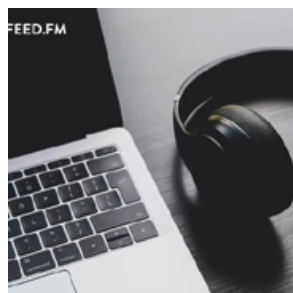


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Film & Television Music News



What's the best music API for businesses?

[01 Film & TV News] Who needs a music API? From the large wellness company that wants to make music an integral part of its in-app experience for its thousands of users, to the indie video game studio that seeks to use music to improve player immersion, to the fitness trainer who wants to stream a custom music station to motivate a workout session, any for-profit enterprise must obtain all the right licensing to be in full compliance with copyright law.

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Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore – James Newton Howard

Original Review by Jonathan Broxton

WARNING: this review contains plot spoilers. If you have not yet seen the film, you might want to consider waiting until after you have done so to read it.

The latest cinematic entry in J. K. Rowling's Wizarding World, after eight Harry Potter films, and the first two entries in the 'Fantastic Beasts' prequel series, comes this eleventh film, subtitled The Secrets of Dumbledore. Like the first two 'Fantastic Beasts' films, it follows the adventures of the magizoologist Newt Scamander, who becomes increasingly embroiled in the power struggle being waged between the wizard Albus Dumbledore, and the dark sorcerer Gellert Grindelwald, who wants to assert wizarding dominance over the non-magical 'muggle' world. The Secrets of Dumbledore picks up immediately where The Crimes of Grindelwald left off, with Grindelwald amassing an army of followers – including the orphaned Credence Barebone, who is actually a descendant of the Dumbledore family – while Dumbledore and Scamander travel from Berlin to Bhutan and beyond to try to stop him being elected as the Supreme Head of the International Confederation of Wizards. Eddie Redmayne reprises his role as Newt, Jude Law again plays Dumbledore, and Mads Mikkelsen replaces the scandal-plagued Johnny Depp as Grindelwald; these are joined by regular supporting cast members Dan Fogler, Ezra Miller, and Alison Sudol, while Callum Turner as Newt's brother Theseus and Jessica Williams as American witch Lally Hicks see their roles significantly increased.

The Secrets of Dumbledore is a much more serious film than its two 'Fantastic Beasts' predecessors, in the same way that the Harry Potter films all became less childish and more serious as they progressed. In many ways, Grindelwald's story is very similar to Voldemort's from the original series: he is a wizard who sees himself as superior to regular humans due to his magical nature, and as such seeks to assert his perceived dominance over them in any way he can. The parallels between Grindelwald's story and Adolf Hitler's rise to power prior to World War II are also very clearly defined, to the point where a great deal of this film's action takes place in Berlin in the 1930s. Themes relating to forbidden love – the youthful gay relationship between Dumbledore and Grindelwald, the magical/non-magical romance between Jacob and Queenie – are also prevalent, as are issues relating to family and heritage. It's also interesting to see how the 'Fantastic Beasts' story is also neatly



dovetailing into the origins of the Harry Potter story, which has already explored Dumbledore's relationships with his brother Aberforth and his sister Ariana, Grindelwald's fall from power, and how that all feeds into the eventual birth of Tom Riddle, aka Voldemort, in great detail.

The Secrets of Dumbledore is a slower, more thoughtful film than both 'Fantastic Beasts' and The Crimes of Grindelwald, more concerned with relationships and wizarding politics and shifting allegiances than grand spectacle and wand fights, which might alienate some younger audience members, but which I found fascinating. Having said that, the whole thing still looks spectacular, the production design is top notch, the VFX creatures are astonishing, David Yates's direction is assured, and there are still several fun and exciting action sequences, including one deep within the dungeons of a Berlin prison which veers from weird comedy to something approaching gross-out horror. It is all capped off with a predictably excellent score by James Newton Howard, who has scored all three 'Fantastic Beasts' films with thematic ebullience and a grand, orchestral, romantic sweep.

The thing that is most impressive about Howard's three scores in this series is its thematic depth; Howard has proven himself adept at immersing himself in the sound of magical fantasy across numerous films, as recent scores like The Last Airbender, Maleficent, and Snow White and the Huntsman, among many others, attest. What 'Fantastic Beasts' has over all these, though, is the fact that it gave Howard the opportunity to establish, then build upon, a huge array of character, concept, and location themes, as they re-occur in different settings across the course of the three films. Howard has worked with recurring leitmotifs before, and has written sequel scores to his own originals, but only in 'Fantastic Beasts' have these themes developed into a Star Wars-style tapestry of melodic content, and it's very impressive.

For The Secrets of Dumbledore, Howard revisits several pre-existing themes from the first two films, including the moody main title 'Conspir-

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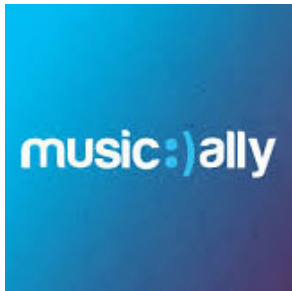


ALEXANDRA LIOUTIKOFF, PRESIDENT, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP LATIN AMERICA & U.S. LATIN

Universal Music Publishing Group (UMPG) has signed an exclusive, global publishing administration agreement with Univision to represent the network’s music catalog

[01 Film & TV News] As the largest provider of Spanish-language TV content in the US, Univision’s music catalog is part of its programming which includes award-winning telenovelas and other drama series, sports, reality and variety shows, news programming, and imported Spanish-language feature films.

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The trouble with licensing music in the metaverse

[01 Film & TV News] The latest episode of our Music Ally Focus podcast is out this morning: an interview with Vickie Nauman, founder of music consultancy CrossBorderWorks.

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acy’ theme, the soaring main ‘Fantastic Beasts’ theme, the theme for Newt and its ‘Newt the Hero’ variation, the jazzy theme for Jacob, and the Edward Scissorhands-esque Love/Friendship Theme that represents the romances between Leta & Newt, Tina & Newt, and Queenie & Jacob. Then, from the second film, the personal themes for Dumbledore and Leta Lestrange make brief appearances, as do the increasingly ominous musical ideas related to Grindelwald and Credence Barebone. For this new film we have one new character theme for Lally, the American witch from Ilvermorny School who joins Newt and Dumbledore in fighting Grindelwald, plus location-specific themes for the Kingdom of Bhutan and the German Ministry of Magic, and a concept-specific theme related to the terrifying Manticores which attack Newt and Theseus in one of the film’s most memorable set pieces. All this is surrounded by masses of Howard’s ever-impressive fantastical tones, which range from broad orchestral strokes to soft pianos, choral sounds which range from soothing to sinister, electronic embellishments, and even some light horror music for the more intense scenes of magical mischief.

I have read some criticism online about how Howard has ‘phoned in’ this third sequel score by relying too much on pre-existing thematic ideas, almost to the extent where music in this new film appears cut-and-pasted from previous ones, but I don’t buy that criticism at all. People said the same thing about John Williams and The Rise of Skywalker, but what people seem to be criticizing is the nature of leitmotif itself... except, of course, the thematic repetition is the whole point. That’s how it works. Once you’ve established a musical identity for a person, a place, or a concept, then that’s what it is. You can’t just create new musical ideas willy-nilly if you want to maintain consistency, and Howard’s musical consistency is one of the strengths of the entire franchise. There is development, there are variations, and there is creative interplay

between different ideas to illustrate conflicts and alliances, and I for one find it all remarkably adept.

In a score full of highlights, several cues stand out. I love the subtle undertone of wistful regret to “I’m Expecting Someone,” which underscores the opening scene of Dumbledore and Grindelwald conversing politely in a restaurant, but with vague hints of menace underpinning their cordiality, soft strings and voices accompanying a fast piano variation on the Main Theme, while solo cellos add emotional depth. “She’s Ready” underscores the scene in China where Newt watches the birth of a baby qilin, whose existence drives much of the plot of the film, and whose presence is accompanied by a magical, breathy motif for vocals and chimes, a foreshadowing of the Bhutan motif that appears later in the score. Some of “Wyvern Rescue” revisits the soundscape that exists within Newt’s magical suitcase, while the unusual electronic build up to the first full performance of the main titles theme reminds me of the music he wrote last year for Raya and the Last Dragon.

“Lally” offers the score’s first, and really only significant, statement of Lally’s theme, which is full of playful pizzicato strings and light metallic textures, as well as some fun fluttering and trilling woodwinds. It is sadly under-utilized in much of the rest of the score, but does re-appear in the end titles suite. “Call Me Jacob” is a wonderful combination of two themes: first, the lilting Jacob and Queenie romantic material as he fantasizes about reconciling with her, and which has a subtle undercurrent of loss and longing, and features a solo piano playing the chords from Jacob’s theme in a morose manner, before it eventually segues back into a statement of his main ragtime jazz theme.

The subsequent “Countersight” is an elaborate tapestry of interlocking ideas, underscoring the scene where Dumbledore explains his plan for stopping Grindelwald from disrupting the upcoming International Confederation of Wizards

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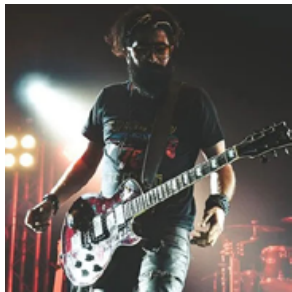


PHOTO CREDIT: SAM MOGHADAM KHAMSEH

Session wants to solve the music metadata mess — and unleash billions in missing royalties

[01 Film & TV News] In a nutshell, metadata is all the underlying information tied to any released song or album. That includes everything from song titles, songwriter cuts, producer names, publishers, the record label, and more. Think of it as all the info printed on the CD or vinyl jacket if you're a physical music lover, but expanded into a digital repository that can travel anywhere.

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<https://mubu.guru/BLXnt>

election to Newt and company while on a train to Berlin; it opens with a wonderfully buoyant and magical performance of the main 'Fantastic Beasts' theme, but thereafter moves around between Jacob's Theme, more references to the Jacob-Queenie romantic material for sparkling chimes and dancing strings, and numerous darker allusions to the Grindelwald and Credence motifs, plus the introduction of the new German Ministry motif surrounded by ground basses and subtle synths. Howard conveys so much information in this cue — offering some musical explanation for the motivation behind the plan, while linking Grindelwald, Credence, and the German Ministry together as the antagonists of the piece. It's so clever.

The sequence from "A Message to Deliver" through to "Let Him Stand" is unexpectedly dark and threatening, as it underscores the entire sequence where Dumbledore, Newt, and the company try to infiltrate the German Ministry of Magic to thwart Grindelwald's plans for dominance. Howard's music here is imposing; it concentrates mostly on the musical ideas related to Grindelwald and Credence and the German Ministry, and ranges from grinding dissonance to percussive brass and string motifs, eerie choral ideas, and even some more contemporary sounding electronic tonalities. Towards the end of "Insufficient Evidence" the music grows to levels of almost Wagnerian intensity, clearly marking Grindelwald's ascent with the parallels to Hitler's rise to power in Nazi Germany that I mentioned earlier.

"Kama's Memory" offer's the score's one and only reference to Leta's Theme — his late sister — an indicator of his motivation for helping bring down Grindelwald, and then "Same Blood" again offers lots of colliding musical ideas for the scene where Credence tries to assassinate Dumbledore on a street in Berlin, but is foiled and is instead told the real truth about his family history. Credence's emotional theme from the first score returns in the latter half of the cue, surrounded by the angry electronica referencing Credence's obscurial energy, while the Schindler's List-esque theme that is first heard at 3:40 appears to be some sort of variation on John Williams's Harry Potter Hedwig theme, perhaps a Dumbledore Family Theme? Eventually, "Let Him Stand" sees Grindelwald's motif from the second score rise to the fore, underscoring his bitter triumph, and is especially imposing when it combines with the militaristic, threatening German Ministry motif.

"Manticore Dance" underscores the first part of the sequence where Newt infiltrates the dungeons deep beneath the German Erkstag building to rescue his brother Theseus, but encounters hundreds of crab-like creatures guarding its passageways; to distract them, Newt performs a hip-rolling booty-shaking dance that mesmerizes the creatures, and Howard captures this moment with weirdly jaunty music featuring vaguely

Spanish influences including light jazz textures, guitars, accordions, castanets, and other tropical percussion — it makes the sometimes quite threatening horror of the moment seem absurdly funny, and is one of the film (and score)'s most memorable sequences.

Meanwhile, at a lavish banquet being held at the German Ministry of Magic, Jacob and Lally confront Grindelwald directly, but Jacob is mistaken for an "Assassin" and all hell breaks loose; in this terrific action sequence Howard revisits the stylings of "The Demiguise and The Occamy" from the first film, adventurous and elaborate and rousing, and which have a wonderful John Williams/Harry Potter flavor to the orchestrations. Interestingly, Howard also makes some clear allusions to the Jacob and Queenie romantic music, highlighting Jacob's motivations for confronting Grindelwald. Back down below in the dungeons, after a quick detour to explore the mischievous metallic Niffler textures in "Ted and Pick," we are treated to the one of the score's few major statements of Newt's hero theme in "The Escape" as Newt and Theseus sprint through the catacombs away from the manticores and to safety, amid an array of wonderful flashing brass fanfares.

Eventually the entirety of the action moves to Bhutan where Grindelwald — having been fraudulently exonerated of his crimes by the German Ministry of Magic — is now manipulating the vote to choose the Supreme Head of the International Confederation of Wizards by using the qilin he acquired at the beginning of the film; the animal can innately sense 'goodness' in people, and has historically been used to choose leaders, but Grindelwald is using one that he killed and then resurrected using dark magic, and which is now under his control.

"Kingdom of Bhutan" presents an extended statement of the Bhutan theme heard earlier in "She's Ready," with more of those lovely ethereal vocals and glassy textures. "Family History" is intimate and sensitive, and makes use of some pretty piano writing in combination with electronic chimes and a religioso choir as Dumbledore reveals that Credence is actually his brother Aberforth's son. This stands in stark contrast to the "Reanimation" scene involving Grindelwald and the qilin, which moves strongly into full-on horror territory with its groaning dissonant orchestrations and eerie choir. "The Room We Require" is sprightly and fanciful and anticipatory, and makes the spine tingle when it erupts into a wonderful reprise of John Williams's music from Harry Potter — the only one of several direct Williams quotes in the film to make it onto the album.

The first of the two big Bhutan action sequences comprises the cues from "Surrounded" through to "Case Chaos," as Dumbledore's mini-army attempts to confuse Grindelwald's minions by sending them on wild goose chases in pursuit of copies of Newt's magical suitcase.

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The electronic pulses in “Hey Fellas” add a layer of mystery and intrigue, and build to a brilliant showcase for brass, while “Case Chaos” features some tremendously complicated string and woodwind interplay, and some thematic allusions to both the Main Theme and Newt’s Heroic Theme, while the driving snare drum riffs in the cue’s second half add a whole new dimension, and occasionally remind me of 1980s James Horner.

Everything comes to a head in “The Vote” where – after Grindelwald’s bewitched qilin chooses him to be the leader – the music matches the wizard’s descent into full-on magical fascism with allusions to the Conspiracy theme, bubbling electronica, and eventually a massive, overwhelming eruption of Grindelwald’s theme, played in dark orchestral glory. Both Jacob and Dumbledore try to reason with the crowd in “He’s Lying to You,” to the combined strains of Dumbledore’s theme from the second film, and a heartfelt variation on Jacob’s theme, but Jacob is subjected to the cruciatu curse for his troubles, and it is not until the existence of a second qilin is revealed in the magical “The Twin” that the tide begins to turn.

The climax of the sequence is “He Sought to Kill, I Sought to Protect,” which underscores the inevitable Dumbledore-Grindelwald duel with dark, crushing electronics and orchestral dissonance, before eventually turning into a massive action sequence – huge Latin choir, huge orchestral crescendos – tempered with dark emotion and epic bitterness. Bested by Dumbledore, Grindelwald escapes, claiming “I Was Never Your Enemy” to sad, reflective, emotionally wrought orchestral tones making allusions to the Grindelwald textures, before the music – like the person – disappears like smoke into the wind.

The finale of the score is “The Ceremony,” which underscores the understated wedding between Jacob and Queenie, finally reconciled, in the back room of his Brooklyn bakery. Outside the store best man Newt bashfully meets maid-of-honor Tina to the lovely strains of the friendship theme, and then shares a heartfelt farewell with Dumbledore’s to the strains of his theme – the only really prominent performance – on warm, comforting woodwinds; the sound of the church organ at 3:35 is especially lovely. “Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore” is an end credits suite comprising a vivacious variation on Newt’s theme, a more richly orchestrated version of Lally’s theme, some magical choral textures, wandering woodwinds, romantic strings, and a playful version of the Main Theme; this is followed by “Heaven,” an original song by American jazz/soul vocalist Gregory Porter, which is really good; Porter’s voice is rich and smooth, the orchestral arrangement has a classic Hollywood sound,

and the whole thing has some tonal similarities to “When You Wish Upon a Star.”

I thought that The Secrets of Dumbledore was an outstanding score, yet another entry into the ever-expanding cache of excellent James Newton Howard efforts in the fantasy genre. The way it takes the building blocks from the first two Fantastic Beasts scores – all the different character and concept themes – and blends them with the new ideas, is very impressive. This type of musical world building is difficult, and rare in modern Hollywood film music circles, and the fact that James Newton Howard is doing it with such style and intelligence and emotional depth is something worth celebrating. Is it a step below the first two scores? Possibly, because the standards set by them are impossibly high, and also because it follows the tone of the film and is more concerned with interpersonal relationships and plot revelations than it is big action moments; as such, some may consider some of it a little meandery through its middle section. Speaking for myself, though, I was engaged for the entire lengthy running time, and I hope that the planned fourth and fifth films in the series actually get made, and that James Newton Howard gets to play with these fantastic beasts again in the future.

Track Listing:

- ▶ I’m Expecting Someone (2:15)
- ▶ We Can Free Each Other (2:38)
- ▶ She’s Ready (2:32)
- ▶ Wyvern Rescue (3:45)
- ▶ Young Man’s Magic (3:20)
- ▶ I Know You Are There (2:36)
- ▶ Lally (1:23)
- ▶ Call Me Jacob (1:42)
- ▶ Countersight (4:28)
- ▶ A Message to Deliver (4:08)
- ▶ Insufficient Evidence (2:08)
- ▶ Do You Know What It’s Like? (2:39)
- ▶ Kama’s Memory (2:34)
- ▶ Same Blood (5:28)
- ▶ The Erkestag (2:59)
- ▶ Let Him Stand (2:05)
- ▶ Manticore Dance (3:24)
- ▶ Go to Him (2:23)
- ▶ Assassin! (1:40)
- ▶ Ted and Pick (1:11)
- ▶ The Escape (2:31)
- ▶ Kingdom of Bhutan (2:46)
- ▶ Powers of the Beast (1:50)
- ▶ Family History (4:08)
- ▶ Reanimation (2:06)
- ▶ The Room We Require (3:16)
- ▶ Surrounded (1:13)
- ▶ Hey Fellas (1:36)
- ▶ Case Chaos (1:46)

- ▶ A Full Heart (3:48)
- ▶ The Vote (4:20)
- ▶ He’s Lying to You (5:23)
- ▶ The Twin (2:20)
- ▶ He Sought to Kill, I Sought to Protect (2:36)
- ▶ I Was Never Your Enemy (1:23)
- ▶ The Promise (2:31)
- ▶ The Ceremony (5:02)
- ▶ Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore (2:48)
- ▶ Heaven (written and performed by Gregory Porter) (3:53)

Running Time: 110 minutes 14 seconds

Watertower Music (2021)

Music composed by James Newton Howard. Conducted by Pete Anthony and Gavin Greenaway. Orchestrations by Pete Anthony, Jeff Atmajian. Philip Klein, Jon Kull and Peter Boyer. Recorded and mixed by Shawn Murphy, Peter Cobbin and Kirsty Whalley. Edited by Jim Weidman. Album produced by James Newton Howard and Michael Dean Parsons. ■



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