

Andy Quin - Nature, music, organs, and me!

For organist Andy Quin, composing music is as natural as breathing. Quin's music has been heard by most of us, but his name is largely unknown because you do not often see it in the credits. The music Quin creates is generally termed 'background' music. However, Quin has had remarkable success. His music accompanies adverts, films, trailers, games, and much more.

Quin has contributed music to hundreds of films, TV productions, and adverts throughout the world. He is also a performer and jazz pianist. His streaming figures are phenomenal, as is his support for fellow musicians. However, none of Quin's success would have happened had he not been drawn to organs and organ music.



Quin began classical piano studies aged four and, by the time he was eight, he had added pop/jazz organ and drums to his repertoire. It was on the organ Quin began performing. His first paid job was accompanying silent films in theatres including the Regent Street Cinema in London. By the time he was a teenager, Quin had his first professional summer season at a local holiday camp. He says, "I did everything, from accompanying singers and dancers to playing in the pit band. I also played for pantomimes and shows at many venues on the East coast of Essex - like Butlins, pier shows, accompanying Arthur Askey at the Ocean Theatre, and playing on Clacton Pier during the 1970s."



Quin played at the Colchester Hammond Organ Society after moving away from London and found himself among well-respected organists including George Blackmore who composed 'The Highlander', Brian Sharp who was a popular organist on the circuit, and Ena Baga, who was a performer who also appeared as an organist in TV programs and was a hugely popular player, among others.

As a teenager, Quin performed at many theatres and many different kinds of organs. His interest in improvisation, technology, and recording meant he became more interested in composition. After he graduated from Keele with a degree in music and electronics (and sometime before in truth), Andy turned his home into a studio complete with synthesizers, tape loops, and an array of speakers. He linked two organs to make a 4-manual console.

When Quin began composing music for films and TV, he had found his niche and the chance to create different sounds.

Now, about his successful career and how it works, Quin explains, "My 'bread & butter' work is Library Music or Production Music. This is music not produced for commercial sale to the public, but specifically for licensing for use in TV, film, adverts, games, videos, trailers, etc. The advantage from my perspective is that I just get to write and record music. I don't have to deal with directors, or strange 'unmusical' timings to follow a narrative, etc., as in the



Andy in concert at the Grand Piano

Andy's music has accompanied films including Victoria and Abdul (2017 with Judy Dench), Under Suspicion (1991), Trumbo (2015), and Ab Fab The Movie (2016) and productions including Lucifer, Parks and Recreation, Mary Berry's Country House Secrets, Location Location, and many more.

When Quin's career took off, it left little time for performing and for many years, he performed sporadically, but always kept his hand in. However, recently he has returned to performing

better-known 'music to picture' that most people know about. So, I write music, it's licensed to clients who will then either cut their images to the music or cut the music to the pictures. I have no control over what end users do, and also very rarely get a credit! I have done 'specially composed' music but did not really enjoy it much because there are too many external constraints."

Despite all the films and TV productions it is the adverts that people often remember - such as the After Eight Perfect Dinner Party and The OXO family. Many firms return to Andy's music for their campaigns including Nike, VW, Barclays Bank, and BA. His ad for Space Mountain proved successful for Euro-Disney and his music has been behind campaigns for

perfume, toiletries, cars, and drinks. His track, Awakening, which first came to prominence in the To The Wonder (2012) film trailer got taken up by Birds Eye Peas and was then licensed exclusively by Guerlain to launch their new perfume with Angelina Jolie.

regularly and has been welcomed back to the circuit. He has many performances lined up for this year and beyond. Comparing his two careers, Andy comments, "in 50 years of gigs, I doubt I've played to a million people live. But 2 billion streams in the past couple of years on YouTube is just incredible. The numbers are mind-boggling! So, from an earning perspective, composing has been vital. It is also immensely enjoyable and different from performing. I also improvised and composed from a very young age and always loved it. The two strands now co-exist with a lovely balance."

Quin's inspirations come from a variety of sources, but often it is when he is walking with his dogs or in his garden. Nature inspires with vistas, sounds, and movement and a special

bench partway along one of his walks, for Quin, is the perfect place to be inspired by the living canopy that surrounds him. However, while ideas may come from a bench by a wood, where Quin is immersed in Nature, he is always ready to embrace new ideas and technology and



Andy sound mixing in the studio



Andy in concert on Europe's largest Wurlitzer theatre organ, at the East Sussex National

now works with AI as well as more traditional recording methods and live music, to create his distinctive sounds.

Quin has worked for several music production companies but now records largely for De Wolfe Music - a British music production company recognised as the originator of what is now known as library music. The company was established by Dutch musician Meyer De Wolfe in 1909 and began recording music to use in talking movies. Working out of their Angel Studio in Islington, London, De Wolfe remains a powerful force in music. Quin has recorded over 90 albums for them so far and his album 'Mirage' was the first CD of the world's first digital music library.

At home, Quin possesses an Estonia 9' Concert grand, a pristine valve Hammond A100, a Yamaha HX1 and HX3, a Hauptwerk system, and a small J. Oaks and Son Pipe Organ.

About the author - Sammy Stein:-

Sammy is an author and columnist. She has curated a jazz festival, and written with some of the world's most respected musicians. She has won a Jazz Times Distaff award and Phace Magazine Music Book of the Year and has been commissioned twice by the Library of Congress (a huge honour for a non-US writer).

Copies of her books are now held in the British Library, The Oxford Bodleian Library, and Cambridge University Library.

Sammy is driven by her passion for music, and share the joy that music brings. An advocate for female musicians Sammy regularly supports upcoming writers and musicians. her work has appeared in Readers' Digest, WeJazz magazine, and other publications.

She writes for Platinum Mind, Something Else Reviews, and the Freejazz Collective.