

Thelma and Louise

Sometimes the right people come together at the right time to make the right movie for the right audience. Certainly it happened in 1969 with *Easy Rider* and certainly it happened in 1991 with *Thelma and Louise*, a film where each of its creative elements came together and resulted in a film that truly struck a chord with audiences and critics. A road movie, a buddy movie, a comedy, a tragedy, *Thelma and Louise* became an instant classic. The *New York Times* review said it all:

“Their adventures, while tinged with the fatalism that attends any crime spree, have the thrilling, life-affirming energy for which the best road movies are remembered. This time there’s a difference: The story’s daring anti-heroes are beautiful, interesting women. Mr. Scott’s *Thelma and Louise*, with a sparkling screenplay by first-time writer Callie Khouri, is a surprise on this and many other scores. It reveals the previously untapped talent of Mr. Scott (best known for majestically moody action films like *Alien*, *Blade Runner*, and *Black Rain*) for exuberant comedy, and for vibrant American imagery, notwithstanding his English roots. It reimagines the buddy film with such freshness and vigor that the genre seems positively new.”

The casting is so right that it’s impossible to imagine this film with anyone else playing any of the roles. Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis are perfection as Thelma and Louise, both delivering multi-layered and iconic performances. Harvey Keitel is their equal as Detective Hal Slocumb, and Michael Madsen, Christopher McDonald, and Brad Pitt are all excellent in supporting roles. Equally right is the great photography by Adrian Biddle. Ridley Scott’s direction is, as always, impeccable – his visuals and direction of the actors brings out every nuance of the story and the landscape against which it plays. Although we know the story cannot end well for Thelma and Louise, the

film has a final shot that is one of the most oddly exhilarating images in all of cinema – death as the ultimate freedom.

Every creative component of the film is masterful – from direction, writing, acting, editing, photography, art direction, costuming – it’s all of a piece and that includes the great score by Hans Zimmer. Zimmer, born in 1957, began scoring films on his own in the 1980s with projects like *A World Apart*, *Paperhouse*, and others. But it was in 1988 that he got his big break, scoring the Barry Levinson film *Rain Man*. *Rain Man* was a smash, and Zimmer received his first Oscar nomination. Then came *Twister*, *Black Rain*, and *Driving Miss Daisy*, and since then he has been one of the most successful film composers in history, composing scores for such hits as *Days Of Thunder*, *A League Of Their Own*, *The Lion King*, *As Good As It Gets*, *Crimson Tide*, *The Rock*, *The Prince Of Egypt*, *Gladiator*, *Hannibal*, *Pearl Harbor*, *Black Hawk Down*, *Batman Begins*, *The Da Vinci Code*, *Pirates of the Caribbean 2 and 3*, *Kung Fu Panda*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Inception*, and many, many others. He has been nominated for eight Academy Awards and taken home the prize once – for *The Lion King*.

Zimmer’s score for *Thelma and Louise* captures Scott’s visuals and the tone of the film perfectly. While there are a fair number of pop songs used in the movie, it’s Zimmer’s twangy, mournful, exciting, hard-driving, bluesy music that really propels the film and helps give it its distinctive feel. In a *Film Score Monthly* interview, Zimmer, discussing his approach to film scoring, stated, “...I’m cantankerous and opinionated. I compose from a point of view. Point of view is the most important thing to have and it doesn’t necessarily have to be the director’s point of view. In fact, great directors welcome disagreement and something new to the party. The bottom line is I’m trying to serve the film just like the director is trying

to serve the film.” The first thing Zimmer wanted in serving the film of *Thelma and Louise* was a guitarist named Pete Haycock, whose playing Zimmer had loved as a teen. And his incredible performance on the soundtrack is as much a character in the film as its two leading ladies.

Interestingly, as originally planned by Ridley Scott, the film was to have no main title sequence and the first cue of Zimmer’s score, “Going To Mexico” was to be heard around thirty-five minutes into the film, with only source music heard prior to that. But apparently when Scott heard “Going To Mexico” he really liked it and wanted it up front, and so he added the main title sequence, where it fades in about eight seconds into the cue, edits into some of “The Hell With Texas,” edits back into “Going To Mexico” and bumps out early, going directly to a source music cue.

Thelma and Louise had a soundtrack release on MCA that was all songs save for one track, “Thunderbird.” That track was assembled specifically for that album. It basically pieced together parts of three cues: The beginning of track 14 (“Thelma and Louise”), the middle of track 8 (“Suck My Dick”), and the end of track 11 (“Charged With Murder”) – all with a slightly different mix and more of an ending. For this first ever release of the film score, we present all the music as Zimmer recorded it for its use in the film. As sometimes happens, a few of the cues were shortened for the movie, but we left them in their entirety for the CD. As a bonus, we also include the “Main Title” cue exactly as it is edited in the movie. It’s a real pleasure to finally bring Zimmer’s wonderful score to CD – it’s been way too long in coming.

— Bruce Kimmel