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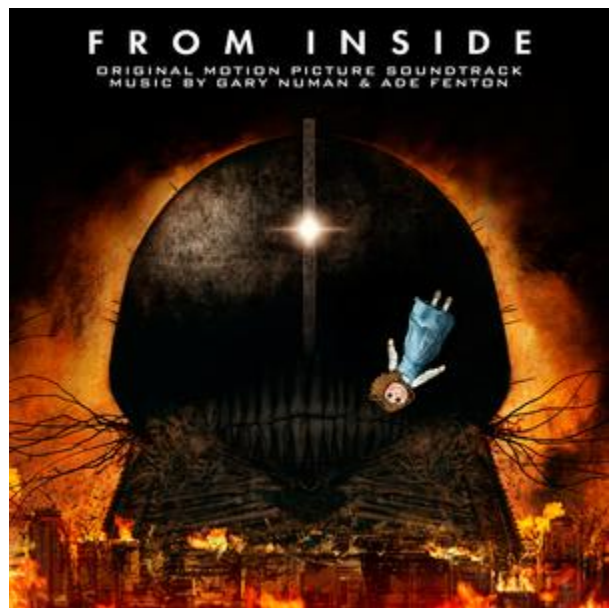
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A Conversation with Gary Numan & John Bergin Mike Ragona: John and Gary, what brought the two of you together for film From Inside?

John Bergin: Gary had just moved to LA and was looking to learn about film scoring. There is no greater place to learn about the world of film music than Lakeshore Records where I am Art Director, so that's where we crossed paths. At the time were preparing From Inside for release after a three year tour playing festivals. When Gary came by to introduce himself, it was perfect timing that we were looking for a final score to the film. For Gary, scoring From Inside was a great way to introduce himself to the process. For me, it was literally a dream come true, having been a long-time fan of his work.

Gary Numan: When I first moved to the US I introduced myself to a few people to let them know I was very interested in working on film and TV music. A few days after, I met with Brian McNellis at Lakeshore I had a phone call saying that they were interested in working with me on a special edition of John's From Inside animated movie. It was exactly what I was looking for. John was familiar with my music so it was a low pressure introduction for me into the



requirements and skills of film score writing. It seemed to me that I would learn a lot, without somebody screaming at me and beating me with a large stick, which is exactly what happened. John was so incredibly laid back and easy to work with but he knew exactly what he wanted.

MR: Gary, what is it about the story that inspired you most when creating the soundtrack?

GN: No one thing to be honest. The challenge and enjoyment of writing for film is that you are presented with a constantly changing flow of moods to enhance. Each step is a task that inspires, that pulls ideas out of you. The scenes I had the most fun with though were all those that featured the train. John wanted the train to always have a sense of purpose, a relentless drive. Once in a while though I was able to move away from that and make the train seem almost ethereal. I was pleased that John picked up on that straight away and allowed that to happen. I think the train is such a cool, menacing looking thing. Coincidentally, it was the train that drew me towards the idea of working on the film in the first place as I'd been working on a novel, still am actually, part of which is built around a large, menacing ghostly train that never stops. It was a strong connection for me, before I'd even watched the entire film.

MR: How did you approach it creatively and technically and how entrenched in the film did you get?

GN: Technically, I had a few problems at the start trying to get my software to do what it was supposed to. Being unfamiliar with how it worked in a film environment I stumbled a few times with that but nothing that delayed things too much. Creatively, it was surprisingly similar to how I write music for a Gary Numan album. I have always created the mood first and then let that guide me when it comes to vocals and lyrics. So, it was much the same except that I didn't need to bother writing lyrics. I simply started at the very beginning, the opening theme, and waited to see what ideas came to mind. When that was done I moved onto the next scene and then the next. I'm not sure if that's how an established score writer would go about things but it worked for me.

I think Ade worked quite differently in that he wrote a lot of things and then looked to see where they would fit, whereas I wrote specifically for each scene as it came along. Strangely enough, although we are credited with co-writing the score, we actually spent very little time together. I primarily looked after the first half, Ade the second half.

MR: How did Ade Fenton participate this time around and what's your history together? I had always assumed he was a kind of creative partner of sorts.

GN: I don't have a creative partner, to be honest. With the exception of just a handful of co-writes I have always written my own songs and have self-produced most of the albums I've ever made. Ade has produced two of my twenty or so albums, *Jagged* in 2006 and *Splinter (Songs From A Broken Mind)* in 2013, and we co-wrote the *Dead Son Rising* album, which came out in 2011. In fact, although that *DSR* album is credited as a co-write with Ade, in truth, we didn't really write it together. Most of the songs were mine and I offered Ade a co-write credit as I thought his production had gone beyond the point where a simple production credit would be enough, or fair, so I offered to share the song writing credit with him. He also added a couple of instrumental things of his own to it so it really was a joint effort and I was pleased with the end result. I think with the next Gary Numan album though I'll probably look for someone else to work with. I think it's important to ensure that things stay fresh. I've been working with Ade for a few years now, and I think we did some cool things, but I'm looking to try something else with the next one.

With the *From Inside* score, I knew that Ade was as interested in working in film as much as I was and so, as we'd just finished the *Splinter* album, it seemed like a good idea to work on the score together and see how it worked out. I worked on my half in Los Angeles and Ade worked on his half in England. We shared files along the way to make sure we were using the same sound pallet and that we were writing along

similar lines. There was also some cross-fertilization of ideas along the way so it's not entirely my half, his half, but it's not too far from the truth.

MR: John, the film is based on your graphic novel. What are the basics of the storyline and what is the history of its evolution into a film?

JB: *From Inside* is the story of Cee, a young pregnant woman who finds herself on a damaged train slowly transcribing its way across a bleak post-apocalyptic landscape. Cee struggles with memories of her lost husband and the imminent birth of her child as she and her fellow passengers seek food, shelter and a new home. The graphic novel is 360 hand-painted pages, published by Tundra in the mid-'90s. Tundra was the publishing company of Kevin Eastman, creator of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. He had formed the company as a place where writers and illustrators could push the boundaries of what was possible with comics. Around 2006, Lakeshore Records proposed the idea of adapting the graphic novel to film. The idea was to keep it simple; one animator, one computer. Compared to most CGI animated films with small armies of animators and rooms filled with servers, this was akin to limiting yourself to paper and pencil. I liked the challenge, though - to see if it were possible to emotionally effect an audience with such simple tools. The film took about two years to complete. It has screened in about 40 festivals around the world. I am most proud of my Best Animated Feature win at the prestigious SITGES festival in Spain.

MR: Fabulous, congratulations. Hey Gary, you've mentioned how your creative process starts with melody with vocals coming later. Has it always been that way, even going back to the Tubeway Army days? From an artist's perspective, how has your music progressed or matured over the years?

GN: I think my songwriting process has changed very little. I sit down at a piano and I write melody and structure as I always have. It's what comes next that's changed, and only then because of the sheer scope of choices that modern technology gives you. You create a bare bones framework, the heart of the song I guess, on day one. After that you add layer upon layer, the fleshing out of the song, until you have it finished. These days you can do so much more in that fleshing out stage than was possible when I first started recording. As far as the music itself is concerned I think the progression, if there is one, has come from simply growing older and learning how to express the many emotions we all feel in a more musically articulate way. It's being able to understand emotions as a human being first, and that took me a very long time as I have Aspergers, and then finding ways to feed that into the music. Most people have commented on the emotional content of the recent *Splinter* album for example. I simply wasn't equipped emotionally or musically do have done anything like that when I started out.

MR: John, was there any difficulty translating the novel's material to the screen?

JB: "Paintings that move" is the visual style I strove for. That was probably the most difficult thing to do - to not break that feeling of looking at a painting. If I were to show you a painting of a woman, for example, and ask "What do you see?" You would likely answer "A woman." But that's not true. It's a painting of a woman. We accept paintings as substitutes for reality--we suspend our disbelief. I wanted to maintain the emotional impact that comes with having still images be read as a substitute for reality--of feeling like actual events rather than pieces of paper or 3D models moving before your eyes. I would animate right to the point where my representations stopped becoming stand-ins for reality and became what they really were (drawings), then I would take one step back until they felt real again. I found that character animation got me to this switching point on a much steeper curve than animating inanimate objects. Considering *From Inside* is a story about people, it was a constant challenge to find creative ways to work around this problem.

MR: What is it about Gary's music or creative process that you admire the most?

JB: As I mentioned, I am a long time fan of Gary's work. I can remember the exact moment, years ago, when I first heard his music. I have always admired how he works outside traditional song structures, yet

maintains accessibility. His music has always felt like a singular experience, but never to the point of exclusion... if that makes sense? A lot of singular visions feel like "love it or leave it" statements. Gary's work, while singular, has always felt inviting and emotionally authentic. Those two elements - the unusual and the emotional - were perfect for *From Inside*. The film is reserved and dark (if the story itself had a sound it would be a quiet one-note drone). Gary's music brings life and dynamics to the film - something it really needed. I couldn't be more happy with the score.

MR: Gary, what do you like most about John's writing craft?

GN: Well, it's undeniably dark, but I love that. I love the way the story moves between dreams and reality, you are never sure what's real and what isn't. It twists and turns from beginning to end, you are never sure what's going to happen next. It's imaginative and inventive and it was an honour to write the music for it.

MR: Gary, what advice do you have for new artists?

GN: I don't mean to sound glib but my advice to any new artist is don't listen to advice. You need to know what you want and how you want to get it and you need to be confident, determined and resilient. You will probably, at various times, be surrounded by people who think they know best but, more often than not, they don't have a clue so ignore them all.

MR: John, do you have any advice to aspiring writers or filmmakers?

JB: Work. Hard. Don't stop.

MR: What does the future hold for both of you separately and perhaps together creatively?

GN: I have a new Gary Numan album project that I will start writing in January, a fantasy novel that I'm working on slowly but surely, a few more shows to promote the *Splinter* album, ending at London's Hammersmith Apollo in November, a huge update to my autobiography, a documentary, a couple of collaboration projects that are underway, a live DVD--two actually--and some other things. I certainly hope to work with John Bergin again in the future and I'm very much looking forward to seeing what he does next. He's a very talented man.

JB: I have a new comic to be published at the end of this year called *Wednesday*. Once again, I explore the post-apocalypse, but this story is brighter, faster (there's actually a joke or two in the book - along with guns, cars, and robotic sock monkeys [<http://epicwednesday.blogspot.com>]). The comic will have two accompanying soundtrack albums by Geno Lenardo (*Filter, Device*) and Daniel Davies (*Year Long Disaster*). I have a couple screenplays in development and am working on a novel that will be published late next year. Anyone interested in keeping up can find me on Twitter @JBXX or Facebook @john.h.bergin Of course I hope to work with Gary again! It was an amazing experience. Truly, a legend.