



ROY BEMELMANS

BIO

“Subtlety and impact don’t have to be mutually exclusive.” In this one phrase, composer Roy Bemelmans encompasses the unique musical signature that has established him at the forefront of today’s new generation of orchestral composers. The 31 year old Dutch-born Bemelmans has created an impressive catalog of scores and instrumental works for various ensembles, his work drawing parallels to peers and heroes like Wim Mertens, Max Richter and James Horner.

Growing up in his native Netherlands, Bemelmans discovered his identity as a composer amidst several years of piano lessons. While he was supposed to be practicing the music of others, he found himself spending more time developing and playing his own ideas. Pairing his desire for new themes and harmonies with his love of film, he found himself naturally drawn to composing in a cinematic style. The first official commendation of his talent came when, at age 17, he won the Dutch Music Olympiad, a national composition competition for high school students.

Encouraged by his win, Bemelmans spends the following years studying composition, instrumentation and music technology, and starts to seriously pursue a career as a composer. This leads to fruitful collaborations with some of Holland’s leading documentary filmmakers. His score to the 2008 underwater documentary *Eau de Bretagne* wins awards for best score at several underwater film festivals. In 2009 Bemelmans writes the music for Ton van Zantvoort’s documentary *A Blooming Business*, as well as for the documentary *De Onrendabelen (The Unprofitables)*, an indictment of social and political wrongs, directed by acclaimed filmmaker Hans Heijnen. The Dutch television broadcast of *De Onrendabelen* is watched by a million people. That same year Bemelmans receives a welcome recognition of his talent when he is awarded a grant by the Dutch Performing Arts Fund to assist him in continuing his training at one of the top programs in the field of film music composition, the UCLA Film Scoring Program.

He moves to Los Angeles in January of 2010 and immerses himself in Hollywood's film music tradition, learning from some of the best composers in the business and recording with LA's finest musicians. "Hearing the music that previously only existed in my head being brought to life by a group of talented players is an indescribable feeling that has greatly impacted the way I want to work. There's nothing like it."

After graduating from the program with distinction in 2011, Bemelmans starts working as an assistant to composer Andrea Morricone, son of Ennio Morricone and composer of the famous *Cinema Paradiso* love theme. Working with Morricone allows Bemelmans to learn more about writing film music in the expressive and much loved Morricone style.

Later that year Bemelmans joins the mentor program of the Society of Composers and Lyricists, one of the primary organizations for professional film, TV and video game composers in the US. And more hands-on training follows in the summer of 2012 when he is selected by ASCAP (the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) to participate in their prestigious Film Scoring Workshop with Richard Bellis. This workshop allows him (along with 11 other composers chosen from about 300 applicants) to experience top-level film scoring workflow by working with seasoned Hollywood professionals, as well as conducting a recording of his music with a 61-piece orchestra. The workshop also includes master classes from composers like Bruce Broughton and John Debney.

In early 2013 Bemelmans is invited to attend the Berlinale Talent Campus, a creative academy and networking platform for emerging filmmakers during the 63rd Berlin International Film Festival.

Currently dividing his time between Los Angeles and Holland, Bemelmans contributes music to various American and European productions. He has recently completed work on the independent feature *The Boarder* and the feature-length documentary *The Loving Heart*. And with every piece of music Bemelmans writes, he continues to fine-tune his compositional voice. "I think my music is very visual. It's evocative; people often start describing to me what they're seeing while listening to it." It is this visual instinct that makes him a good fit to write for motion pictures, and also assists him in responding to the basic challenge of film scoring. "When it comes to composing for film, I have to wear two hats. I write the music, but I also interpret the film dramatically. I'm constantly taking my composer hat off and thinking like a director, checking whether the music I'm writing is what the film really needs. Great music isn't necessarily great film music, and vice versa."

Although film music has always been a primary focus for Bemelmans, he is careful to remind that he considers himself a composer, not just a film composer. “Most of my music is not written to picture. And when I am writing to picture, I always strive to write pieces that can stand on their own.” Not surprising for someone who counts Billy Joel and Coldplay alongside Bach and Debussy among his favorite composers.

Though already an accomplished young composer, Roy Bemelmans is just getting started. “I am very passionate about writing music. I have to do it. And I can’t do it halfheartedly.” While his drive is blunt, his art is fine, capturing the attention and imagination of listeners and always exploring the perfect marriage of subtlety and power.

www.roy-bemelmans.com