





# KING OF THE WORLD

BY JEFF BOND

## HOLLYWOOD HAS LEARNED IN THE PAST THREE

decades or so not to underestimate James Cameron. Beginning as a lowly production assistant on Roger Corman's *Rock and Roll High School* in 1979, Cameron quickly worked his way up to art direction, special-effects design and even second-unit directing on Corman's distinctive brand of low-budget horror and science-fiction programmers: movies such as *Battle Beyond the Stars* (1980), *Galaxy of Terror* (1981) and *Android* (1982). He spun his experience into a directing gig on *Piranha Part Two: The Spawning*, a Jamaica-filmed sequel to Joe Dante's *Jaws* takeoff, *Piranha*.



*Piranha 2* wasn't an auspicious directing debut—Cameron was fired off the film, although contractual obligations kept his name on it. So, there was little reason for excitement when Cameron wrangled bodybuilder Arnold Schwarzenegger, fresh off his starring role in *Conan the*

*Barbarian*, to play a hulking cyborg killing machine in Cameron's sci-fi action movie *The Terminator* in 1984. Modestly budgeted at \$8.4 million, *The Terminator* became a surprise financial and critical hit, grossing over \$38 million and positioning Cameron as an action director to watch. Next, Cameron





convinced 20th Century Fox to make a sequel to Ridley Scott's *Alien*, one of the most influential and critically lauded science fiction films to follow in the wake of Fox's *Star Wars*. Cameron layered a subtle Vietnam War movie allegory on top of Scott's ethereal space-monster chaxsis, and the result was another commercial hit, this time with even more critical acclaim, earning Sigourney Weaver a Best Actress nomination for her work as space heroine Ellen Ripley—a first for the science fiction genre.

Cameron's experience in visual effects gave him the expertise to push the boundaries of effects technology on an underwater epic, *The Abyss*, in 1989, and his mammoth sequel to *The Terminator*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*—films that proved pivotal in developing the computer-generated visual effects that led to the dinosaurs of *Jurassic Park* and eventually the CG characters, environments and enhancements that we take for granted today. And Cameron's *True Lies* showed a conceptual daring in its depiction of a macho spy (Schwarzenegger) who turns his espionage skills on his marriage when he suspects that his wife (Jamie Lee Curtis) is cheating on him.

Despite Cameron's successes, no one was looking for him to make the next great period romance. But that's exactly what Cameron was developing in the aftermath of his bone-crunching Arnold Schwarzenegger action movies. Cameron had been eyeing the real-life saga of the RMS *Titanic*, the British ocean liner that sank in icy waters after hitting an iceberg several hundred miles south of Newfoundland in April 1912. Perhaps the most infamous tragedy in maritime history, the accident cost the lives of at least 1,500

passengers and crew members on the vessel, with only around 700 people escaping in the ocean liner's lifeboats.

The *Titanic* story had been tackled on film before—in 20th Century Fox's soapy *Titanic* in 1953, and the more sober and documentary-like British film *A Night to Remember* in 1958. The topic had also spawned a fanciful spy novel with the self-explanatory title *Raise the Titanic*, and an ill-fated movie adaptation in 1980.

Cameron's take on the tale was ingenious—essentially *Romeo and Juliet* on the *Titanic*. The story featured two star-crossed lovers: aristocratic Rose (Kate Winslet), who is doomed to be married to a spiteful steel baron, Col Hockley (Billy Zane); and roguish, working class Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio), a lower-class artist who

gamble[s] his way onboard the ocean liner and then sweeps Rose off her feet during the *Titanic*'s maiden voyage. Rebellng against the expectations of her family and her class background, Rose literally spits in the face of her well-heeled fiancé and takes to Jack in an intimate session of nude portraiture and below-decks seduction. But just as things seem to be working out perfectly for the young couple, the *Titanic* has its fateful rendezvous with an iceberg, and Rose and Jack find themselves struggling to survive and forced to make some fateful sacrifices for love.

Cameron addressed head-on what had only been an undercurrent of earlier takes on the story: the class divide that literally condemned a vast demographic of the *Titanic*'s passengers to death because they were unable to





gain access to the half-filled lifeboats taken by the ship's upper class. Even with the icy North Atlantic waters filled with survivors in life jackets after the *Titanic* disappeared beneath the midnight waves, only 13 people were picked up by the ship's lifeboats in the aftermath of the sinking, even though most of the lifeboats had the capacity to take on many more. Cameron showed steerage passengers locked below decks, forced to wait behind bars while the upper-class passengers were loaded on lifeboats, and his romantic leads moving back and forth between the two worlds of Rose's past,

elegant dinners and the raucous, earthy parties of Jack and his friends in steerage.

For Cameron, whose reputation rested on hard-edged action and science fiction, the screenplay was an enormous gamble. More than half of the three-hour-plus film—almost a full-length movie in itself—would be spent developing the romance between Rose and Jack, with only the audience's foreknowledge of the impending disaster serving to maintain suspense. Cameron framed the story with scenes in the present day involving a high-tech salvage team led by Bill Paxton's Brock Lovatt, who's in search of a diamond

necklace called The Heart of the Ocean, thought to have been on board the *Titanic* when it sank. When Lovatt's diving team discovers a pencil sketch of a nude young woman wearing the necklace, they track down Rose herself, now 102 years old and played by veteran actress Gloria Stuart. Rose's memories form the story as Cameron gradually ushers the audience into the world of the *Titanic* and 1912.

Cameron's successes with *Terminator 2* and *True Lies* were profitable enough to sell the idea of *Titanic*, but it would take two studios—Paramount and 20th Century Fox—to finance and distribute the film. Even at its original budget of \$100 million plus, *Titanic* was a risky investment. "If you think about it, when the green light was given to this film, the budget was \$125 million, so it already put into a certain level of filmmaking that normally is protected by the fact that it's a sequel to another film, or the fact that it can at least become a franchise if it's successful," Cameron said in an interview in *Entertainment Today* at the time. "But *Titanic* is a 'one-or'—you're not going to do a sequel to it, and you're not going to have all these kinds of ancillary profit sources, so it was risky right from the beginning." The movie's epic, three-hour-plus running time also meant that it would not

be able to screen as many times per day, which would make it more difficult to generate revenue quickly.

Cameron also didn't have the advantage of attracting tremendous star power to the project. He cast Leonardo DiCaprio, largely known for smaller movies such as *What's Eating Gilbert Grape?*, as Jack (just prior to *Titanic*, DiCaprio had starred as Romeo in Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*), and Kate Winslet, best known for Peter Jackson's pro-*Lord of the Rings* cult film *Heavenly Creatures* and Ang Lee's *Sense and*



*Sensibility*—none of them exactly blockbusters. To support DiCaprio and Winslet, Cameron cast such veterans as Kathy Bates (as brash "Unsinkable" Molly Brown, a middle-class ally for Jack), Bernard Hill (as the *Titanic*'s captain,



Vicor Barber (as the ship's designer, Thomas Andrews) and David Warner (very effective as Cal Hockley's scowling manservant and enforcer, Spicer Lovejoy). Ultimately, 99 actors were cast in the picture and 100 stunt persons were employed.

Cameron's technical ambitions for the film were groundbreaking and exacting, and would eventually push its budget from over



\$100 million to well over \$200 million, making it the most expensive movie ever made at the time of its release. To film the movie's opening sequences of Lovatt's team exploring the wreck of the *Titanic* using deep-sea submersibles and remote-control camera drones, Cameron mounted a real underwater expedition using two of the only submersibles capable of such deep dives. Cameron couldn't film wide-angle lens material through the deep-diving submersible portholes, so he collaborated with his brother Mike, an aerospace engineer, to build

remote-control camera drones that could survive the pressure. Cameras were operated 16 hours a day by Al Biddings and Cameron to get the *Titanic* wreck footage.

Previous *Titanic* movies had relied on large but understandably limited physical sets and miniature models to recreate the ocean liner and the disaster. For *Titanic*, Cameron and 14 visual-effects companies led by Digital Domain

constructed a 45-foot miniature of the ocean liner, but instead of filming the ship model in water, they shot the model dry on a soundstage using motion-control techniques, adding computer-generated simulations of water to place it in a realistic environment. To populate the decks of the model, the movie's visual-effects technicians created crowds of computer-generated people, planting the seeds of the CG armies that would later inhabit Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* movies.

To film the shipboard scenes, Fox and Paramount built the 40-acre Fox Studios Baja at a cost



of \$40 million, where Cameron had a 775-foot recreation of the *Titanic* constructed out of steel. At 90% the size of the actual ocean liner, the standing set was compared by Cameron to "the equivalent of a 75-story skyscraper turned on its side."

Cameron and his crew recreated the exterior and interior of the *Titanic* in exacting detail, and Cameron hired a core group of 175 extras

trained in the etiquette and style of movement and manners of 1912 to populate it. Two construction companies jacked up the 775-foot *Titanic* set to tilt it at the appropriate angles for sinking, flooding the recreation with 180 people on it, which required creating new methods of filming with electrical equipment and water. Cameron had famously driven his cast literally off the deep end on *The Abyss* during long days of shooting underwater scenes in an abandoned nuclear reactor cooling facility, and he was equally demanding on the *Titanic* set. His ability to focus both on the macro details of disaster-movie-scale action and the microscopy of an intimate, period drama impressed Gloria Stuart, who compared Cameron to legendary director James Whale, with whom she had worked on *The Invisible Man* and *The Old Dark House*. But



Cameron's ambitions and the sheer scope of the production soon put the project behind schedule. "Everybody was geared for July 4," composer James Horner said in an interview in *The Hollywood Reporter*, discussing the movie's original 1997 release date. "Backing up from a July 4 release means you have to start dubbing a complicated movie like this at least four or five weeks beforehand, I have to write the music and record the music, so backing up from that by six more weeks brings you to the middle of April, and here we are already on the 10th of March having discussions. He's still shooting, and four weeks from now I have to start



writing the music. And he hasn't really started editing anything. I'm saying, Jim, this is never gonna happen. You're never gonna make these dates. Forget the score. Without the score, you're never gonna make these dates."

Accusations of profligacy and ego soon dogged the director, who took to the pages of the *Los Angeles Times* to rebut the charges, and publicly dropped his fee for directing the movie. The film's original July release date came and went and by the time it was completed for release in December of that year, *Titanic* had become the most expensive movie ever made. Even Cameron went on record as doubting that it would ever make back the money spent on it: "It's never going to be a huge windfall for the studios. Even for the studios, this is a labor of love."

This was one occasion where Cameron was dead wrong. The film's delays and its tremendous cost fueled rampant speculation that it was a disaster, and much of the concern could be traced back to Cameron's *The Abyss*, which had gone over budget and over schedule, and then became the lone Cameron project to underperform at the box office. But some of the seeds for *Titanic*'s ultimate success were planted in *The Abyss*, a science fiction story that Cameron had grounded with a powerful romantic plot line and strong dramatic performances from actors Ed Harris and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio. *Titanic* took *The Abyss*'s theme of the power of love in the face of death and placed it on an epic canvas that was only magnified by the familiarity of the *Titanic* disaster story.

Early test screenings generated high anticipation and strong word of mouth for the movie. Opening against the James Bond film, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, *Titanic* took the weekend opening at number one. The movie also rolled up some stellar reviews: *Newsweek*'s David Ansen called it "Big, bold, touchingly unsycrhal filmmaking"; and *The New Yorker*'s Anthony Lane said, "There are sights here that no other film director would have the nerve to stage." Roger Ebert, always enthusiastic about well-made genre movies, said *Titanic* "...is in the tradition of the great Hollywood epics. It is flawlessly crafted, intelligently constructed, strongly acted and spellbinding." Critic Michael Medved in *The New Yorker* said that the movie deserved a Best Picture Oscar.

Cameron had made good on his reputation as a genius at genre mashups, combining his undraped mastery of complex, sprawling action with a timeless, affecting romance that had every teenage girl in the country swooning and their parents rushing to theaters to find out what the fuss was about. Cameron's obsessive attention to detail paid enormous dividends over the movie's lengthy running time:



early in the film he had a character on the contemporary salvage ship show a computer-generated recreation of the *Titanic's* sinking and breakup, which paid off at the film's climax, reproducing the death throes of the great ocean liner and its human cargo in exacting, agonizing detail. Playing against the gauzy romance he established in the first half of the film, Cameron unflinchingly focused on the pathos and horror of the disaster, showing doomed steerage-class children huddled with their mother in the drowning lower-class cabins, and in a nerve-shattering pullback, a freezing sea full of screaming survivors struggling for their lives in the immediate aftermath of the sinking. Rose's

ultimate struggle to survive among these desperate victims gains power from Cameron's chilling tour through the frozen, floating dead as a single lifeboat searches for the living among the bodies.

The epic blend of romance and fact-based, existential horror turned *Titanic* into the ultimate water cooler movie, and the studios' fears that the movie would be a boresdoggie turned to hopes that profits might not be out of reach. "This is a long-distance runner," Fox Filmed Entertainment chairman Bill Mechanic told *The New York Times*. "Most movies fall off and fade away after a few weeks. We believe this won't. It's getting incredible word of mouth. Hopefully it will go on and on

and on." Robert G. Friedman, vice chairman of Paramount Picture Group, had the same hunch. "There are those rare movies which ultimately become special events. People ask each other, 'Have you seen it yet?' It takes on a cultural icon status. That, I think, is happening to *Titanic*."

Public enthusiasm and box office kept the film running deep into 1998, where it remained the top box-office attraction for 15 straight weeks. It won Golden Globes for Best Motion Picture, Best Director, Best Original Score and Best Original Song, a Directors Guild Award, and 14 Academy Award nominations, eventually winning 11 Oscars including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Art Direction, Best Cinematography, Best Visual

Effects, Best Film Editing, Best Costume Design, Sound and Sound Effects Editing, Best Original Dramatic Score and Best Original Song. At the Oscars ceremony, Cameron held up his directing statuette and proclaimed, "I'm the king of the world!"—quoting a line from his own screenplay. *Titanic* went on to become the highest-grossing movie in cinema history, earning over \$600 million domestically and more than \$1.2 billion overseas. It took 12 years for another movie to best that record—a movie that, like *Titanic*, was plagued by cost overruns and delays, doubts and predictions of disaster: another movie directed by James Cameron, called *Avatar*.



## TWO OF TITANIC'S MULTIPLE OSCARS WENT TO ITS

score by James Horner and the song "My Heart Will Go On," with music by Horner and lyrics by Will Jennings, performed by singer Celine Dion. Horner's score was in many ways the climax of his career and a natural result of the composer's instincts, honed over two decades of his meteoric rise in Hollywood, for adding a populist, world-music aesthetic to the grand traditions of orchestral film scoring. Both Horner and James Cameron had gotten some of their first work on low-budget Roger Corman genre productions, a proving ground that required adaptability and a knack for getting impressive results with very limited resources. Cameron vividly remembered the young Horner providing a grand symphonic score for *Battle Beyond the Stars*, Corman's 1980 answer to *Star Wars* and *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, and one the veteran producer wanted scored in the manner John Williams and Jerry Goldsmith had brought to their space-saga efforts. "Battle Beyond the Stars had this huge score," Cameron told the *Los Angeles Times* in 2015. "To us it was like John Williams. He had been classically trained, and he knew what he was doing. We were all shocked."



It was only natural for Cameron to call on Horner's talents when he made *Alien* in 1986, but the space shocker became a rough first collaboration for the pair as Horner struggled to make the schedule. "It was a very difficult experience for both of us because there was so little time for such a mammoth job," Horner said in *The Hollywood Reporter* in 1988. "I wasn't able to give him everything he wanted." Cameron returned to his *Terminator* composer, Brad Fiedel, on the *Terminator* sequel and *True Lies*, and worked with Alan Silvestri on *The Abyss*, which might have been a natural project for Horner. But both men were eager to combine their talents again on *Titanic*. "I got a script and I realized that this was a movie I really wanted to do," Horner told the *Reporter*. "It was not just the story, which was wonderful, but it was Jim taking a tremendous gamble. I wasn't interested in doing one of Jim's action movies. I wanted to

do a film where Jim was taking a huge step out on a branch and everybody could hear the wood breaking. He was after something quite different from anything he'd done before and I didn't want to give him what he'd had before. We sort of made vows to one another not to work the way we had worked before."

Cameron had been impressed by Horner's Oscar-nominated scores for *Braveheart* and *Apocalypse 13*, both of which had demonstrated an evolution in the composer's style. *Braveheart* was a particularly popular work that had ignited a trend in working Celtic instrumental and vocal styles, popular in New Age music, into film scoring. Cameron's screenplay made a point of noting that the *Titanic* had been "built of Irish steel, by Irish workers," and with the dramatic element of the Irish underclass making the voyage to the US in steerage, and the melancholy, soulful quality that Celtic music could





conjure up, applying the approach to *Titanic* seemed a natural idea that Cameron encouraged. "Jim and I both did not want a Hollywood 1940s type big-drama score," Horner said in the *Reporter*. "It had been done brilliantly on many different types of disaster movies so many times before. I also desperately wanted to avoid that traditional 1912 English sound, which had also been done many times. The color that I decided to go with was primarily synths and vocals, because I could do so much with them. I could make them sound contemporary and I could make them sound elegiac. I could give

the score a slightly different patina or color, using synths, than you would have using only an orchestra. That was very important—how we addressed the colors in the movie, and what we put against the images. We didn't want it to sound just like a movie. That is how I came up with the idea of the sounds that I used, and why so much of it is synth- and vocal-based as opposed to orchestral, using the voice of the Norwegian star Sissel."

Described by writer Ray Bennett in *The Hollywood Reporter* as "a kind of Nordic Enya," Sissel Kyrkjebø's breathy vocals had been

heard at the opening of the 1994 Winter Olympic games in Lillehammer, and she'd had an international hit with Plácido Domingo recording the official Olympic song, "Fire in Your Heart." "I was after a very special voice, a particular color," Horner said of the Norwegian singer's voice. "I listened to a lot of people. I was looking at it more as an instrument than as a human voice."

Interviewed in the same *Reporter* issue, Sissel, who toured Ireland with the Irish folk band The Chieftains, talked about the way her background fit in with the Celtic elements of the score. "Scandinavian and Celtic music have a lot in common. Nordic music, like Irish music, is grown

from inside the people. When the Chieftains play, you can see the hills of Ireland, and that's what I like about the music I use."

Horner absorbed the movie's dailies and a 36-hour assembly as he conceptualized his approach, eventually conjuring up several inter-related themes that he would dump for Cameron. He created a questing, optimistic theme for the *Titanic* itself, heard on Gaelic pipes in Horner's opening ("Logo") as written, and then a melancholy elegiac theme for Rose, heard in a ghostly Sissel vocal in "Main Title," that would play over the haunting footage of the *Titanic* wreck as seen by Lovett and his salvage crew in the film's early scenes. To create the energy and anticipation of



the boarding scenes ("Southampton"), Horner wrote a theme for synthesizers and Saxe's vocals that was part New Age anthem and part hymn that would accompany the *Titanic* on its voyage out of port and into the open ocean.

Horner also wrote a melancholy love theme, teased in the opening moments of the ocean liner's sprint toward the open sea ("Take Her to Sea, Mr. Murdoch") and finally played as Jack first sights Rose on the deck of the ship ("First Sighting")—all music that the composer would demo for Cameron. "I knew from the first piano sketches that James played for me that we were going to have a great score," Cameron said in PR materials for the film. "I felt like I was going to cry—just from the beauty of the



music and how perfectly it captured the feelings of *Titanic*. He played the theme as the ship is leaving Southampton, full of optimism, and the more tragically romantic Rose theme, and he played me a third theme that would later become the Celine Dion song. When he was done playing those three themes—which took maybe 15 minutes—I said, 'I don't know if this is going to be a good movie or a bad movie, but I know it's going to be a great score.'"

The basic, romantic elements of Horner's score—the themes for the *Titanic*, for Rose, the New Age launch music and the love theme—would become dominant elements even though Horner would write a great deal of suspense, action, and even psychological scoring, weaving an elaborate, interconnected fabric that would constitute over two hours of dramatic music. Ultimately, Cameron would reject, dial down or dial out much of



Horner's carefully constructed dramatic underscore in favor of the composer's more iconic and often more contemporary-sounding melodies. Horner himself seemed to reflect this when speaking about how he chose the music for the original soundtrack album in his 1998 *Hollywood Reporter* interview: "I wasn't interested, frankly enough, in all the big disaster stuff. The ship sinking, the spectacle; the orchestral music I put against it, I always felt would play by itself. Hitting the iceberg the first time, and the ship actually sinking."

In the film *Score: A Film Music Documentary*, Cameron recollected Horner delivering a cue labeled "Sketch" for him—Cameron thought it was written for the scene of Jack creating the nude drawing of Rose but it was actually Horner's piano demo for the love theme ("Rose"). Cameron thought it fit perfectly over the drawing scene and decided to place the cue there, insisting that Horner not orchestrate it, and leave it as a solo piano piece.

Horner in fact had to take multiple approaches to several key cues in the score as the movie changed shape in editing. "All the music was slowly being written and organized and the picture was changing and, needless to say, as the movie evolved, the music had to evolve, or change as the picture changed," Horner said in *The Hollywood Reporter*. "There were a lot of touch-ups to the music along the way. Whole scenes got changed or reedited as Jim got into the movie. Bit by bit, the movie came together but sequences that we thought were locked weren't. It readily became apparent that Jim was reediting the movie."



Some of the biggest changes affected Horner's opening music and his scoring of the submarines exploring the wreck of the *Titanic*. The bagpipe-like performance of the *Titanic* theme ("Logo"), which would have bookended the film, was dropped, and Horner's "2 1/2 Miles Down" cue for the underwater wreck, originally written to be more foreboding and suspenseful, was edited and dialed down to a subtle background atmosphere in the film (only around three minutes of Horner's ten-minute-plus cue was used). Horner's approach to Rose's attempt to jump off the stern of the ocean liner ("Rose's Suicide Attempt") fea-

tered the composer in a dark psychological mode, playing ethereal, ghostly synths against a subdued version of Rose's theme, as if the spirits of some afterlife are urging her to take her own life. The same cue features a slow, descending motif derived from Horner's "2 1/2 Miles Down" cue, a tidal pull seeming to tug at Rose's soul, urging her down to the depths where *Titanic* would ultimately die.

Cameron dropped most of this music, cutting in more atmospheric music from "2 1/2 Miles Down" and even "A Promise Kept," written for scenes near the end of the film. Horner used the

same ghostly, psychological approach in "Murdoch's Suicide" as the *Titanic*'s first mate, overwhelmed by having to make decisions of life or death while loading the *Titanic* lifeboats late in the movie, takes his own life with a pistol—but this music too went unused.

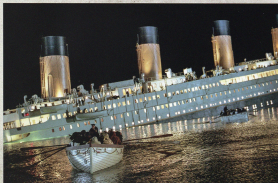
One thing that Cameron retained from Horner's original approach to the suicide attempt sequence was "Jack Saves Rose," introduced as Jack convinces Rose to take his hand to coax her down off the railing. The cue opens with what sounds very much like a subtle reference to Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man"—possibly a sly and appropriate commentary on Horner's part, given Jack's station in life.

In retrospect, Cameron's emphasis of Horner's more contemporary-sounding material over the dramatic underscore helped the music along to iconic status as it cemented its relationship with the film's love story and with viewers. Horner's more conventional, if undeniably exciting and effective "disaster" music superbly supported the climactic action, while operating firmly in territory the composer had established throughout the first two decades of his career.

Horner saved his final inspiration for the end of the film: a song, "My Heart Will Go On," performed by singer Celine Dion with lyrics by



Will Jennings. "I was going to make it somewhat of a lullaby," Horner recalled in *The Hollywood Reporter* in 1998. "I wanted it to be something elegant, like the last cue on the CD. I wanted it to have that kind of very wistful timeless quality. I started to think that the only way to do it in a way that would be timeless, contemporary, appeal to a wide audience and mean something to me, would be to write a song. It was more of a compositional decision than a commercial one." Knowing that performers and lyricists would be poaching on his deer to write a song for the highly anticipated movie, Horner kept his cards close to his vest, never mentioning the idea to Cameron until late in postproduction and wrangling Celine Dion to perform a demo of the tune. "Celine strikes me as





being a wonderful opera singer in a way," Homer said in 1998. "The fact that she does pop music is really secondary to what her voice can really do. Because the song has such a very large range, I felt she technically was the only person who could sing it."

In his 2015 *Los Angeles Times* interview, Cameron remembered being firmly against even the idea of a song when Homer suggested it to him. "You wouldn't put a song at the end of *Schindler's List*," he remembers telling Homer. "This is a serious historical drama. But as I listened, I started to realize how great it was. I felt a connection to it. I said, 'Let that carry the people out of the theater.'" In PR materials for the film,

Cameron recalled being equally affected by Celine Dion's performance. "By the second stanza, I was so moved by the heights that she hit, by the power in her voice. I had no idea who Celine Dion was but I just liked the song. Later, the song had a whole life of its own. If you'd seen the film, and you heard it while shopping or driving around, it would bring back all these emotions."

The song, and score, had more than a life of their own—the *Titanic* soundtrack became the best-selling album of 1998 and the best-selling orchestral soundtrack album of all time, with 11 million copies sold in the US. The Celine Dion song was everywhere, winning a Grammy Award as well as an Oscar. James Homer's *Apollo 13* and

*Brownheart* scores had already made him one of the most popular film composers working in Hollywood, but *Titanic*'s critical accolades and wide-ranging popularity proved difficult to top. Still, Homer continued to produce well-regarded scores for projects such as *The Mask of Zorro*, *Enemy at the Gates*, *A Beautiful Mind*, *House of Sand and Fog* and *Apocalypto*. In 2009, Homer reunited with James Cameron on the science fiction adventure *Avatar*, a film as technically and thematically challenging, and as risky, as *Titanic*. Once again, romance was at the center of the story; once again, Homer delivered a transcendent, romantic score; and once again, Cameron's vision triumphed, making *Avatar* the biggest box-office hit of all time, finally eclipsing Cameron's *Titanic*. Homer was in fact set to score the sequels to *Avatar* when he died in an aircraft accident in June 2015. With some exciting new scores and even concert works emerging at the time, James Homer seemed on the cusp of a bold new period of creativity, and his death robbed the world not only of one of its best-known musical talents but of all the future music he would doubtless have written.

Jeff Bond is the author of *Darwin Macabre: 25 Hours of Danny Elfman* and *Ten Barton, The Music of Star Trek: The Art of Star Trek: The Kelvin Era* and of upcoming books on Seth MacFarlane's series *The Orville* and on producer Irwin Allen. He owns a great big model of the *Titanic* that he's definitely going to build someday. Seriously.



## TITANIC IS FIRST AND ABOVE ALL A LOVE STORY.

The passion, the intimacy and the heartbreak one feels in watching a love story on film are created largely by the actors, but we help out where we can with cinematography, set design and the other crafts. Of course music is the most important addition to the actors' work for increasing the emotional impact of the film.

James Horner's score for *Titanic* is all I had hoped and prayed it would be and much more. It deftly leaps from intimacy to grandeur, from joy to heart-wrenching sadness and across the full emotional spectrum of the film while maintaining a stylistic and thematic unity. The music spans time, making immediate the actions and feelings of people 85 years ago with full emotional resonance without falling into either of the two dreaded traps: the sweeping conventional period picture score, or the inappropriately modern and anachronistic "counter program" score.

James has walked the tightrope by using synthesizer, vocals and full orchestra to create a timeless sound which tells us that these people were not so very different from us. Their hopes, their fears, their passions are like ours. In the film I have tried to accentuate the universalities of human behavior, rather than focus on the quaint differences between this other time and our own. James has done the same thing, bridging the gap of time and making these people seem so alive, so vibrant, so real that the dreaded event, when it finally comes, is terrifying in its authenticity.

And most importantly, he has made us one with Jack and Rose, feeling the beat of their heart as they experience the kind of love we all dream about, but seldom find.

—James Cameron

*(From the 1997 Original Soundtrack Album)*



# THE I SALONISTI SESSIONS

BY JOHN ALTMAN

## THE ANSWERING MACHINE WAS DEFINITELY EMPTY

When I went to bed at about 1 a.m. on a Saturday morning. So it was with some surprise that I noticed it blinking with 9 messages when I came downstairs some 7 hours later. I scratched my head, yawned and pressed play.

"John, this is Jon Landau's assistant—could you please ring me on Mexico 1234?" "This is Jon Landau's assistant, please call me." Three more of these, each increasing in urgency, then "John, this is Jon Landau, please call me immediately!" Three more of these followed, and then there it was: "John, James Cameron, ring me!" I needed no second bidding.



Thus far my job as historical music advisor had been pretty straightforward: take the White Star Line playlist, choose 25 or so pieces from it, a mix of classical reductions, popular salon pieces, and hits of the day (including some that were so obscure the Library of Congress archive had to be raided), and speak to the wonderful musicians of I Salonisti—2 violins, cello, double bass and piano (they were not only to record the music but were to perform as the ship's orchestra in the movie). And, of course, I had to write the missing arrangements, travel to Zurich to produce the recordings, then sit back and relax while the filming progressed. Or so I thought...

I dialed the number, which after hearing it 9 times in a row I now knew by heart. "John Altman for James Cameron," I announced with a tremble in my voice. "Ah yes, one moment please." I heard the sound of footsteps, then nothing, and then... the unmistakable sound of water splashing. A voice...

"Hello????"

"James, this is John Altman calling from London."

"Nearer My God to Thee"—how do the words fit the music?"

"I'm sorry?"

"The words—how do they fit the music?"

Asaah—now I realized the urgency... and realized that people had been waiting in the water, possibly all night, for this moment. I began to sing but I'm afraid my vocal abilities would not give Bocelli sleepless nights at the best of times, and this certainly wasn't the best of times.

"One moment!" the mighty Cameron interrupted my flow. "OK, start again."

I did, if possible sounding even worse at the second attempt, and realized that there was now a microphone or megaphone held to the mobile phone beaming it out to heaven knows how many cast and crew members. I finished my a cappella rendition to total silence, then a perfunctory "thank you" from the great director, and then the click of the receiver.

I didn't hear anyone singing along with "Nearer My God to Thee" in what proved one of the most moving moments of the movie, but I hope it wasn't my eccentric performance that Saturday morning that made them drop the idea.

Nonetheless, what you have here is a wonderful collection of evocative period material expertly played and recorded, that added so much to the authenticity of the musical fabric of the score.

Once I had chosen the pieces to record I faced a double dilemma. The first problem was authenticity of sound. We knew that the orchestra in First Class under the leadership of Wallace Hartley consisted of 5 musicians as indicated above. But how, for example, would they have interpreted the very new syncopated sounds of "Alexander's

Regime Band"? And how would the pop songs blend with the classical and salon selections? The answer came in the form of I Salonisti. Once I had heard them I knew that whatever I wrote would be interpreted with 100% authenticity and brio, and these recordings are the proof of those wonderfully productive days in Zurich. There was never any need to think about correct interpretation or altering any of the arrangements.

One interesting point of contention is the exact melody of "Nearer My God to Thee," which would have been performed by the musicians on deck. There is still a body of evidence that the band, if they indeed did play the hymn, would have been playing either the "Horbury" or "Proprior Dec" versions—but we have included the "Bethany" version heard in the movie, that is today the most familiar. It's even possible that "Song of Autumn," also included here, was the last song played. Certainly "Alexander's Regime Band" was played at some point. We will of course never know the truth of the matter but what is indisputable is that we have all this marvelously evocative music that immediately transports us back 100 years to another time and place.

—John Altman  
Historical Music Advisor  
London, December 2017



**SONGS PERFORMED BY I Salorini**

Thomas Firl, *voice*  
 Lorenz Hasler, *viola*  
 Ferenc Szedlak, *cello*  
 Bela Szedlak, *double bass*  
 Werner Gigler, *piano*

**PRODUCED BY** John Altman  
**RECORDING ENGINEER** Jörg Petershans  
*Recorded at Pasterly Studio, Alton, Switzerland*

**VALSE SEPTEMBRE**

Written by Felix Godin, arr. John Altman •  
 Published by Sony/ATV Harmony (ASCAP) / TCF  
 Music Publishing Inc. (ASCAP)

**MARGUERITE WALTZ**

Written by Charles Gounod, arr. John Altman •  
 Published by Sony/ATV Harmony (ASCAP) / TCF  
 Music Publishing Inc. (ASCAP)

**WEDDING DANCE**

Written by Paul Linke, arr. John Altman •  
 Edward B. Marks Music Co. (BMI) / Sony/ATV  
 Harmony (ASCAP)

**POET AND PEASANT**

Written by Franz von Suppé, arr. György Mond-  
 way • Published by Sony/ATV Harmony (ASCAP) /  
 TCF Music Publishing Inc. (ASCAP)

**BLUE DANUBE**

Written by Johann Strauss, Jr., arr. György  
 Mondway • Published by Sony/ATV Harmony  
 (ASCAP) / TCF Music Publishing Inc. (ASCAP)

**SONG WITHOUT WORDS**

Written by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, arr. John  
 Altman • Published by Sony/ATV Harmony  
 (ASCAP) / TCF Music Publishing Inc. (ASCAP)

**ESTUDIANINA**

Written by Paul Lacome and J. De Lau Lavalgnan,  
 arr. John Altman • Published by Sony/ATV  
 Harmony (ASCAP) / TCF Music Publishing Inc.  
 (ASCAP)

**MEDITATION DE TRAI'S**

Jules Massenet, arr. György Mondway • EMI  
 Music Publishing (UK) (also itself & and Francis,  
 Day & Hunter) (World Excluding U.S.) ASCAP  
 Sony/ATV Harmony (U.S. only)

**VISION OF SALOME**

Written by Archibald Joyce, arr. John Altman •  
 Published by TCF Music Publishing Inc. (ASCAP) /  
 Sony/ATV Harmony (ASCAP)

**TITTY BITSY GIRL**

Written by Ivan Caryll and Lionel Monckton, arr.  
 John Altman • Published by Sony/ATV Harmony  
 (ASCAP) / TCF Music Publishing Inc. (ASCAP)

**ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND**

Written by Irving Berlin, arr. John Altman •  
 Published by Williamson Music (ASCAP) /  
 Sony/ATV Harmony (ASCAP) (U.S. only)

**SPHINX**

Written by Francis Popy, Leo Pouget and Pierre  
 Chapelle, arr. John Altman • Public Domain in  
 the U.S.

**BARCAROLE**

Written by Jacques Offenbach, arr. György  
 Mondway • Published by Sony/ATV Harmony  
 (ASCAP) / TCF Music Publishing Inc. (ASCAP)

**OPHEUS**

Written by Jacques Offenbach, arr. György  
 Mondway • Published by Sony/ATV Harmony  
 (ASCAP) / TCF Music Publishing Inc. (ASCAP)

**SONG OF AUTUMN**

Written by Archibald Joyce, arr. John Altman •  
 Public Domain in the U.S.

**NEARER MY GOD TO TREE**

Written by Lowell Mason and Sarah Adams, arr.  
 Jonathan Evans-Jones • Published by Sony/ATV  
 Harmony (ASCAP) / TCF Music Publishing Inc.  
 (ASCAP)

**ARRANGED AND CONDUCTED BY William Ross****OH, YOU BEAUTIFUL DOLL**

A. Seymour Brown, Nat. D. Ayer • Published by  
 Warner Bros. Inc (ASCAP) / Bionstock Publishing  
 Co. (ASCAP), Sony/ATV Harmony (ASCAP)

**COME JOSEPHINE IN MY FLYING MACHINE**

Fred Fisher • Public Domain in the US

**THE MERRY WIDOW**

Franz Lehár, The librettists, Viktor Léon and Leo  
 Stein • Public Domain in the US

**SONGS PERFORMED BY Gaelic Storm**

**PRODUCED BY** Randy Genston  
**MIXED BY** Bill Dreacher and Randy Genston

**BLARNEY PILGRIMS**

Traditional, arr. Gaelic Storm • Gaelic Storm  
 Music (ASCAP)

**JOHN RYAN'S POLKA**

Traditional, arr. Gaelic Storm • Gaelic Storm  
 Music (ASCAP)

**KESH JIG**

Traditional, arr. Gaelic Storm • Gaelic Storm  
 Music (ASCAP)

**BROWSY MAGGIE DANCE**

Traditional, arr. Gaelic Storm • Gaelic Storm  
 Music (ASCAP)



**CONDUCTOR**

James Horner

**ADDITIONAL****CONDUCTING BY**  
William Ross**CONTRACTOR**

Sandy De Cuscard

**VIOLINS**Clayton Hasting  
Eun Moo Ahn  
Richard L. Altombach  
Arnold Blahnik  
Charles Blahnik  
Robert L. Brossard  
Shawn V. Cain  
Ron Clark  
Bruce Duboy  
Karen Elaine SakunisDavid Swart  
Ronald Tolson  
Alexander B. Fraser  
Armen Garabedian  
Ben Garabedian  
Julie Ann Gilgare  
Harris Goldstein  
Gladys Gutierrez Zherdev  
Ernie Grant  
Richard S. Greene  
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Amy Hershberger  
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Karin Jones  
Miran Hag Kojan  
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Katalin Rosta  
Susan Rishik Farnster  
Jay Rosen  
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Rolly H. Sweeney  
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Dorcas N. Buffum  
Brian Dombow  
Markus G. Fisher  
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Keith Greene  
Roland Kato  
Janet Lakatos  
Doraki Malinos  
Victoria E. Makrady  
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Stephan P. Embold  
Christine Ermacoff  
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John A. Walz**BASSES**Ariad Colston  
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Drew D. Dambowski  
Charles Domiano  
Steve Eblman  
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Christian C. Kolgaard  
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Todd AO: March 31, 1997 (trailer), May 19-22, 24-26, June 16-19, 23-27, June 28-July 3, July 7. *Baywatch*<sup>®</sup> (synth/electronics/bagpipes) July 9-11, 14 and 15 (orchestra), July 16 (keyboards/synth/electronics), August 14 (keyboards/electronics/bagpipes), August 15 and 16 (keyboards), August 17 (keyboards/bagpipes), August 18 and 19 (orchestra), MM Studio, Hollywood, CA; April 21-22, Capitol City Studio, Calabasas, CA; April 26-May 10, Record Plant, July 8-9, Capitol Studios, September 12, Skywalker Ranch, Lucas Valley, CA; September 22, October 4, 11-12, Skywalker Sound, Napa, CA; September 26, 1997.

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their tireless efforts on my behalf!"  
- JAMES HORNER, 1997

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