

Deconstructing Dad

The Music, Machines and Mystery of Raymond Scott

A documentary film by Stan Warnow

A fascinating look at a musical genius and the way he lived his life.

Stan Warnow allows us to share his journey of discovery as he pieces together the story of his father. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

--Leonard Maltin

This feature length documentary is a comprehensive biographical exploration of the life of musician/inventor Raymond Scott. Swing music, electronica, music for film, cartoons, records, TV and radio—Raymond Scott created all this and much more in a career that spanned most of the 20th century. Presented from the unique perspective of Stan Warnow, his filmmaker son, this film is also a personal quest to unravel the timeless fabric of love, connection and rejection that are a part of every parent child relationship, with the additional element of having a famous father obsessed with his work, and further complicated by a scandalous divorce. But combined with this personal angle is always a return to an in depth presentation of the unique and compelling story of this maverick American musical innovator—who had a meteoric rise to fabulous success, followed by a slow spiral into obscurity and now, posthumously a growing acknowledgement of his fundamental role in modern American music.

The film interweaves rare family photos and home movies, contemporary documentary scenes, Hollywood movie excerpts featuring Scott and cartoon excerpts (Scott's music was used extensively in Warner Brothers cartoons, he's been called "the man who made cartoons swing"). Interviews with notable fans include legendary multi Oscar winning film composer and conductor John Williams, Mark Mothersbaugh of Devo fame, clarinetist and bandleader Don Byron, DJ/philosopher Paul D. Miller (DJ Spooky), Herb Deutsch, co-inventor of the Moog Synthesizer, Hal Willner, cutting edge music and concert producer as well as other Scott devotees, colleagues and relatives.

The documentary is of course filled with Scott's eclectic music--some of it played by contemporary musicians as they discuss and illustrate why they love it. The *Raymond Scott Quintette*, the groundbreaking group that brought him his early fame, played a unique madcap amalgam of jazz and composed music. In the 1940's Scott formed, conducted and composed for the first integrated network radio orchestra—a dynamic big band featuring jazz greats like Ben Webster and Cozy Cole. Later, he was a synthesizer pioneer, mentoring the young Robert Moog. Scott's crowning invention was the Electronium, a "simultaneous composition and performance machine," purchased by Motown, which then hired Scott to be their "Director of Electronic Music Research and Development." After retiring from Motown Scott continued his work in electronic music until crippled by a stroke in 1987, and the film explores those declining years and the rebirth of interest in Scott that began a few years before he died. The end result is a wide ranging personal portrait of this under appreciated musical and technological visionary.

BIO—Stan Warnow is a New York based film professional who received a Masters in Film Production from the NYU School of the Arts, and went on to a career that has included work as a cinematographer, editor and Producer/Director. He was a cameraman and editor on the Academy Award winning documentary *Woodstock*, and produced and directed the award winning feature documentary *In Our Hands*. More recently he was editor on the documentary features *Rittenhouse Square*, directed by Robert Downey Sr., and *Music From The Inside Out*, produced and directed by Daniel Anker.

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