



FILM MUSIC NOTES

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EXCERPTS FROM LEAVE HER TO HEAVEN by Alfred Newman

(For a biography of Mr. Newman, refer to FILM MUSIC NOTES for February, 1945)

EDITORIAL

A recent news item in the Hollywood Citizen is headed "Music in 'Heaven' Not Dubbed in." Our editorial eye was naturally caught by the headline and we went on to read what followed: "'Leave Her to Heaven,' new Darryl F. Zanuck presentation now in its second record week at Loew's State, Chinese, and Upton theatres, is one motion picture for which the background music was not dubbed in as an afterthought. Credit for this break from the traditional way of handling cinema music goes to William A. Bacher, who produced the picture." That this little gem is the work of the publicity department is evident, for after all, while "dubbing as an afterthought" may have been prevalent in the studios of yesteryear, it is certainly not the case today. The music department is beginning to come into its own more and more, with not only composers, but orchestrators or arrangers sharing in the credits. Some studios will allow the head almost what he wants in the way of orchestra, a thing unheard of not so long ago when music was still the stepchild of the industry, and it is very evident to ears hearing more and more of the background music which studios are skimping in this respect and which are allowing the composer full sway. Incidentally, it would surprise many people, not in the know, to learn that a studio putting out one of the most popular features in the world is one of the chief offenders while Warner Bros., we understand, is one of the most generous. We think the studios are beginning to realize this and they should, for a musician is only as good as his tools and the best of these should be provided in the proper quantity to insure proper results.

* * *

Not long ago, our local paper carried an advertisement to this effect, "Hear Spellbound, Sunday night, on such and such a station, musical score and interview with the composer, Miklos Rozsa." Brought to you by such and such a shop (selling records and which include, of course, Spellbound Albums, which certainly show that this music is being recognized. And apropos of Spellbound we were very much interested to hear that the little daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Whitfield (Mr. Whitfield's article in our January number will be remembered by our readers) was taken by some friends to see the picture. Her parents did not know the film the children were to see and when they found out it was Spellbound were a trifle perturbed to know what effect it would have on a child of her age. To make a long story short, it had no bad effects, but on the following Sunday, the child listened with great pleasure to this performance on the air and explained to her parents, sequence by sequence, just what was taking place in the picture as she followed the music. We think this is quite a feat for a seven year old. Incidentally, this little girl is the Penelope of One Man's Family which has one of the biggest air audiences on radio.

* * *

We were much gratified to receive recently in our mail a letter from Universal Studios announcing a new series of publicity releases which will cater solely to musical publications, coverage to include both the popular and classical fields, under the title of "Musical Notes." Heretofore, the studios have been disinterested to help us in any way to secure such items of information and we have had to rely almost entirely on outside sources for such material. Our heartiest congratulations to Universal Studios for recognizing the trend and "getting on the band wagon." Items from the first issue will be found elsewhere in this issue.

* * *

About this time every year the perennial question recurs - shall we print FILM MUSIC NOTES or keep it in its present form. No one who has ever assembled mimeographed material is unaware of the actual labor involved, and it would be infinitely easier to print the bulletin. But printing is expensive and as we have no "angel" to back us, such as we now have in Mrs. Field who has "fought, bled and died" for us

EDITORIAL continued

so to speak, in the Hays - now the Johnston office - (which does our mimeographing for us) this would mean it would have to be put on a commercial basis and advertisements secured in order to carry the expenses. Many of our readers object to this. Only the other day we received a letter which said "It was a most pleasant experience to read a music magazine without having to wade through page after page of the usual ballyhoo type of advertising." We quoted last year from our English correspondent, Mr. Huntley, on this subject, and a well-known musician here in Hollywood said to us recently "Do consider carefully before you decide to go into print. The magazine has made a name for itself in its present form. It is known in the studios as that 'mimeographed magazine' and not in a derogatory sense, either. There is something different about it now, but if you print it, it will be like dozens of other trade journals published each year - don't change it." Again we ask our readers for their views on the subject.

* * *

As we have had occasion to say before, all questions not relating directly to the magazine should be sent to Mrs. Grace Widney Mabee, National Film Music Council, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City 11. We do not maintain a research library and therefore, most of the questions asked about the music in any specified film should be addressed either to the music or publicity departments of the studio which produced the picture. The latter department usually encourages requests for additional material and photographs, etc., and will undoubtedly be glad to furnish the necessary information.

* * *

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A Message from the National Film Music Council

The future of the world is in the hands of youth, and it is not only in Germany and Japan that youth needs re-educating. Education must take on the character of ethical training and a recognition of the rights of the other fellow. Music played a large part in keeping up the morale of our troops and now that war is over, there is still need for music in the life experience of every child. The integration of music with all other subjects in the school curriculum is most important.

It will be of interest to our readers to know that the OWI Advisory Film Committee is to set up throughout the country, organizations which will aid local film groups to discuss the visual media as did the Washington Visual War Workers. The organization's temporary headquarters will be in the office of the secretary, Vernon G. Dameron, in the NEA's Department of Visual Education, in Washington. This Film Council of America is desirous of having the cooperation of all groups interested.

The new trend is away from metropolitan life and the local motion picture theatre will assume more power and prestige. The president of the Music Educators National Conference, John C. Kendel of Denver is emphasizing the fact that Music must become a vital force in the lives of all students. Is it not important that teachers know of the good films coming to their local theatres? FILM MUSIC NOTES, sent monthly from our Hollywood Office, 6162 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood 28, California, is the only publication of its kind which gives unbiased opinions by excellent musicians, on current releases.

The chairman of the National Film Music Council has been invited to serve on the Audio-Visual Aids Committee in the field of education. Hazel B. Nohavec of Cleveland is chairman with Helen C. Dill of the University of California at Los Angeles, chairman of the division of film music. Mrs. Dill is at present in charge of Film Music Forums on the west coast for the National Film Music Council.

Two projects are essential: first, that of working closely with the local motion picture theatres in recommending good pictures and pointing up their music values. Second, to provide such 16mm. films for schools having projectors, for demonstration purposes (see October bulletin for special list and all issues for new films). These questions along with others will be considered at the 10th Biennial meeting of the MENC to be held at Cleveland, March 27 - April 3. It is also urged that a request be made for the production of such 16mm. films as may be used today in the field of music education. The University of Nebraska Bureau of Audio-Visual Instruction recently held five Audio-Visual conferences in various cities in order to discuss the use of motion pictures as aids to teaching.

The Blue Book of Non-Theatrical Films can be obtained by writing to The Educational Screen, 63 East Lake Street, Chicago 1, Illinois. This book contains information as to firms that will supply projectors and other equipment. Price \$1.00

Letters are coming daily thanking us for sending extra material and for the valuable information found in FILM MUSIC NOTES. We wish to be helpful in every way we can. However, many changes are taking place in the educational world and in the motion picture industry. We are greatly indebted to the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc., with offices in Hollywood and New York and also the National Board of Review who give the National Film Music Council headquarters in their offices at 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City 11. The former represents the motion picture industry and the latter, reports the action and approval of pictures by the public at large.

A number of films made by the OWI Overseas Film Committee have been made available on a purchase basis and probably will be in many of the non-theatrical film libraries. They include films about America. Most of them have music by good composers.

NEWS ITEMS....COMMENTS

Errata: January. In paragraph three of News Items and Comments read "picture" for "music" (Copland's music for the picture Our Town).

In Reviews of Current Feature-Length Motion Pictures (She Wouldn't Say Yes) read "brittle" for "little" in the opening paragraph (this brittle and somewhat superficial, etc.).

In Behind the Musical Scenes of The Shocking Miss Pilgrim in paragraph six add an "s" when Mr. Henderson "marshall(s)" his singers. Also, Ricardi for Ricordi, and Junius Matthews for Julius.

* * *

A most interesting picture from the Tashkent Studios in Moscow was shown a selected group at Paramount recently. Stark and grim but beautifully performed, it is a fine example of the realistic school of cinema to which Russia has accustomed us. What took us most especially to see this film at the invitation of Mr. Jay Leyda of the M.P.A. of A and S, however, was not the work of the actors, nor even to hear the sound of the expressive Russian language once again, but because the score of this particular picture has been highly acclaimed among the cognoscenti. Brutal and powerful scenes especially noteworthy following many long silences in which the action was allowed to progress without the use of music at all, thereby enhancing the tragedy of the whole. It is the work of the young Armenian, Akim Khatchaturian, probably known mostly over here for his symphony. The recording was poor and far too loud but, nevertheless, the music is deserving of careful consideration.

* * *

Some of the best classical music to be recorded for the screen will be heard in Universal's new release, The Seventh Veil. Story revolves around the psychiatric breakdown of a young concert pianist, played by Ann Todd. The film includes such works as Chopin's Prelude Number Seven, Pathetique Sonata by Beethoven, Grieg's Piano Concerto in A Minor and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto in C Minor. Life Magazine, in a recent issue, voted the British produced vehicle "the best picture of the week." Muir Mathieson conducts the London Symphony Orchestra in the film's Royal Albert Hall sequence.

* * *

Universal Studio commences its sixth year as a producer of musical shorts with the signing of Russ Morgan, Matty Malneck and Alvino Rey as the first three leaders to bring their popular orchestras to the screen in 1946. Relatively unknown six years ago, the currently popular Harry James made one of his first screen appearances under the banner of a Universal musical two-reeler. Will Cowan is assigned to the musical short unit as director and associate producer.

* * *

We now have proof that this IS the atomic age. When Ernest Gold, young composer whose score for Columbia's Girl of the Limberlost attracted so much attention, scored Notorious Gentleman for Universal recently, he was told that he had to get the music finished on very short notice on account of recording schedules. Having composed the score in four days, he then wrote one hundred and thirty-four pages of orchestration in two days, forty-five pages the first and eighty-nine the second!! Oh for those good old horse and buggy days!

* * *

Wilhelm Von Wymetal, former director of the Metropolitan Opera, has signed a contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. He will direct Lauritz Melchior, Kathryn Grayson and Marina Koshetz in operatic numbers for Two Sisters From Boston. Mr. Von Wymetal has been director of the Opera Nazionale in Mexico City for the last two years.

* * *

NEWS ITEMS....COMMENTS continued

The Hollywood Reporter says: Eight noted musicians are a part of the seventy-five piece symphonic orchestra recording the new musical score for Cecil B. DeMille's *The Sign of the Cross*, which will be re-released this summer by Paramount. Included are John Pennington, first violinist of the London String Quartet; David Frisina, concert master of the Los Angeles Philharmonic; Louis Kaufman, concert master and concert violinist; Alex Murray, concert master of the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra; Henry Tamianka, concert master and violinist of the London Symphonic; William Vandenburg, for eight years solo ocellist of the Philadelphia Symphony; Lauri Kennedy, solo cellist brought to the United States by John McCormack and recently with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; Alfred Brain, solo horn of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and formerly with the London Symphony. Violins valued at approximately \$95,000 are being used, including the famed DeRosier Stradivarius, played by Pennington, a Guarnerius, played by Alex Murray, and a Vuillaume, played by David Frisina.

Lou Levy has submitted "*Cinderella*," Sergei Prokofiev's new symphonic ballet, to Walt Disney for consideration as background for a feature-length cartoon.

Of the twenty-five song hits with the largest radio audiences during 1945, nine were from films and one from a Broadway musical, according to a summary of audience coverage index surveys for the past year issued here over the week end by the Office of Research - radio division.

Major songtrend of the year is the shift in musical taste to the heavy melodies of the masters. This was reflected by such popular adaptations as "*Strange Music*" from Grieg and "*Till the End of Time*" from Chopin. Noticeable, also, was public acceptance of heavy contemporary tunes - "*Laura*," "*Symphony*," "*Warsaw Concerto*." Columbia Pictures is interested in doing a biography of Shostakovich, using his Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Symphonies, which amount to one reason why Am-Rus has dispatched Eugene Weintraub to Hollywood.

The number of Cole Porter tunes to be featured in Warners' *Night and Day*, story of the composer and his music, has been set at thirty, which is the largest representation from a single writer to be heard in a film.

One of the most ambitious pieces of music done in a film studio in a long time is the score for the Joan Crawford-John Garfield starrer, *Humoresque*, at Warners. Franz Waxman has woven at least fifteen classical tunes as well as much incidental music into the film. Isaac Stern, violin virtuoso, and Osoar Levant are giving of their talents, too, to make the music one of the selling points of the film. Peter Meremblum's California Junior Symphony Orchestra (125) will appear in the film. They recorded von Suppe's "*Poet and Peasant Overture*." Among the strains in the background are adaptations from "*Habanera*," "*Carmen*" and many other heavier scores. That music will play an even greater part in future films is evidenced by Petrillo's latest ruling against foreign music being admitted into this country. It is known that Petrillo is looking for even greater employment of musicians by the studios, for in the past few months radio shows have given up many good musicians to the studios.

Miklos Rozsa was signed yesterday by Universal to a four-picture deal. This contract is exclusive of the Rimsky-Korsakov Technicolor musical *Heat Wave*, on which he is currently working.

Marian Anderson, Artur Rubinstein, Patrice Munsel, the Don Cossack Choir, Markova, Carmen Amaya and Ezio Pinza have been set by 20th-Fox for stellar roles in *Impresario*, based on Sol Hurok's autobiography.

* * *

NEWS ITEMS....COMMENTS continued

Jane Wyatt will play the feminine lead in Andrew Stone's production, The Bachelor's Daughters. The male lead is Eugene List, who will have the role of a concert pianist. Mr. List is the former Army sergeant who played for President Truman, former Prime Minister Churchill and Premier Stalin at the Potsdam Conference. Miss Wyatt has just finished work in Universal's Strangest Conquest. The cast of the new picture also includes Gail Russell and Claire Trevor. It will go into production in March and will be released by United Artists. New York Tribune.

* * *

The Toronto Symphony is the star of a new movie soon to be released in Canada, the United States and Russia. The ten-minute musical short offers a close-up of the eighty-three musicians before and during a concert. They are shown making their entrances, talking, studying their parts and tuning up. Then the conductor, Sir Ernest MacMillan enters and begins the program with his own St. Malo. The other numbers are Benjamin's Jamaican Rhumba and Kabelevsky's Colas Breugnon. The ensemble, which is the first Canadian orchestra to appear on the screen, was photographed in Toronto by the National Film Board. A twenty-minute movie was made for school, college and club use. The symphony film is a part of the Canada Carries on Series. As the film is released in Canada, two similar films are being released in the United States and South America. Later it will appear in Russia as part of a longer film on Canada's cultural life. The orchestra is heard throughout Canada every Friday night. Musical America.

* * *

Virginia Balinger in the Musical Leader: You met the vivacious and handsome Theodora (Teddy) Lynch as she sang a "Traviata" sequence with Met star John Garris in Paramount's The Lost Weekend. You'll be seeing and hearing her again in Universal's forthcoming version of an episode in the life of Rimsky-Korsakov, titled Shahrazad (the English translation of the original "Scheherazade"). Miss Lynch will be featured in a Mediterranean kasba sequence and will sing a special vocal arrangement of the "Scheherazade" music.

It seems the songstress began her career singing at the Waldorf Roof establishment. Then her thoughts turned to serious music and she set out for Italy to study. To support said studies, she took a job as reporter in her spare hours for the Rome office of the New York Herald Tribune and was there until the outbreak of the war. Now she divides her time between pictures, concertizing, study and her ranch in the Santa Monica mountains.

Charles Kullman, Metropolitan Opera tenor, has been signed for a lead role in the picture. Kullman, studied at Yale to be a doctor and got his first patient when he turned film actor in Universal's Shahrazad. Kullman portrays a ship's doctor in the musical, and is required to bandage the arm of Chester Conklin, a sailor. The tenor has been a Met star for ten years. He abandoned medical ambitions when glee club activities intrigued him more than classes.

Shahrazad is based on the events of one particular week in the life of the famed Russian composer during his three years at sea as a cadet in the Russian navy. As the story goes, the ship was becalmed in Mediterranean waters by a heat wave, and all aboard were given shore leave. The circumstances of this particular week supposedly were of great import in the life of the budding composer. Undoubtedly the oriental coloring of "Scheherazade" can be credited to these travels, as well as the Symphony in E Flat Minor.

Miklos Rozsa is doing the score for the picture and will incorporate such themes as the "Hymn to the Sun," "Flight of the Bumble Bee" and of course the "Scheherazade" music. Walter Riesch is responsible for the screenplay and direction. He did such tales as Gaslight and The Unfinished Symphony. Jean Pierre Aumont will portray the composer, and Brian Donlevy plays the colorful Captain Bligh of the Russian navy.

* * *

NEWS ITEMS....COMMENTS continued

Henry Purmort Eames, chairman of the Southern California section of the American Society for Aesthetics, announces a conference in Rembrandt Hall on Pomona campus. Music and architecture will be discussed by Edmund Cykler; a study of the power and versatility of music will be read by Professor Eames, Dr. Miklos Rozsa will discuss the evolution of music in films; Carl Thurston, art critic, will compare the arts; Dr. Theodore Greene, Stanford University, will speak on "The Problem of Meaning in Music and the Other Arts."

* * *

Speaking of *Duel in the Sun* - Dmitri Tiomkin is writing the musical score for this Selznick production. Tiomkin, who's been in the service these four years, will be remembered for his scoring of *Lost Horizon* which won him an Academy Award. He also formerly scored such pictures as *The Great Waltz*, *You Can't Take it With You*, and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*.

* * *

Signing of composer and conductor Werner Janssen for the scoring of *A Night in Casablanca* has been announced by producer David L. Loew. This film will bring the Marx Brothers back to the screen for the first time in four years. The Janssen Symphony of Los Angeles will record the entire musical background for the production which will feature many of the Marx musical specialties.

* * *

FILM MUSIC NOTES offers FILM MUSIC NOTES PORTFOLIO, October 1943 - June 1945 at three dollars.

Each month since October 1943 we have presented excerpts of best-known film music from current films. They are selected by the composers themselves and are in manuscript. Here you have source material of unique value. Themes, signatures, background and bridge sequences arranged for piano alone, with suggested orchestration or conductors' sheets.

These excerpts are laboratory material, stimulating and suggestive alike to composers, students and music lovers.

Among the composers represented:

Scott Bradley - Cartoon Cue Sheet

Aaron Copland - The North Star

Erich Wolfgang Korngold - The Constant Nymph

Gail Kubik - The Memphis Belle

Louis Gruenberg - Counter-Attack

Alfred Newman - The Song of Bernadette and The Keys of the Kingdom

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NEWS ITEMS IN BRIEF

John Huntley reporting for FILM MUSIC NOTES from London, England

Talking things over with Muir Mathieson the other day, he told me about a scheme by the Decca Company to issue a large series of film music phonograph records, with fresh discs appearing each month. I gather that it is intended to record one brand new film score in each issue, plus what Muir calls "one of the classics." For example, the first set of records, due to appear in March or April, will feature concert arrangements of the new Arthur Bliss score Men of Two Worlds (over which Mathieson is very enthusiastic), William Alwyn's music to The Rake's Progress (I am rather doubtful about this item "out of context," as I said when I reviewed the film), and as the "classic" will be Ralph Vaughan Williams' long awaited suite from The Invaders. (British title: 49th Parallel).

Something special cooking in one of Britain's very few cartoon studios. The Halas-Batchelor unit are working on a film called The Magic Canvas, for which the music has already been composed by Matyas Seiber, and recorded by the Blech String Orchestra before a foot of film has been shot. The artists have prepared a special disc recording in which every bar is numbered by a person speaking the bar number before the music is played. It all sounds very odd to the inexperienced to hear every bar of music at a time played separately and numerically announced, but from this, the artists have drawn up a unique shooting chart. Each instrument is represented by a different colored crayon on a graph which is marked out in frame numbers, bar numbers, and pitch of music note. After drawing in all the instruments on this chart, every musical movement comes before you as a rising or descending, a fading or an intensifying color scheme from which the story and visuals are worked out. After a long period on wartime Ministry of Information propaganda cartoons and trailers, the Halas-Batchelor Unit is getting into its stride in an attempt to make a success of something which has never so far been achieved in this country - make a decent color cartoon.

A course of twelve lectures on The Art of the Film at the Harrow Technical School now running includes a session on film music. William Alwyn is the lecturer.

Film Review No. 1. Caesar and Cleopatra. Directed by Gabriel Pascal. Music composed by Georges Auric; conducted by Muir Mathieson; played by the National Symphony Orchestra. No one knows exactly how much this film cost. Rumor has said that the accounts department of Denham just dare not reveal the full details of the most expensive, (the most wastefully expensive at times) production ever made in England. They say around about a million or maybe, well a million, five hundred thousand pounds - not dollars. Whispers say it cost eight million dollars; that is a lot of money in any film studio. It certainly leaves Gone With the Wind well behind on cost. You cannot ship tons of sand (by mistake) and a full sized sphinx to Egypt for nothing. Many sets costing thousands of pounds never even appear in the film. It has split the critics wide open and it is hard to say whether the expense, the director, or the film have been most frequently attacked. The George Bernard Shaw play has been faithfully reproduced on the screen against a lavish background of ancient Egypt. There is spectacle and wit, magnificent acting and plenty of entertainment. So far it has succeeded at the boxoffice even though it failed to please the press. Briefly it tells two stories - the awakening of womanhood in Cleopatra under the brilliant influence of Caesar, and the escape, siege and final triumph of the Roman army at whose head Caesar is fighting. Without doubt, it is technically almost flawless; this applies to the music as well. It is in modern style with a delightful main theme and skilled orchestration. It is a restrained score with strong sense of dramatic timing. Muir Mathieson, the most famous figure in British movie music (he has about one hundred and fifty scores to his credit) directing the recording in the Denham sound studios, with one of England's new orchestras, the National Symphony Orchestra. Whatever you hear, whatever you may read about it, Caesar and Cleopatra is a film to be seen.

NEWS ITEMS IN BRIEF continued

Film Review No. 2. The Rake's Progress. Rex Harrison, Lilli Palmer, Godfrey Tearle. Directed by Sidney Gilliat. Music composed by William Alwyn; played by the National Symphony Orchestra; conducted by Muir Mathieson. This is the outstanding score of recent months. Composer William Alwyn, already established as perhaps England's foremost musician of the documentary film (Our Country, Welcome to Britain, a Ministry of Information film made for the American Army in Britain, and The Proud City), has so far made only a mild impression in feature films. True, Squadron Leader X, Escape to Danger and On Approval showed possibilities, but it was with factual material like Desert Victory, The True Glory and World of Plenty that Alwyn made his name. The Rake's Progress is honest-to-goodness film music. With an above-average recording by the Denham Studios technicians, led by Brian Sewell, the National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Muir Mathieson combine to produce the most exciting sound track of recent months. Alwyn's music would probably be meaningless on its own, but from the signature (with its modulations between full orchestra and saxophone passages) to the restraint of the impressive climax, this is a score to be noted as music for films and not music in films.

Film Review No. 3. Brief Encounter. Trevor Howard, Celia Johnson. Directed by David Lean. Musical direction by Muir Mathieson. The National Symphony Orchestra with Eileen Joyce (pianoforte) playing Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2. I like The Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2 far too well to be able to follow a first-class film at the same time. Brief Encounter is solid screen entertainment, despite the absence of big star names; witty Noel Coward, homely Celia Johnson, plus the finest lighting camerawork of the year 1945 by Bob Krasker. Add to this feast a world famous concerto and intellectual indigestion results. One of the loveliest railway shots ever is amplified by those first eight chords of the No. 2 Concerto, and as we swing into the main theme, up comes the titling. However, as soon as the story begins to unfold, we are continually distracted from the fascinating plot to listen to Eileen Joyce (with the faithful Scot, Muir Mathieson, plus N.S.O.) in a brilliant rendering of a work which, despite many hearings, still requires my full attention. It cannot be done. Either you listen to Rachmaninoff or Coward, but not both; if you do want to introduce serious music to the public via the film (a thundering good idea) there are plenty of technically satisfying, aesthetically sound (even boxoffice gratifying) methods of doing it, as Song of Russia, The Seventh Veil, and Fantasia (incidentally, among some Beethoven, Chopin, Mozart and Grieg, the Rachmaninoff No. 2 is itself included in a masterpiece of music presentation The Seventh Veil). It is an old problem, this business of using well-known music as a background for films, and nearly always, as in this case, it is unsuccessful.

THE THINGS THEY SAY

British film music composers, directors, and writers
comment on their specialized branch of the film industry

Compiled by John Huntley

"When you see a well-dressed man, you are not conscious of his clothes; you are just pleasantly aware that here is somebody well turned out. The total impression is satisfying, though you can't exactly say why. Film music should have this effect on the cinema-goer; he should not be conscious of it as something distinct from the film itself. The twin principles of vision and sound should merge and achieve a unity - as they do in ballet, or in the music drama of Wagner; but, of course, the business of writing for the screen requires a very special technique. The composer has to be a kind of musical epigrammatist, compressing the sense of an idea into the shortest possible time and conveying it with the greatest economy and effectiveness." Arthur Bliss, 1944.

"Music can help to humanize the subject and widen its appeal. Music can make the film less intellectual and more emotional. It can influence the reaction of the audience to any given sequence. But music for the films must also be specially written. If music is considered necessary it should be treated as an integral part of the script, and the difficult question of finance should not be left to chance or afterthought, but should be settled before shooting begins. Music can develop rhythmic suggestions from words. It can carry ideas through dissolves and fade-outs. It can prepare the eye through the ear. It can merge unnoticeably from realistic sound into pure music. It can shock. It can startle. It can sympathize. It can sweeten. But for the love of mike, never let it be mediocre!"

Muir Mathieson, 1940

"I do not think the medium is at present at all satisfactory as far as the composer is concerned, as his music is largely inaudible, toned down to make way for, in many cases, quite unnecessary talk. This is, in my opinion, quite needless as it is possible to pay attention to two things at the same time if they appeal to different parts of the intelligence." Arnold Bax, 1944

"Music always has and, I believe, always will form a valuable part of film creation. It performs certain duties in the exciting of human emotions which cannot be replaced by the use of either speech or sound. To use Walter Leigh's phrase, 'It is an artificial organization of sound for purely emotional purposes, a representation of physical movement in terms of sound and rhythm.' But one thing is obvious, that music required today for incorporation into the sound band, along with natural sound and speech, is absolutely different from either orthodox concert music, or from the kind of music which was written as an accompaniment to silent films and later for synchronized scores. The old idea that music must fulfill the function of an undercurrent to the picture, just quiet enough to prevent distraction from the screen, being faded down when the commentator speaks, and faded up again when he has finished, this is as antiquated as the type of film for which it is still used. Modern music for sound film must be an integral part of the sound script, must, on occasions, be allowed to dominate the picture, must on others perform merely an atmospheric function and frequently it must be intermixed with natural sound and speech." Paul Rotha, 1935.

"I'm afraid I have to be brutally frank and say that the chief incentive to write for the screen is f.s.d, because a composer is likely to make far more money in a little time by this sort of work than he is from the casual and not-too-frequent performances of his works in the concert hall or over the radio. But even while working against all the mechanical restrictions on inspiration imposed by this form

THE THINGS THEY SAY continued

of composition, it may still be possible for a musician to preserve his artistic integrity. But he must bear several things in mind; one is that the atmosphere of the film studio may encourage complacency, because film people have a way of exaggerating and bestowing praise that is not always justified by hard artistic standards. Secondly, it must be remembered that the dramatic quality of a piece of film music is enhanced by the correspondingly dramatic content of the picture itself. The person watching the film is already in an emotionally responsive condition and will tend to invest the music with wonderful qualities that it doesn't really possess. My argument is that in the last resort film music should be judged solely as music - that is to say, by the ears alone, and the question of its value depends on whether it can stand up to this test." Arthur Bliss, 1944.

"If Puccini were alive today, he'd be writing for the films. A friend of mine recently expressed this provocative opinion, one consideration of which propounds the interesting questions of the economic possibility of opera surviving, and of the measure of fulfilment which the composition of film music affords to a composer whose leanings are toward the dramatic. The former question will probably be decided quite automatically. The financial strength of the film industry offers handsome rewards for the professional composer; the opera house does not. Opera was a living art in the countries most affected by the war, and it seems probable that its survival at all in these countries can only be on the basis of the well-tryed repertoire. If this be so, the opera house cannot avoid taking on the artistic value and functions of a museum. The question of whether writing for the films provides a satisfactory alternative to the composition of opera is one which can only be decided by the individual composer. Judging by the enthusiastic way in which such composers as Vaughan, Williams, Bliss, and Walton have taken to the films, and judging by the results, it looks as if, given the right film, composers have a new vehicle for whatever dramatic urges and talents they possess."

Hubert Clifford, 1944

"It would, I think, be fair to say that the standard of music in British films is, at the present time, as high, if not higher, than in any other country. This applies more especially to the serious type of film. Let me hasten to explain that I refer more to the quality of the music than to the technical handling of it. I would say that the technique of the Americans is more advanced, or at least infinitely 'slicker' than ours. Their management of music on the sound track is brilliant, and their composers seem to have trained themselves to write with a precise care and appreciation of the dramatic significance of each turn in a story. Perhaps because he has been at it longer, the American composer has turned himself more thoroughly into a music dramatist than the British. On the other hand, I think the average score written here has more intrinsic musical value. If British composers can achieve a balance between the technical dexterity of the Americans and their own standard of writing, then we shall have made another big step forward in the development of a real film music." Muir Mathieson, 1944.

"I believe that film music is capable of becoming, and to a certain extent already is, a fine art, but it is applied art, and a specialized art at that...I still believe that the film contains potentialities for the combination of all the arts such as Wagner never dreamt of." Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1944

(With acknowledgement to Tempo, Sound Illustrated, Paul Rotha, and R.C.M. Magazine)

HIGHS AND LOWS IN RECENT SCORES
by Celeste Hautbois

I RING DOORBELLS. There seems to be a theory that a budget score must be cheap in more than one way. Mr. Erdody gave many indications of a fine talent and it is a shame that the imagination and originality present in some sequences was not kept up throughout the score in favor of the type usually called "salon music." The use of a Stephen Foster theme was unfortunate, since it had no meaning and only decreased the musical value further. The string section was too small and the whole thing sounded strained and flat. The woodwinds were used with skill. Most of the time the score stayed in the background and thus neither helped nor hindered the picture. It would definitely be worthwhile to examine the possibilities of orchestrating a budget picture, such as this, without any brass at all in favor of an adequate string section. True, a trumpet is much louder than a fiddle, but volume isn't everything. The harp was used too sparingly and could have done much to enhance the orchestral texture. Mr. Erdody's work was thus weighed down by a large number of circumstances. With no extra expense it could have been a better score.

THE UNITED STATES. It is a shame that the composer of this score does not get mention on the screen. Since there were almost no "cues to catch" the composer had practically unlimited musical possibilities and he did make the most of them. The score has an unusual accumulation of fine sequences and could and should be made into a symphonic suite. The rhythmic and harmonic idiom employed throughout is vivid and vibrant, and never does the composer write "modernistic" stuff where it should be modern. Only this kind of picture can have this kind of score. Since most of the time the music is behind a narrator it proves that it is a pure Hollywood myth that music having a bit more than the usual tremolos and slow high divided strings interferes with the dialogue. It would be worthwhile to make an effort to find the composer's name. I believe that a surprise would be in store for us.

SHOCK. David Buttolph wrote a discreet and unpretentious score for this picture. This in itself is noteworthy because the temptations to be conspicuous are many. In keeping with the exceptionally high standards prevailing in the music department at 20th-Fox, this score always supports the picture, adding drama and excitement and yet never calling attention to itself as a "score." The musical ideas show boldness and dramatic power. The inevitable "love music," however, lacked genuine emotion and sounded sentimental and sugary, falling far below the high standard of the rest of the score. The orchestration by Arthur Morton was exceptional for its imagination, sensitivity and skill in handling the orchestral resources. Mr. Morton was given equal screen credit with conductor Emil Newman and composer Buttolph. This is as it should be and it is satisfying to note that the arranger is given his due not only in "musicals" but in dramatic productions, as well. The use of weird harmonics in the violins in the dream sequence in the beginning of the picture, as well as the use of orchestral color as a means of dramatic expression showed Mr. Morton's superior abilities and set a new high in orchestration as such. It might be added that there was not a trace of the usual abundance of high divided violins and the almost proverbial harp glissandi, a fact that also contributes greatly to the high artistic level. The close cooperation between composer and arranger was rewarded by great unity of composition and orchestration. The recording made the orchestra sound a bit small and strained in the main and end title music, otherwise it was very adequate.

THE VIRGINIAN. Mr. Amfitheatrof has written a long and sometimes too lavish score for this one. It is obviously uneven. The first half of the picture which moves rather carefree and is definitely on the lighter side had little interesting music. The usual "western" type of music was heard and little of the awe-inspiring freshness of the out-of-doors was conveyed. Instead the music moved along well worn and, one might add, plush-lined paths. The second half, which is tense and

HIGHS AND LOWS IN RECENT SCORES continued

dramatic was wonderful. It seems that Mr. Amfitheatrof had more to write about, and write he did. The hanging as well as the last few scenes had great dramatic power and helped immeasurably to convey the mood of tension and stark drama. These sequences were composed and orchestrated in a manner only too rare in pictures. It is a pity that Mr. Amfitheatrof is not being given a picture which suits his great talent better than did this one. A powerful and intense drama would be more down his alley than was this western. He, nevertheless, managed to give the picture a lift when it needed it, and that is more than can be said about a lot of other scores.

THE HOODLUM SAINT. There is little music in this picture and what there is has purely incidental character. Mr. Shilkret gets credit for it but some of the sequences were written by a ghost by the name of Al Sendrey who also made the orchestration. As ghosts are heard but not seen, Mr. Sendrey got no credit for either the orchestration or the original music he wrote. Regardless of who wrote the music it was not very imaginative and forceful. It had only one advantage: it stayed in the background. The sequence in jail, just before "Snarp" gets out on bail is best musically and is very well orchestrated. However, it seems a bit too dramatic and theatrical for what it is to accompany. The high register of the novachord was well used in some of the religious sequences but that is about all. The picture had many dramatic weaknesses, and a clever and sensitive score could have helped over many a rough spot. The score, however, does nothing of the sort and clings to bits of action and dialogue as though afraid to step out on its own. If producers would give composers more time to get the spirit and mood of a picture and to absorb all the fine points, the music would give more active support to the films and in turn would raise the boxoffice appeal to the public. That ought to be worth the few extra days required. This picture is an example of just that.

IDEA GIRL. Frank Skinner was musical director but most of the music revolves around two songs by Edgar Fairchild. The second of these, "I Don't Care," has an unfortunate resemblance to "Melancholy Baby." But maybe Fairchild "didn't care." The first song is very attractive and shows Mr. Fairchild at his usual best. There was little music except for these songs and what there was showed a well versed hand and lots of experience but little else. Charlie Barnett's band played ineffective arrangement and gave a pretty bad account of itself.

THE SEVENTH VEIL. The story being about a pianist, there was a lot of fine music to be heard in addition to Mr. Frankel's score. The classical selections included part of Grieg's piano concerto, part of Rachmaninoff's Concerto No. 2, plus a wide variety of piano solos including some of Beethoven's Sonata Pathetique, some of Chopin's music and part of Mozart's Sonata in C. It is too bad that lack of time made necessary a very sketchy and fragmentary treatment of the pieces mentioned, yet they were so beautifully played and the recording was of such exceptional quality that one can easily overlook the pruning the classics had to undergo. Mr. Frankel's original score was really original which is a rare distinction. Very fine characterizations and a sensitive creation of moods made the score a truly memorable one. Outstanding was a montage showing the young pianist at play, at work, in the country, and in her room. The melody used was a simple waltz to which she was dancing in the establishing shot. The various moods were created entirely by the orchestration which proves how powerful a medium of expression orchestral color is. Many other sequences showed a remarkable freedom from the usual cliches and proved again that "notey" music does not necessarily interfere with the dialogue and that one may, providing one knows how, write modern music instead of serving up a watered down version of the romantics, yet still grip the listener. It is doubtful, however, whether Mr. Frankel could have done as fine a job, if he had been compelled to finish his score in the usual ten days or two weeks which the average composer in Hollywood gets.

" LEAVE HER TO HEAVEN "

THE SEDUCTION

BY ALFRED NEWMAN

1st VIOLINS
2nd VIOLINS
OBOE
VIOLAS
CELLI

POCO ANDANTE

mp
pp
p

Film Music Notes No. 27

" LEAVE HER TO HEAVEN "

BURIAL RITES

BY ALFRED NEWMAN

MAESTOSO

FLUTE
ADD. STRINGS
CLARINET
BASSOON
TRUMPET
TROMBONE
STRINGS

pp
mf
mp
p

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The Film Sense
by Sergei Eisenstein
Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1942

First book of theory for Soviet pupils of the State Institute of
Cinematography of which Eisenstein is the head

From the preface we quote -

"The perspectives of the possibilities of the film are unlimited. And I am firmly convinced that we have barely touched these possibilities."

And the purpose of the book (written especially for film makers and so of interest to laymen as well) is thus stated.

"This volume is focused on one basic aspect of film theory and film practice: the question that has come to be known as 'montage.' Although this term has accumulated other connotations in America, it was in America that it was truly born - in the great works of D. W. Griffith, whose pioneering was developed and defined in the work of Soviet film makers."

This volume also presents a perspective on audio-visual cinematography. What do we mean by montage?

"Before the inner vision - hovers a given image emotionally embodying a theme. The task - to transform this image into a few basic, partial representations which in their combination and juxtaposition shall evoke in the consciousness and feelings of the spectator, reader or auditor that initial general image which originally hovered before the creative artist. The desired image is not fixed or ready made but arises - is born." (Dynamism). So the inner technique, the inner process creates the living feeling. More of this inner synchronization later. Again "the secret of writing 'shooting-scripts' with genuine emotion, instead of a mere sprinkling of close-ups, medium shots and long shots," is to be found in this type of montage. Paradise Lost is named as a first-rate school in which to study montage and audio-visual relationships. Best of all "shooting-scripts" is Leonardo da Vinci's notes for his painting of the Deluge - for sound as well as for a picture.

This subject of montage (montage of attractions, chromo-phonio and vertical) is paramount in the four chapters of Eisenstein's book.

1. Word and Image
2. Synchronization of Senses
3. Color and Meaning
4. Form and Content: Practice

Every division contains material of unusual interest in broad artistry but the subject of vertical montage is perhaps of greatest value to the readers of FILM MUSIC NOTES. This has to do with synchronizing music and sound effects. The orchestral score is usually read horizontally but for film purposes it must be read vertically as well, for simultaneous action. We are fortunate that our Film Music Portfolio contains one of Scott Bradley's Cartoon Sheets, cued for music and all effects. Nat Finston showed me one of his master sheets for a feature picture, completely synchronized: this we hope to have soon for reproduction.

I wish we might publish the diagram of a sequence contained in the "Film Sense" from Eisenstein's Alexander Nevsky with music by Prokofiev. This is a superstructure analagous to an orchestral score. With a visual staff; a staff for phrases; the music itself; a staff for division of measures; a diagram of the visual shots and a

THE FILM SENSE continued

graph of movement which applies to both film and music - we have an audio-visual score. This diagram is of the prelude to the famous Battle of the Ice between Alexander's forces and the Germans.

1. Twelve sequential shots of the film at the top
2. Below seventeen music phrases (blank spaces)
3. The Prokofiev music - seventeen measures
4. Length in measures of the visual shots (blank spaces)
5. Diagram of the pictorial composition spaced like the shots, brought into measure
6. Finally, diagram of movement in both film and music in which the rhythm is simultaneous

Now I quote freely -

"This last gives the inner synchronization in which the plastic and the tonal find complete fusion in a language common to both, - movement. There enters into this conception tonality, pace, perspective, substantial masses and dramatic feeling. From the base of the music's movement all these manifestations spring with equal force - the intonation of the voice, the gesture. The movement which lies at the base of a work of art is not abstract or isolated from the theme but a generalized, plastic embodiment of that image through which the theme is expressed. 'Striving upwards, expanding, broken, well-knit, limping, smoothly developing, patchy, zig-zagging' are terms used to define this movement."

To sum up vertical montage -

"A key to the measured matching of a strip of music and strip of picture. Both strips united vertically or simultaneously: matching each continuing musical phrase with each phase of continuing parallel picture strips, - (thus) a correlation of aural and visual with specific emotions."

As to concrete methods, there are in "Alexander Nevsky" sequences in which shots were cut to previously recorded music track: sequences for which the entire piece of music was written to a final cutting of the picture: sequences written for the general idea, for rough or final cutting. Eisenstein also gives a noteworthy example from Disney's Silly Symphony (1931) in which the Peacock embodies the inner movement of the Barcarolle (Tales of Hoffman) i.e., the approaching and receding movement of the water - the play of light on the canal. Thus the peacock gazes at his upside-down reflection in the water; his tail "shimmers musically." This imagery does not contradict the love theme.

At the end Eisenstein asks this pertinent question: "Are all subtleties of construction predetermined?"

Here is his answer:

"During the period of work one rarely formulates these 'hows' and 'whys'. The basic selection is transmitted not into logical evaluation as in post-analysis, but into direct action."

To which he adds a final quotation from Wagner: "When you create, you do not explain!"

This book first came to my attention in Carmel-by-the-Sea, and brought so much into my ken that it occurred to me you students of film music might find it equally stimulating. Margery Morrison.

NOTE: Sergei Eisenstein is best known over here for such films as Thunder Over Mexico, Alexander Nevsky, and more recently, the great epic, Ivan the Terrible, seen here at a special showing for Academy members in May, of last year.

- The Editor

The Place of Electronic Music in Films
by Ivor Darreg

Electronic music is now coming into its own. We are at the beginning of a new and engrossing chapter in musical history. Having been, for the last two decades, a faithful servant - recording, amplifying, and reproducing speech, music and sound effects with ever greater fidelity as time went on, electronics is now proving its ability in the direct production of all manner of musically-valuable sounds, by means of the many new electronic musical instruments lately emerged from the laboratory stage. Tones of all kinds - the loudest and the softest; the deepest and the highest in pitch; pure tones, tones artistically blended with noise-sounds, rhythmic percussive, and imitative sound effects; even the vowels and consonants of human speech and song; all these may be electronically generated and played by the musician at the keyboard or fingerboard of these new instruments. There are also, of course, electrically-amplified instruments having conventional strings, reeds, etc.

Film musicians and composers should investigate these greatly expanded resources now opened to them. Of all the forces of nature, electricity is the most refined and subtle; we may thus expect electronic musical instruments to express musical feeling much more perfectly than can ever be done with our present instruments that are restricted to mechanico-acoustic principles. Those arrangers, composers, conductors and performers who employ electronic musical instruments will **attain their** ideals more closely. In consequence listening audiences will more thoroughly enjoy what they hear. It goes without saying that a more perfect musical rendering of dramatic emotions will prove very desirable in attaining the aims of film art.

The creative ideas of modern composers have become far too advanced to be properly expressed through our ordinary musical instruments of today. The world will never know how many beautiful musical themes have been lost for all time because the composer or arranger hesitated to write passages that might be too difficult on the present awkward orchestral instruments. Often a melodic line or a chord will demand a certain particular tone-color in order to sound at its best, but if the instrument having the wanted timbre cannot play the passage easily, one will either alter the theme (to its detriment) or give it to another instrument (at a sacrifice).

Timbre, by the way, will assume greater importance in music with the advent of electronics. Tone-color will rank with rhythm, melody, and harmony as a fundamental factor in musical composition. Electronic musical instruments will even be able to hold one note and play a "melody" of timbres on that same pitch. The performer will also possess a vibrato of tone-quality-change, as well as the usual vibrati of pitch-change and loudness-change.

Special instruments for use when composing are now possible. No longer will a composer be forced to "funnel" his orchestral ideas through the relatively narrow and restricted piano "bottleneck." Apparently it is not generally realized what a tyrannical stranglehold the piano has been exercising over the composer's inspiration. True, the piano has immeasurably aided the evolution of our music; but, benevolent as it may seem, the piano's dictatorship is still a dictatorship.

Though some new rules might possibly take their place, many of the present "thou shalt nots" and "you mustn't try it" of music will be swept away by electronics. A purer intonation will be available for certain adagio and largo passages. New tuning systems will come into use to meet the needs of the various less-than-semitonal scales. Atonality, too, will profit from the use of timbres specially created for atonal music, and special non-harmonically-related scale-tunings will also be available on occasion.

THE PLACE OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC IN FILMS continued

The percussions of the electronic orchestra will enjoy a greater variety and flexibility than even our present strings. The situation now obtaining, where string players must play eight or more to one part, will be eliminated. More players will be needed in the electronic orchestra than is now the case, because there will be so many new tone-colors and thus more choirs: all these choirs will be complete, because electronic instruments of whatever kind will come in full sets from soprano to contrabass.

Orchestral balance will be improved; the conductor will have greater control through electrical indicators, gain and tone controls. There is also the possibility of specially designing instruments for film work so as to compensate for the frequency-response characteristics of the sound and recording equipment used. A feeling of greater truth, clarity, and sincerity will result when we have instruments that will be perfectly suited to the sound-film medium. Where tempo is unusually rapid, or where difficult sync problems exist, it might be worthwhile to use special instruments playing one or two octaves lower than usual, performing and recording at one-half or one-quarter normal speed. The playback at normal tempo would then supply a minutely careful rendition, yet with less rehearsal time.

When musicians, through electronic advances, are freed of the burden of needless drudgery imposed by conventional instruments, they will be able to concentrate their newly-released efforts on the attainment of greater artistic heights in their music. Proper cooperation and coordination between musically-trained and electrically-trained persons will bring the Electronic Age to music quickly and smoothly. The "brick wall" supposed to divide the musical field from the study of electricity and sound is quite imaginary. The attempt to stop musical progress and freeze everything at a pre-1900 status quo is equally ridiculous. For this reason - to help foster an understanding of the importance to us of electronic music - the writer has engaged in both electrical and musical activities.

The day will come when the film without electronic music will be as out-of-date as the silents.

18th Annual Awards

Music Nominations

Best Scoring of a Musical Picture

ANCHORS AWEIGH, M-G-M - Georgie Stoll
BELLE OF THE YUKON, International-RKO - Arthur Lange
CAN'T HELP SINGING, Universal - Jerome Kern, H. J. Salter
HITCHHIKE TO HAPPINESS, Republic - Morton Scott (Musical Director)
INCENDIARY BLONDE, Paramount - Robert Emmett Dolan
RHAPSODY IN BLUE, Warner Bros. - Ray Heindorf, Max Steiner
STATE FAIR, 20th-Fox - Alfred Newman, Charles Henderson
SUNBONNET SUE, Monogram - Edward J. Kay
THE THREE CABALLEROS, Disney-RKO - Charles Wolcott, Edward Plumb, Paul Smith
TONIGHT AND EVERY NIGHT, Columbia - Marlin Skiles, Morris Stoloff
WHY GIRLS LEAVE HOME, PRC - Walter Greene
WONDER MAN, Beverly-RKO - Ray Heindorf, Lou Forbes

Best Music Score of a Dramatic or Comedy Picture

THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S, Rainbow-RKO - Robert Emmett Dolan
BREWSTER'S MILLIONS, Small-UA - Lou Forbes
CAPTAIN KIDD, Bogaues-UA - Werner Janssen
THE ENCHANTED COTTAGE, RKO - Roy Webb
FLAME OF THE BARBARY COAST, Republic - Morton Scott, Dale Butts
G. I. HONEYMOON, Monogram - Edward J. Kay
G. I. JOE, Cowan-UA - Louis Applebaum, Ann Ronnell
GUEST IN THE HOUSE, UA - Werner Janssen
GUEST WIFE, Greentree-UA - Daniele Amfitheatrof
THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM, 20th-Fox - Alfred Newman
THE LOST WEEKEND, Paramount - Miklos Rozsa
LOVE LETTERS, Wallis-Paramount - Victor Young
THE MAN WHO WALKED ALONE, PRC - Karl Hajos
OBJECTIVE, BURMA, Warner Bros. - Franz Waxman
HARRIS-UNDERGROUND, Bennett-UA - Alexander Tansman
A SONG TO REMEMBER, Columbia - Miklos Rozsa, Morris Stoloff
THE SOUTHERNER, Loew-Hakim-UA - Werner Janssen
SPELLBOUND, Selznick-UA - Miklos Rozsa
THIS LOVE OF OURS, Universal - H. J. Salter
THE VALLEY OF DECISION, M-G-M - Herbert Stothart
THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW, International-RKO - Arthur Lange, Hugo Friedhofer

Best Original Song

ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE, ANYWHERE, AREN'T YOU GLAD YOU'RE YOU, CAT AND CANARY,
ENDLESSLY, I FALL IN LOVE TOO EASILY, I'LL BUY THAT DREAM, IT MIGHT AS WELL BE
SPRING, LINDA, LOVE LETTERS, MORE AND MORE, SLEIGHRIDE IN JULY, SO IN LOVE,
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SOME SUNDAY MORNING.

REVIEWS OF CURRENT MOTION PICTURES FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF MUSIC INTEREST

A WALK IN THE SUN, 20th-Fox. (One Day in History). Director: Lewis Milestone
Musical Score by Fred E. Rieh

Even though you may be fed up with war pictures, don't fail to see this one. It is exceptional, with a thousand flashes of wit, satire and profound philosophy lighting its unfolding. It is not entertainment, it is not a story: you are a participant in the Italian landing. Through the supposedly desultory talk of the men, the farmer, the truck driver, the druggist's assistant and whoever, they are fused into units which separately and together work out a campaign and win a war. Inadequately briefed, their native intelligence and a higher loyalty carry them through "and we've taken a farmhouse" - One day? A thousand days and a thousand farm houses! Mr. Rieh's accompanying score is both distinguished and imaginative, with original treatment of narration and songs which have marching tempo and ballad quality. The voice of the singing narrator, strongly reminiscent of Paul Robeson's, had a beautiful racial feeling...The music begins with muted, muffled drums, gradually reinforced by the orchestra in low frequencies, with a marching rhythm persisting throughout, growing to a climax, punctuated by terrible dissonances and ending as it began. The "Walk in the Sun" has the quality of a patrol. It is an overall picture of the G. I. that has not yet been excelled. Furthermore, you get the feel of the country, the terrible contrast between the smiling landscape and what lurks therein and you are made, thereby, to realize that this day and its objective is typical of the whole crucifying experience in Italy. With his superb actors and ace photographer, Mr. Milestone has made a fine and sobering picture to be pondered by all of us for, alas, we are already showing an inclination to forget the price we paid for victory. Mature-Family. Running time: 1 hour and 55 minutes.

YOU CAN'T DO WITHOUT LOVE, Columbia-British. (As You Like It). Dir: Walter Forde
There is bound to be a difference of opinion as regards this British made musical with its unmistakably English flavor. For while an effort has been made to suit the music to the plot and, in this case, to the star, in general it is so far outside of our standards that it is difficult to judge it fairly. Some will like its underdone quality, its over-simplification and lack of almost everything in the way of eye appeal. The rather homely and badly costumed heroine, on whom almost the entire burden of the music rests, they will find refreshing. Her voice is pleasing but utterly without shading, giving somewhat the effect of a cornet-a-piston. Production values are like a flat drawing and sympathetic and sincere though the leading lady may be, others of us will long for just a dash of that Hollywood glamour which heretofore we have been prone to criticize, and for some of the Hollywood staging and costumes which make our conception of even wartime budget pictures, acceptable to eye and ear. For those of us who feel this way, everything in the picture sounds dry and dull, the singing mediocre in quality, and the recording poor and lacking in overtones. The lyrics have little sparkle and contribute nothing, the pace is too slow, and the arrangement of the small orchestra is such as to make it seem thin and inadequate. No music credits are given, perhaps wisely so. Mature-Family. Running time: 1 hour and 14 minutes.

THE ROAD TO UTOPIA, Paramount. (Fun for All). Director: Hal Walker
Music Score by Leigh Harline

Simon-pure hokum of that special brand in which the team of Crosby and Hope excel! Production values are varied and original in unexpected comments and change of dimension, such as the actor crossing the stage set for the stokies, the unexpected "plug" for Paramount, and the Santa Claus sleigh. Much of the picture, in fact, is in the rare vein of the Gold Rush with the duet and dance at the beginning a classic. Bing's "Welcome to My Dream" is lovely, sung in the singer's own simple style. Robert Benchley leaves us with one of his most genial characterizations, allowing for no sadness, and the expert tongue-in-cheek score, tailored by Leigh Harline, is a more than adequate fit in every situation. Family. Running time: 1 hour and 30 minutes.

WHISTLE STOP, Nero-U.A. (Small Town Melodrama). Director: Leonide Moguy

Original Score and Musical Direction by Dmitri Tiomkin

(1) A sordid picture, badly adapted. The original novel showed the motivations which actuated the characters and was fairly absorbing, but the film version is not only tawdry but unconvincing. It might appeal to a certain type of adolescent boy: it shows him the "know how," the smooth approach so essential to his self esteem. He is not concerned with the "light of a new day" at the end. Photography is interesting at times and the action and direction are good in spots but Mr. Tiomkin's beautiful scoring is entirely wasted on this type of production - it does not belong anymore than the use of pastels for a chromo. Mature-Family.

(2) This picture must be accepted as entertainment derived solely from a dramatic story, well directed, accompanied by a splendid musical score. Deviating widely from its source, the novel by Maritta Wolff, insufficient motivation and illogical action are responsible for a plot lacking in psychological conviction. In the opening scenes we find that Kenny (George Raft) is a man of keen mental capacities, reared in a conventional upright family, yet throughout the story he sways indecisively from racketeering to decent mode of life. Mary (Ava Gardner) overthrows a successful career to influence vacillating Kenny to reform, and subsequently in the climax accepts him "for better or worse." Neither of these situations are convincingly realistic. However, the picture must be credited with a strong dramatic impact, suspense and thrilling action, and a superb musical score. Drama of this type gives the composer a field day of occasion for his art, and Mr. Tiomkin seizes the opportunity to write and direct a distinctive score. Throughout, the picture reflects brightness and color on scenes which otherwise might be drab, and tends to add quality rather than accentuate cheap atmosphere. When action is the order, the music rises realistically to the occasion. His use of the solo violin in love scenes provides illustration of effective accompaniment. The Gitlo-Lew Lentz double slaying scene inspires a masterful example of the power of full ensemble. Altogether, as a study in film music, this score will be found to contain lessons of value in composing for pictures. Mature-Family. Running time: 1 hour and 20 minutes.

SHOCK, 20th-Fox. (Sanitariums and Psychosis). Director: Alfred Werker

Music by David Buttolph. Musical Director: Emil Newman

An absorbing and suspenseful psychological study and expose' of private sanitariums with Vincent Price excellent in a melodramatic characterization which is never overdone. The music by extra-dimensional effects (created by the use of high frequencies, unusual overtones and muted chimes) is of special value in prolonging the suspense and tightening the situations. Used as background throughout (no nightclub sequences!) it is a most essential factor in the production. Adults. Running time: 1 hour and 10 minutes.

THE HARVEY GIRLS, M-G-M. (Good Fare for All). Director: George Sidney

Musical Direction by Lennie Hayton

Musical comedy in color that is as hard and bright as the raw western frontier town which is its locale. Elaborate settings, an excellent cast, melodies which are tuneful and pleasing, and a story which holds interest and ethical value, even if it does not do anything like justice to the real Harvey Girls of the period nor to Fred Harvey's part in the bringing of one kind of civilization to the west. All these make up a picture which, if not outstanding, is gay, sprightly and entertaining. The saloon brawl could have been left out to advantage, for certainly Fred Harvey would not have countenanced Harvey Girls acting in any such manner, even in a righteous cause. It is a pity, too, that the "Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe" ditty has been so much sung that it has lost its freshness. A special word of praise must go to Virginia O'Brien for her work in the smithy scene, which is one of the highlights of this lively and rollicking show. Background music is unobtrusive and fitting. Family. Running time: 2 hours.

TARS AND SPARS, Columbia. (Music and Comedy). Director: Alfred E. Green
Musical Director: M. W. Stoloff

A genuine musical comedy, high in entertainment value, fast moving and well staged. Direction and photography are arresting throughout, especially in the dance scenes and the whole set-up is lively and intriguing with an interesting documentary background. The supporting cast really steals the show: Jeff Donnell, Marc Platt and Sid Caesar, the former with her pleasing personality, the latter respectively with their dancing and imitations. Two good songs are featured, "I am Glad I Waited For You" and a better one still, "Love is Like a Merry-Go-Round," modeled on the finale of Verdi's "Falstaff" in amusing, melodious and expert counterpoint. So far, it is the only number approaching in deft distinction the April rain ensemble in Bambi. An arrangement for harp (played beautifully by the young artist Robert Maxwell), and three mouth organs deserve special mention. It starts out as purely classical, then is cleverly developed into jazz in variations; it is exciting but keeps an even, smooth line. The half-spoken, half-sung "I Like Eggs" is not only amusing through acting but musically as well. It jumps from swing to opera to Russian folk song with clever chorus passages and orchestration. A picture that children will enjoy as much as their elders. Family. Running time: 1 hour and 27 minutes.

BREAKFAST IN HOLLYWOOD, Golden-U.A. ('Nuff Said!). Director: Harold Schuster
Musical Director: Nat W. Finston

Variety and human interest feature this unpretentious serving up on the screen of the popular radio show held together as in the original by the personality of Tom Breneman. The story is well conceived and tied in with the well-known program. Breneman is a great showman: types are well chosen and sprinkled with star names, with Beulah Bondi, as always, outstanding and the authentic Hollywood background and music add color and verve. In fact, music here is an absolute essential in establishing locale and atmosphere for the greater part of the picture. The musical features are accomplished with clever application of all sorts of orchestral devices which produce descriptive sounds greatly increasing the effects desired in the production proceedings and in themselves bring humorous reactions and add to some of the funny incidents. The little love story which threads the whole is also nicely done, all told making the film a pleasant experience in entertainment. Family. Running time: 1 hour and 30 minutes.

THE DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID, Bogauss-U.A. (Yellow-backed Novel). Dir: Jean Renoir
Musical Supervisor: David Chudnow. Music Score: M. Michelet

In spite of its whimsical fantasy and beautifully authentic costumes and settings, this much touted picture is a disappointment. Low in theme and with some scenes so starkly realistic as to be abhorrent, it is far from wholesome fare even for adults. It starts as light comedy then gives promise of powerful drama that drags in the end to rank melodrama of the Grand Guignol type, leaving the audience with a sense of frustration. There is little of actual "chambermaiding" - the diary is negligible and other values should give the picture its name. The direction of Jean Renoir and the acting of the principals is practically flawless, and rarely has a background done over here so well reflected the feeling of another country - possibly due to the fact that director, photographer and scorer are French. Furthermore, we have been given to understand that Jean Renoir drew from his father's paintings for his inspiration, all of which gives the film a greater value than its subject. Mr. Michelet's expressive score does full justice to the story content. Especially sinister is the measured tread in the ascent of the staircase, but it is in its lighter moments that the music is most gay and entrancing, pervading the entire score and lifting it when most needed. Incidentally, who was responsible for the band - Mr. Chudnow or Mr. Michelet? It was delightful. It would be difficult, perhaps, to always attain the high mark set by his contribution to "Voice in the Wind" but this picture also proves the composer's sterling qualities as a serious musician capable of providing just the right background for serious themes. Adults. Running time: 1 hour and 30 minutes.

THE UNITED STATES, Produced in Britain. (Hands Across the Sea).

Though made in Britain this straightforward documentary presents a truer picture of the real United States than many of our own films, for if the film is a criterion the British producers have a better knowledge of the vastness and wonders of our country than do some of us. It should certainly do much to promote a better understanding of the U.S.A., not only in their military forces but throughout the Empire. Many of our own films must give foreigners a strange idea of us - what with the stressing of gangsters, outlaws, cafe society, nightclubs and drinking. This one showing our cities, commerce and industry and, in addition, the home life of an average small town boy, brings things into their proper perspective and our thanks are due the producers for their laudable effort. The accompanying score has an unusual accumulation of fine sequences and is of distinct value. It contributes to the emotional content - in the factories it is mechanical, in the home soft and tender, leading up to grand climaxes in the western scenes. Too bad no credits are given. Family. Running time: 1 hour.

IDEA GIRL, Universal. (Agreeable and Frothy). Director: Will Jason
Musical Director: Frank Skinner

Amusing light comedy, featuring an adequate cast and clever use of song-plugging tactics. Contemplating Miss Bishop's pulchritude, it is to be feared that many customers will think the title too short by at least one letter! Most of the comedy in the film is situational. Mr. Mowbray and Miss Fulton turn in good comedy but theirs is of the personal sort and has little to do with situations. Mr. Arthur Q. Bryan of the radio is a distinct and welcome addition to the screen. Let us see more of him in future. The picture introduces the Rubinstein Concerto to Hollywood as well as two popular songs written by Edgar Fairchild. The first of these is attractive but the second too reminiscent of "Melancholy Baby" to merit any critical acclaim. Otherwise there is little of interest musically in the film. Family. Running time: 1 hour.

THE VIRGINIAN, Paramount. (Pattern for Westerns). Director: Stuart Gilmore
Music Score by Daniele Amfitheatrof

Good entertainment though not necessarily a "must" is this Technicolor version of Owen Wister's famous novel, beautifully mounted and dramatically presented by an outstanding cast and refreshing in that we are spared the usual saloon brawls and smash-ups. The story does not give Mr. Amfitheatrof much chance for anything unique but his score does greatly enhance the overall quality of the film. Lovely orchestral arrangements for the quiet beauty of nature, clever use of the brasses to emphasize fright and tension and a sweet and peaceful theme, mostly for strings, for the romantic interludes. Music, for the scene with cattle and horses, is original, less percussion bringing the same results as the usual trail music, and a slow trill is used most effectively for a traveling motion in the heart of the orchestration. Just as a picture it is all most enjoyable. Family. Running time: 1 hour and 30 minutes.

SWING PARADE of 1946, Monogram. (Elaborate and Pretentious). Dir: Phil Karlson
Musical Director: Edward Kay

A musical of doubtful worth. Lack of refinement mars much of the comedy and puts it in the slapstick class. Had this been avoided and Gale Storm and Phil Regan's lovely music been given a chance to dominate the picture it would have been a better one, but as it is the noisy bands, low comedy and overplaying of the stooges injects a note of brash burlesque which cheapens the whole. The director does the best he can with the material at hand, dances are eye-filling and Connee Boswell's performance is commendable, but it is all objectionably and loosely put together and the homely chorus is another disappointing feature. Louis Jordan's too, too hot band will probably please the youngsters, which is to be regretted. Incidentally, it is interesting to note in this connection Deems Taylor's prediction that the next generation will be tone deaf! Mature-Family. Running time: 1 hour and 15 minutes.

THE HOODLUM SAINT, M-G-M. (Morality Play in Modern Dress). Dir: Norman Taurog
Musical Score by Nathaniel Shilkret

This story of the reclamation of six souls, each struggling in a sordid, materialistic world, without guidance and without faith is really a modern morality play and as such, high in ethical value. It is admirably directed and beautifully performed by a fine cast (by the way, it is a pleasure to see again Lewis Stone in one of his noteworthy characterizations) and while undoubtedly controversial in theme, is so marked by sincerity of performance as to be worthwhile. Mr. Shilkret's score keeps the play light and interesting - it does not overdo the background nor date the music. The dance marathon is amusingly scored and executed. There is a beautiful sequence with flute - the mystical and sustained sequence in the cell when Sharp turns to his patron saint and also when Terry seeks the same is highly effective, and Angela Lansbury's singing is really lovely, as is she. Mature-Family. Running time: 1 hour and 33 minutes.

SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY, 20th-Fox. (And a Little Child -). Director: Walter Lang
Music by Cyril Mockridge. Musical Director: Emil Newman

Fine photography, a remarkable presentation by a child actress and excellent background music, all set a responsive mood for the poignantly sentimental story outlined by the title. It is interesting to note how greatly the use of records in pictures has increased in recent years. From its use in the Gruenberg score of So Ends Our Night to the part played in the Janssen score for Guest in the House, through innumerable pictures it has been used with ever-increasing effect. Here it is especially to be remembered. In fact, the music throughout is used with great discretion - the long silences pointing up the tender theme for Julie and the powerful dissonances leading up to her death - followed by a breathtaking dramatic silence being most noteworthy of all. Family. Running time: 1 hour and 25 minutes.

BEHIND GREEN LIGHTS, 20th-Fox. (Chills and Thrills). Director: Otto Brower
Musical Director: Emil Newman

A murder mystery with a semi-documentary background which is good fare of its type. Gripping and absorbing, it gives a general police, press and political set-up which might be duplicated in every city and above all things there is plenty of PLOT. Music is used sparingly throughout with telling effect, the main title as usual giving away the content of the story - it is heavy and grim with discordant harmonies which set the mood. Mature-Family. Running time: 1 hour and 5 minutes.

THE WELL GROOMED BRIDE, Paramount. (Suave and Pleasing). Director: Sidney Lanfield
Music Score by Roy Webb

Brilliant, sophisticated entertainment performed by an outstanding cast with original production values, witty dialogue and beautiful photography, especially in the shots of San Francisco. If there are any illogicalities in the film they are so smoothly and swiftly glossed over that one doesn't mind them. The principals are at their best and there can be no more satisfactory actors in any cast than the first four listed: Olivia deHavilland, Ray Milland, Sonny Tufts and James Gleason. Mr. Webb's score, though short, adds greatly to the picture. Much of its comedy is due to the swift comments and ejaculations of the music, like the walking-"climbing up the hill" sequence and the train rhythm skilfully incorporated into the orchestration. The composer's use of the accented downbeat is delightful, nothing forced or artificial in his music - it just belongs and deserves careful attention. Adults. Running time: 1 hour and 16 minutes.

THE BLUE DAHLIA, Paramount. (Entertaining and Intriguing). Dir: George E. Marshall
Musical Director: Victor Young

Alan Ladd in top form is here again paired with Veronica Lake to their mutual advantage in a story first rate of its kind but with so many bops, fights, knockouts and deaths that one must not be of a squeamish temperament to really enjoy it. The supporting cast almost steals the show, with the clever characterizations of Bendix,

THE BLUE DAHLIA continued

da Silva, Dowling and Wright, and Tom Powers makes us wish there were such police officers. Exceptional direction moves the picture at the proper tempo and sets and lighting also worthy of special mention. Almost all of the music in the picture is right in the film itself.- bands, radio, etc., are the only sources and the effect in this picture, at least, is good. Many interesting sound effects are used to point up some of the tensely dramatic sequences, while others are played without music, giving excellent results. All these things hurt Buzz' head and so motivate the story and help untangle the plot: the noisy, juke box music, the barbaric beat of drums in the orchestra, etc., all bring back the confusion and strife of battle - thus Victor Young makes a pattern for a score which is perhaps not a score in the ordinary sense of the word but a very clever handling of music. Adults. Running time: 1 hour and 40 minutes.

BAD BASCOMB, M-G-M. (The Good Old West). Director: S. Sylvan Simon
Musical Score by David Snell

Exciting and humorous melodrama in the familiar Beery-Main tradition. It is difficult, of course, to believe him to be a dangerous leader of bandits, though he comes into his own toward the end when his soft heart wins over all obstacles. He really has a fine partner in the rough, goodhearted Marjorie Main and Margaret O'Brien is as touching and lovable as ever. Direction, photography and scenery combine to give a fine sense of reality - all worked out to the smallest detail. The score for this picture, while never unusual or outstanding, has nevertheless many good points and must be considered above the average. The introduction is excellent and the long chases and fights are skilfully done. Orchestration and recording are good throughout but the fight and battle scenes are usually so full of natural sound effects that one wonders why they must be further enriched by music. It can hardly be heard anyway and a bit of silence between shots would lend unheard of realism to such sequences. There is no song or even a theme, though there were several chances for both. Family. Running time: 1 hour and 55 minutes.

TERROR BY NIGHT, Universal. (Holmes and Watson). Director: Roy William Neill
Musical Director: Milton Rosen

Suspenseful and well produced, with especially fine photography of the train making its tortuous way by night from England to Scotland. Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson in the persons of Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce have earned a first place in the affections of the "Baker Street Irregulars" and other Holmes addicts. The series have improved steadily and consistently and now supply worthwhile entertainment for all lovers of detective yarns. Music, intermittent but fitting, builds mood and injects the right sinister note as the plot unfolds. The main title epitomizes the story: tragic, relentless, stark. After that no music until about halfway through the story when the sinister enters in. It is all beautifully convincing, intriguing and mysterious. Mature-Family. Running time: 1 hour.

PORTRAIT OF MARIA, Films Mundiales. (Pictorial Tone Poem). Dir: Emilio Fernandez
Musical Director: Francisco Dominguez

In this simple and poignantly touching folk tale the superb artistry of Dolores Del Rio and the extraordinary beauty of the photography leave a series of vivid and lasting impressions. Xochimilco, the fair, the little hut with its naive interior the shop: blessing of the animals, the artist's studio, etc. Figueroa's camera with his Mexican landscapes, clouds and sky pieces bring back that never to be forgotten Eisenstein classic Thunder Over Mexico. Profoundly moving and cosmic in significance the film tells us more about our Southern neighbor than any round of nightclubs or scenic beauties. Too bad though that we could not have had the original version. The dubbed in English was out of place and disturbing, spoiling the unity of the film and marring its artistic tone. A few captions in English would have given us the reasons for Maria's persecution and the music could have done all

PORTRAIT OF MARIA continued

the explaining, so well did it describe the emotions of the actors. The score is one of haunting beauty and deep melancholy. While not typically Latin American in character it enhances the overall quality of the picture and some parts are worthy of concert performance. The orchestration, however, is a bit thicker than we are accustomed to, due to lack of strings. The sentimental theme associated with Maria is reminiscent of Tea for Two. It originates in the little boat on the moonlit lagoon and achieves a thrilling effect when it is distorted later, matching the distortion of the girl's mind in delirium. The theme itself is highly emotional and always beautiful but never gay. Perhaps due to the recording, at times the woodwinds sounded harsh but the passage with the pipe is effective. All in all, the music has moments of suspense and exciting highlights and in its serenity and simplicity is the kind that only a talented musician could write. Mature-Family. Running time: 1 hour and 18 minutes.

THE SAILOR TAKES A WIFE, M-G-M. (Opinions Differ). Director: Richard Whorf
Musical Score by Bronislau Kaper

(1) An amusing, romantic drama of young married life in which it is satisfying to see two youngsters from happy, secure homes weather the storms of temptation, war and utter insecurity to find, besides their love, trust and stability. It is all delightful, touching (at times a little hard to believe) and really funny. A good cast - the character of Freddie Potts being worked out and acted exceedingly well and entertainment the chief value of the film. The music is strictly background music - no songs or prominent melodies. It is as delightful as the story, dreamy, comical and romantic, befitting the youthful spirit of the film. Kaper even captured the naive mood which is so real in the young couple. An excellent score, only too short.

(2) One of the few mistakes made by M-G-M -- why copy an outworn plot, miscast two fine young favorites and bore an audience to tears. It has many inconsistencies - even a fur coat would not pay for the furnishing of that apartment shown in the film, and Mary's wardrobe is deluxe. The refugee and Rochester give the best laughs. Kaper, who is superbly competent, has no opportunity to show his calibre. Plenty of laughs, however, indicated audience enjoyment. Mature-Family.

Running time: 1 hour and 45 minutes.

MY REPUTATION, Warner Bros. (Social Drama). Director: Curtis Bernhardt
Music by Max Steiner

In production and story values, photography, music, cast - in fact, everything but title - this is one of the best movies of present day American society. Situations are not exaggerated, nor opposing conventions. The music sets the stage in the somber mood of the day after the funeral: the hush in the house and throughout marks the division of the story by a changing, developing explanatory theme, like headings of a chapter, which suits this particular picture admirably. Photography is both arresting and distinguished. The tabu scenes a splendid contrast to Spellbound - the final shot is again a cosmic one, (like Casablanca's, for instance) facing the future. In all her long list of successes Barbara Stanwyck has never given a better performance. She and George Brent do magnificent team work. Lucile Watson gives a most amusing and authoritative presentation of the mother and the two boys are natural and touching. Exceptional and choice. Mature-Family.

Running time: 1 hour and 35 minutes.