

# billboard The Makers of 'Rudy' Come Back Together 25 Years Later to Celebrate the Musical Score of Football's Most Enduring Film

Dave Brooks



The making of the film *Rudy* is nearly as improbable as the story of the film's namesake underdog. The real life **Rudy Ruettiger** overcame the seemingly impossible to play on the Notre Dame squad, but years later when he asked for a few days off from his job at an Indiana car dealership to fly to California to pitch the film, he was told "take all the time you want" and then was promptly fired. Ruettiger persisted and both Orion Pictures and Columbia Pictures greenlit the movie, only to let it linger for years before dumping it. By the time the film's director **David Anspaugh**, writer **Angelo Pizzo** and producer **Cary Woods** got TriStar Pictures to sign off on the project, the three had one more long shot in their playbook, asking famed composer **Jerry Goldsmith** to score the 1993 film.

"Rudy was not a big-budget movie and Jerry Goldsmith was a gigantic, award-winning composer" who had scored more than a hundred films including *Chinatown*, *Alien* and *L.A. Confidential* before passing away in 2004, Woods told *Billboard*. "He was a little out of our range, but we sent him the script and he loved it and he agreed to do it, much to our surprise and

excitement."

The soundtrack for *Rudy*, which drew inspiration from Irish hymnals and the sounds of the Notre Dame marching band, was celebrated in Los Angeles on Saturday during *Rudy in Concert*, a live screening of [USA Today's](#) "best football movie of all time" accompanied with an 80-piece orchestra led by conductor **Justin Freer**, president and co-founder of CineConcerts which produced the event. Prior to the screening, the original team behind the film including Pizzo, Woods and Anspaugh, along with producer **Rob Fried**, actor **Sean Astin** and the film's inspiration, 70-year-old Ruettiger, joined Goldsmith's wife **Carol Goldsmith** for a reunion in a green room at LA's Microsoft Theater, which hosted the film screening and concert.

"Rudy is a powerful movie, but Jerry's score is like a religious communication," Astin told *Billboard* backstage, prior to taking the stage for a pre-concert panel looking at the impact the score had on *Rudy*. "It has these amazing harmonics and operates on a frequency and level that you don't see in most films."

It's also completely changed the trajectory of Ruettiger's life, taking him from hometown hero to a nationally known sports icon who stars in the Amazon documentary *Rudy Ruettiger: The Walk On* and delivers 40-plus motivational speeches a year. Ruettiger is energetic, authentically excited

and calls everyone he encounters "coach," whether they're publicists or the grandkids of one of his many friends. He says he remembers watching Goldsmith and his wife Carol the first time they saw the score synced with the film, saying "they were standing hand in the hand, and Jerry had tears coming down his cheek."

Developing the live performance of the score took CineConcerts more than a year to bring together, explained company co-founder **Brady Beaubien**, whose partner Freer was a student of Goldsmith at UCLA. After locating the original score, Freer had to piece the music of the film back together, often by ear, while reorchestrating musical elements of *Rudy* that aren't included in the official film score.

Freer is hoping to tour *Rudy in Concert* around North America, working with local musicians in each city while relying on local and national promoters to help produce the project. CineConcerts also developed a live performance for "Star Trek: The Ultimate Voyage" highlighting Goldsmith's work on the popular sci-fi television and films, visiting more than 100 markets. Beaubien is hoping for similar success with *Rudy in Concert* and is working to sell the show to promoters and art presenters with help from their booking agent **Michael Cherella** at WME.

"We're finding that people remember the movie, but they're not sure if putting it in a 2,500 concert hall is going to work," Beaubien says. "But I've found that if you really believe in a project and the music is super powerful and the movie itself is uplifting and has a great message, that people will come see it."

Astin said he hopes the concert and accompanying tour raise awareness about Goldsmith's work, which has been honored with dozens of awards, including 18 Oscars nominations, although he has only won the prize once for the 1976 film *The Omen*.

"He didn't get an Oscar nomination for *Rudy*, and I was just heartbroken by that," Astin recalls. "It's an amazing thing when your body of work is so familiar that people might miss something that is next level. Movies like *Rudy* fit within a genre that is inspirational and shaped around storytelling, but not always memorable. The score of *Rudy* is all together different. There's something going on with his music and you can see it in the musicians who perform the material who haven't heard it before. There's an electricity to their reaction that is undeniable."

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<https://variety.com/2018/music/news/rudy-sports-movie-sean-astin-concert-score-jerry-goldsmith-1202954652/variety.com>

## Beloved Sports Movie 'Rudy' to Receive Live-to-Picture Concert Treatment (EXCLUSIVE)

Jon Burlingame

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September 24, 2018 10:39AM PT



**The Jerry Goldsmith score will be performed by an 80-piece orchestra on Nov. 10 at the Shrine.**

A beloved sports movie will receive the live-to-picture concert treatment when "[Rudy](#)" is screened on Nov. 10 at Los Angeles' Shrine Auditorium with an 80-piece orchestra performing Jerry Goldsmith's original score. Star [Sean Astin](#), director David Anspaugh, writer Angelo Pizzo, producer Cary Woods and Daniel "[Rudy](#)" Ruettinger (the real Rudy) are all slated to appear in a pre-show panel discussing the film and its music. Justin Freer will conduct the 80-member Hollywood Chamber Orchestra. His CineConcerts organization (in partnership with Sony Pictures) is behind the event.

The 1993 movie – which told the true story of a young man who, against the odds, realizes his dream of playing football for the University of Notre Dame – ranks no. 54 on the American Film Institute’s list of “most inspiring films.”

A portion of the proceeds will go to the scholarship fund of the Notre Dame Alumni Club of Los Angeles and to Southern California high school sports programs.

Said CineConcerts producer and co-founder Brady Beaubien: “Jerry Goldsmith’s incredible score brings to life the heart, raw excitement, and internal battle by creating the continual sensation that Rudy’s struggle feels like it is our own. We feel privileged to bring this film concert experience to Los Angeles, where countless movie dreams are born and where the score was also written.”

Anspaugh and Pizzo previously collaborated on another sports movie, the basketball-themed “Hoosiers,” also with a Jerry Goldsmith score that received an Oscar nomination.

Goldsmith, who died in 2004, was an 18-time Oscar nominee (who won for “The Omen” in 1976) and among the most respected composers in Hollywood history. Goldsmith’s inspirational “Rudy” theme has been licensed countless times over the past 25 years, going on to become one of his most-recognized tunes. This marks only the second full live-to-picture presentation of a Goldsmith score (“Planet of the Apes” was done in London in 2015).

CineConcerts does live-to-picture concerts of the “Harry Potter” films and has also done “Gladiator,” “The Godfather,” “It’s a Wonderful Life,” “Breakfast at Tiffany’s” and other classics.

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<https://variety.com/2019/music/news/rudy-in-concert-jerry-goldsmith-1203174785/>

**Jerry Goldsmith’s 25-Year-Old ‘Rudy’ Score Headed for a New End Zone: ‘Rudy in Concert’**

Tim Greiving / March 27, 2019 6:30PM PT



**The late composer’s music will get the full orchestral treatment at an L.A. screening... with the real Rudy on hand to cheer it on.**

“There are so few things in the world that you can stand up and scream from the rooftops and not care what anyone says,

because you know there’s absolute right and absolute wrong,” says Sean Astin, who played [Rudy Ruettiger](#) in the quintessential underdog movie, “Rudy.”

“And it is an absolute right and an absolute truth that this score by [Jerry Goldsmith](#) is perfect. It’s a perfect score.”

Goldsmith’s music, a glorious paean to the unflagging heart, will be celebrated Saturday in a live performance accompanying a 25th anniversary screening of the 1993 film at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles. “Rudy in Concert,” conducted by Justin Freer — the co-founder of CineConcerts, who studied with the late composer — will also feature a pre-show panel with Astin, director David Anspaugh, screenwriter Angelo Pizzo, producers Robert Fried and Cary Woods, Carol Goldsmith (the composer’s widow) and Ruettiger himself.

“I saw [Jerry Goldsmith](#) cry in the sound room with his wife, Carol, as they were scoring that movie,”

says Ruettiger, who attended all of the scoring sessions at the now-extinct Todd-AO Scoring Stage. “He turned and said to me, ‘This music will be heard the rest of your life, Rudy. The rest of your life.’ I’ll never forget those words.”

Ruettiger was there every step of the movie-making journey, which he says began in the locker room after his famous tackle in the 1975 Notre Dame game against Georgia Tech. After a decade’s persistence — overcoming his small stature, dyslexia and poor grades — he fulfilled his childhood dream of making it into the Fighting Irish, and finally got to play in the final game of his final season. He tackled the opposing quarterback and got carried off the field.



“I don’t know if they were criticizing me or making fun of me in that locker room, when the guys said, ‘This only happens in Hollywood,’” says Ruettinger. “I’m going, ‘Dude, you don’t understand what I’ve been through in order to get to this point. This is real life, man. The reason why those people cheered is not because I made the tackle. I think they cheered because there was hope there. That’s what filtered through that stadium. The impossible became possible.”

Ruettinger took his inspirational story to Hollywood twice without bearing any fruit. Unkept promises and an unused script came and went, and he took a job as an insurance salesman and then as a groundskeeper at a condo in South Bend, Indiana. His dreams were revitalized after he saw the 1986 underdog basketball movie, “Hoosiers” — directed by Anspaugh, written by Pizzo and scored by Goldsmith — and he eventually got his story to its team.

Finally, in 1993, TriStar Pictures made Rudy’s story into a movie. In other words, it took Rudy as long to get to Hollywood as it did to get onto the field at Notre Dame.

“The movie of ‘Rudy’ is not about football, it’s not about Rudy Ruettinger,” he insists. “It’s a message of hope. The same feeling I had when I saw my dad in church when they gave the Notre Dame score, how his eyes lit up with hope. He worked three jobs, we had 14 in the family — stressful life. But yet when Notre Dame won, it gave him hope. That’s a gift I wanted to give him. And that’s the gift I think we gave America.”

The film, which earned almost \$23 million after it came out on October 22, 1993, routinely appears on lists of top sports movies. Among the hordes who have thanked Ruettinger over the years are former New England Patriots wide receiver Chris Hogan and former L.A. Lakers star Kobe Bryant, who both partly attributed their careers and work ethic to the film.

“You haven’t experienced what I’ve experienced,” says Astin, “with thousands and thousands of people, many of them big men — you know, hulking, football-sized men — who want to have an aside with me to tell me it was the first movie they cried during. I’ve been at the bedside of dying children — they’re in the bed in their living room, and they’ve got the movie up.”

And “it’s absolutely the music,” Astin says, that brings on the waterworks.

“I’ve always felt a sense of injustice within the Hollywood community about formally recognizing what Jerry accomplished with this score,” he says. “All composers know and love and revere Jerry, and they totally love this score. But he didn’t get an Academy Award nomination, which I just didn’t understand. I was just so upset when that happened.”

Goldsmith, who died in 2004, was a bit of an underdog himself. His prolific body of work for film and TV over 50 years rivaled that of his contemporary, John Williams, but he was rarely offered the beloved blockbusters and prestige pictures that Williams racked up. For every “Planet of the Apes” or “Chinatown,” there were five films like “Mom and Dad Save the World” and “Chain Reaction.” He only won a single Oscar, for 1976’s “The Omen.”

“Jerry was not the kind of guy to self-promote,” Anspaugh told me in 2017. “Combine that with the fact that sometimes it’s just the luck of the draw, you know, to have the right movie at the right time, and do big box office. But I mean, my God — his body of work...”

After he composed a bouncing, jubilant, synth-heavy score for “Hoosiers,” Goldsmith was eager to work with Anspaugh and Pizzo on another uplifting film. He was well-known for his work in the horror, sci-fi and action genres, but the composer had a soft spot for intimate, sincere dramas.

“That’s one thing that Jerry and I share, in terms of our critics,” Anspaugh said. “He has been criticized for being too sentimental at times — as have I. And the other similarity is that neither one of us ever apologized for it. It’s just who we are.”

When he conducted concerts of his film music, Goldsmith nearly always included suites from these two sports films. When people asked him what his favorite scores were, he would often say “Hoosiers” and “Rudy.”

His fanfare for “Rudy,” a rousing brass tune that persists and strives along with the protagonist, has become shorthand for athletic glory and underdogs everywhere. It’s a staple of sporting events, from little leagues to the Olympics.

Then there’s the tender, almost lullaby-like melody for Rudy, which opens the film on solo flute. It’s a sensitive portrait of the real heart of the story — Rudy’s heart — and it passes from this childlike guise to a minor-key melancholy when hope starts to dim, before swelling into a magnificent hymn for full orchestra and choir.

“You have to be careful in movies like that — you really have to pick your spots,” said Anspaugh. “Because Rudy had all these obstacles thrown in front of him, and with every victory, you know, there would be an opportunity to go for the jugular. And then what do you have left at the end? I tried

to steer away from those traps, as best I could, and Jerry did the same. But at the same time, we were true to what the material was, and what Angelo wrote.”

The Hollywood Chamber Orchestra will perform the score on Saturday — including some of the musicians who performed on the original recording, like pianist Mike Lang — along with the Cal State Fullerton University Singers.

When the score was first being recorded, Ruettiger asked Goldsmith if he could conduct the orchestra. “He says, ‘Sure!’” Ruettiger recalls, laughing. “And the orchestra, they were great — just great people. And they got excited, I got excited, and they let me do bar 64 and bar 65. Isn’t that awesome?”

He got to keep the baton.

During those sessions, Ruettiger befriended Goldsmith’s longtime music editor, Kenneth Hall. When Hall started teaching in the film scoring program at USC, he invited Ruettiger, now a motivational speaker, to come and inspire the prospective film composers. Hall passed away in 2016, but Ruettiger still comes every year. He’ll speak to the students on Thursday.

“If I didn’t go to practice every day and practice and practice, I would never have been prepared for that moment,” he says of his big play. “And that’s what I tell the film students: you practice and prepare like you’re scoring a movie — *today*. Because your time’s going to come, and you’re going to be ready. That’s what happened to me.”

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[etonline.com](http://etonline.com)

## 'Rudy' 25 Years Later: Sean Astin and Rudy Ruettiger Reunite

Rande Iaboni

<https://www.etonline.com/rudy-25-years-later-sean-astin-and-rudy-ruettiger-reunite-exclusive-123561>



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It has been 25 years since [Sean Astin](#) graced the silver screen atop the shoulders of his fellow football teammates as they erupted in chants of "Rudy! Rudy! Rudy!" in the climax of the aptly titled, *Rudy*. The film was based on the inspirational true story of Rudy Ruettiger and ET was recently on hand for the big reunion between Astin and his real-life counterpart!

"This is Sean Astin, by the way. The real Sean Astin!" Ruettiger excitedly told ET cameras upon reuniting with Astin backstage at [CineConcerts'](#) 25th-anniversary celebration, *Rudy in Concert*.

"We both look alike now," Ruettiger added. "He got heavier and I got heavier. He looks great!" the now 70-year-old motivational speaker joked. The film was released on Oct. 13, 1993, and followed Rudy (Astin) on his journey to play football at the University of Notre Dame despite not having the grades, money or physicality. Determined to overcome the odds, Rudy never gave up and eventually fulfilled his dream of playing for the team. "*Rudy* was not a hit, *Rudy* the movie was unsuccessful when it was released in theaters," Astin, 48, admitted to ET. "Now, over 25 years later, this movie has found its way into the hearts of millions of people."

"Kobe Bryant watched the movie at 16 and it kept him going," Ruettiger shared. "I'm his hero! The movie was his dream and his connection to keep going and keep working hard."

For Astin, who was just 22 during filming, *Rudy* holds an especially poignant meaning in his life.

"I was talking to my wife this morning and she really likes *Rudy* because for her it's the beginning of our marriage. We had just gotten married," Astin revealed. "To me, it's kind of a defining moment, not just in my career, but my life."

ET was on the set all those years ago and spoke with Astin about his recent nuptials.

"Christine and I have been married for four months," Astin told ET at the time. "I think married life is wonderful! Everyone says you are so young. For me, married life is beautiful."

ET played the clip for Astin, who cringed after seeing his younger self.

"I'm younger in that video than my oldest daughter now!" a shocked Astin said. "How did my parents let me get married that young, what were they thinking?!"

Astin and his wife are still married today and share three daughters together.

"This movie is about my wife and me," Astin added. "The experience of making this film and what it means to me, it's about Christine."

Astin, who had previously starred in films like *The Goonies* and *Toy Soldiers*, won the title role in *Rudy* thanks to the massive support from his real-life counterpart.

"He looks believable, he looks naïve, and he's that lovable. That's the guy," Ruettiger described. "So I called [the screenwriter] and said, 'You gotta look at Sean Astin.'"

Following that advice, director David Anspaugh quickly scheduled a meeting with the actor.

"He walked through the door and walked across the restaurant," Anspaugh recounted to ET. "He was wearing a white T-shirt and tennis shoes, and just walking from the door to the table I'm going, 'That's the guy to beat!'"

Shockingly, Astin was not the studio's first choice for the title role. "The studio [wanted] Brendan Fraser," Anspaugh revealed. "I said, 'Have you guys read the script? Brendan is a big guy, he's like 6'3". Rudy is this little guy, we need to find someone like that.'"

Though Astin matched Rudy's height at 5'7", there was still a ways to go before he was ready to hit the field. Astin admitted that producers for the film instructed him to gain roughly 10 to 15 pounds because the actor was not credible at his current weight.

Despite his small stature, Astin put a lot of focus into performing as many stunts as he could in the film. "I did want to do as much of it as they would let me, until I got hit one time and I felt my neck buckle and then I was like, 'stunt guy!'" Astin revealed with a laugh.

Astin even stole his daughter's heart with his portrayal of Rudy. "It was put back in the theaters [for the anniversary] and I didn't know this at the time but my wife bought tickets for them to see it," Astin shared. "[My daughter] Elizabeth just kept pinching my cheeks and saying, 'Dad, you're so cute, oh my gosh, you're so cute!'"

The CineConcerts event, hosted at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles, featured a live orchestra conducted by composer Justin Freer, and a panel discussion. Freer was mentored by the film's original composer, Jerry Goldsmith, who died in 2004.

"As soon as I saw the movie and I heard Jerry Goldsmith's score, that felt permanent," Astin recounted. "What Jerry did with this score, it was just transcendent."

"The music makes the movie number one!" Ruettiger agreed.

Goldsmith's score was most pivotal in the climax as Rudy is carried off the field on the shoulders of his teammates, and filming that scene for the movie was like lightning in a bottle.

"We really only had one shot," Astin explained of the scene that was filmed during halftime of an actual game at Notre Dame in front of 50,000 unsuspecting fans. "We were waiting and waiting, there's this kind of natural cheer that grows from the crowd...and then I go running onto the field and it's clear they've been waiting for this one person, so they start cheering for the little guy running onto the field."

"My whole thing was, 'Don't slip!' Because if you fall down, there's no take two," Astin added.

Though the film left out major moments of Ruettiger's real life (he served in the Navy and was an amateur boxer at one point), that memorable scene was incredibly accurate to how it really went down.

"It all came together where they honored me and no one has ever been carried off the field that way," Ruettiger boasted.

And that infamous "Rudy" chant has not only followed Ruettiger, but Astin as well.

Two years ago while participating in an Ironman Triathlon (consisting of 15 hours of running, bike riding and swimming), Astin received a serious blast from the past from the surrounding crowd.

"I'm coming down the lane, I'm running and I hear, 'Rudy! Rudy! Rudy!' and I'm like, 'That's awesome!'" Astin shared.

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