



# NEWSLETTER

An Entertainment Industry Organization

## From The Hollywood Reporter

### Inside music composer agents

By Kevin Cassidy and Stephen Galloway

#### The President's Corner

I am very pleased that our first event of 2011 is a panel of my peers working in the film music industry, moderated by next year's CCC President Eric Polin, Sr. VP of Music Publishing for Universal Pictures. Eric's panel will offer an in-depth exploration of negotiating film music contracts and related business dealings. Featuring prominent professionals in the industry, the panel will provide a truly enlightening experience for anyone seriously interested in the inner-workings of music for film. Next month, we will be discussing the growing Latin music market in a panel moderated by Board Member Eric Palmquist.

I encourage you to attend the Music Industry Toolbox on February 22nd at the Gibson Showroom in Beverly Hills. This groundbreaking event is a joint venture between the California Copyright Conference (CCC) and the Association of Independent Music Publishers (AIMP). The Music Industry Toolbox will provide an intimate environment for music industry professionals to learn about exciting new products and services being provided by a select group of sponsors, as well as the opportunity to network with peers; a longstanding trademark of both organizations.

Happy New Year!

Shawn LeMone  
President, California Copyright Conference

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

**February 8, 2011** – Music En Espanol - Current and future opportunities in the Latin Music Market

**March 8, 2011** - Branding

**April 26, 2011** - International

A producer had asked Kraft's composer client to write a "very Hitchcockian, Bernard Herrmann-type score" for his production, but the composer was leaning toward something sparser. The producer was adamant: "I want wall-to-wall music," he said, "just like in 'The Birds.'"

And there lay a snag. "He managed to pick the one Hitchcock film that had no music in it," says Kraft.

By the time the agent had finessed the matter, it was too late: The producer realized music was the least of his problems and had to reshoot a good chunk of the picture.

Welcome to the world of the film music agent, a world that involves an unusual blend of knowledge and art, of cajoling and diplomacy.

It is work that differs subtly from that of other agents. Music agents tend to know far more about their clients' art, they have operational skills that often resemble a producer's, and they frequently develop intense relationships with their clients, much like managers.

While a number of gargantuan agencies are at the heart of the entertainment business as a whole, "the representation of film composers is dominated by smaller agencies who don't represent a lot of other creative talent," says Seth Kaplan of Evolution Music Partners. "The larger agencies may have a composer or two, but the dominant force in our little niche is the specialized agencies."

Those specialized agencies include Kraft-Engel Management, First Artists Management, the Gorfaine/Schwartz Agency, Greenspan Kohan and Soundtrack Music Associates, among others. Their history is full of intertwined relationships, rivalries and conflicts — exacerbated by the narrow world in which they operate.

One agent dismisses two rivals by saying, "They're both nuts"; he notes of a competing company, "They could be selling widgets." Another agent is known to have sabotaged a former colleague by badmouthing him to all his clients. These agents may be friendly on the surface, but the competition between them is intense.

That's partly because so many have worked together at different times. Take Kraft: Recognized as the most knowledgeable about music among

his peers, he taught film music and worked for a soundtrack label before joining ICM in the 1980s. When ICM decided to exit the film composer business in the early 1990s, Kraft went out on his own.

Later, he was teamed in Blue Focus Management with veteran agent Vasi Vangelos, who then formed his own company, First Artists, in 2003.

While these are the major players in film music, the big agencies still have plenty of clout. ICM is back in the game, and agent Tad Lumpkin — who represents a roster of writers, producers and directors, as well as such composers as Paul Cantelon (“The Diving Bell and the Butterfly”) and Mateo Messina (“Juno”) — says there are advantages to being with a powerhouse.

“At a full-service agency that represents all kinds of talent and filmmakers, you see projects move from idea to the finished phase,” he argues. “Being involved in a project that long really gives you (the chance) to get a composer an opportunity.”

If ICM and CAA are kingpins in the larger world, Gorfaine/Schwartz is the most prominent composers agency. But the company, which once stood unrivaled (rather like CAA in the ’90s), is facing greater competition today.

“There is more of a balance of power than there has been for a while,” one competitor notes. “Today they are the largest, but they’re not alone.”

Gorfaine/Schwartz’s strength has been bolstered by the fact that it represents Hans Zimmer, “the most important person in this business, without question,” according to one rival agent. “That is how Gorfaine/Schwartz maintains most of its power, because Zimmer uses a group of other composers to collaborate on the scores that he is doing and has a whole team of people that work for him,” and that in turn leads to a higher volume of business for the agency. (The agency’s Sam Schwartz declined to comment.)

Zimmer has not yet been “poached.” But agents are increasingly aware of how easy it is for their clients to be stolen.

“Any time one of my clients gets a major job, I can depend on the fact that (another agent) will be calling. Luckily our clients value our hard work and stay loyal,” Kaplan notes.

Kaplan’s partner, Christine Russell, says months of work can go into securing a big job.

“I worked for seven months to get Mark Kilian the job as composer on (Overture’s upcoming release) ‘Traitor,’” she says. “When he got it, I thought, ‘F\*\*\*in’ A!’ When you know somebody’s really right for something, you do push harder, and sometimes you have an instinct that a certain client would work well with a particular director, even if there’s not a specific project at hand. In those cases, I will try to create an opportunity for those two people to meet. It always pays off.”

It also pays off these days to stand out as a composer, and the best way to do that, according to the Agency Group’s Linda Kordek, is to be willing — and able — to work in a broad range of styles.

“It’s really critical right now that a composer have a signature sound,” says Kordek, whose roster includes Jonathan Goldsmith (“Away From Her”), Susan Marder (TNT’s “Saving Grace”) and songwriter Joe Jackson. “A film composer needs to be able to compose music in all genres and all styles — that’s part of the job description.”

Anita Greenspan of Greenspan Kohan Management adds that while talent and versatility are certainly vital, a strong head for business doesn’t hurt.

“The most successful composers in our business — and I’m not saying the most talented, I’m saying the most successful — are the ones who are good businessmen first,” she says. “That said, I love the tortured artist. I’ve got one guy who is outgoing, but the rest of them shy away from rooms full of people or act so bizarre they need their behavior explained. Sometimes I have to ask, ‘What the hell did you do that for?’ The one that’s the most unpredictable and the one you don’t want to let loose on a crowd of people is probably my husband (Mark Mothersbaugh)! But they all have to have at least some business acumen and not get their egos bruised. They have to remember it’s not personal.”

As for the economics of the boutique agencies, unlike the majors, which take a standard 10% of their clients’ income, music agents’ fees are individually negotiated and tend to range from 10%-15%, akin to managers’ fees. That is in part because their work covers an array of tasks not handled by regular agents.

Composers can be paid either a “package” fee or a simple “creative” fee for composing. The package fee covers the hiring of musicians and other producing aspects that agents often become involved with.

“We are very involved in the process of assisting composers in the booking of everything they need, so that the composer can concentrate on writing the music,” says Maggie Rodford, managing director of Air-Edel Associates. “With an actor’s agent, everything is taken care of by

the production.”

“We’re full-service problem solvers, involved in every phase of the game,” adds Kraft’s partner Laura Engel. “You don’t just book a film for somebody and move on.”

That’s apparent from a glance at agent John Tempereau’s schedule this year. Tempereau, a senior partner with Soundtrack Music, has already been to Beijing — not because of the Olympics, but because three of his clients have been working there. “I was there to support (them),” he says.

Evolution’s Kaplan showed the same kind of international reach when he first heard about composer Abel Korzeniowski.

Korzeniowski, while living in his native Poland, had heard about Kaplan and sent him a CD. When the agent listened to his music, he was stunned by its quality — but going from that to handling Korzeniowski as a client was a whole other matter.

“We had to get him a visa,” Kaplan recalls. “One of our clients was good enough to say he would give him work. But it took us eight months to get him out here.” Within weeks of his arrival in Los Angeles, Korzeniowski had his first American project, HBO’s “PU-239.”

If Kaplan and Tempereau are turning their attention overseas, that is no coincidence. Both are dealing with a business that is facing serious economic challenges as studios make fewer films and work for their clients becomes more scarce. Stagnating music budgets have radically changed the dealmaking dynamic.

“More than ever, it’s a battle,” says Robert Messinger of First Artists Management, whose clients include Michael Brook (“Into the Wild”), Philip Glass (“Notes on a Scandal”) and Gustavo Santaolalla (“Babel”). “It’s very tough right now to get fee increases. On some films it’s still possible. But on many the producer or the studio will just come to you and say, ‘This is what we have. Who will do it for this fee?’”

“There’s just not the negotiating that there has been in the past,” adds Greenspan. “It used to be that a studio would call and say, ‘We’re interested in so and so — what is his fee?’ You’d quote the fee, and hopefully you’d settle somewhere around there, a little higher than the last time the composer worked. Now we get the calls that say, ‘This is how much we have.’”

“There has been a 15%-20% downward turn (in fee amounts) over a five-year period,” notes Rodford, “and given that normally most things go up, that becomes quite an interesting conundrum.”

Rodford cites one recent indie film in the \$15 million-\$20 million budget zone as an example.

“In an ideal world, we would have wanted an overall (music) budget of \$600,000,” she explains, “but the budget allocated was in the realm of \$75,000. The producers sadly had been told they could get the music for that.”

If the difficulty of financing independent films has a direct impact on salaries, so does the reduced number of major studio films. In the not-too-distant past, it was standard for A-list talent on a blockbuster film to earn a creative fee of \$1 million-\$1.5 million, while the fee for a midrange major release might fall between \$500,000 and \$700,000. Not anymore.

While top-echelon composers like Zimmer and James Newton Howard can still earn fees of up to \$2 million for these pictures, many of the non-superstars are accepting pay cuts to keep working. That, in turn, is impacting the lesser-known composers on the tier below.

“It is more competitive,” says Kaplan. “A composer who has done his first or second studio movie and who is making \$250,000-\$500,000 on a picture is seeing all of these composers who were at a higher income level coming down and taking those films because there are fewer films available in the higher bracket.”

He adds, “People in the upper strata don’t have enough upper-strata movies to keep them busy, and that puts pressure on and limits the opportunities for up-and-coming composers.”

The pressure increased this year with the WGA strike, and it could get worse if the SAG also strikes. All this will not just impact composers: “It is hurting the music editors and postproduction people, too,” says Tempereau.

Fewer opportunities have led some agents to shed clients who are not working — though there is more work in certain areas, even if there is less in film.

“Television has remained healthy, and the rise of other markets such as video games has helped,” Tempereau says. “When the film business does come back, the good news is these other areas are still going to be there.”

Until then, the pressure on the agents is only going to increase. It is, as one agent says, a buyer’s market.

For any composer who thinks his agent can protect him — as Kraft did with the Hitchcock-loving producer — that may be wishful thinking. Now, for any prospective client, he has advice that is tougher than it might have been just a few years ago.

“You can’t make it as a flake or an egomaniac,” he says. “There are enough flakes and egomaniacs in the business in general, and nobody’s going to let the composer or his agent be one of them. You want to be a narcissistic jerk? Take a number.”

Chuck Crisafulli contributed to this report. Reprinted with permission

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## Panelist Biographies

### TODD HALLOWELL

(Executive Producer/Second-Unit Director) most recently served as executive producer and second-unit director on Ron Howard’s *Frost/Nixon*, *Angels & Demons*, *The Da Vinci Code*, *Cinderella Man* and the Academy Award®-winning *A Beautiful Mind*. Hallowell started his career as assistant art director (and Ron Howard’s photo double) on Roger Corman’s *Grand Theft Auto*, which was Howard’s 1978 directorial debut. He subsequently served as art director on *Back to the Future*, *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*, *Fletch* and the pilot for Michael Mann’s groundbreaking television series *Miami Vice*. Hallowell moved up to production designer on *Adventures in Babysitting*, *Burglar*, *Vital Signs*, *The Dream Team*, *Class Action* and Howard’s *Parenthood*. He directed the second-unit sequences in *Striking Distance*, *Adventures in Babysitting* and *Money Train*. Continuing his collaboration with Howard, Hallowell served as associate producer/second-unit director on *Backdraft* and *Far and Away*, and he multitasked as executive producer, production designer and second-unit director on *The Paper*. For Howard’s award-winning *Apollo 13*, he repeated his duties as executive producer/second-unit director and received, along with producer Brian Grazer, Producer of the Year honors from the Producers Guild of America. He also worked as executive producer/second-unit director on Howard’s projects *Ransom*, *EDtv*, *The Missing* and the box-office hit Dr. Seuss’ *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.

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### JULIANNE JORDAN

Julianne Jordan started her music supervision career when director Doug Liman brought her to a little independent movie called *Swingers*. The film ignited the “swing” craze in the 90s, spawned a new type of vernacular, and pushed the interest in retro swing music into hyperdrive. The soundtrack quickly went gold and Julianne has not stopped working since.

Julianne has enjoyed a fruitful collaboration with Doug Liman on all of the films he directed, including *Go*, *The Bourne Identity*, *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*, and the 2010 release of *Fair Game*. Julianne has also supervised such hit films as *The Italian Job*, *Valentine’s Day* and *Red*.

In 2007, Julianne supervised the blockbuster family film *Alvin and the Chipmunks*, where she lent her expertise in helping to create an entirely new soundtrack with songs featuring that world-recognized chipmunk sound. *Alvin and the Chipmunks* is now a platinum-selling soundtrack and earned Julianne an American Music Award for Best Soundtrack. She also received a gold album for her work on *Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel*.

Julianne is currently working on *Hop* for Universal Pictures and *New Year’s Eve* for Warner Brothers.

No stranger to performing, Julianne is an accomplished violist who studied her craft at Skidmore College. Julianne is currently serving her first term on the Board of Governors for the Los Angeles Chapter of NARAS.

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### MIKE KNOBLOCH

Recently named President of Film Music and Publishing for Universal Pictures, Mike Knobloch has spent the last two decades overseeing music for film. Prior to his new post at Universal, Knobloch was Executive Vice President at Fox Music. From that post, he has supervised music on dozens of Fox’s films, from low budget to tent-pole productions. Highlights include overseeing the scores and soundtracks of *Titanic*, *X-Men* (1-3), *Romeo & Juliet*, *Fight Club*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Drumline*, *Ice Age* (1-3), *I Robot*, *Walk The Line*, *A Good Year*, *Man On Fire*, *The Devil Wears Prada*, *The Simpsons Movie*, *Alvin And The Chipmunks* (1-2), *Horton Hears A Who*, *Marley And Me*, *The Secret Life*

*Of Bees*, and James Cameron's *Avatar*.

He is President of The Recording Academy Los Angeles Chapter and has served on the Board of Governors in L.A. for several years. Mike is an active supporter of The Academy's GRAMMY U initiative and other mentoring programs such as National GRAMMY Career Day and has hosted various film screenings and panel discussions. In 2005, he founded the film-scoring curriculum of the GRAMMY Foundations GRAMMY Camp a summer program that immerses high school students in professional film scoring, among other disciplines of the music industry.

Knobloch is an active alumnus of Northwestern University and a member of the NU Deans Advisory Committee. He is a host and advocate for the school's internship program. Born and raised in New York, he lives in Los Angeles with his wife and children.

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## **CHRISTOPHER LENNERTZ**

Christopher Lennertz is a composer, producer, conductor, and arranger for film, television, video games, and records. He has studied with Academy Award winner Elmer Bernstein, David Raksin, and Christopher Young and has a degree in composition from USC's Thornton School of Music. He has worked with such artists as Basil Poledouris, Michael Kamen, Mark Mancina, Ozomatli, The RZA, and Alien Ant Farm. He was named Best New Composer in 2002 by Cinemusic for his work on Clive Barker's *Saint Sinner*. His collaboration with Ozomatli on their record *Street Signs* garnered a Grammy Award for best Latin Rock Album. He won an Interactive Academy Award in 2004 for *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* from EA, was nominated again in 2006 for Activision's *GUN*, and was also nominated in 2006 for an Emmy Award for his music on the Warner Brother's series *Supernatural*, produced by McG. In 2007, his eclectic score for *Tortilla Heaven* won the Filmmusic Award for Best Independent Feature Score. In the winter of 2008, he scored Fox's blockbuster *Alvin and the Chipmunks*, which has earned over \$350 million worldwide as well as the comedy *Meet The Spartans*, which opened at number one in the U.S. Box Office. Recently, Lennertz has scored *Disaster Movie*, *The Open Road*, *The Godfather Part II* for Electronic Arts, Activision's *Quantum of Solace* and the award-winning drama, *ADAM*, for Fox Searchlight. Coming up next, is *Cats and Dogs 2* for Warner Brothers and Fox's *Marmaduke*. At only 38 years old, Christopher Lennertz has scored 39 feature films, 5 network television series, many of the worlds biggest interactive titles, and has spent weeks on the Billboard charts. Mr. Lennertz currently lives and works in Los Angeles and is represented by the Kraft-Engel Management and Format Entertainment.

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## **CHRISTINE RUSSELL**

Christine Russell's impressive career in the music industry spans nearly 20 years, with the last 12 of them spent in the music representation business. In 2004, Christine co-founded Evolution Music Partners (EMP), a talent agency that represents top composers, music supervisors and recording artists for film, television and all forms of visual media. EMP's clients have worked on critically acclaimed, award-winning, and hit films such as "Sweeney Todd", "Lost In Translation", The "Saw" franchise of films, "The Last King of Scotland", "Tsotsi", "500 Days of Summer", "Zodiac", "A Single Man", popular television shows such as "Dexter", "Big Love", "Survivor" and "Numbers", "The Event", "\$#! My Dad Says". Christine has also worked with some of the biggest national and global brands, placing music on advertising campaigns for Chase Bank, Sheraton Hotel, Nintendo, Rock Band, Clairol, Chevy, among many others. In Evolution Music Partners, Christine and her partner Seth Kaplan have built a diverse company that is an innovator in providing a range of services to its clients that is in tune with the current media music marketplace.

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## **Moderator Biography**

### **ERIC POLIN**

Eric Polin is Sr. Vice President of Music Publishing at Universal Pictures where he oversees the administration of their film and TV music catalog dating back to 1928. Previously, he was a partner at Wixen Music Publishing where he oversaw the publishing administration of some of the top songwriter/artists in the industry. Mr. Polin has been quoted in The New York Times, and his opinions have been published by Billboard magazine, The Hollywood Reporter, and the U.S. Copyright Office. He has worked in many areas of the entertainment industry, including motion pictures, television, home video, and music. Mr. Polin currently serves as Vice President of Copyright Conference, where he has participated on and/or moderated various panels and has authored the hauntingly unforgettable CCC newsletter article entitled "The (Lost) Art of Mechanical Licensing." He holds an MBA from the University of Southern California and a BA in Economics from UCLA.

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