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**Film & TV Music: H'wood Reporter/Billboard Conference**

**By Scott G (The G-Man)**

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Music for Film and TV:

A Report from the Hollywood Reporter/Billboard Conference

By Scott G (The G-Man)

"Forget the name of this thing," one audience member said of The Hollywood Reporter Billboard Film and TV Music Conference, "it's really all about the politics and money it takes to put your music in a flick." More than one attendee privately agreed.

The underlying truth of that position may explain the conflicting points made by the more than two dozen speakers. For example, Glen Ballard was optimistic while maintaining a healthy dose of pessimism. Mark Mothersbaugh was elated yet often reliant on quietly humorous sarcasm. Chris Douridas was excited while being realistic and determined. And so it went during the two-day event held at the Renaissance Hotel in Hollywood, with every panel member upbeat about many aspects of the industry while acknowledging that there are lots of problems.

Good News/Bad News.

The dichotomy of "good news/bad news" was handled by each presenter in his own way. Stewart Copeland (former member of The Police and now noted film and commercial composer) and Garry Marshall (director of hugely successful films such as "Pretty Woman") used humor to make their points about the economic realities of the business putting pressure on creative decisions.

"Every musician wants to work on 'A-level' projects," Copeland said, "but the fact is that many of us in this room will most often be working on 'Swordslayer 6' where your decisions might be very different." Film composer John Debney ("Passion of the Christ" and Marshall's "Princess Diaries" films) also noted how your career choices are influenced in unusual ways as you progress from first-time writer to recognized professional.

Writer/producer Ballard may be best-known for working with Alanis Morissette on "Jagged Little Pill," but he has an impressive list of credits in music, film, television, and live music. Stepping in at the last minute to deliver the Vanguard Address (replacing Dave Stewart, who had to remain out of the country on other commitments), Ballard noted that the record industry is experiencing problems, "some our fault, but some not." Of the former, the main cause is "releasing too many albums not worth \$15 or 45 minutes of an audience's time." The primary problem that cannot be avoided by the record industry is the proliferation of other entertainment choices. The only way to combat this, he feels, is through creativity and quality in the music.

Ballard struck a strong chord with many in the audience when he noted that "Blazing creativity is rarely recognized in the beginning," warning that "If imitation replaces inspiration, then we will elevate mediocrity far beyond what we've already done."

Using the journalistic concept of suppression as a stepping-off point, Ballard said "we've let the marketplace create a 'creative prior restraint' on what we think and what the industry will accept from an artist." While calling for a total dedication to the art and craft of music, he cautioned that "anybody can make a multitrack recording" but that there are "essentials: storytelling, melody, lyric, structure, and performance."

With the current industry recognition that commercial radio is horrible for music, Ballard further noted that artists should not even consider radio when composing. "The minute you go into writing, if you're thinking about radio, you're in the wrong place. Radio is in a different business from us. They sell advertising space and we make music. Occasionally our goals converge, but not often."

On a positive note, Ballard pointed to the increased opportunities for marketing music in games and telephones. Music in phones may be an especially important market, with "millions upon millions in China alone."

View from the Executive Suite.

Lia Vollack is President of Worldwide Music for Sony Pictures Entertainment. A former music editor and music supervisor, she has the ability to step in for hands-on assignments in addition to overseeing all aspects of film music and soundtracks for Columbia, Screen Gems, and Sony Pictures Animation. Additionally, she works with Revolution Studios, Sony Pictures Classics, and all Sony Local Language Productions.

Although she readily admits to the downside of the business, many of her statements were quite positive: "Artists are more committed to quality," Vollack noted, adding "Inspiration is the main point up front, and then comes the deal." She urged all those in the profession to "aspire to brilliance."

Chris Douridas is still most widely known for hosting radio programming on National Public Radio stations, yet it is his work as music supervisor and consultant that makes him notable in the industry. Among the many films on which he has worked are "Shrek 2," "Under the Tuscan Sun," "One Hour Photo," "American Beauty," the "Austin Powers" films, "As Good As It Gets," and "Grosse Pointe Blank." He is a consultant for Apple's iTunes and a part of Dreamworks.

"The challenge," Douridas points out, "is finding films directed by people with a vision that includes the music." Using examples of how music selections have interacted with filmmaker's concepts, he emphasized that it is "important to have the artist invested emotionally."

#### The Mark of the Composer.

From his days with Devo, the most dadaistic rock group ever released on a major label, up to his latest film score, Mark Mothersbaugh has brought a unique perspective to sonics and the business of having a career in the music industry. He has composed for a wide array of film and television projects, including "Rugrats" (TV, film and stage versions), "The Royal Tenenbaums," "Rushmore," "Thirteen," "Happy Gilmore," and the forthcoming films, "Lords of Dogtown" and "The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou."

Responding to insightful and often humorous questions from Melinda Newman, Billboard's West Coast Bureau Chief, Mothersbaugh covered a wide range of topics, including composing for commercials: "I always liked the creepy way commercials work their music into your brain." He agreed with Newman that "They're subversive." On the needs of filmmakers: "Directors are looking for music that compliments the universe that their movie has created." On composing for so many children's

television programs: "There are advantages to scoring kids shows. You can mix mambos and heavy metal."

Newman pointed out that Mothersbaugh did the music score for several films dealing with young women who were coming-of-age, including "Thirteen," "Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen," "Drop Dead Gorgeous," and others. "Is it difficult to get into the mindset of a teenage girl?" Newman asked. "Well, wardrobe is important," Mothersbaugh replied.

Also participating during the well-organized conference were such industry notables as Burt Berman, President of Music for Paramount Pictures, Darren Higman, Sr. VP of WMG Soundtracks at the Warner Music Group, Robert Kraft, President of Fox Music, and music editor/music supervisor Curt Sobel.

Additional observations included:

"Only go into this industry if you wake up with an ache to write or create." – Tamara Conniff, Co-Executive Editor, Billboard.

"If you're inspired to write something brilliant" for a film, even if it doesn't get utilized, "you've got another copyright for your vault." – Laurie Soriano, of entertainment law firm Manatt, Phelps & Phillips.

"The final song in a film's end credits might be called 'the janitor's song.'" – Lia Vollack.

"When I first started working in music at an ad agency, I couldn't figure out why so many mediocre people were getting to work on some great projects. Then it hit me: it was all about their connections." – Josh Rabinowitz, of the Young & Rubicam advertising agency.

"I like using great songs in my pictures. You know, not the ones that are there for the marketing that you bury by having five seconds of it on the radio as a car drives up to the camera." – Garry Marshall.

"A lot of this business is agent-driven, so we in legal are just scribes." – Laurie Soriano.

"Imagine watching a movie without the music. It would lack drama, intensity, and excitement." – Tamara Conniff.

<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com>

<http://www.billboard.com>

<http://www.glenballard.com>

<http://www.mutato.com>

<http://www.stewartcopeland.it>

<http://www.grooveaddicts.com>

<http://www.kcrw.com>

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Scott G writes and records as THE G-MAN, and his work may be found at <http://www.narip.com>, <http://www.delvianrecords.com>, <http://www.myspace.com/thegman>, and his own site: <http://www.gmanmusic.com>.

## **Advertise With A Billboard**

**By Rachael Cleipher**

Are you looking to make a strong advertisement for your business, event or just for fun? If so, than you already know that there are a ton of ways to advertise. Surely you've considered using the internet, the phonebook, the newspaper or even perhaps sending out mass emails or mailers. Perhaps, however, you have not considered advertising with a billboard.

Advertising with a billboard is great for many reasons. First, and most obvious, is that a billboard is huge! No one can drive by a billboard without seeing it, and that is exactly the kind of advertising you need for an important message. People may be able to ignore a small flyer in the mail or even an add in the newspaper, but it is unlikely that anyone will ignore your billboard.

Another great reason to advertise using a billboard is that it is visual. People love visual. Billboards allow you to combine color, photography and graphics, and words. This combination makes for a powerful message that cannot be forgotten. You will be hard pressed to find another advertising

avenue that has all of these elements for the public eye to see. No one has to surf the internet or purchase a paper to see your ad. Brilliant.

If you do decide to go with a billboard for your next advertisement, then do it wisely. Even the best marketing strategies can be horrible if they are done without care. So take time to think through the kind of billboard you want, the location that would be best for you, and the audience that you are trying to reach with your billboard. All of these details and more are vital to consider when you are trying to create the perfect billboard.

Realize now that you may not have all the skills it takes to properly advertise on a billboard. Don't be afraid to gather knowledgeable professionals and ask for their help. The more help you receive, the better chance you have of making a great and lasting impression with your billboard. Allow people to give you suggestions about how to market for a wider audience or about how to set your billboard apart from the countless amount of other billboards that line highways and roads.

Take your time, do the job well, and enjoy all of the benefits that advertising with a great billboard can bring to you and your company.

Rachael Cleipher has seen many great billboards her day. Unfortunately, she has also seen some forgettable ones. See more at

for the sake of your business and learn

how to create a billboard that works.



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