

For SCL's SCORE

## ***What Else Do You Write?***

By  
Michael Isaacson

***" If I try to be like him, who will be like me?" - Yiddish Proverb***

We spend our early lives mastering the great ideas, accomplishments and skills of others who have gone before us; this we call education. Subsequently, as professional composers and lyricists, we place ourselves in a collaborative, commercial, media arena. Here, once again, we practice and perfect the prevailing styles of others or join a group in pluralistic expressions; this we call making a living. Some of us go on to also create constructs of words or music that may or may not find a "buyer" but serve as singular expressions of our truest individuality; this we call art.

While it may be occasionally assessed that there are fine film scores that rival the best art music or some wonderful lyrics that rise to the level of poetry, it is more accurate to argue that it's primarily in this third area of our work, which is free from consumer demands, where we can find out what we really think and feel in our words or music and who we really are as artists.

This is nothing new; we all began wanting to express ourselves as individuals. But how many of us can say, in the deepest, most honest, quiet of our beings that we have remained true to our initial love and aspirations? How many of us have been seduced by economic realities and find ourselves mistaking what we do to make a living with what we initially chose to validate our own, unique, gift of life? In other words, in the homogenized world of commercial media have we found, developed, and sustained a personal voice?

With many of us struggling in our careers just to survive the increasing challenges thrown at us, is it even fair to bring up the issue of individuality?

It is and must be addressed for these reasons:

1. We were not put on this earth to be solely the parrots of others. We were born in the divine image to aspire to greatness. This is what gives the deepest meaning to our lives and defines our personal agenda in the elevation and repair of the world.
2. Redundant, homogenized, expression (inauthentic thought) fosters and perpetuates a mediocrity that demeans all of us; making us little more than clones.
3. Our world needs more individual voices and less corporate ones. Throughout history, It has ultimately been the individual who furthers new appreciation of life's infinite potentiality.
4. If we do not regularly exercise our uniqueness we lose sight of our great gift and abdicate the right to its expression.

So, stop for a moment, and ask yourself what else have I written lately that lives solely as a document of my personal voice? Include more of these efforts as a regular part of your larger

creative life and we will all benefit from knowing that you understand and appreciate the remarkable gift given to you and celebrate its power as an individual.

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**Michael Isaacson is a versatile composer, conductor and orchestrator who, aside from his own extensive credits, has assisted Alex North, Elmer Bernstein, Walter Scharf, Charles Fox and many others. He now gives private composition and conducting lessons. Dr. Isaacson may be reached at: [Eggcreamer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Eggcreamer@sbcglobal.net)**