



by Steve Eliau

This series is dedicated to the men and women who work behind the scenes in the film industry. These are the people who don't get interviewed for the special features on DVDs, who don't get recognized by the Academy, even in the special pre-recorded ceremonies. They are the ones whose names pass by at the end of the credits, when the audience has left the theater and the usher is sweeping up empty soda cups and popcorn crumbs. Of course, they're also the people at parties who can talk about their jobs without boring their friends, because almost

everybody wants to know more about the movies.

NAME: Darius Holbert

TITLE: Film Composer, Musician

JOB DESCRIPTION: I write the songs that make the young girls cry. Or get killed by a crazed hobo at the lake. Or set sail to the future in a shiny machine. Or point at a scary moment with ear-splittingly high-pitched strings.

SELECTED CREDITS: Feature films such as *Worlds Greatest Dad*, starring Robin Williams, and *Shrink*, starring Kevin Spacey. Other credits include *Treevenge*, *Walking Wounded*, *Kung Fu Joe*, *Downsized*, *Oh Baby*. TV credits include *Lost*, *Grey's Anatomy* and *Desperate Housewives*.

HOW YOU GOT YOUR START/WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO GET INTO THIS FIELD: I've been a musician all my life. I started piano and composition lessons around ages 3-4, toured Australia with and wrote and directed a choir before I was in my teens. I fronted a rock band out of Dallas playing honky-tonks in Louisiana and Oklahoma before I could drive. I studied music at London's Royal Academy of Music and the University of North Texas. I moved to LA 10 years ago to continue the saga, playing and recording for folks as varied as the Wu-Tang Clan to Sophie B. Hawkins, and from Bobby Brown to Everlast. I started solely focusing on scoring films about 2 years ago and I have been incredibly fortunate so far in my career. It's been a stone cold gas. But more than anything else, I'm just a down-to-earth guy from Texas who loves his job!

HOURS: Most, if not all.

ADAPTABILITY/ATTITUDE: The key to successful film scoring is to never let your attitude about your skill set get in the way. If you get tons of revisions and 3,000 notes about how you need to make this scene "like easing into a warm bath - more orange", always be open to other ideas, even if they come from a bunch of C students (producers) and high-school clarinet players (directors). You always have to work well with others, because the alternative is boring.

LOW BUDGET VS BIG BUDGET FILMS: I'd always rather work on smaller, cheaper productions. I know it sounds like poor economics (pun intended), but the creative freedom far outweighs any big payday. The bigger budget projects always have more ears to please - you have to go through the director, the supervisor, a gaggle of producers, the show runner's nanny, even studio bosses to get one cue across. If it's just you and two or three other super-energetic, un-jaded, talented people, better production ALWAYS comes through. I'm lucky to be able to get paid enough through working on many varied projects, which affords me the time to work on really cool, but lo/no paying productions.

ON WORKING IN NY: Since I live in LA, I LOVE working in NY. I've played there with a bunch of different projects and even worked on a film there; I've always had a blast and I have a bunch of pals there. I don't think there's any hope in hell that I could live there, but I was convinced I'd hate LA too when I first moved here. Now LA is a living, waking dream. Well, not quite that, but at least my wife lives here.

BIGGEST HURDLE YOU'VE HAD TO OVERCOME: Since I have moved to LA, I have had a bunch of successes. I was on a lot of folks' first call lists for session and studio work. I was musical directing and artist developing and even had had my own solo project get some good spins, so when I decided to make the move to scoring for film and tv, I thought I could slot right in. Not so. Almost NONE of my contacts translated into the scoring world, so I had to start from the bottom. I mean literally going on Craigslist and finding 4 minute student theses to score about a man in a wrinkly suit - just for copy and credit. It was a dark time, but I learned a TON about what to do and what not to do. Plus, not all the projects were arty filmographical/sociological nightmares with processed single-note-piano-of-varying-volume scores. Most of them were actually really cool, and I have continued to work with many of the directors on bigger and better things.

BEST DAY ON THE JOB: Pretty much every day that I continue to work on good projects is the best day. The WEIRDEST day is this one: I was asked to work at a session to write a '20s style crooner tune' about smoking weed for the new Bobcat Goldthwait film, featuring vocals by the guy who does the Spongebob voice. So it was me, Bobcat, Spongebob and a couple of session musicians, singing about getting high. Crazy. The picture was just premiered at Sundance; it's called World's Greatest Dad, stars Robin Williams, and it's totally kickass. Bruce Hornsby's in it too and is hilarious! The best part about the session is that I had a 'Lame-Off' with Bobcat. (Me: "I musical directed Kevin Federline on The Tonight Show". Him: "Wow, but I was in Police Academy 4. I win")

ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO SOMEONE LOOKING TO GO INTO YOUR YOUR FIELD: It is a pretty tough racket, there's a ton of rejection, and you're either getting paid way too much or hardly at all. But there's nothing I'd rather do...hell, can do!

