

# COMPOSER: Jones discusses work with Seth MacFarlane

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**TCP:** How did you end up working with Seth MacFarlane?

**Jones:** I have been working with Seth about 20 years now. I had scored many of the most popular animated series, and had scored "Star Trek: The Next Generation." Seth grew up loving to get home from school to watch all these shows. He was a geek about every detail and extra smart. He saw my name on most of his favorite shows and liked my approach to the music. When he came to Hollywood, and was starting work at Hanna-Barbera (Productions, Inc.), he asked me to score his first shows, [and] I did.

We became good friends and great collaborators. He animated the pilot of "Family Guy" at his kitchen table, [and] I scored that in one night. They dubbed

it the next day, [and] soon after that, Fox picked up the series.

**TCP:** What's your favorite thing about working with him?

**Jones:** It is no accident that Seth is so successful. He simply is a genius, plus he has a kind and down-to-Earth way of dealing with people, really different than most of the egomaniacs here. I always feel he gets what I do, and he trusts me to create a great score.

**TCP:** Are there any side projects you're working on?

**Jones:** I actually just quit working on "Family Guy" two months ago. Seth left the show a couple years ago to do features and has a major production deal not only for films, but TV series such as "Cosmos" that aired recently. With him not there, the producers in charge have really taken much

out that I enjoyed. ... The role of music which had been so key to the show was now so reduced, I just felt like I didn't want to spend any more time working like that. I've been freelance for 45 years, so I never know what's up next really.

**TCP:** What are you doing right now?

**Jones:** When you work on a TV series for a long time, like I've done on "Family Guy," everyone thinks you are married to it. It takes about a year for people around Hollywood to get that you're loose again, so I teach. I lead the Academy of Scoring Arts, an educational organization with groups all over the U.S. and in Toronto and growing all the time. ...

We're actually thinking seriously about moving back home to the Northwest. I want to be my

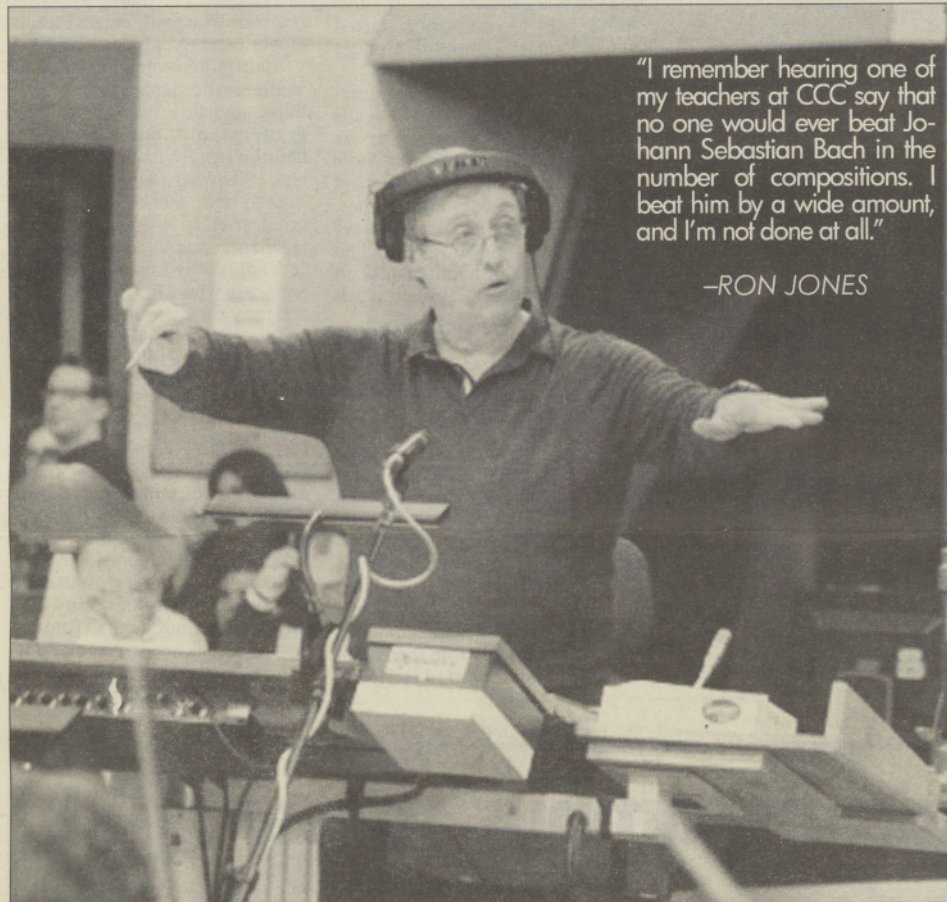
own studio. I'm heavily involved in the arts, not just music. I've so far composed over 40,000 compositions. I remember hearing one of my teachers at CCC say that no one would ever beat Johann Sebastian Bach in the number of compositions. I beat him by a wide amount, and I'm not done at all. I plan to only work on projects I personally care about and if it's about creativity and making something world-class.

**TCP:** You did the scoring for Disney's "Duck Tales," which always had an adult feel to it. What made you decide to approach the score that way?

**Jones:** I decided early on to follow in the footsteps of the great film composers, such as John Williams, Bernard Herrman [and] Jerry Goldsmith. They always respected the audience, and their

music showed the best in the art and craft of scoring. I never patronize the audience. When I scored all this Saturday morning animation for Hanna-Barbera, I visualized the kids, but treated them as being very smart.

Most composers treated the kids like dummies and the music sounded that way; just stupid. The Disney animation guys wanted "Duck Tales" to be great. The first composers they hired treated the audience like they were idiots. They hired me because I did care and I would treat the show and the audience with the same high values as if this was a major feature film for an adult audience. I've done the same on "Family Guy." Always write smart music for a smart, intelligent audience; that's my goal.

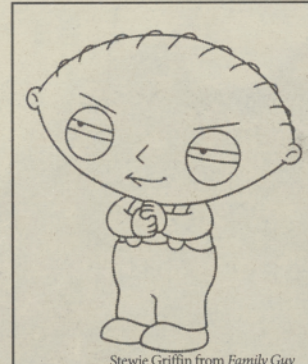


"I remember hearing one of my teachers at CCC say that no one would ever beat Johann Sebastian Bach in the number of compositions. I beat him by a wide amount, and I'm not done at all."

—RON JONES

Photo contributed by Ron Jones

Ron Jones has been working with Seth MacFarlane for almost 20 years. "He simply is a genius," Jones said.



Stewie Griffin from Family Guy

Jones will visit Niemeyer Center Wednesday, May 28 from noon until 4 p.m. There will be a Q&A following the performance. Visitors welcome.

### CORRECTION:

In Issue 21, the team photo on page 7 mistakenly said the team huddled pre-game. The caption should have been "the teams huddles after winning their game."

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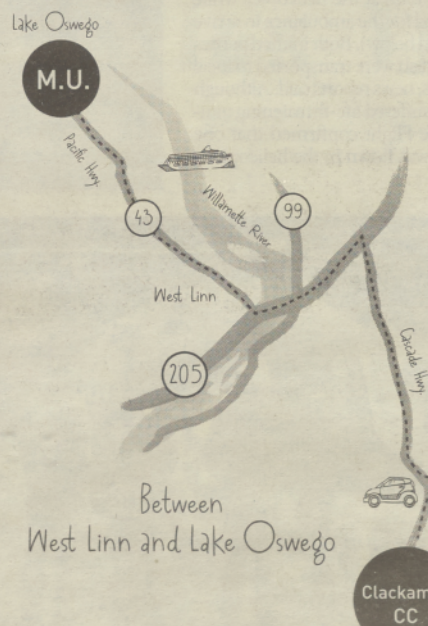
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