

## COMPOSING MUSIC FOR GAMES & FILMS

by Adam Brown

My name is Adam Brown and I am a film and video game music composer. I have worked on a lot of different projects throughout the world since graduating from De Montfort University, Leicester in 2011. I have also studied in London at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music.

I have performed with many orchestras at some of the country's leading music venues including The Royal Albert Hall, Birmingham Symphony Hall, Royal Festival Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall. Performing huge symphonic pieces (on the tuba) really tempted me towards the compositional style of musical study rather than the performance side. I loved the adrenaline performing in concerts but wanted the musicians to be performing my own works instead! From an early age I have been a big film fan. I have always enjoyed watching films of any genre and listening to the musical scores so, when I was 20 I suddenly realised that I wanted to be a big Hollywood film composer!

Qualifications are very helpful but not always completely necessary. However, having an undergraduate degree as well as music A Levels and GCSEs is always helpful, as they will show you have a good level of understanding musical theory. This is always important for orchestrating film scores, which obviously does need a comprehensive knowledge of musical theory. However, not every film score has orchestral music, some scores are electronic which means that you do not necessarily have to be a top orchestrator to be a film composer - but it certainly helps.

My first film score commission was straight after graduating from University. To get the first few credits as a composer you need to expect to work for free. This is not always the case but it certainly allows you to gain experience, which in turn can give you confidence to move on to bigger and better projects. My first job was for a short horror movie called 'Playtime'. I worked with the director/producer James Briggs of Heightened Reality Pictures. The project was a psychological horror, which was produced very well with an ultra low budget. Because of the nature of the film I was allowed to have a lot of freedom in the score. This gave me the opportunity to experiment using techniques I had absorbed throughout my education. I used a full orchestra with a large percussion section and several ambient synthesizers to invoke tension and fear for the audience. This was a great experience and gave me the confidence to progress as a film composer.

When I compose for a project I am in constant contact with the clients. I regularly send the client different work-in-progress examples to keep them up to date with the score, which allows more time to alter and amend the version to the clients' satisfaction. So far, every client I have worked with has been very happy with my work and also pleased with the regular communication. This has allowed me to reach my potential in each individual project I have been working on. Each project has been different. Some projects have been very swift and the client has been happy from the first draft, whilst others have needed more time spending on amendments to satisfy their needs.

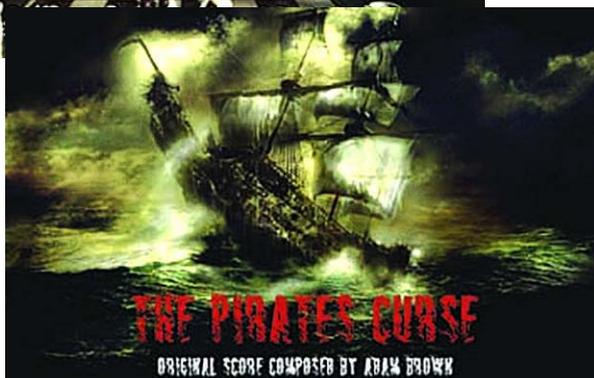
When I scored the low budget short film 'The Pirate's Curse' for Ric Lawes I had complete freedom in the score. This was great as it allowed me to realise my full potential as a composer and I produced the music which I felt was perfect for the film; sometimes this is not always possible if clients have distinct ideas about the score for their films. Ric Lawes is the CEO of Location Thailand and I have enjoyed working regularly with him in the past and have a few projects in the pipeline. The film itself was crying out for a mysterious yet epic score. It was a great project to work on and certainly one of my favourites so far.



Working on one of my earliest projects I encountered difficulties, which were a direct result of my lack of experience. It was a 90-minute production and, whilst composing the score, I hadn't fully taken into account the impact that the editing process would have on the length of each scene. The time-code I was working from was constantly altering so, although I got the score right in the end, it was a struggle and doubled the time I actually spent working on the film. Nevertheless, I had a great time on the project and was much more comfortable on the next job.

One of my clients, who has regularly come back to me for work is Ric Lawes, the CEO of Location Thailand. I have enjoyed working regularly with Ric in the past and have a few projects in the pipeline. My first experience with him was composing for the pirate adventure film, which again allowed me a lot of freedom. The film itself was a short production, which was crying out for a mysterious yet epic score. It was a great film to work on and certainly one of my favourites so far. Another memorable project was working on the film 'Ham and the Piper' by Prussia Lane Productions. Mark London knew exactly what he wanted for his film and this really helped me to compose a powerful score which (apparently) has had numerous positive remarks during the original screening with cast and crew. The film itself is very powerful - a drama about an elderly couple who have come from contrasting ethnic backgrounds.

I am lucky enough to be working with the best technology around; however, this was not the case even ten years ago. Technology has progressed so much in recent years and is now easily available to anyone. This allows composers to create world-class quality music from their home studio rather than having to employ a full orchestra. Obviously, in larger budget commissions, live music is used but that is not always the case for independent films with a limited budget. So really, technology has changed the way music is sourced for many shorts, independent films and games in the past ten years - perhaps not necessarily for the best as far as musicians and recording studios are concerned and not everyone who now is able to use the latest software has the same musical background in music that I have.



### FILM CREDITS INCLUDE:

Don't Let Him In, 2011 - Coldwood Productions (UK)  
The Pirate's Curse, 2010 - Location Thailand (Thailand)  
Scrabble, 2010 - Endboard Productions (UK)  
Ham & The Piper, 2010 - Prussia Lane Productions Limited (UK)  
Playtime Trailer, 2010 - Heightened Reality Pictures (UK)  
Playtime Feature, 2010 - Heightened Reality Pictures (UK)  
The Colne Engine, 2010 - Zenithfilms (UK)  
Natalie Story, 2010 - Bell Soto Photography (USA)

### GAMES:

The Curse of the Black Lake Prison, 2010 - AJ Square Inc (India)  
The Dragon Dance, 2010 - AJ Square Inc (India)  
Blood Knight, 2010 - iPwn Studios LTD. (USA)  
Stim, 2010 - Toolbox Productions (USA)  
Shattered Stars, 2010 - Team Impact (UK)  
Dots Re Energized, 2010 - Cubin J (UK)  
Specter Shadow, 2010 - Yoyobob Games (UK)  
Infested II, 2010 - Yoyobob Games (UK)  
Army Men, 2010 - Army Men (UK)

To hear samples of Adam's work go to:  
[www.adambrown.co.nr](http://www.adambrown.co.nr)