

SHORT SYNOPSIS

A groundbreaking musical drama about a scientist whose own genetic history threatens her career, her lab and her life.

“Are you ready to kick the ass genomic?”

Dr. Lynn Magnusson is a brilliant geneticist racing to isolate a cancer-causing gene. All that's standing in her way is competition from a well funded French lab, a ticking biological clock that leads to a risky office romance, and her own fears that she might carry the same Huntington's gene that killed her mother. Based on the award-winning play by Electric Company Theatre, **The Score** explores the human elements and revolutionary implications of the rapidly advancing world of genetics and uses humour, music and dance to transform scientific ideas into universal themes of identity, freedom and creation.

SYNOPSIS

The Score tells the story of Dr. Lynn Magnusson, a woman at the helm of a cutting-edge but under-funded lab that is racing towards a significant discovery of genetics-based cancer research. In order to beat the odds at being the first to discover an elusive cancer trigger and maintain her funding, she contemplates sharing research and resources with a lab in Paris, headed by JP Martineau. Meanwhile she is being courted by Ameritech Pharmaceuticals, a multinational company that may be the answer to her lab's financial woes. The thought of joining forces creates dissension within her staff, as the researchers fear their work and recognition will be exploited. Ignoring their concerns, Magnusson forges ahead and furiously works to unlock the blueprint of the gene before her competitors.

The Score also juxtaposes the story of Dr. Magnusson with a musical composer whose studio is upstairs from the lab. Both are driven by great passion and determination. As Magnusson seek answers within her research, the composer strives to write a beautiful composition, seemingly driven by the events in Magnusson's own life. Ultimately his composition illustrates a metaphor between the genetic make-up of a human being and the notes of a musical score; if there is a note that is wrong, does it ruin the composition?

While Dr. Magnusson is singularly fixated on work and the success of the lab, she is simultaneously plagued by her own ticking biological clock. These two forces in her life soon collide when a torrid affair with Benny, her most promising young researcher results in an unplanned pregnancy. Until now Magnusson has ignored the possibility that she may have Huntington's disease, a hereditary progressive neurodegenerative disorder. Her mother's recent death plays upon her mind, yet she strives to put it behind her and ignore this potentially deadly note of her own genetic make-up. She has the ability in to test herself and

discover her fate, but so far has resisted. Now she must face her greatest fear - her fate is at risk, but also that of her unborn child. Dr. Magnusson must face the music.

Throughout the film, images of the graceful and particular movements of a dancer in the composer's studio interweave Magnusson's story. As we see the onset of the disease beginning to affect Dr. Magnusson, the dancer's movements become more erratic, begging the question, that if we alter a gene, what happens to the body or "the composition?" Does it alter the sound of the music, or the nature of humanity? Things begin to go awry for this strong and brilliant woman. At the very moment that her pregnancy test proves positive, Dr. Magnusson's Paris counterpart announces their intention to publish their joint findings alone and take credit for the research. Her world is falling apart. **The Score** raises these ethical and moral issues surrounding the genetics industry and its effects on individuals. How does one deal with the fact that they might pass on a genetic disorder to their offspring? How do patents and ownership affect the industry and the public? When is it morally acceptable to withhold findings from the general public? How much will determinism play a role in the future of the human race?

Told with humour, music and dance, **The Score** transforms the scientific ideas explored in the world of the laboratory into universal themes of human identity, freedom and creation. **The Score** portrays themes of genetic determinism in a world of rapidly advancing science. It also examines the necessity for an active dialogue between the public and scientists in determining what ethical guidelines will dictate the ongoing exploration of this brave new world.