

## The Man Behind Carl Thiel Music

By Nicole Bogatz



Carl Thiel, a member of Local 433 since 2004, is an award winning composer/producer based in Austin, Texas. Born in Mexico, moved to Canada then to Austin, TX, Carl has been exposed to a very diverse culture influenced by music, color and creativity. He began learning how to play piano at age 6 and that was just the beginning of his studies. He attended the National Conservatory of Music, Trinity College School, and the University of Texas. After creating and passing out mock commercials he had composed music for he finally landed his first paid :30 Sec television ad. This was only the beginning of his dream.

Carl has composed many scores and soundtracks for film, television and commercials. Some of Carl's most recognized work includes the films Miss Congeniality, Kill Bill Vol. 2, Spy Kids 4, Planet Terror, Last Man Standing, Machete, and commercials for Coors Light and Coca-Cola. Upon completion of his latest film score for Machete Kills, I decide to sit down with him and find out what it is like to work with Robert Rodriguez and on such a highly anticipated film. Also, as Carl is a Union musician, I was curious to hear what it was like being part of a Union and working on a project with this much hype. We sat down for a Q&A at his local studio, Carl Thiel Music.

**Q:** How long did it take for you to complete the score for Machete Kills?

**A:** We had nine weeks to provide one hundred minutes of music. That was just the music, no ADR, follies, etc. A good movie adds lots of sound and music to make it successful. Most of the time the audience doesn't notice it, but without all of the layers the feel of the movie would not be the same. A good soundtrack makes a movie "look" better.

**Q:** When working on a film do you get to choose to use or not use Union musicians or contracts? What are the benefits or cons for using the Union?

**A:** I try to use the Union every chance I get. Most of the time the choice of using Union contract and musicians, or not, is up to the producer of the project. The advantages of using the Union musicians and contracts are that the Union takes care of the musicians with the pension and health & welfare. The rates from the Union are a livable wage, you get a better quality of musicians and the Union is our guidelines for projects.

**Q:** Would you rather work on commercials or full length films? Which are your favorite projects you have worked on?

**A:** I enjoy all of the work that I do. Advertising usually pays better than film, if you look at it on an hour per hour basis. But I prefer working on Film, because I find it more artistically fulfilling. The longer format allows you to develop themes that build over time. My favorite is usually the project I am currently working on, but When Angels Sing still has a special place with me.

**Q:** Who are some of your favorite musicians to work with?

**A:** There's so many! Tom Hale, French horn just came in and killed on a track for a commercial; David Grissom, guitar; The Del Castillo brothers, guitars; Mitch Watkins, guitar; The Tosca girls, string quartet; Chris Maresh, bass; Carlos Sosa, sax; Joel Guzman, accordion; Brannen Temple, drums; Dony Wynn, drums; there are a lot of great musicians in Austin.

**Q:** What can we look forward to seeing you work on next?

**A:** I have been working with singer-songwriter Erin Ivey on a song for a Docu-Drama that I'm scoring, directed by Andrew Shapter. I have always wanted to get more into Dramatic films, like Thomas Newman, one of my favorite composers, so this will be a great opportunity to flex that muscle.

**Q:** What is the one thing that you would like to say to all Union and Non-Union musicians about this industry?

**A:** Don't be afraid to fail. People who are the most successful have failed a lot. You have to go through failure to get better. If you can overcome your fear then it can be cathartic.