

Composer Adrian Ellis
is scoring the *strangest* film.
With the *strangest*
possible instruments.

THE MUSIC OF MADNESS

INDIECAN ENTERTAINMENT AND VERTIGINOUS PUNCH
PRESENT "THE MUSIC OF MADNESS"
FEATURING ADRIAN ELLIS WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY TATE YOUNG



THE MUSIC OF MADNESS

Director: Tate Young

Run Time: 52 Minutes

Colour | HD | 16:9 Full Frame | Stereo

Country of Production: Canada

2021

DISTRIBUTOR INFO

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LOGLINE

Composer Adrian Ellis attempts to score the strangest film with the strangest possible instruments—power saws, hammer drills, fishing wire and crowbars—in this riveting documentary about the power of creativity and experimentation.

TAGLINE

Composer Adrian Ellis is scoring the strangest film. With the strangest possible instruments.

SHORT SYNOPSIS (100 Words)

Composer Adrian Ellis is charged with scoring the strangest, most violent film of his career. He abandons his classical instruments to create music from items as ugly as the film itself: discarded metal boxes, power saws, jars, crowbars. He plays them with drumsticks, with violin bows, he pulls apart a piano and plays it with fishing wire. It's a creative and poetic documentary that takes us through the demanding process of composing a film score. **THE MUSIC OF MADNESS** is an exploration of the challenges and power of experimentation, hand-crafted for any filmmaker, composer, cinephile or musician alike.

LONG SYNOPSIS (175 Words)

Director: Tate Young

Runtime: 52 minutes

Composer Adrian Ellis attempts to score the strangest film of his career with the strangest possible instruments—power saws, hammer drills, scrap metal and crowbars. He plays them with drumsticks, with violin bows, he pulls apart a piano and plays it with fishing wire. It's an inventive and poetic mid-length documentary that takes us through the demanding process of composing a film score.

Adrian's a captivating guide; as VP of the Screen Composers Guild of Canada, he's a regular speaker at TIFF & HOT DOCS and recently interviewed Hans Zimmer for the DGC's signature TIFF event. Unafraid to experiment and fail, he hurtles through the uncertain work of crafting music from junk, equally at ease explaining sine-wave theory or cursing out rusting power tools.

He and director Tate Young have worked closely together for over a decade, which gives rare and intimate over-the-shoulder insight to the creative process. **THE MUSIC OF MADNESS** is an exploration of the challenges and power of experimentation, hand-crafted for any filmmaker, composer, cinephile or musician alike.

THE MUSIC OF MADNESS: DIRECTOR STATEMENT

What makes a classically trained screen composer decide to score his next film with a powersaw? To pull apart his piano and play it with fishing wire? Can he create an entirely new instrument from the sounds of junk? And how does a film score get made, anyhow?

Composer Adrian Ellis & I have worked together on films for almost a decade. We've collaborated on two dramatic features, numerous short films, documentaries, and commercials. THE MUSIC OF MADNESS began as an experiment while Adrian scored a short film I was writing & producing—the notorious underground festival hit TIMEBOX. If you haven't seen it, director Daelan Wood's opus is everything you could imagine in an 8-minute man-hunting time-travel clone-slaughter-fest. As Adrian best puts it, with a cackle, "It's disturbing."

So we tasked Adrian with scoring this strange, hyper-violent film and he decided to tackle it in surprising fashion—to build the music from items as ugly as the film itself: crowbars and metal boxes and hammer drills. He intended to play them with drumsticks, with violin bows, to record all-new hellish soundscapes. It was a genius hunch, but there was no guarantee any of it would work. At all. It could be a total and embarrassing failure.

I needed to see it happen, naturally, and wound up filming him for several days. I worked as my own camera / sound recordist, so what you get onscreen is an evolving conversation between a director and composer with a long-standing relationship—who've been talking about story and craft and music for years. And Adrian's a heckuva conversationalist. He's a regular speaker at festivals like TIFF and Hot Docs, VP of the Screen Composers Guild of Canada, and recently interviewed Hans Zimmer on-stage for

the DGC's signature TIFF event. He's equally great at explaining musical sine-wave theory and cursing out a rusting power saw with infinite f-bombs.

Perhaps because we've worked together for so long, Adrian was delightfully unafraid to experiment and fail in front of the camera. Repeatedly. And his inventiveness and joy in the midst of creativity is really what drives this show. He loves what he's doing, he loves the craft of it, and he loves the *moment* when an experiment creates a sound that no one else has ever heard. He even loves the bull-work of wrestling that raw audio into something musical that plays against the imagery of the film. Sometimes it works, sometimes it's just *weird*. But the audience is right there when the piano makes *that noise* you actively hear in the film later, and you experience the creation of a complete score in rare over-the-shoulder fashion.

With THE MUSIC OF MADNESS, we wanted to show an audience how a score is made, to explore creativity and craft. It's a film for artists, for musicians, for filmmakers and for anyone with a desire to step out of their creative box and try something completely different.

DIRECTOR BIO: TATE YOUNG

Tate Young is a multidisciplinary filmmaker whose work spans documentary, sci-fi features, investigative journalism, TV, and short films. He has directed numerous process-driven documentaries, including the viral-hit HOW INK IS MADE.

Young was picture editor on the investigative journalism series 16X9 (GlobalTV) for several seasons, and directed multiple doc series including: MADE IN TORONTO, Sportsnet's CANADIAN CATHEDRALS, Maclean's BEST RESTAURANT digital series, and BookTV's 3-DAY NOVEL CONTEST.

He directed the dramatic sci-fi digital series HAPHEAD, and the award-winning sci-fi feature GHOSTS WITH SHIT JOBS. His short sci-fi horror film TIMEBOX premiered on CBC's CANADIAN REFLECTIONS in 2018. His short film HYPERNOVA is currently playing the 2020/2021 festival circuit, and his script for the short film BONECRUSHER recently won the Directors Guild of Canada's Short Film Award.

Tate grew up in Fort McMurray and other northern Canadian mining towns as the son of two English teachers, and now lives in Toronto. He has worked as a professional fly fisherman, a lumberjack, and once owned a pink ambulance. The MUSIC OF MADNESS is his first hour-long documentary.

COMPOSER BIO: ADRIAN ELLIS

Adrian is known for his inventive, story-driven approaches to creating his scores. For his recent work on the single-take, split screen feature *Last Call*, he took up the challenge to record the score in single take, in front of a live audience. For *Timebox*, he restricted himself to producing music made only of “found objects”, including power saws, parts from a 1930’s radio, and a “bowed” piano. Whether using field recordings, a solo piano, or a 60 piece orchestra, Adrian is always hunting for a sound that is as compelling and unique as the stories he is helping tell.

Born in Canada to a musical family, he grew up partly in Germany where his father found work playing French horn in the Wuppertal Sinfonieorchester. There, he was immersed in symphonic and operatic music, and began to learn of music’s narrative power. As a boy, he could often be found dressed up in home-made costumes, acting out imagined scenes from Holst’s *The Planets*. He would later go on to study fine art and classical guitar, laying the groundwork for his career as a musical storyteller.

With over 60 credits to his name, Adrian’s feature film work includes his hybrid score for *The Scarehouse* (NBC Universal), the dark orchestral *Definition of Fear* (directed by James F. Simpson (*Merchant of Venice*)) and *Taken Too Far*, directed by Paul Lynch (Star Trek TNG/DS9). Television credits include themes for *Daily Planet* (Discovery), huge orchestral cues for *The CFL* and *International Hockey* (TSN), as well as music for Canada’s long running national morning show, *Canada AM* (CTV). He also works in the burgeoning world of web series, and is noted for the award winning scores for the

hugely popular, two-time Canadian Screen Award nominated *Out With Dad*, and the sci-fi noir *Haphead* (Canal+).

Recently, Adrian has been cultivating a second passion: leading in-depth conversations with great musical storytellers. He's had the opportunity to share the stage and chat with luminary composers such as Trevor Morris (*Vikings*), Robert Duncan (*Castle/Timeless*), as well as Oscar winners Mychael Danna (*Life of Pi*) and Hans Zimmer (*Inception*). He has developed and led panels for renowned festivals such as TIFF and Hot Docs, and organizations including The Canadian Film Center and The Directors Guild of Canada.

Adrian is the 1st Vice-President of the Screen Composers Guild of Canada, and an advocate of the value of screen music and the importance of the filmmaker/composer relationship.

PREVIOUS PRESS & INTERVIEWS

GlobalTV // Edmonton International Film Festival Interview

<https://globalnews.ca/video/5965151/eiff-2019-interview-with-tate-young>

CJSR Interview With Director Tate Young

<https://soundcloud.com/cjsrfm/music-of-madness-tate-young-interview>

VIEW Story With Composer Adrian Ellis

<https://www.viewmag.com/post/hamilton-film-composer-adrian-ellis>