private office hours we discussed the art of conforming to picture in greater detail. The advantage of changing meters instead of tempos is that an orchestra can follow meter changes much easier than unprepared or drastic tempo changes. Ultimately this will prevent them from asking questions or stopping during a recording where there will be limited time and resources. I remember Lucio mentioning that when Directors ask for a demo, he tends to show them this scene because it is difficult to score and requires the music to carry the narrative. As provided in other assignments, we were given a list of sync points and this scene posed many challenges. In the end I believe the session went very well and it was nice to do it in the comfort of my own home. I didn't manage my time too well but I did get enough in order to make something happen. No matter what I got from a recording, I was always determined to use my technical knowledge and programming to make the music work. I remember Lucio asking if I had enough to comp something together and that I could've probably used 7 or 8 more minutes because I had written a challenging cue. He was definitely right but I told him that I was sure that I could make it work.

All of these recording sessions have served as an amazing experience towards my development. The lessons and mistakes I have experienced will haunt me, inspire me and motivate me as I develop my craft. Interacting with musicians, conducting, being aware of my body language and adhering to deadlines are all crucial parts to the life of a composer. Mistakes in score preparation, conducting, Pro Tools sessions and parts will serve as lessons

I will never forget and hopefully never repeat. I remember a funny quote Pablo Schuller mentioned “During Berklee you can make all the mistakes, After Berklee? No mistakes” I thought this was funny with an ounce of truth. While I expect to make mistakes going forward, I am committed towards improving and developing my craft in order to reach my goals. The important thing I have learned is not to let a mistake go unwarranted without a lesson.

#### IV. EXTERNAL WORK AND FINDING VIDEO

During the Fall semester I didn't have much time to pursue outside projects. Prior to Berklee I was working on professional projects and I really missed working with Directors and Producers. For this reason, I chose to start saying yes to a lot of projects while I continued my search for CE material. This was a double-edged sword because I found myself working on a multitude of films that required diverse scores. In a couple instances I enlisted help from my classmates, which was an interesting experience. It was a very good learning experience and I'm glad I decided to collaborate with my Berklee classmates for future reference. This amount of work combined with competitions, coursework, advisory board meetings and the coronavirus situation, made things a bit more challenging. Determined, I was poised to rise to the challenge and do the best I could under the circumstances. I can't remember how many emails and how many of my friends I contacted during the process of finding a film to score for my CE. I reconnected with a lot of industry peers, scored some fun new films of different genres and was able to find a film that I was comfortable to score and record. It was important to find one that hasn't been scored yet and has yet to be released so that this project can enjoy a life of it's own after Berklee. I ended up scoring a 4 minute animated short, which will be a hybrid score recorded with live orchestra at AIR studios. I'm incredibly excited for the day we



get to record and look forward to all of the extra perks of going to London! Like Berklee, it'll change my life.

## V. COMPOSITIONAL/ORCHESTRATIONAL APPROACH

When it comes to an animation cue, I remember Vicente talking about how tempo is one of the most important things when preparing your session. He mentioned that, typically when dealing with animation he starts with tempo between 140 to 160 bpm as a benchmark. When approaching the score for my CE animation (working title “*POV*”) I used this tip as a starting point. The score started off as ambient and so I wouldn't include this part in the 3 minutes of music recorded for London. The portion I chose to record is actually quite similar to a chase scene but instead it involves an old man sitting in a boat mindlessly about to Fall off a cliff. There are levels of urgency involved and as we were taught, an ostinato is a good way to keep the scene moving while superimposing elements above it to support the narrative.

Certain moments of attention, much like our assignments must be hit with something in the orchestra e.g. horn rips, woodwinds, glissandi or extended techniques/effects. It has the feel of a cartoon series or dramatic animated short film and the music is largely carrying the narrative, making it the perfect selection to record in London. Another challenge will be using meter changes to conform the piece to accommodate any revisions the Director may have. In a talk we were fortunate to have with Batu Sener, John Powell's assistant, he mentioned that he tactfully sets the tempo lower than expected to accommodate revisions. I took this tip as a great piece of advice and chose to implement this technique when scoring my CE. I scored my CE using Cubase, which is my main DAW but I am also equally proficient with Logic, which prior to Cubase 10.5 helps with video export. When scoring my cue I was sure to set

many different sync points because it's animation scoring. Some sync points are, the entrance of the bird, different perspective shots, the threat of imminent danger and when we see the old man is free Falling down a steep cliff.

The brass and horn writing is especially important in this piece, in addition to the use of woodwinds. Alfons' class in Orchestration helped me to fine tune my brass writing and to make sure I am aware of using woodwinds effectively. This is probably my third time writing to an animatic and it is never a simple process. I find that the colors and a polished animation film can lend a ton of extra creativity towards your musical direction. Of course, for many working in scoring for animation, locked picture is a massive and unlikely luxury. In animation these changes and picture conforms are common. I had to get past the sentiment that this piece was supposed to be incredibly monumental or the best piece I've ever written. The most important goal is that my score serves the film and helps tell the story, anything else would be an added benefit. Of course it was important for me to apply orchestration, narrative and technical skills, which I have learned during the Berklee program. Due to the hours of practice, this was likely to be achieved organically without focusing on specific principles. I wanted to make sure that the piece was flowing properly and had enough variation in the music for listeners.

## VI. CONDUCTING AND VIDEO GAMES

Taking conducting with Sergio in the Fall and Video Games with Jeanine was a great experience. I learned a lot about who I am as a person and I wasn't extremely familiar with Video Game scoring, having only scored a few indie games. Sergio's class in particular taught me about being aware of body language and his exercises during class helped so much. I began to notice a marginal but present improvement in my conducting during Advanced conducting which I took with him in the Spring. Sergio also taught me Advanced

Video Game scoring which has been incredible and quite extensive to learn about. I wasn't aware of the amount of depth that video games had to offer musically, technically and narratively. Software such as FMOD and WWISE were largely new and like Digital Performer proved to be a new challenge.

I really enjoyed the pieces of music that we were asked to create reductions of, prepare conducting sessions and often transcribe by ear. These proved to be quite a challenge but I learned so much from these assignments that I'm sure they'll help me going forward. The scores chosen were so beautiful that they inspired me to analyze and learn to see what someone like Alexandre Desplat does? What is trailer music form? Why is this music so interesting? Why is John Ottman's "*They'll remember you*" from the *Valkyrie* soundtrack so beautiful and balanced? Both of these courses really sparked my curiosity and drove me to work harder towards analysis in scoring. This went far beyond typical MIDI programming while studying a score, it involved blends, orchestration techniques and the way entrances and exits of certain sections are effective. I learned so much from these two courses and although it was a challenge I know exactly what scoring for film and television entails and what working in video games demands. It was very important to me to be able to experience that and see what fits best. I wasn't opposed to working in both, but due to my limited knowledge in video games I wanted to see if it was something I could do.

## CONCLUSION

When I had received my acceptance to Berklee, I couldn't imagine the amount that I would learn in one year, musically and personally. The faculty from this program are people that I will lean on and probably contact in the future because I know I can trust their guidance. The recording sessions are absolutely unforgettable. The practice of hearing your music being played by a live orchestra is mesmerizing and addictive. Just experiencing this, has driven me

to heights and instilled a will in me to pursue this further, using live musicians whenever possible. The many different skill sets in my cohort was also something I witnessed and I'm sure they'll be working in the industry going forward, in some capacity. I look forward to following their careers and seeing their names on projects. Lastly I'd like to thank my family, friends and many incredible mentors who have helped me reach this point. I could not have attended Berklee without their guidance, support and confidence in my ability.

I know this career can be difficult, taxing and challenging. It also has the opportunity to be rewarding and fulfilling! I hope to make the Berklee faculty proud by continuing to advance, study and develop my craft further. Now it's time to face the real world, it's likely that we may struggle for everything we earn, but I am determined to make my dreams a reality. Before coming to Berklee I knew exactly what I wanted to do. After coming here my commitment, desire and passion for the craft has become stronger than ever. I'd like to thank Program Director Lucio Godoy, Alfons Conde (Orchestration), Vicente Ortiz Gimeno (Music Technology), Sergio Jimenez Lacima (Conducting/Video Games), Pablo Schuller (Recording/Editing/Mixing) and Jeanine Cowen (Video Games). I hope to make you all proud one day and am thankful for the lessons and things I have learned from you and my fellow students this year.