

1.) 2020 Cinema Musica - 7 Sep 2020 - Vincent Ott

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Composers Introduce Themselves

Hi, I'm Vincent, I'm 24 years old and I'm from Wiesbaden.

I've been working as a film music composer in the UK for a year now. How did this happen?

This is my story:

I was born in Frankfurt in 1996 and grew up in Wiesbaden. I've been studying piano, choir, drumming and percussion at the 'Wiesbadener Music - & Kunstschule' (Wiesbaden school of music and arts) since I was four years old. Back then, as a child my teachers always used to encourage me to compose music and support me as well as they could. I'd also started writing songs from an early age, which I would then perform with various different school bands.

I was given an entirely new perspective on things when I joined the video club at my high school. I was able to gain insights into composing and producing music for various short films ('learning by doing' in my self-assembled studio in the basement). It fascinated me just as much as performing with my band did and it also opened a door to writing music for film.

First Success at 'Dein Song' ('Your Song')

I used to send my compositions to various competitions. My biggest success in my teens back then was my song 'Shades and Shadows' being sung by Cassandra Steen in the finale of the ZDF-production 'Dein Song'. As a result I was entirely sold that I simply had to do something to do with music once I finished high school.

Studying music in London

After my Abitur (high school graduation) I moved to the UK in fall 2014 to study music at City University London, majoring in piano performance but also studying film music and recording techniques. During this time I developed a strong passion for electronic and abstract composition, as well as for latin music, especially for Samba. I was part of the percussion band 'Rhythms of the City' for many years with which we've performed many gigs, amongst others also international gigs in Scotland and Germany. Our repertoire consisted of various Brazilian genres, which significantly influenced my style of writing music.

Intermezzo in Hollywood

In the summer of 2015 it already became clear to me that my studies for the Bachelor of Music needed an extra spin to them. I packed my bags and relocated to Los Angeles for three months - obviously, where else? After all, every single up and coming film composer wants to be here!

I was able to shadow composer Ian Honeyman in Santa Monica and I could assist him in a professional environment. After hours I tried to network and I met film director Drew Stewart, who asked me to score his film 'The Brazilian Connection'. Since large parts of

the film are set in Brazil I was able to make use of my experience of playing latin music for many years. I let the music I've learnt, especially so Samba, influence my scoring of the film. I combined the swing and the sound of caixas, surds and chocalhos with distorted guitars and synthesizers to project the dark tone of the Brazilian drama. In L.A. I was first introduced to library music, which would prove to be very important later on.

Distinction in completing my Postgrad in Film Music

Back in the UK I completed my Bachelor of Music in 2017 and moved on to study at the Royal College of Music (RCM) in London, where I completed a postgrad in 'Composition for Screen'. With its time-honored 'Harry Potter-esque' buildings, the RCM had a focus on classical music, which led me to write increasingly for larger orchestras. I would then record this music in the studio of the college with other music students. For this reason, my output back then was mainly traditional, orchestral film music. However, I would still let my passion for Brazilian music and contemporary genres inform my writing decisions. Another focus of my master degree was scoring short films by film students of other universities. These were mainly animated shorts and working on them taught me a great deal of techniques for scoring animation. Fortunately, some of these films went on to participate in film festivals and I was happy to be awarded 'Best Original Film Score' for one of the shorts.

Composing for the US-Gameshow 'Master Minds'

Ever since my return from L.A. I had been producing music for libraries and also for several gameshows with Ian Honeyman. Recently, our music for the gameshow 'Master Minds' had been on TV all across the US.

Likewise, I'd always been working on real-world film music productions during my master in London as for instance for composer Ilan Eshkeri and music producer Steve McLaughlin. Witnessing the creation of the soundtracks for the TV-Series 'Riviera' and the scores for 'Ghost of Tsushima' and 'The Sims', really broadened my academic horizons.

Graduation at the Royal College of Music

Ever since graduating from the Royal College of Music in 2019 I've been working with film music composers Sunna Wehrmeijer and Peter Bateman. Sunna and Peter had just relocated from Los Angeles to Salisbury and hired me to work in their studio. Here I spend my time writing for Netflix, as for instance 'Spirit Riding Free', 'She-Ra and the Princess of Power' and 'Scooby-Doo and Guess Who?'.
So this is where I am. What's on the cards for the future?

Who knows really, but I would be very interested in heading L.A.-wards again, as soon as the turmoil around Covid-19 has lifted a little.