

Featured Finale User

Welcome to the Featured Finale User area of Coda's site. Each month, we will profile a Finale user, his or her recent projects and provide a sample of their work done on Finale. This month, in the spirit of the Olympic Games, we are featuring Michael Mortilla who has used Finale for only 4 months and has already created a 130 page score!

If you would like to be considered for the Featured User section, please forward your name, phone number, e-mail address and a brief paragraph about yourself to finalemarketing@codamusic.com.



Finale User Michael Mortilla Scores with 1996 American Cultural Olympic Games

View example pages of the score in [Adobe Acrobat](#) format:
[Easy Street \(307KB\)](#)

BMI composer/publisher Michael Mortilla, a recent Finale convert, will be performing live during the Olympics with a 70 piece orchestra. The event, which will feature film music by many prominent film composers, is a collaboration between the Cultural Arts Olympiad and the High Museum of Art as part of their *100 Years of World Cinema*.

Michael's trek to the Olympics began in 1990 when he scored the Charlie Chaplin Mutual films, 12 short silent films, released world wide for television and on video laser disc by Image Entertainment. In 1995, when the Mutual Films were re-released, Mortilla was invited to re-orchestrate them using updated technology.



The score for *Easy Street*, one of the Chaplin films, will be performed live with new arrangements at the Arts Olympiad Festival in July. Conductor Richard Kaufman, a music consultant for MGM, has invited Mortilla to perform the original score with the Brevard Music Center Orchestra. Mortilla will be performing his own score for *Easy Street* and will be the pianist with the orchestra in a performance of the Buster Keaton film *One Week* with a score by Erick Beeheim.

Mortilla comes to electronic music via an SQ 80 keyboard "only because it had a sequencer built into it. I could record my performance and store them to disc." In 1989, when Mortilla was hired to first write the Chaplin movies, he invested in an Atari computer, the same one he used for 8 years. "It could do lead sheets, minimal notation and I could do desktop publishing, and I thought this Atari will last me to the year 2000."

When he got the gig from the American Cultural Olympic Games, Mortilla took his old Atari files and transferred them to his wife's Mac. He was so impressed with the final output, that he bought a Power Mac 9500 with 17 inch monitor.

"I've been using Finale just since March, 1996 and there are so many features of it I like. I like the graphic interface... I can treat notation the same way you would treat a page in desktop publishing." Mortilla explains that in terms of laying out the page, the appearance of the printed page is "everything. If you can't make it look good for the studio musicians, it doesn't make it." Mortilla compares his output with Finale "something like PageMaker, but Finale's interface is a lot more graphic."

Mortilla uses two main software programs - Studio Vision Pro, and Galaxy - in his work, but he is anxious to see what else Finale can do for him. "Lots of people told me that the learning curve for Finale was tough, but that didn't dissuade me - in fact, it impressed me because that meant it had a lot of things going for it."

When it came time for Mortilla to re-orchestrate the Olympics project, he took a hard look at what was out there in electronic music, and the features of Finale offered him everything he wanted. "Plus Warner Brothers and a lot of the studios used Finale and that meant something. I've now used Finale for 250 hours, and found I was able to pick up things relatively easily." Mortilla says he also enjoys the hidden benefits of Finale. "The amount of control the program allows you... it's amazing how detailed it is."

Mortilla, who used the MIDI process throughout the entire sequencing, says that the attraction of MIDI is that it allows you to hear the orchestration without hiring an orchestra. "MIDI offers instant gratification - you note it and you can hear it - it's instantaneous you can change the note and that's good." For him, the attraction to Finale was that he could use his old MIDI files, transfer them to Finale, and then manipulate them easily. "That was wonderful. And that was Finale."

Mortilla rarely writes by hand now, although he may do his sketches by hand and start a lot of his work at the piano. "But for this film, this process is really looking at the film, deciding what music would be effective where, the usual spotting sessions... sitting at the piano first, coming up with the idea, then sitting down and working from my computer and synthesizers. I go for more acoustic sounds, I don't go for fancy electronic effects - then with my computer, my process is to sequence the entire piece - then port it over to a notation piece. That will probably change in the future when I will start with notation, especially knowing Finale."

Once Mortilla gets to the point where the raw form is entered, then he'll go in and add articulation or phrasing. "You have to be careful about the order because things are always in flux - for me, I wouldn't put the dynamics in before the orchestration or instrumentation because I don't do a lot of detail work until the end of the process." For his Olympic score, the instrumentation included almost 22 staves per page, and the full conductor's score equaled 130 pages.

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