

# Trevor Jones turns 75



By [Martin Myers](#)

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Trevor Alfred Charles Jones, a musician, composer, conductor, film expert and with his extraordinary ability to paint feeling with sound that, when put together, have made his work truly great.



Image by Professor Alison Lewis.

Trevor Jones, nominated by *Time* magazine as one of the top five film composers in the world, turned 75 on Saturday, 23 March 2024.

His over 40-year career includes over 120 film and television productions, such as: *Mississippi Burning*, *Last of the Mohicans*, *Around the World in Eighty Days* and *Notting Hill*, and many more familiar and notable titles.

David Bowie listened to one of his scores and said that he was in awe of Jones' talent.

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He went on to compose many scores for Hollywood movies and TV series and has worked with directors, actors and musicians such as (these are randomly picked but signal the diversity of genres, styles and personalities of his colleagues) Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Ridley Scott, Robert De Niro, Sylvester Stallone, Julia Roberts, John Travolta, Al Pacino, Sting, U2, Sinead O'Connor, Britney Spears and Elvis Costello.

Jones is a jury member for the Oscars and the BAFTAs and, in 1999, became the first chair of music at the National Film and Television School.

He received the title of Fellow of the British Royal Academy of Music in 2006.

It all started at about age five, when Jones used to go to the Gem Cinema in Woodstock. The projection equipment was so old and worn out that often the picture and the soundtrack became disconnected. He (curiously) was already very aware of the relationship between image and sound, and tuned in to the emotional effect of music in the movie. He said to his mother – “I’d love to write music for film”. So (at the age of 5) he had already articulated his calling.

He took his first piano lessons at the age of 10, describing himself as a hypersensitive kid with a stammer, drifting around the schoolyard humming Schubert’s 8th, getting bullied and afraid of gangsters.

At 17, he was awarded a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he studied composition, orchestration, conducting, piano and organ. Then, to the University of York where he studied jazz, pop, rock, folk, avant-garde and electronic music. This eclectic mix allowed him to write scores which combined ancient instruments such as the dulcimer and the shakuhachi with a full symphony orchestra, synthesisers and reverb units, kalimba, claves and chimes.

He graduated with a master’s degree in Film and Media Music, and then studied at the National Film and Television School. There he made sure that he gained experience as part of the lighting team, operating the camera and being involved in the pre and post-production stages.

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With his all-encompassing knowledge of musical instruments, musical styles, composition, electronics and film, he is able to

imagine a whole which has been described as revolutionising music in film.

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