

# Arya Kumar

## Clevelands #1 Film Scorer

How many times have you heard someone say, "Let's go see a movie?" Probably more than you can remember. But when have you ever heard someone say, "Let's go hear a movie!" Probably never. And that's how it should be, according to film composer Arya Kumar, whose scores can be heard in such films as "The Joker's Card," "Crops" and "Alone."

Kumar began training introductory classical piano at age nine in Kuwait, and continued formal classical piano lessons for 14 years, with one year off after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. Having studied in different countries, playing in several rock bands and groups in the US, learning the sitar, tabla and intricacies of Hindustani music, and, of course, exploring western orchestral scoring, Kumar brings vast knowledge and unique experience to his musical scores. "Music is my passion. I put it off as a hobby, but it's become semi-professional right now," he said.

Kumar decided to write scores of his own music that could be used for film and TV. Three years ago that decision paid off when director Johnny Wu chose him to score his award-winning superhero parody "The Joker's Card." "Talking with Johnny Wu was interesting. He wanted to combine the 60's Batman series with the 90's Batman movies and introduce some of his own styles as well," said Kumar.

Initially, Kumar used the internet to network until becoming involved with the film community in Northeast Ohio. "I prefer working face-to-face than over the internet. It's exciting to see the process," he said.

Other films that Kumar worked on are "Alone," about the life of a hacker who works for the wrong people, and "Crops," about aliens who return to earth to harvest. Both are by director George Butiri and his company Two Martinis Productions out of Cleveland.

Kumar was approached by Butiri half way through post production of "Alone." "I contributed half of the soundtrack to the movie. My contribution is more of a piano-based score. I worked more on the piano-based portion and George contributed more of the techno," he said. "Crops" is not ready for the score process yet but Kumar anticipates a heavy workload for this feature length film with a "decent soundtrack release." "We talked about some orchestral, some techno and a vocal release - a very 'Hollywoodesque' score," he said.

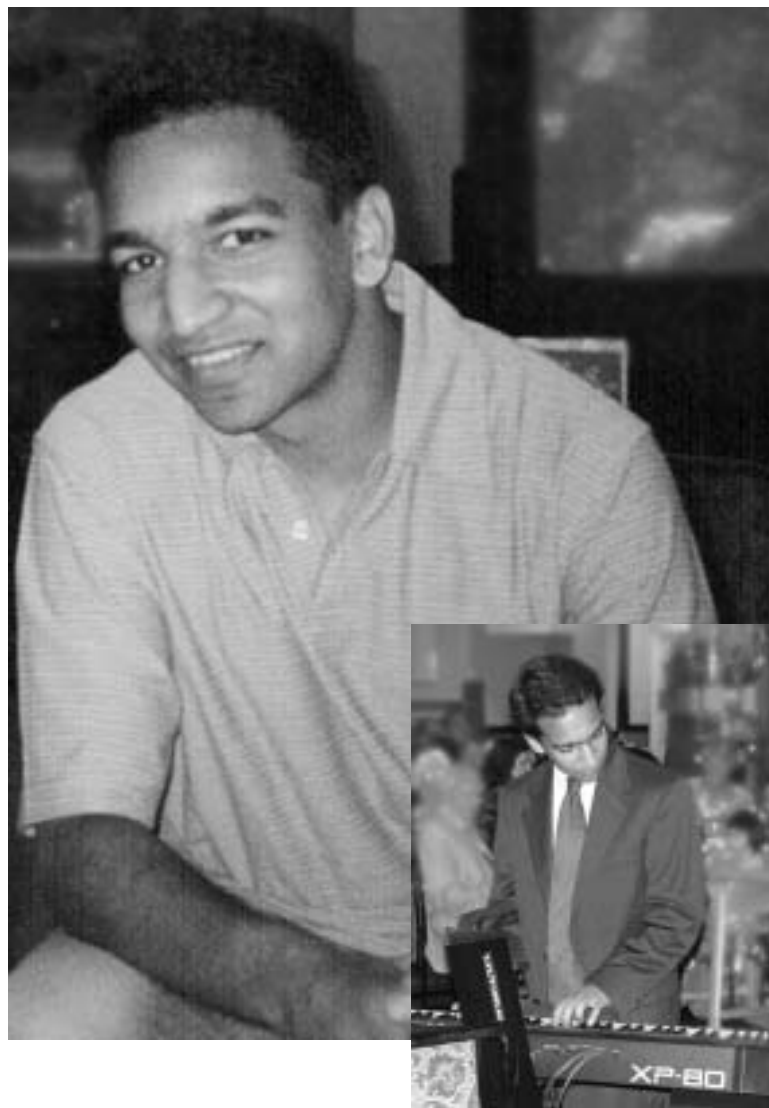
Kumar's process for scoring a film begins with the director, producer or editor giving him the video clips with dialogue, sound and temporary music. "All those pieces of information give me a direction to go in," he said. Kumar imports the video into his computer system, uses his sound library and keyboards to create the score then saves it as a wave file for the director to review. Kumar pointed out that he bases his score on the temporary music when it is provided. The director uses 'temp music' only to set the tone or mood of a scene. "I contribute something pretty similar," he said.

Kumar said while scoring the film he must know where the musical transitions are, whether during a fight scene or more subtle events in the film. "The score works alongside the video to enhance the film experience," Kumar said. Knowing where the transitions are can be challenging but not for Kumar. "It really depends on the person. I have an ear for the music," he said.

"Lesser known pieces are excellent in their own right as well," he said. Kumar explained that the score shouldn't detract attention from the characters. He offers Spanglish, about John Clasky (Adam Sandler) a devoted dad whose skills as a chef have afforded his family a very upscale life, as a good example of this. "The score is just in the back. The purpose of the score is to enhance the movie experience, whatever the experience is," he said.

Kumar said it's been fabulous to get to know people in the movie making business. "Johnny Wu has called me 'the number one film composer in Cleveland.' I have a lot of people interested in talking to me," he said.

He offers this advice to filmmakers about the scoring of their film. "Make the best movies you can. You don't want to use music to fix dialog or sound mistakes, and also start thinking about what kind of music would be used for each scene," he said.



***"You don't want to use music to fix dialog or sound mistakes" cautions Arya.***

### Upcoming Projects

Crops, Passing the Bar, Bad Blood, The Delivery, and Urgent Care and Johnny Wu's next feature - Joker's Rapture which will film next year.

**Kumar is glad to speak to anyone in need of a film score, or just wanting to talk about film scoring. He can be reached at 216-536-1201. To learn more about Kumar and his work log onto [www.aryavartakumar.com](http://www.aryavartakumar.com).**