



Prince

Prince's Music Connects With Batman Film

"Prince's energy, movements - his whole persona reminded us of the character that was being created on screen. Once we made that connection, the rest was inevitable," says producer Jon Peters on the subject of Prince's extraordinary musical contribution to the Guber/Peters production of Tim Burton's film *Batman*.

That connection -- between the myth of the super hero and the music of Prince - may seem obvious match of talents that clicked from the inception. Yet the real story behind what may be the most innovative soundtrack album in history is most interesting for what it reveals about the creative process in the collaborative arena of movie-making.

"We wanted to use Prince's music from the very beginning," said Peters. "We just weren't sure how. One of the original ideas was to have Prince write music for the dark characters only. But as the film progressed, it was obvious from the texture and look of what Tim (Burton) was getting, that we needed a unified approach to the score."

That approach clarified itself when it came time to select incidental music for various key scenes in the movie. "Both Tim and Jack Nicholson are long-time Prince fans," explains Mark Canton, Vice President, Music, Warner Bros. Pictures. "They were the ones who insisted on putting in two Prince cuts -- '1999' and 'Baby, I'm A Star' -- as temporary music for specific sequences. They worked so well that we decided to ask Prince if he would redo them for the picture. We flew him to London to take a look at the rushes and he had three ideas right on the spot. The next night he had dinner with Tim and that was that. There was no stopping him. He had a vision for what this music should sound like and, once we heard what he had in mind, we knew he had captured the mood of the film perfectly -- dark, edgy and a lot of fun..."

"Prince was in the midst of the Japanese leg of his *LoveSexy* tour," continues Alan Leeds, Vice President, Paisley Park Records, "but he was so enthused about what he'd seen in London that he wrote nine songs in two weeks. It was an extraordinary burst of creative energy that, in my opinion, reflects his grasp on what Tim and the others were after on screen. What was even



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more remarkable was his approach to the material. Prince really got into the characters, thinking about motivations and personalities almost as a screenwriter might do. After we got back to the States, Tim kept showing him rough cuts and the depth and dimension of these musical character studies continued to grow. Prince wasn't just writing to enhance what was happening visually. In a very real way he was creating a musical equivalent of the film -- something that would stand on its own, as a story and as an album."

The subsequent soundtrack release would mirror Prince's ground breaking strategy for scoring. "It's quite simply never been done before," says Peters. "This is not background music by any means. Danny Elfman, who is the best young film score composer in the business and has worked with Tim previously, provided a first rate original soundtrack. What Prince has done is created music written for and inspired by *Batman*. The album and the film are two separate works, in two different media, complementing and supporting each other." Prince's *Batman* is indeed a self-contained album in its own right, a kind of aural souvenir that doesn't so much evoke movie memories as create their musical equivalents. Each song is sung in the character of the one of the film's principal players, with Prince alternately

taking on the personas of the Joker, Vicki Vale, Bruce Wayne and Batman. The album's debut single, "Batdance," a irresistible hip-hop, funky psychodrama featuring Vicki Vale, the Caped Crusader, and a character that Prince created called Gemini. Another standout selection, "The Arms of Orion," was co-written by Prince and Sheena Easton, who also performs on the track.

"We have a relationship with Prince dating back to *Purple Rain*," explains Canton. "We knew that whatever he would do would be as original as the movie itself. That gave us a lot of confidence to let things evolve naturally. We had a great film and that meant we needed great music. I guess you could say that the marriage was inevita-

ble." "Batman is a movie painted on a large canvas," concludes Peters. "It's about myths and the power of myths. About good and evil and the struggle between the two. In many ways, Prince's music deals with those themes. It wasn't a matter of looking for the biggest name although Prince certainly has that. There was a clear connection happening between his music and Tim's movie. It only made sense."

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