

5834

Thank you for your excellent submission! Although I would have loved to go into more depth about your score, due to time constraints for feedback, here are some notable moments to highlight and areas to consider for improvement. If anything could use more elaboration or clarification, please don't hesitate to reach out, and I'll do the best I can to help.

The tone at the beginning struck me as a bit dark. The low, dark string bass, and the dissonant melodic lines are making me feel like she's his captive or something. After Matty calls out for June, there is a hard cut to her sickly stare. Choosing this moment to start the cue accentuates what is already a very severe edit. Spotting here puts a lot of extra weight on this moment and cues the audience that this film is about June, about her illness, but it is really about the impossible burden placed on home care professionals.

Later, when Matty makes the tough decision to leave her to tend to his Granddad, the only way that moment can be an effective payoff is if we have come to feel that June and Matty have a connection, a relationship that goes beyond the worker-client dynamic. She says she takes such great care of her and that she would pay him more, and he says that he truly likes her now. The aim should be to feel this warmth and personal connection before things start to unravel. After Matty says "I like you now", the score does turn a bit in the right direction which is great.

Overall, I found the score feeling a bit heavy handed. When June starts her seizure, the score reacts as if it is a horrible emergency with an extreme shift and dark, heavy sound design. This is definitely a turn in the story that requires musical attention, but this itself is not the conflict of the scene. In fact, Matty is calm, in control, and reacts in a steady and composed manner. This is common for her and what he's here to take care of. This goes back to how the score opens on the shot of June, in that the heavy weight of the score here also puts the emphasis on June's condition, on her story.

The beeper indicates a much more important development in the story as it begins the divergence of his attention and builds to his ultimate decision. Emphasizing the beeper moment with a hit or shift, adding tension or modulating, something that brings attention to it, would create an intriguing "what is that?" moment for the audience, which will start to build suspense as more information is unveiled. Another important moment is at 2:07 when the editing starts fragmenting the scene into two paths, one where he's taking care of June and the other where he's trying to reach his Granddad. The film is showcasing this duality and using the severity of the edits to build visual tension, so that's a good anchor point for the score to move in a more tense direction as well.

At 2:04, the energy you've built up noticeably drops, and the pulse is replaced by a more skittering out of time pulse. It seems like you may be doing this to create space for his dialogue or to create contrast for the next big hit at 2:08. These are good instincts that can work in the right context. In most suspense scenes, I'd caution against this unless intentionally creating a special effect. Usually suspense is created with some kind of glue that holds the entire sequence together and grips the audience without letting go. A consistent pulse or a sustain can function this way. Once the energy is going, it feels like a train that cannot be stopped, but breaking that energy can let the audience breathe for a moment and let them off the hook. In this case, I don't think the events on screen are dramatic enough to warrant breaking up your pulse and coming back in with a big hit, and I think it would be more effective to hold on to the tension as one sequence all the way through.

I don't think there's any question that you successfully built and magnified the tension through the development of the score. The introduction of the heavy brass and high strings riff is really well done in the context of your score. It's a unique choice and definitely up to personal taste as to whether or not it works. In a conventional sense, to me it reads more horror, it reads of bigger scope and scale. The stakes are possibly life and death, so I'm not disregarding your approach entirely, which is unique and bold, but there's also an emotional component to the film that I think is missing.

Continuing to build the tension all through his decision to leave and through the montage is a smart and unique choice. It fuses this montage with his mental state as he's racing back to see his Granddad, and keeps our attention with Matty as one continuous sequence. Well done!

Choosing to leave the final hallway scene dry is a really dramatic decision that works very well in the context of your score. By building up as big as you do, as heavy and dark as you do, the release of that into a vacuum feels poignantly empty and still in a way that strongly reflects Matty's emotions. Although I don't agree with the way the middle section was scored, I think this ending is a fantastic decision based on that.