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MRS 13

NEWS:

The Tripartita was given in London with considerable success on May 18th. The date for Ormandy's performance has not yet been announced, but we now learn that Antal Dorati will also conduct it with the National Symphony in Oct. 1976.

Dr. Rozsa did not attend the London performance. He was in Hollywood finishing the preparations for a second Polydor album to be recorded in October. Contents: KNIGHT WITHOUT ARMOUR, LADY HAMILTON, DOUBLE INDEMNITY, THE KILLERS, "Blind Flight" from MEN OF THE FIGHTING LADY, MOONFLEET, TRIBUTE TO A BADMAN, LUST FOR LIFE, and, finally, the JULIUS CAESAR Overture. He has also completed a new work, an a cappella setting of three Chinese poems for mixed choir. Broude Brothers will publish it.

On April 6th, Dr. Rozsa attended a U.S.C. tribute to (of all people) David O. Selznick. His Selznick anecdote involved SPELLBOUND: he had wanted to use eighteen violins, but Selznick insisted on twenty-four because Franz Waxman had used that many in REBECCA! By the way, has anyone ever explained what prompted Selznick to insert Waxman's SUSPICION chase music into the ski scene of SPELLBOUND?

An Orion disc of Rozsa's first two published works will be released this summer. Leonard Pennario will be featured in the Quintet. The English THIEF/JUNGLE BOOK reissue is United Artists UAS 29725 and is in genuine stereo (without the closing moments distortion that plagued the RCA). Delos records, a small California outfit, will this summer release the NBC broadcast of Korngold's suite from ROBIN HOOD, conducted by the composer and narrated by Basil Rathbone; they also plan to reissue the Mercury CAPTAIN FROM CASTILE with additional music available for the first time. And London has a Vol. II of Herrmann fantasy films in the works, featuring THE THREE WORLDS OF GULLIVER, MYSTERIOUS ISLAND, and JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS.

Ken Sutak's massive study of sound track law and record piracy will take up the entire June issue of the Bulletin of Copyright Society of the U.S.A. It may have far-reaching effects on such activities in the future, but the article itself will be found only in law libraries and copyright offices.

Our thanks to Robert Karam for a special contribution and to Sidney Balbes for designing our new masthead.

The promised tapeography will appear next time. Several members were kind enough to send, or promise to send, a number of tapes we had never even heard of, and the cataloging was too big a job to meet the deadline for this issue.

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THE PALMER BIOGRAPHY by John Fitzpatrick:

An entire book devoted to the music of Miklos Rozsa is a dream that few of us could have expected to realize so soon. But Breitkopf and Hartel's 1972 commission for a ten thousand word "monograph" set the wheels in motion, and the result has finally reached our shores. It is a full book, since Palmer turned in, and Breitkopf published, a text of more than twice the commissioned length.

The biography proper is the first chapter and the one that must have posed the most problems. Inevitably, a good deal of familiar material has to be rehearsed here, including the famous Korda-Berger-Mathieson-Straus contretemps. But there is new material too: more of the Hungarian background than I have seen before (including a fascinating portrait of Rozsa as a musical revolutionary in high school) and a glimpse of the composer's one meeting with Bela Bartok.

The next chapter tries, very briefly, to set Rozsa's music in historical perspective. It is an interesting effort, though admittedly rather speculative at times, e.g., when it ascribes an exile's longing for his homeland to the melody of the NAKED CITY epilogue and to Rozsa's music in general, of which Palmer takes this to be an archetypical example. But the basic features of the Rozsa style are all mentioned here, and one can only fault the discussion for its brevity, particularly on the subject of harmonic bitonality, which is not fully illustrated.

The real meat of the volume is in the next two chapters, which discuss specific works. Almost every concert work up through the "Nostalgia" songs is treated. (Exceptions: Op. 6, the mysterious symphony which appealed to Walter and Monteux except for its length; the ballet Hungaria, based largely on folk materials and now lost; and "High Flight", a 1942 song now only recently unearthed and published by the composer.) Palmer is particularly good at clarifying the occasional liberties Rozsa has taken with his basically classical forms, e.g., in the first movement of the Concerto for Strings and the last of the Piano Concerto (theme and variations miraculously within the traditional rondo). Everywhere Palmer marshals an impressive display of illustration and comparison to back up his points. It would be

hard for anyone, whatever his musical background, not to benefit from a discussion as lucid, yet suggestive, as that of the first movement of the Piano Concerto.

The film music chapter strikes me as less successful. Not that there is any condescension: on the contrary, this side of Rozsa's career gets more attention than the concert music and is carefully related to it. In fact, Palmer's analysis of the essential link between Rozsa's folk-based style and his unique success at historical subjects is quite ingenious and possibly the best thing in the book.

But there are so many film scores that only a few can be discussed and most of these only briefly. Then too, much of the discussion is merely musical - fine as far as it goes but not always as conscious as it might be of the sonic, verbal, and visual contexts that determine the nature of composition for the cinema.\* Thus Palmer tells us (rightly, I think) that MADAME BOVARY is a pivotal score but never really shows us why. Or SPELLBOUND: there is deserved praise for the wonderful little scherzo but no mention of the fact that in the film it is much abbreviated and terribly at odds with the dialogue.

But these are theoretical objections and should not disguise the fact that there is stimulating musical analysis on every page. Much of it deserves the tribute of controversy, and I hope our pages will reflect this in the future. One example will have to do here: does Messala's theme really sound like Fafner's? I hear nothing in common except the use of the tuba. I find Palmer's comparison (which he has repeated several times) rather odd in view of the real, and never remarked, tendency of Bernard Herrmann to refer to the Wagnerian dragons in almost every one of his fantasy scores. (He echoes the serpent in the third scene of Rheingold as well as the one in Siegfried.)

The rest of the book contains a rich treasury of supplementary materials. There are forty-four elaborate musical examples keyed to the text by number, though not, unfortunately, identified in the appendix itself. Twenty photographs, a foreword by Eugene Ormandy, and lists of concert and film works round out the volume. The last named includes a couple of British titles not previously recorded but misses once again the uncredited contributions to TO BE OR NOT TO BE and BEAU BRUMMEL.

Altogether a worthy effort. The only serious drawback is the price. \$6.95 is entirely out of line for a volume of this size and format. (It is a sewn paperback - 14x21 cm. - of seventy-eight pages. I can't imagine any Rozsaphile being deterred by this, but general readers and libraries may be, which is a pity and something members ought to work to prevent.

Dean Streit of Alexander Broude Inc. / 225 West 57th St. / New

York, NY 10019 offers a discount to American members: \$6., postage included, to any member who includes payment with his order and calls Mr. Streit's attention to his membership. In Europe, contact Breitkopf and Hartel (London) / 8 Horse and Dolphin Yard / London W1 / England.

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\*Some of Palmer's discussion is admittedly based on suite and record versions rather than the film originals. For one reason see p. 17.

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SUNSET BOULEVARD by Preston Jones:

On the few prior occasions when Messrs. Gerhardt and Korngold have included Waxman music in their RCA anthologies, they have made some editorial decisions which favored Waxman's melodramatic gifts over the lyrical side of his talent. For example, their version of THE TWO MRS. CARROLLS on the Bogart album concentrated solely on the blood-and-thunder sequences while ignoring the lovely pastorage for the opening fishing scene. SUNSET BOULEVARD strikes me as an overdue attempt to present a more balanced picture of the late composer.

Even so, those who have made PRINCE VALIANT "the most requested of Waxman's unrecorded scores" may be disappointed by its presentation here. In order to squeeze VALIANT into his usual "something-to-please-everybody" format, Gerhardt has sacrificed all of the score's humor and almost all of its romance. The principal love theme is allowed two brief, perfunctory appearances which serve as mere parentheses to contain some delightfully stirring heroics, excellently conducted and played. The main title is offered minus the fanfare with which it concludes in the film. Since Aguar's exile is already in progress as the film begins, the section titled "King Aguar's Escape" actually refers to an early sequence in which Val rushes down the castle walls to greet Voltar's ship. The tournament music, which is lost in dialogue and sound effects on screen, proves exhilarating on this record. However, until the time when someone records such segments as Val and Aleeta's romantic garden scene, medieval-flavored love theme, Val's introduction to King Arthur's knights, and the peppery music for the final battle, PRINCE VALIANT will have to remain on the list of Waxman's "unrecorded scores".

Gerhardt's version of A PLACE IN THE SUN includes an extension of the love theme which has never been recorded before, but this more complete edition is not flattered by comparison to the live-concert performance conducted by Waxman (on Columbia CL 2113/CS 8913). Under Waxman, the romantic material is appropriately (in terms of the filmed drama) reminiscent of a salon orchestra and much smoother than

Gerhardt's more ponderous rendition. More importantly, Waxman's version of the chase fugue has much more bite and urgency than Gerhardt and the National Philharmonic are able to muster. (Incidentally, the scholarly parlor game of "Name that Tune" - Waxman's fugue/Shostakovich's Eleventh Symphony - can be stretched as far back as the underscoring of the fatal crap game in Act One, Scene One of Gershwin's Porgy and Bess.)

John Waxman refers to THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN as "the first extended score for the horror and science-fiction genre", yet credit for that distinction surely belongs to Max Steiner's wall-to-wail scoring of KING KONG. In any event, BRIDE is a landmark score. Roth in the tale-of-terror genre and in the history of film music, it ranks with the Wolf Man/Frankenstein/Dracula scores of Hans J. Salter and Frank Skinner and the Hitchcock scores of Bernard Herrmann. Here is one of the few instances on a Gerhardt album where, instead of slicing bits and pieces from a full score and trying to compress them into a representative suite, he has chosen to present one musical excerpt in more or less its entirety. Hence, "The Creation of the Female Monster" from BRIDE is given room to breathe in a way that most of Gerhardt's straight-jacketed "suites" are never allowed to do. Although he receives no official credit on the album, it was Gerhardt who reconstructed this material from a piano sketch and the sound track. I found his conducting to be equal to the considerable challenges of the music, suitably moody in the muted early passages and sufficiently exciting in the frenzied section that depicts the Bride's stormy birth. Actually, the music on this record begins well before the actual revitalization sequence, with the ominous string accompaniment to Karl's venturing off in search of "a fresh heart" and the resultant murder. As in the film, this leads to the tympanum which pulsates throughout the rest of the piece (representing the beating heart—a fact not mentioned in the album notes). Gerhardt's recording includes all the remaining music that leads up to the moment when the lightning-charged body is lowered from the storm, with two small but regrettable excisions: a theme, heard twice in the film, composed for scenes in which the monster warns Dr. Frankenstein to continue his work; and a portion of the section in which Dr. Praetorious slips the Monster a "mickey". In the return of the Monster's motif, just before the climax, Gerhardt manages to make the music more energetic than it is on the actual sound track. Since he apparently could not spare another minute and a half to bring the scene to its true finish, Gerhardt cuts his version short with the descent of the now-alive Bride, the tympanum beating double-time. To facilitate his abbreviated ending, Gerhardt uses here the final musical moments, not of the creation scene, but of the film's almost identical fade-out, ending with a subtle and stunningly effective use of bells,

much as in the climax of Alex North's CLEOPATRA. Since it is an effect which is not to be heard on the sound track, credit is probably due to Gerhardt for this dazzling touch. I wish he had shown the same good taste when tacking his own ending onto THE ROBE.

This first recording of a portion of BRIDE is a jubilant occasion, but it raises a disheartening issue concerning the basic concept of the RCA Gerhardt series. There is not space to adequately discuss the problem here, but I would mention that, in my opinion, THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN is a masterpiece, one of those film scores which cries out to be heard in its entirety. Gerhardt's "Creation" has not begun to indicate the many riches in this score, and he never can do full justice to this or any other masterwork so long as he persists in clinging to his "Greatest Hits" format.

SUNSET BOULEVARD, Itself, offers music that is edgy, mysterious, and at times downright queasy. Again, however, the potential effectiveness of Waxman's mood is minimized by the brief time allotted to this recording.

From OLD ACQUAINTANCE comes another self-sustained scene, with no deletions this time. The "Elegy for Strings" betrays its soap opera source with an ever-so-slight tendency toward lushness, but it is a tender 'miniature with several interesting harmonies and sincere emotional feeling.

Among Waxman's Hitchcock scores, my own preference has been for the alternately tranquil and soaring SUSPICION. REBECCA, however, is a close sibling and undeniably an excellent score in its own right. Gerhardt renders some of it here in a fine performance. In his book, The Long View, Basil Wright refers to "that haunting opening sequence which everyone remembers so well, with the camera travelling up the laurelled drive...while Joan Fontaine's voice, soft yet urgent, begins to recall the events we are about to witness". We may all remember that sequence, but we will find none of Waxman's evocative music for it in Gerhardt's album. I, for one, feel cheated by its omission.

I find it hard to believe that the brief statement of PHILADELPHIA STORY's main theme played here is the complete main title music. Truncated or otherwise, however, it leads into a couple of minutes of delightfully blithe, Gershwin-esque sophistication. (The fanfare, incidentally, is an extra treat, a biologically accurate rendition of M-G-M's regal signature.)

The last five minutes of the album are wastefully devoted to "The Ride to Dubno" from TARAS BULBA. If we are to be offered nothing but brief excerpts from complete scores, why can we not at least enjoy brief excerpts which we cannot already hear in definitive performances elsewhere? Why not, say, the main title from MISTER ROBERTS, or the

march from DEMETRIUS AND THE GLADIATORS, or almost any five minutes from THE SILVER CHALICE? I mention a few personal favorites, but, doubtless, other readers could name many more. At any rate, SUNSET BOULEVARD, with its glories and frustrations, is an important scratch in the surface of Waxman's unrecorded literature. There is more to come. Mr. Gerhardt's next grab-bag will include "The Parachute Jump" from OBJECTIVE, BURMA! And Elmer Bernstein's club is now offering THE SILVER CHALICE.

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SPELLBOUND by Frank DeWald:

Thanks to outstanding performances, exemplary production, and intelligent merchandising, "SPELLBOUND-The Classic Film Scores of Miklos Rozsa" is a standout in the current bonanza of Rozsa recordings and reissues. This release, longed and hoped for ever since the success of THE SEA HAWK sparked RCA's commercial sensibilities and spawned the Classic Film Scores series, is greatly welcome.

THE RED HOUSE is an outstanding example of filmusic distilled into a balanced concert suite of moderate length. Although the themes are essentially those recorded by Rozsa on a long-deleted Capitol disc (T-456), their new arrangement here is more cohesive and musically logical. It is difficult to compare the two versions in writing because their sectional titles are different. In any case, the "Prelude" of the Capitol disc corresponds to the "Prelude", "Morgan Farm", "Hired Hand", and "Swimming Scene" of the RCA version, although "Hired Hand" and "Swimming Scene" have been interchanged in the latter, a brief introduction has been added, and a short transitional passage for woodwinds has been interposed between the "Prelude" and "Morgan Farm." "Meg Finds the Red House" and "Teller Shoots at Meg" are exactly the same as "The Forest" and "Screams in the Night" on the Capitol disc, although they are in reversed order in the earlier version. This important change gives a more dramatic shape to the new suite in that it places the pastoral episodes at the beginning and provides greater tension and momentum to the end. A tympani roll leads to "Pete's Death and Finale" on the RCA disc, which corresponds exactly to the final movement, "Retribution", in the Capitol suite. The short modulatory passage which supposedly "smoothes out" the key change into the finale is not present in the Capitol recording and seems redundant on the RCA. It is the only "improvement" which does not benefit the structure of THE RED HOUSE Suite.

Gerhardt's performance is distinctly more dramatic than Rozsa's - note how he emotes on the rising string phrase in "Pete's Death" and compare it with Rozsa's matter-of-fact reading. RCA's sparkling sonics

reproduce Rozsa's kaleidoscopic orchestral color far better than Capitol's mono recording.

The THIEF OF BAGDAD excerpt, "The Love of the Princess", is highlighted by a lovely melody in Rozsa's most romantic vein. There is something uncharacteristic about the piece, however, and stylistically it is more akin to Steiner than Rozsa. It is attractive enough, however it misrepresents Rozsa's virile and exotic "Oriental" writing.

THE LOST WEEKEND is one of Rozsa's most legendary scores, and the excerpts recorded here are quite good. The snarling opening chords will rattle your speakers, and the warmly romantic theme which follows is tinged with a touch of melancholy and mystery. "The Mouse and the Bat" is a clever bit of orchestration, and the nightmare music is exceptionally well-paced by Gerhardt, who never allows the tension to lag. The concluding love theme is so lushly played it is easy to forgive its excessive romanticism.

THE FOUR FEATHERS music, for which we are greatly indebted to Christopher Palmer's many hours of devoted labor, is the album's most valuable excerpt. It is not surprising to read Dr. Rozsa's statement that it was odd to find himself "in the distance of 36 years in search of a cinematic style". Although those who are accustomed to the more polyphonic, sequence-inundated style Rozsa had developed by the 50s will not recognize it here to any great extent, this is music of strange and beautiful power, played to the Nth degree of musical excitement. The five-note motif of "The River Journey", introduced by a distant solo horn, will remind listeners of the "Farewell" sequence from THE ROBE, but, rhythmically at least, it also foreshadows the opening of SINBAD!

The DOUBLE INDEMNITY excerpts are well-played but poorly chosen. What Gerhardt had written would be a "long suite" appears on the disc as two measly excerpts lasting just over three uninspiring minutes. This music supports the theory that it is better to record scores at some length than to represent them with unsatisfying tid-bits. The same could be said of SPELLBOUND, based on the excerpts recorded here, although in that case having the music available elsewhere on a full-length disc mollifies the situation somewhat.

The short excerpts from THE JUNGLE BOOK and KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE are, by contrast, self-sufficient. "Hawks in Flight" is a scintillating scherzo aptly placed in relief against the somber moods of DOUBLE INDEMNITY and "The Song of the Jungle". There is quite a bit of music in KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE, but Gerhardt has managed to go right to the center and find an easily-overlooked jewel, which sounds better here than on the soundtrack.

The last cut, "a new concert overture" from IVANHOE, is the

record's only major disappointment. To begin with, it is not new at all, but an amalgam of the film's prelude and closing scene. That aside, Gerhardt's performance is rhythmically errant and poorly shaped.

Throughout the entire Classic Film Score series, Gerhardt has admirably opted to treat each recording as a unique performance rather than to be a slave to the original performances on the film sound tracks. In the matters of balance, tempi, phrasing, and editing, he has quite correctly conducted from the point of view of the musician, not the archivist. He has occasionally departed from soundtrack interpretations in the interests of a more satisfying "concert" experience. In the case of IVANHOE, however, his unsteady tempi, although undoubtedly well-considered, are decidedly unmusical.

Having heard a single performance of a piece of music as often as I have heard the soundtrack of IVANHOE, it's a bit unsettling to hear a version which departs from the accustomed one, This aspect of musical narrow-mindedness is unfortunate, and has resulted in some unjustified criticisms of Gerhardt's magnificent work on the basis that it doesn't sound note-for-note like an earlier, cherished, and over-heard performance. But I have listened to both Gerhardt's IVANHOE and Rozsa's soundtrack original many times over, and in this case Rozsa's version is better. Gerhardt over-emphasizes the seams in the music. His ritard before Richard's theme, for example, causes an unmusical lag in the structure. The beginning of the second half is not propelled enough, and though the two love themes are well-paced, the last statement of Ivanhoe's theme suffers from excessive rubato.

This one disappointment aside, however, SPELLBOUND is a joyous event. Everyone connected with the recording, not least of all Miklos Rozsa himself, has my thanks for many hours of listening pleasure.

(Ed. note: It has recently been rumored that the Gerhardt series is to be cancelled by RCA; members may wish to make their opinions know-n to the company on this subject.)

#### HERRMANN'S SHAKESPEARE by Mark Koldys:

London Records' series of film music recordings continues with their latest release, "Music from Great Shakesperean Films" (SPC 21132, the first of this series to be accorded a "concert series" record number). Bernard Herrmann conducts the National Philharmonic Orchestra in his first recording of film music not composed by him. Included is a suite from Dmitri Shostakovich's HAMLET, the Prelude to Sir William Walton's RICHARD III, and three scenes from Rozsa's JULIUS CAESAR.

The entire first side of this disc is devoted to Herrmann's incisive, brilliant, and virtuosic rendering of a six-movement suite from HAMLET. Shostakovich's film music has never been his strongest suit (cf. ZOYA, PIROGOV, et al.). The pressures of conforming to the doctrines of "socialist realism" that have so diluted the inspiration of many of his symphonic works have been even more dominant in his cinematic composition. The mediocritizing effect upon his music is all too evident in this score. The suite opens unpromisingly with noisy, staccato chords introducing an unexceptional melody unimaginatively assigned to horns and strings. The suite's "Introduction" does not recover from this initial blow. The second movement is the best part of the suite: a lively A-B-A construction in which A is scored for strings and B for brass. But the next movement shows that there is nothing supernatural about Shostakovich's conception of "The Ghost": it begins with some of this composer's most garish and blaring nonsense-noise, which thankfully subsides into empty and dissonant meanderings presumably designed to depict menace. The fourth movement, a theme-and-variations, is reminiscent of ballet music; unfortunately, the gratingly repetitious percussive effects and the lack of depth prevent any meaningful musical exposition. Although the fifth movement contains all of Shostakovich's familiar mannerisms, its melodic line is creative and the harmonizations are distinctive enough to keep it interesting. But unfortunately, the final movement of the suite ("Duel and Death of Hamlet") leaves a bad taste. The debts to Tchaikovsky are too apparent (cf. Romeo and Juliet), and there is virtually no development of the slender musical materials Shostakovich employs. Clichéd running figures in the strings are heard in repetition upon repetition, leading nowhere. Suddenly, and artificially, the main theme of the score interrupts blaringly, and then the rest is silence.

It is to Herrmann's credit that he can make enough out of this score to sustain interest; it is one of his most successful conducting assignments to date. Unfortunately, he fares less well with the familiar RICHARD III Prelude. Herrmann's approach is so stodgy that the invigorating rhythms of the opening sections resemble more a slightly lively funeral dirge. The more lyrical sections do not suffer as much, but this performance is bested by the composer's own on all counts.

It is only with Rozsa's three scenes from JULIUS CAESAR that interpretative and musical values of significance coalesce to present the listener with a completely rewarding experience. Unlike QUO VADIS, JULIUS CAESAR did not represent an attempt at musical authenticity;

rather, the feelings and emotions of Shakespeare's characters were reflected in music of a style as universal as those very emotions. This can be a dangerous procedure; at worst, it can result in music so unsuited to the film that it becomes downright alienating, distracting the attention from the film and toward the inappropriateness of the music. Shostakovich's HAMLET may fall into that category. But Rozsa's musical style is perfectly suited to this approach.

"The Ides of March" is portentous without being pompous. Drawing upon the lower regions of the orchestra, Rozsa uses a quality rather than a quantity of sound to convey the doom that awaited Caesar on that fateful day. Herrmann's slow tempi are ideal, stressing the deadly fate that awaits. "Caesar's Ghost" is a beautifully orchestrated and harmonized gossamer-like selection that conveys all the supernatural qualities and subtleties that Shostakovich's ghost lacked. High strings play against cellos and basses; eerie harmonics with percussion add an other-worldly quality; it is aptly described by annotator Christopher Palmer as "a kind of blue light, a cold, glassy, shimmering sound". The final scene ("Approach of Octavian's Arm and Death of Brutus") makes good use of two-part antiphony: as winds and brass play a march, strings play against it Brutus's theme, and the two interweave, culminating in a powerful coda. Herrmann's slow pace again makes sense; indeed, it would be difficult to imagine more powerfully effective performances of any of these scenes than these.

The recorded sound throughout this release (Arthur Lilley, engineer) is in keeping with previous Phase-Four efforts: clear, well-forward sound, with a minimum of concert-hall resonance. At times, as in the JULIUS CAESAR finale, the sonics are too dry, but this is a matter of opinion. The overall achievement is sonically impressive.

If only for the JULIUS CAESAR scene, this recording deserves purchase. The HAMLET performance is without peer, if its musical content appeals to you. One eagerly awaits Maestro Herrmann's next releases.

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THE NEW RECORDING SOCIETIES by John Fitzpatrick:

It has been three years now since Elmer Bernstein's High Fidelity announcement of plans to record old film scores and nearly one year since his organization went into full operation. Members have posed many questions about the Film Music Collection (FMC) and about the newer Entr'acte Recording Society (ERS), and some of these can now be answered, at least in part. I will try to do so based on information Mr. Bernstein and Mr. Lasher (of ERS) were kind enough to provide.

Some may consider any assessment premature, but Royal S. Brown has already made one and, since my conclusions differ considerably from his, I feel obliged to state them.

First, it should be noted that both societies consider recordings their raison d'être. Since actual preservation of music is a more important task than mere history and criticism, the FMC and the ERS are almost beyond criticism on this point so long as they perform their function. I shall make no attempt here to discuss the music so far preserved by the two groups. Their future plans, however, are worth reporting. FMC will be releasing THE SILVER CHALICE and THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES. Both are major works, which should offset the reservation many have had about the first two selections. ERS is planning one more new record and a couple of reissues for its first year. Waxman, Herrmann, and Kaper are among the composers mentioned. Both societies, then, have demonstrated the capability and intention to do some valuable work.

But the "recording society" approach has some potential drawbacks too, and all concerned would do well to think about them. Both groups are offering publications that attempt to fill the place of the old Film Music Notes. But the economics of the recording industry do not always sit well with the idea of an independent journal. Thus Film Music Notebook #3 spends two whole pages simply congratulating itself via favorable letters, not one of which is allowed to run long enough to make any substantial point. And Entr'acte's Main Title is full of rather generalized blurbs about the "Golden Age" and favorite composers. Film Music Notes would never have stood for either. As the new organizations grow and incur greater financial obligations, it will take Herculean efforts for them to succeed at their double task: "selling" certain music on the one hand and trying to offer really incisive and balanced criticism of it on the other.

That reservation aside, I am pleased to report that both publications are definitely worth having. The great strength of the Notebook, is Elmer Bernstein's own experience and rapport with his colleagues. It is shown most clearly in his interviews with men like Hugo Friedhofer and Leo Shuken, who have the history of an art form in their bones. Bernstein is performing a great service in helping them to record it. He allowed Friedhofer to ramble somewhat, but his Shuken piece is wonderfully incisive. There are other good things too. Fred Steiner's PSYCHO analysis is really quite valuable. The pedantry that irked RSB is limited to the first half; the second is imaginative and buttressed by many references to the full score. There are lighter things in the Notebook too, though one hopes for more variety in the future since everything, even the jokes, seems to bear Bernstein's stamp.

The Notebook has been averaging nearly forty pages, professionally printed with stiffened covers. Main Title is a smaller publication, averaging sixteen pages and reproduced from typescript like our own journal. Half of its contents to date have consisted of reprints from Film Music Notes (not identified as such, a vice that also afflicts Notebook #3). These are nevertheless good to have back in print, especially since the musical examples, no longer in the composer's own hand, are more clearly reproduced here. Other virtues include a short essay on SISTERS and a shorter interview with David Raksin, who seems to be involved with both organizations. News items are interspersed throughout, sometimes in a rather blurbish style.

Both valuable, then, and both flawed. And both, I might add, larger and more professionally arranged than our own first issue, which also contained a reprint. One can only hope for success and improvement in the face of record industry economics.

The two groups face those economics in very different ways. FMC asks for ten dollars initially and a commitment to buy two out of four (eventually three out of six) records a year at \$8 each. It sounds ominous—forcing you to buy the "product" in order to receive the journal, which should be (and is) good enough to survive on its own. I know it has prevented many people from joining and I hope the policy is modified. But the record selections for the first year ought to justify the policy for almost any prospective member. The selections, by the way, are not strictly "democratic" as High Fidelity implied, but are governed by availability of materials and Bernstein's good taste.

ERS charges \$5 per year for Main Title and membership. They leave you completely free to buy or not to buy the records, which initially cost \$5.95. But ERS is in flux. They are "going commercial" (a possibility FMC rejected) by offering their records to retail dealers at a \$7.95 list. Director Lasher says ERS members will still retain two advantages: slightly earlier availability and a lower price, \$5 each plus postage. But since A-1\* is currently offering SISTERS at the same \$5 price (and lower postage) the issue seems clouded. All the more so now that ERS is offering to sell some of the new Delos records for the "low price" of \$6.95—which turns out to be the usual Delos list price! Join Entr'acte by all means, but watch for further developments about their records. Watch FMC as well: one advertisement in their journal offers Stanyan records at a "special price" that is higher than A-I 's.

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\*Among mail order dealers specializing in film-oriented records, A-1 Record Finders / P.O. Box 75071 / Los Angeles CA 90075 has

consistently been offering the best prices and service over the past year. They are particularly useful for foreign and obscure labels.

#### INTO OUR FOURTH YEAR—AN ASSESSMENT by John Fitzpatrick:

Members from the earliest days of the MRS will recall the uneasy blend of society "shop talk" and general articles that characterized the first issues of our "newsletter". We have been keeping the business to a minimum lately because of the different character of Pro Musica Sana these days. It is not only a bulletin for MRS members; it is also a publication of more general interest, subscribed to, for example, by a number of libraries, including the New York Public and those of the following universities: Indiana, Syracuse, Wyoming, UCLA, and USC.

We are still a society though, and an occasional taking stock is a necessity. This is particularly important when you realize how much things have changed since we were founded in December of 1971. Who could have imagined then that High Fidelity would devote an entire issue to film music? that Orion would produce three discs of relatively obscure Rozsa works? that RCA would initiate a brilliantly produced series of best-selling film music records? that Polydor would reissue the old M-G-M discs and create a new series of Rozsa recordings? that we would get a book on film music and one on Miklos Rozsa himself? that new societies would spring up to release records and publish intelligent journals? It has been astonishing for anyone who remembers the old days. Only on two fronts has there been a lack of progress: film scores today are not appreciably better than they have been, and the Rozsa concert works are not being performed any more often. It is easy to see why: nostalgic sentiment, rather than musical taste, underlies much of the above. Educators of the latter still have their work cut out for them.

Perhaps the MRS has played some small part in bringing some of these changes about; it certainly has benefited from them. But in a different world the MRS must play a different role. What follows is my assessment of our present state and my suggestion for the future. What is needed is member response.

Membership: Growth to the current 160 has been slow for the last couple of years but is currently spurting thanks to some recent publicity. In bringing members together, however, we have not been so successful. Only a few new friendships and local gatherings have resulted from our efforts. One reason is that the single roster we published was inaccurate and outdated from the start. We want to publish a new one but need help (indexing, typing, printing, etc.).

It is an exacting task but can be spread over several weeks. Also to be considered are the upcoming performances in Philadelphia and Washington, and the recorded preservation of them. Members in those areas must take the initiative in organizing get-togethers, but we will supply all possible support.

Correspondence: One of my own goals from the beginning has been to make new friends with similar interests. This has backfired somewhat. Now all three of the directors get so much mail that it is impossible for us to respond adequately to all of it. We are continually frustrated by the need to make a short "business" reply to an expansive and friendly letter. All correspondence is appreciated. Any correspondence with specifically focused questions or comments will hopefully be answered.

"Lobbying": It is entirely reasonable for admirers of Miklos Rozsa to seek to have his music performed and recorded more often. Therefore, the Society would seem to have a natural duty to coordinate efforts in this field. Unfortunately, this has been our most conspicuous failure. Our one major effort (the SINBAD disc) failed because the newsletter was just too slow to keep up with the changing situation. We are looking for suggestions about other projects that can be pursued on a long term basis.

Publications: The newsletter remains the heart of the Society in my concept. Other viewpoints (e.g., that we should try to produce records) are certainly welcome, but those who propose them should be ready to back up their suggestions with the knowledge and work they require.

The newsletter's most glaring fault is its chronic lateness. And the more we publish, the more opportunities there are for us to fall behind. With all three directors working and/or studying full time I see no immediate cure—unless some volunteer help is offered to us in the areas of typing or printing or mailing. Even so, our publication record is more consistent and regular than a number of professional journals. You may note that we have instituted one change with this issue in order to keep our subscription records more accurate: the number of the issue with which your subscription expires now appears to the left of your name on the mailing envelope. This way, mistakes can be rectified before you miss an issue.

The contents of the newsletter also need to be reassessed now that we have two companion journals. On the one hand, there is no longer any need to review every interesting record or report every newsworthy development. On the other, possibilities for critical dialogue and extended analyses of subjects that interest our writers are increased. We have prepared a writer's guide, and anyone interested

in writing for the newsletter should send a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a free copy of this guide.

Reader opinions are the one aspect of the newsletter that I will mention here. We would like to publish more of them. Most of the letters we do receive are congratulatory and, while these are warmly appreciated, we see no reason to pat ourselves on the back by printing them. The best way to get a letter published is to raise a point of information or a detailed and specific point of discussion or disagreement.

Recordings: Unlike the new organizations, we have never claimed to be a "recording society". Our only goal has been to share what we do have - unissued tapes and out-of-print discs - with all our members. And to be manageable at all, our program has to limit itself to a few releases at a time. Within these modest limits our tape service has been a success. Unfortunately, the desire for rare tape recordings seems to bring out the worst in human nature. For some of the problems we have had see p.17. Some members believe we should do more in this area, even to the extent of trying to produce records. I disagree) since I find tape the preferred medium on all counts. However, we will try to pursue other media if the interest and the volunteer work materialize. And the money.

Finances: The general fund of the MRS now contains more than \$700. With debts owed us we now have more than \$1,000. The principal source is dues payments. (The tape service is not designed to be profitable and does not draw from the general fund.) The principal expenses are for printing and mailing and for office supplies.

In short, our only financial problem is this: we have too much money for our present needs! Possible options:

1. We can lower our dues and continue services at the present level.
2. We can keep our dues at the same level and:
  - a. save money for some future use.
  - b. use the money to establish an MRS library of discs and/or scores. At present the Society has no discs and few scores of its own. It simply makes use of the personal collections of the directors, which include all the records but few scores. The advantages of establishing an MRS collection are obvious. The disadvantage is that the size of the Society would allow only a few members to benefit directly from its holdings—though everyone might benefit indirectly from the researches of a few.
3. We can raise dues and tackle some more ambitious projects, like recordings.

Once again, feedback is needed here. Please do not suggest things like more frequent publication or tape issues. These call for time and work, not money.

This may be an odd time to announce a dues increase, but unfortunately one is necessary. Many overseas members have requested air mail shipment of the newsletter. We have occasionally managed this in the past, but to guarantee it in the future we will require \$6 for one year or \$8 for two years.

This increase is necessary to share the burdens equally, since air mail costs three times more than surface. The standard overseas rates remain \$4 and \$6. If dues are reduced in the future, they will be reduced uniformly in all categories.

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DIFFICULTIES by John Fitzpatrick:

When Christopher Palmer was working on his book, he asked me to provide him with some tv recordings of Rozsa films. I was able to supply a few (this is the only reason I am mentioned in his preface) but I had to turn to a friend for others. This gentleman, who had best remain nameless, made such a tape but then informed me that I could not send it to Palmer; I was to withhold it, thus forcing Palmer to send "us" the tapes he was no doubt keeping from us. The entire incident was more foolish than anything else, for of course I had no reason to suspect, then or now, that Mr. Palmer was doing anything of the sort.

Only a few months later, there was another incident more directly relevant to the MRS. This same gentleman turned his pressure tactics against the Society. I was to use my position in various ways to pressure Dr. Rozsa into giving "us" the master tapes from SINBAD. Otherwise, the Society could expect no more help (or tapes) from Mr. X, who had a collection considerably larger than my own. Naturally, I refused and broke off communication with him.

Oddly enough, he remains (nominally) in the Society although opposing one of its major goals - sharing ideas and materials of common interest. Now he makes it known, whether truly or falsely, that he possesses some rare Rozsa studio tapes that members are likely to want (e.g. music tracks from BEN-HUR), but that he will not share them unless the MRS comes up with something equally rare for him. The irony is that this person, like everyone else, has enjoyed full benefit of our tape service. Evidently he still thinks people are out to defraud him.

Why dredge all this up now?

1. As a partial explanation of a minor flaw in Palmer's book.

2. To let members know about some of the difficulties faced by the MRS.

3. To explain why the MRSSS has not been able to acquire such tapes, despite our eagerness to make them available to the general membership.

4. To ask for opinions on how to deal with such problems.

5. To remind all of us (myself included) to resist the temptation to let our musical passions get the better of us. Finally, I take this opportunity to thank by contrast the dozens of members (including Mr. Palmer) who have helped the MRS in every possible way - time, writing, tapes, scores, etc. - and who make the MRS successful. Above all, there is Dr. Rozsa, whose cooperation has aided us on all fronts. People like Mr. X are, fortunately, very rare.

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YET ANOTHER BEN-HUR by Alan Hamer:

A notable new recording of some music from BEN-HUR is highlighted on a new album, "The Big Sounds of Ron Goodwin", EMI Studio Two TWOX-1034. It also contains what might politely be called "high class mood music", Farnon or Mancini: three Jerome Kern standards, a couple of recent, rather shallow film themes, and a welcome stereo remake of Goodwin's own exciting "Red Cloak", which was issued as a single twenty years ago and typifies the best writing of this talented musician.

A strange potpourri, then, in which to find a nine-minute "tripartita" from Rozsa's masterwork and some of the best BEN-HUR on record! Unlike Stanley Black's "tone poem", the Goodwin suite simply includes three episodes from the score - Prelude, love theme, and Parade of the Charioteers - yet it somehow manages to seem infinitely more satisfying as a whole.

This Prelude is easily the closest one to the sound track yet. The smooth yet urgent tempt moving quickly from the Ben-Hur theme to the love theme (played briskly) conjure up much of the excitement of what is to follow. What follows here is an exquisite lead-in to what is arguably Rozsa's finest love theme. It is well played and not sentimentalized. It is also richly recorded, as is the whole record. The Parade is the least successful of the three movements, maimed by a sluggish pace which culminates in an unnecessary rallentando.

The performance as a whole is relatively authentic, sonically supreme, and thoroughly satisfying. It is, therefore, not to be missed by any Rozsa admirer despite the "muzak" feel of the rest

of the record. Goodwin has previously given us an excellent SPELLBOUND Concerto (TWOX-1007), and it is to be hoped that he will get around to some other Rozsa scores. How about QUO VADIS or THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD?

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FILMUSIC IN FOUR CHANNELS by Mark Koldys:

The advent of the exciting new medium of quadriphonic sound has brought a new dimension to home sound reproduction. It is indeed a fortunate coincidence that its appearance has coincided with the current wave of interest in film music recordings. The end result has been the release of quite a few truly noteworthy performances in this dynamic new medium.

Four channel sound comes in two flavors: matrixed (SQ, QS) and discrete (CD-4, tapes). While purists argue that only discrete quadriphony is true quadriphony, ever-improving matrix decoders help that system to retain its lead in popularity. The most significant film music release in matrixed quad is Bernard Herrmann's SISTERS (Entr'acte ERQ 7001). The disc is encoded via Sansui's QS matrix, the strong point of which is its excellence in reproduction of auditorium resonance and ambient effects. The SISTERS recording uses the rear channels mainly to give a vague sense of expansiveness, with little direct information appearing in the rear channels. Columbia's SQ matrix, on the other hand, when abetted by full-logic circuitry, excels at reproducing direct sounds from all four channels, and is a little bit less successful at ambient effects from the rear. Consequently, the two SQ film music recordings take advantage of that philosophy. Victor Young's score for FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS (Stanyan SRQ 4013) and Rozsa's SPELLBOUND (Stanyan SRQ 4021) both have strongly directive qualities when heard properly decoded. The irony is that neither of these recordings was four channel when originally taped: each is at least 15 years old! The answer to the riddle is in the fact that each was a three-track recording, mixed down to two for the original Warner Brothers releases. Stanyan has taken the middle channel and rerouted it to the rear, varied other factors, and has created creditable four-channel effects, although in SPELLBOUND the rear right channel seems to have little to do most of the time. (The real feature of that album is the new mastering and equalization of the original tapes, which now sound full and resonant rather than thin and shrill.)

The improvement in four-channel effect when switching from matrixed discs to discrete discs is clearly evident, despite the closing of the gap that is continually proceeding. The CD-4

system is inherently noisier than any of the matrixes (which add no noise to the original two-channel signal), but the benefits in separation are worth it. Four of RCA's "Classic Film Scores" series have been issued in discrete CD-4 quadriphonic editions (CASABLANCA ARDI-0422, SUNSET BOULEVARD ARD1-0708, CITIZEN KANE ARD1-0707, SPELLBOUND ARD1-0911), and a fifth (CAPTAIN BLOOD) is expected. The earliest CD-4 albums were so noisy as to be unlistenable, but improvements were rapid and continuous; of the four noted above, CASABLANCA is the noisiest, but is still listenable, and the others are fully up to standard. The standout of the four is easily CITIZEN KANE: in terms of sonic thrills and exciting directionality it has no peer with any quadriphonic disc issued. The harps in BENEATH THE TWELVE MILE REEF, the percussion in WHITE WITCH DOCTOR, the horn choirs in ON DANGEROUS GROUND: these are but a few of the stunning moments to be heard in this pluperfect quadriphonic display item. All of the Gerhardt series has been recorded to make maximum advantage of the medium, and the quadriphonic releases have not hesitated to position the orchestra all around the listening room, thereby rightly increasing the visceral excitement offered. The stunners are not limited to the Herrmann disc either: PRINCE VALIANT, BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, THE FOUR FEATHERS, THE RED HOUSE, and many more are must-hears if you ever get access to a properly adjusted CD-4 playback system.

Although open reel tape is theoretically the ideal four-channel medium (nearly infinite separation between all channels), its capabilities have not always been used to maximum effectiveness, Stanley Black's compilation "The Epic" is available on London quadriphonic tape (J 17173) but the allocation of the channels seems to be haphazard and careless. Reverberation and ambience appear in the front channels but not in the rear, horns and woodwinds stick out like sore thumbs from artificially segregated environments, etc. I suspect the four-channel version was an afterthought. However, Bernard Herrmann's fantasy film compilation (J 144207) is another story. There is musical sense in the way the instruments are distributed here, and the great clarity that such separation produces adds to listener interest immensely. THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, rather heavy going on the two-channel disc, here takes on new life. An already excellent recording is here rendered superb.

In conclusion, although the matrixed discs are very good, the film music fan who wants to hear his scores in four channel will not find a more spellbinding sonic experience than that afforded by RCA's CD-4 series, with the Herrmann tape a close second. We can only rejoice that there is, on all fronts, more to come.

MIKLOS ROZSA: LECTURE IN LONDON (October 1972):

(This is the second of two parts. Our thanks again to Craig Reardon for transcribing the recording.)

Alan Warner: How did your partnership with Billy Wilder start?

Miklos Rozsa: Billy Wilder - well, you asked me what happened after Korda. Korda went back to England, and I stayed in Hollywood. I then went to New York, and in New York I was suddenly swamped in another atmosphere. Hollywood in 1940 was the absolute desert - cultural desert - not much better now, but at that time it was absolutely horrible, and coming back to New York and civilization, I felt like a different man. And I was interviewed. Now, little did I know that there are things you shouldn't say. But this was 3000 miles away, I was back again, there was music, there was John Barbirolli conducting, you know: it was a great time. And I said everything I thought about Hollywood. Now, the effect was disastrous. I came home, about a month later, and people told me, "What have you done? There are leading articles in papers against you; they've talked against you on the radio; the Hollywood Reporter said, 'If this gentleman doesn't like us, then why doesn't he go back to where he comes from?'" And I was ostracized for ten months. I was the bad boy of Hollywood. And nothing happened. Suddenly Billy Wilder, whom I have only met once, came to a preview. Mr. Korda knew him and asked him to the preview of LADY HAMILTON. And he asked me to do a picture of his at Paramount, which was FIVE GRAVES TO CAIRO. Then I did DOUBLE INDEMNITY, and then came the best film I think he has ever done, THE LOST WEEKEND. It was not very easy at the studio. To work with Billy was a delight: he is intelligent, witty, he likes music, knows music, and he appreciates music. There was a musical director. All the studios at that time had a musical director, who came from vaudeville, if that means anything in England. And their musical taste was extremely low. And this gentleman especially hated my music, and if Billy Wilder and his partner wouldn't have stood up for me, this music would never have been in the film. THE LOST WEEKEND was a similar film in some ways to SPELLBOUND, because SPELLBOUND dealt with amnesia, paranoia, and this one dealt with alcoholism. And, to the greatest annoyance of Mr. Selznick, I can tell you now, I used the theremin. I thought, I hit on something new and interesting, that appeals to the public, and the problem is the same. This man in the picture, Ray Milland, has a craving for alcohol, and I used the theremin to express that craving. Now I had already made SPELLBOUND for Hitchcock where I used the theremin, but SPELLBOUND had not yet been released. So after a private industry preview of THE LOST

WEEKEND, I got a phone call from Mr. Selznick's secretary. She said, "Mr. Hitchcock has told Mr. Selznick that he has seen THE LOST WEEKEND, and he reports that you used the theremin in it. Is this true?" so I replied to her (with my "Asiatic calm"), "Not only it is true, but tell Mr. Selznick that I have also used the flute, the oboe, and the violin! Good-bye!"

Film clip: THE LOST WEEKEND, Milland trudging down 2nd Avenue in New York City.

M.R.: Well, there was a scene where music had to tell you the utter despair of this man, his craving for alcohol, and the utter degradation that he goes to sell, as a writer, his typewriter. And again, here is a dubbing question that I want to point out. Usually, you saw the elevated - this is 2nd Avenue in New York - and the elevated makes a terrible noise. They usually play, in a realistic scene, play it up. Well, in this scene, it was much more important that you hear the despair, and the despair is only told to you by the sound of music, and the theremin helped me in this case. So, one of big enemies of the composers are the sound effects. I had great trouble on EL CID. But of course, we all - because motion picture art is a collective art - we all have to work together and have certain respect for each other's work. My friend Vincent Korda once told me, "I hate actors". I said, "Why?" He said, "They are covering my sets".

A.W.: You worked with Charles Brackett on the finish of that picture.

M.R.: Well, this was also in 1945. It was the end of the war. Mr. Wilder has come to England to be a soldier, and Charles Brackett, who was a very fine gentleman, who only passed away about two years ago, was in charge. He also liked music, and knew the value of music, and that is why a scene like this could have been done.

A.W.: Any questions?

(The voice of actor Leo Genn): Dr. Rozsa, I'd like to ask you about one remark I once had the privilege of hearing you make to a director in charge of a picture at M-G-M, who told you what your new assignment was to be. And your answer was, "I would sooner compose for a Hollywood film director". I would like to know what you think of your relations as a musician and artist...where the front office is concerned,

M.R.: In Hollywood, we would say you are opening a can of beans!

Q.: I meant...

M.R.: I know! Well, not always very friendly. Because the front office is purely commercial, and probably they should be; and we, the so-called artists, are working for them. So there are two, entirely two, ideas, juxtaposed, and they have nothing to do with each other. One wants to have a commercial product, and

the other one wants an artistic product. Naturally, I think the two can be done, and these two films we have just played, SPELLBOUND and THE LOST WEEKEND, they are high cinematic art, and they made a lot of money, as well. However, as you just remind me of that, it's quite true, I was in this very fortunate position, that in spite of the fact that I was an employee of M-G-M studios for fourteen years, I had the right to refuse. That was the condition that I accepted the contract, and there were other films offered to me which were for me meaningless. This was a film glorifying a Hollywood film producer, and how could I write music to that? There are very nice ones, but this was a very ugly one. And so, there were always great troubles between the front office, between the officials and the artist. Now, this is a short episode from one film before THE LOST WEEKEND. It was DOUBLE INDEMNITY, with Barbara Stanwyck, and...who?

A.W.: Fred MacMurray.

M.R.: Fred MacMurray. Mr. Warner here knows the cast of every film ever made, anywhere, including Japan. I wrote a very - this was a very stark drama, brutal - and I wrote a very stark score, and the gentleman representing the front office, or the music department rather, hated it. He called me in his office and said, "This music is no good", and "This is not motion picture music, and the head of our studio, the head of the front office, is going to throw out the whole music, which will reflect on you and will reflect on me", he said, "because I engaged you for this". Actually, he didn't; it was Mr. Wilder who asked me. But, he said, "I like you, and I want you to hear good music in films. Go to hear MADAME CURIE," he said. "There are lovely strings, beau-ti-ful melodies!" I said, "Yes, but this was a love story, and this is a murder drama". He said, "That doesn't matter, we want to amuse our patrons in the cinema, not let them down! This sounds like the Battle of England!" Then he used the most dirty word he could think of. He said, "This sounds like...Carnegie Hall!" And I say, "I take it this is a compliment?" And he said, "I don't mean it as such". Now came the preview. Every film has a so-called sneak preview. It usually means that the public goes in, and the filmmakers sneak out at the end. We went to the preview in utter gloom. The gentleman didn't address one word to me. It was, you know, a disaster, He knew it was going to be a disaster, and we were both going to be killed by the head of the front office. And, the film went very well. It was a beautiful film, and when it was over, this gentleman sneaked out, and was disappearing. And that moment the head of the front office came and said to him, "Louie!" He turned back, and came and said, "This is the end". And that moment, the gentleman from the front office said, "Well, Louie, thank you

for getting me Rozsa. He did a wonderful score. There is only one criticism - I want more of the same music." I still remember this as if it happened today - it was twenty-seven years ago. Louie put his arm around the head of the studio, and he said, "Buddy, I am always getting you the right man, don't I?" He never apologized.

A.W.: We've mentioned your first two phases - could you briefly mention number three, and THE KILLERS, and your work with Mark Hellinger?

M.R.: Yes, the third phase, of which unfortunately we have no film clips today, because otherwise we could be here until doomsday, if we could play everything, was my gangster period. I did not belong to the Mafia, but I worked for Mark Hellinger, who was a wonderful man, one of the great film producers, one of the finest personalities I knew in Hollywood. He was a fine writer, and a gentleman, and, wonderful producer. The first film I did for him was THE KILLERS, with Burt Lancaster. That was his first film. Then came BRUTE FORCE, also with Lancaster. This was a prison break. And the third was NAKED CITY. This was rather a tragic thing, because the director for NAKED CITY was a gentleman we call in Hollywood Jules Dassin. He was promoted since, and his name is now Jules Dassin. That's all right; he lives in France! And he was a very fine director, and he had a friend who worked with him at M-G-M, and he wanted him as a composer. So Mark called me one day, and he said, "Well, I am in trouble. He wants this gentleman". And I said, "Well, that's perfectly OK; you will make another film and I will do the next one. Let him do it." So, they went to New York to shoot all the outside scenes in New York city, and Mark Hellinger suffered a heart attack. And instead of staying six weeks in the hospital, he stayed three weeks, and he was back on the set after that. He came back to Hollywood and listened to the music of this other gentleman, and he didn't like it. Actually, he got in a rage, and they thought he's going to die on the set. And he called me one afternoon, and I remember, "This is Mark Hellinger". I said, "Hello, Mark", and there was a long silence. He said "Would you?", and I said of course I would. I left everything and ran down to the studio, and he went already home. And the next morning I was told that he died, during the night. So I kept my promise and I wrote the score for NAKED CITY. And after that there were many, many brutal pictures I have done, and it was quite a relief that a low period, a fourth, opened in my life in Hollywood.

A.W.: And hearing from Mr. Genn, and you've already mentioned M-G-M, one comes quite close to QUO VADIS. Would you like to tell us the background on that?

M.R.: Well, it was quite exciting news for me when I was told that I will write the score for QUO VADIS. This was in 1950, twenty-two years ago. It was the first great epic film after the

War and the first great film that M-G-M was doing in Europe. It was being done in Rome, and I very much wanted to come back to Europe; this was my opportunity, I thought. However, I wrote quite a lot of music for it, but no one ever mentioned to me that I will go to Rome. Finally everything was prepared, and everybody is going, and they asked for my music, and they say, "Well, we'll get somebody in Rome to carry out your intentions". The director, Mervyn LeRoy, heard about it; actually, he said, "Well, I'll discuss this with you in Rome". I said, "But I won't in Rome". So he ran up to Mr Mayer's office and he said, "We are sending every grip to Rome, but not the composer - is that right?" Well...I went. However, they told me, you can be there for six weeks - under one condition. You do another picture for us in London as well. Well, that was fine. I would have done a picture on the moon, just to go to Rome. However, the problems were interesting and difficult. It was a film that had a lot of music on-scene, that is, a lot of music performed either singing, a choir, a march, or dancing. In other words, music played at the time, on scene. And in Hollywood, up to this time, I think usually a sort of music was improvised. But I have a musicological background, from the Leipzig University, and I found that this is my great opportunity to do something so that my studies were not completely lost in my youth, and to recreate something of the old music. Now there were two kinds of music that had to be recreated, and that was the music of the Romans and the music of the Christians. We know nothing about the music of the Romans, absolutely nothing. We know everything about their sculpture, their painting, everything, but about music, nothing. So it had to be done by deduction. We know that the culture of the Romans was highly influenced by the culture of the Greeks; as a matter of fact Greek was the official language, and Nero preferred to speak Greek to Latin. We have about, at that time about eleven, now thirteen, fragments of Greek music, hymns to Apollo, hymns to Jupiter, and so forth. They were written on tombstones. The Greeks had musical writing. They did not have rhythm, they did not notate rhythm, but rhythm comes from the words, because there were words and music together. I used these fragments in the whole picture. So everything you have heard in the picture performed was authentic. This could have been the music which was played at the time. Of course it was very difficult to find the instruments. For instance, I had no idea - Peter Ustinov played Nero, Mr. Genn played Petronius, and Deborah Kerr was, naturally, in the picture. I had to, for instance.. .Nero, naturally, was playing the lyre when Rome was burning - not fiddling, I must say, because the fiddle was not invented for 1000 years later. Stringed instruments were completely unknown 2000 years ago. The fiddle comes in mostly from Arabic sources around a thousand years ago; so when

Nero fiddles and Rome burns, this is absolutely wrong. So I went into the Vatican Museum, and there were the most fantastic statues, holding a lyre, sitting and holding it this way. I just had to copy it, and I knew exactly how to play it, how to hold it, and so forth. The music was recorded here in London, and for the lyre I used an Irish harp, which is a small harp. It was...fortunately, there was a lady here who played it, and it sounded like a lyre. I could have used a harp, which is, you know, a tremendous big sound. But it had to be a confined, little sound, and the Irish harp, clausa - no, Scottish harp, clausa - sounded exactly. And then I had to build the instruments for the big band marches. You know, you are going to play a scene of one march in a second, and the Roman instruments had to be built. And they are beautiful. There is only one trouble: they don't play! But they looked well! I am sorry to say that about a year ago they were all auctioned off in Culver City when M-G-M auctioned everything they had. And there were my beautiful instruments too. I don't know who bought them, but he will have a surprise if he wants to blow the trumpets: there is no sound in them.

A.W.: Would you like to say something about the extract before we see it?

M.R.: Now this is QUO VADIS, right? What we are all going to see is the suicide of Nero. Unfortunately, Hollywood has a cutting method which I always say is like this...(clap, clap). They say, we can go from here (clap) to here (clap). You are leaving out the best parts in the film - doesn't matter, it cuts here to here. Well, here Nero said the historic words, "And so dies an artist". It is not in the film, because somebody said (clap, clap) - out it went! He dies, and Galba becomes emperor, and you hear one of my Roman marches, and then we come to a spot where before in a former scene, St. Peter left his staff. St. Peter met Jesus, and he asked Him, "Quo Vadis, Domine?" --"Whither goest thou, my Lord?" And Jesus said, "I am going to Rome, to be crucified again", and then Peter returned to Rome. Now we come to this spot, at this moment, what you are going to see. The staff is in bloom, and then comes the irrational element I was talking about. The music which couldn't be expressed by anything else—there's nothing but a chorus, starts, "Quo Vadis, Domine?" But at that moment, the music tells you everything, and that ends the picture. Now let me tell you something. I wanted to play a scene also by Leo Genn. He played Petronius and he gave a magnificent performance, and if a performance is very good - if it expresses histrionically - and with his extremely beautiful voice that he has - everything, there is no music needed. So, when I ran this great scene, the dying of Petronius, stating his letter to Nero, I said, "Where's the

music?" But there was no music needed. That answers your question, that a scene without music, if the scene is great, does not need any help, and it does not need music. So Mr. Genn's great performance didn't need any music, and that's why we are not playing it today.

Film clip: QUO VADIS, the final scenes.

M.R.: May I say one word? This last hymn you have heard is a Greek hymn to Apollo, which I unearthed and used it here. Supposing it went through the whole picture in the scenes of the arena, then the Christians are eaten by the lions, that's what they sing - it comes back here. Then there was this chorus - "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Light" - we have recorded this in Denham, and it was rather hard to have a hundred men speak the words together. I don't know whether you understood it. Too late now to redo it. But this also was part of the music, and as you see, here the dramatic idea, the dramatic ending, was conveyed to you by the power of music.

A.W.: We should at this point talk about BEN-HUR, which we were unable to get an extract from, from M-G-M.

M.R.: Well, this actually started a historical period. And I have done far too many, actually, of historical pictures. But the culmination of all was BEN-HUR, in 1958, released in 1959. It was also in Rome, but I also must tell you there was no question that I will go there. And I wrote most of the on-scene music, like marches, in Rome. I used to go up - it was in December - to the hills of Rome, and, also, in the Forum, and I was absolutely alone, and I thought some 2000 years have come by, but some music must still be in the air. It happened right here, you know...the Via Sacra, there were marches. And I started to march, and I wrote down notes to myself. And suddenly I heard some noise. I looked, and there were two girls, and they looked at me - they were absolutely sure I had escaped from an insane asylum - marching, and writing notes, and singing to it, and one said to the other, "Bazzo", which means crazy. So I went home quickly, because it might have led to complications. However, to work with William Wyler was also a delight, because this is one of the greatest directors, I think, in the business. And one day I went down to the set, just to pay him a visit, and he was directing a scene where Messala had Ben-Hur and his family deported, and he is alone. He was just finishing the scene when he saw me. He came to me and said, "Could you tell me musically what is in the mind of a person who just sacrificed his best friend for his personal ambitions?" I said, "I think I can". He said, "All right, lunch!" Everyone went to lunch. He informed the production manager that he is going to retake now the whole scene, and he has a new idea. Well, that they did, and

he gave me a lot of time, He invented a scene that he goes to the rooftop, stands alone, and so on, so that the music has time to convey what he had in mind. In the evening I was called in the production office, and they say to me, "Look, your appearance this morning cost us \$5000. He has retaken the scene. We love you very much, but if you go to the set once more while he is directing, we ship you back to Hollywood!" Now that, of course, would not have happened if I, or any other composer, would have had conferences with Mr. Wyler or the producer, or the writer, before the scene was made, before the scene was written. But this is very sad, and the question = the composer gets the finished product, and as to the actual production he has very little to say. I showed you the gallop from THE THIEF OF BAGDAD. That was something different. There the music was written, and they did the picture to it. But in dramatic pictures this is not being done, although I think it should be done. I once had a pupil in my course at the University of Southern California who came from Russia. He told me that he knew Eisenstein, the great director - that every script of Eisenstein was in three columns. In the first column there was the dialogue. In the second column, the art director's notes, what sets, decorations, and so on. And the third column was about music. And Mr. Prokofiev, who wrote the great music for ALEXANDER NEVSKY, and so on, was there on the conferences right from the beginning, and scenes were made with his knowledge, and he probably could have asked more or less, or probably could have written some music, and helped the whole production. And I think this is the ideal way for doing certain kinds of pictures. Again, I have to emphasize, pictures with stark reality - I am answering this gentleman - wouldn't need this.

A.W.: You were loaned out, weren't you, from M-G-M to do EL CID?

M.R.: Yes. EL CID was a production of Samuel Bronston in Madrid, and he borrowed me from M-G-M for this picture. Inasmuch as I have done KING OF KINGS before, in Madrid, for him. What are we going to play now?

A.W.: Well, we have the beggar's sequence from EL CID.

M.R.: Yes, well this sequence from EL CID, which you have seen the very ending with the great organ...the Cid, you know who he was, in Spain in the 11th Century, was banished from court because - well, I'm not going to tell you the difficulties he had. He was going away with his wife, who is Sophia Loren, and the Cid is Charlton Heston. Sophia Loren hates him. I don't know how you can hate Chuck Heston, but she does, because he has killed her father. And this scene we will show you is the conversion. First of all the absolute despair. They are going out in the desert in Spain, away from Burgos where the court was, and then comes the conversion from hate to love, and here is El Cid.

Film clip: EL CID, the scene in the desert.

M.R.: It went further than we wanted. The projectionist apparently likes my music.

A.W.: We're running very much against time at the moment. Would anyone like to ask questions?

Q.: Dr. Rozsa, have you ever been confronted with an unhappy producer and director who have taken you to see the rough cut of a film and said, "We know it's absolutely hopeless; our only chance is if you could come up with some great music"? This was explained to me by another composer who said to me his first six pictures were under those circumstances, as he tried to establish himself. He said it was like being an undertaker: you can make the corpse look better, but you can't bring it back to life.

M.R.: I do agree with him. No, it never happened to me. If a Hollywood producer would tell you this, he would know that your price would immediately go up for the next picture. Therefore, never did anyone ever tell me "Your music is going to help this picture". On the contrary, they say, "In spite of your music, this might be a success!" However, let me explain that music, really, can bring a picture to life. It can make it beautiful; it can make it more emotional; it can make it more colorful; and so on. But from a rotten picture, no major score has made a masterpiece yet. And actually, this was proven by statistics in Rome, of all places, that great scores have been written for bad pictures, and didn't do any business. And lousy scores, if you don't mind the expression, have been written for great pictures, and they were big successes. So, I shouldn't even tell you this, if you're one day a producer, but the truth is that it's quite true we cannot cure a dead horse, if it is dead. If it's half dead, then there's a possibility!

Q.: Dr. Rozsa, how come your music was recorded in Germany, in Munich?

M.R.: It was recorded in Munich, that's quite true. This is an arrangement that Mr. Bronston has made, and most probably for money reasons. I finished the picture right here, and I was flown to Munich the next day. It makes no sense, but that's how it was.

A.W.: Maybe we should talk about KING OF KINGS, because we're going to show the Calvary sequence to close our program.

M.R.: KING OF KINGS was the life of Jesus. It was done in Madrid by Bronston Productions. The last scene, which you are going to see, is after Calvary, the Resurrection. And then there is a very beautiful scene when Jesus talks to his disciples, and then the end of the picture, for which I hoped to compose some uplifting music.

But you shall be the judge as to whether I achieved my purpose.

A.W.: To this afternoon, we shall look back on an afternoon of great interest and enjoyment, Dr. Rozsa. Thank you very much.

The program closes with a lengthy film clip, the closing scenes of the film KING OF KINGS.

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ANSWERS TO FILMUSIQUIZ # 7 by Frank DeWald and Ed Seymour:

1. Richard Rodgers's theme for a series of documentaries on the American scene.
2. Five times, in three different versions: MADAME BOVARY (A arrangement); THE STORY OF THREE LOVES (B); and VALLEY OF THE KINGS, THE SEVENTH SIN, TIP Off A DEAD JOCKEY (c).
3. THE 49th PARALLEL (Ralph Vaughan Williams)

MRSSS DEVELOPMENTS by Mark Koldys:

The article by John Fitzpatrick on p. 17 of this issue will answer many inquiries we have received about our tape issues. We would like nothing better than to release music tracks from BEN-HUR and other Rozsa scores, but we simply have not been able to get any copies of these rare masterworks. We encourage any members with original music tracks from film scores to contact us so that the less fortunate members of the MRS can also be given access to these gems.

Our spring releases:

WS-8: BEN-HUR "Musical Highlights" (Erich Kloss? Cond.)  
WM-21: VALLEY OF THE KINGS (tv tape)

WS-8 is not the BEN-HUR Volume II now available from M-G-M in England; it is rather the extremely rare Lion LP issued as a budget priced alternative to the more expensive Carlo Savina release. Long out of print, this recording is considered by some aficionados to be superior to the full-priced alternative. And no wonder: rumor has it that the BEN-HUR Vol. II, the conducting of which is attributed also to Kloss, was actually conducted by the composer. If so, the same might be possible of this recording as well.

VALLEY OF THE KINGS is a particularly interesting example of Rozsa's "Oriental" style, this time adapted for an Egyptian ambience. The Prelude is particularly notable for its musical construction.

We welcome suggestions for future MRSSS releases; tv tapes of KNIGHT WITHOUT ARMOUR and THE FOUR FEATHERS seem likely soon.

LETTERS:

Sir Arthur Bliss, one of Britain's most respected composers, recently died at the age of 83. His contributions to both cinema and concert hall were notable.

Among his first compositions were the Colour Symphony and the unusual Rout for soprano and orchestra, He became a London Films staff composer in the 30s, along with Arthur Benjamin, John Greenwood, and, of course, Miklos Rozsa. Bliss's first score was THINGS TO COME; it has survived as one of the finest of its type, and the "March" achieved wide popularity. An orchestral suite, also from the score, became a standard item in the concert hall. Other movie scores included MEN OF TWO WORLDS (1946), for which Bliss wrote a miniature piano concerto for the African musician to play in the film, and CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS (1948).

Bliss composed in every form, including choral, chamber, ballet, and opera, and he achieved notable successes in America, where he visited quite frequently. Unfortunately, his works have been all too sadly neglected of late. This is a shame, for his composition remained vital and fresh up through his recent cello work, written for Rostropovich.

His loss is greatly mourned by all lovers of sensitive and melodious inventions in music.

Alan Hamer, London, England

A curious note about the Polydor reissue: the photograph of Robert Taylor is from KNIGHTS OF TILE ROUND TABLE, not IVANHOE.

Chris Parkas, New York City

Has anyone noticed that Gerhardt's LOST WEEKEND suite includes the bitter-sweet solo violin melody for Gloria?

Gerhardt's suggestion to use voices in "Song of the Jungle" has certainly paid dividends. The music seen to take on a new character - the wordless male chorus gives the music an almost hymn-like sound, Shrill woodwind motifs, simulating bird calls, are heard over a brooding theme rising from the depths of the orchestra, and the music becomes more densely textured as it takes the listener deeper and deeper into the jungle.

The IVANHOE Overture is very rousing. Compared with Rozsa's own performance, which has more strut, Gerhardt's has given this music an almost BEN-HURish sound, phrasing some of the lines with more sweep and so allowing the orchestra to show off the magnificent scoring.

This is THE album Rozsa devotees have long been waiting for and

it is certainly no letdown. BRAVO!!

John Stevens  
Albury, New South Wales

In his Answers to Filmusiquiz #6, Craig Reardon says that the Dragnet theme is "attributed to Rozsa". Perhaps Dr. Rozsa has used thematically similar material with which Mr. Reardon may be familiar, but the end-title credits of the Dragnet tv show have always attributed that theme to Walter Schumann. The composer's widow, in fact, still receives royalty payments for that most famous of video leitmotifs. Although Schumann, who died in 1958, achieved a great deal of popular success with Dragnet, he was capable of writing scores which demanded much more sensitivity, such as his a cappella choral underscoring of the play John Brown's Body, and his sadly neglected score for that sadly neglected film, The Night of the Hunter (like the play, directed by Charles Laughton).

Preston Jones, Hollywood CA

Bernard Herrmann fans will want to know that an album entitled "The Great Radio Horror Shows" (Murray Hill 933977) includes some of his original radio scorings. This three-record set features an hour-long presentation by "The Mercury Theatre on the Air", which stars Orson Welles in a dramatization of Dracula. It was the first program of the prestigious series (broadcast 1 July 1938), and Herrmann provided a fair amount of original music, music that contains fascinating pre-echoes of the style he was later to develop for the cinema. Also in the cast: Martin Cabel, Agnes Moorehead, and Ray Collins. The set retails for \$7.99 (it includes four other broadcasts) and is generally available through bookstores and mail-order organizations.

Bram Stoker, Sylvania, Ohio

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