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NEWS [January, 1978]:

MRS headquarters returned to New York in November after an absence of five years and a transition period of three months. The new address:

319 Ave. C, No. 11-H
New York, NY 10009

A one-page news supplement was mailed to all members early in December with information on current events. It also announced the regular publishing schedule for PMS which is detailed in the "Future Issues" section below. We look forward to improved service in 1978 and to greater contact with members in or around New York City.

Performances:

Miklós Rózsa conducts a program of his music in Puerto Rico in March. Mehli Mehta and the Schoenfeld sisters will perform the *Sinfonia Concertante* with the American Youth Symphony in Los Angeles on 25 June. The same orchestra will give the world premiere of the *Violin Concerto No. 2* by Lee Holdridge on 16 April.

Mehta's son, Zubin, made musical history in November when "A STAR WARS Concert" became one of the best-attended events in the history of the Hollywood Bowl. The program, which also included music from *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND*, 2001, and Holst's *The Planets*, was accompanied by a "laser light show." A similar event was scheduled to run for a month in a New York Broadway theater with the American Symphony Orchestra performing the music. It closed prematurely due to "technical difficulties."

Society members may want to watch for performances of small works by two of their fellows. Daniel Robbins, who studied orchestration with Miklós Rózsa, has had performances in Long Beach, CA, and Jack Gallagher's works have been heard on National Public Radio and in several cities. Several of his piano scores will be played at Carnegie Recital Hall on 4 March.

Films:

THE PRIVATE FILES OF J. EDGAR HOOVER opened in a few test cities-- Washington, Buffalo, Toronto, Kansas City, Oklahoma City--on 23 December. Future plans for the unusual film and for a sound track album are not clear.

FEDORA was recorded in Munich during December by the Sinfonie-Orchester Graunke. The film is said to be very "talky" and to contain a good deal of classical music (including a Grieg main title). It is also said to be very good, perhaps one of Wilder's best since *SUNSET BOULEVARD*. George Korngold is the music editor. The complicated international production of the film will be one of the best documented in history, thanks to a special "dossier" being compiled by Rex McGee for the Screen Directors Guild.

Recordings:

With *QUO VADIS* successfully taped, preparations are proceeding for a *KING OF KINGS* next fall. Decca's first project, *BEN-HUR*, has finally been released in the USA by London (SPC 21166). RCA's Gold Seal reissue and the Gerhardt "leftovers" collection remain available only from England, however.

Elmer Bernstein records MADAME BOVARY for his Film Music Collection label in January (the current release is Jerry Fielding's SCORPIO, a studio music track). Rózsa chamber music from Entr'acte and piano music from Unicorn remain in the offing for 1978. Westminster Gold WG 8353, a long awaited reissue of WST 14035, contains a noble reading of the *Concerto for String Orchestra* plus orchestral versions of the *Kaleidoscope* and *Variations on a Hungarian Peasant Song*. Music from BRUTE FORCE and THE KILLERS is said to be included in the "Nocturne" on *Classic Film Themes for Saxophone* (Citadel 6021). Other important Citadel releases include the first issue of Georges Delerue's minor masterpiece, A WALK WITH LOVE AND DEATH, and another "improved" Goldsmith album, A PATCH OF BLUE. The same composer's early career can also be explored through a Japanese reissue of LILIES OF THE FIELD. Another reissue covers an off-beat Bernard Herrmann effort: his sensitive background scoring for the Oscar Wilde fairy tale, "The Happy Prince," narrated by Orson Welles and Bing Crosby. The reverse side features "The Small One," scored by Victor Young (MCA 15017 is a reissue of Decca DL 7-4283).

Most film music enthusiasts are, by necessity, collectors of open reel tapes. This medium, usually the choice for fidelity and always for durability, is now enjoying another renaissance thanks to the efforts of Barclay-Crocker, 11 Broadway, New York, NY 10004, and The Reel Society, P.O.Box 9337, North Hollywood, CA 91609. Among presently available items are Miklós Rózsa's Polydor (DGG) I, several of Bernard Herrmann's London recordings, his DEVIL/Welles suites, and most of the Classic Film Scores series (some in quad and some on economical double-album reels). Some of the Entr'acte sound tracks (Steiner's KING KONG, Herrmann's SISTERS, *Great Americana Film Scores*) will be also available on open reel through Barclay-Crocker.

Publications:

Fentone Music, at the same address as Breitkopf & Härtel, London, has issued a portfolio of Miklós Rózsa songs. Included are the two Vansittart songs (op. 16) of 1940; "High Flight" (for tenor) of 1942 but revised in 1974; and the two "Nostalgia" songs (soprano or tenor) of 1972. The volume is also available from Alexander Broude Inc. in New York at the usual MRS discount.

Edward Johnson's monograph on Bernard Herrmann becomes the first to be published (see p. 16). To follow are Christopher Palmer's from Alexander Broude and Craig Reardon and Brad Arrington's (still unscheduled).

Tony Thomas will soon publish a book of interviews with film composers. In January Roy Prendergast's *Film Music* will be published in paperback by W. W. Norton.

Future Issues:

PMS is attempting to return to its regular quarterly schedule. The spring issue (PMS 22) should be published on 20 April 1978. The deadline for articles and major reviews is 10 February, for letters, news items, etc., 1 March. PMS 23 deadlines are 10 May and 1 June. Future contents will include: Florella Orowan on op. 18; an interview with Alain Resnais and other outstanding translations from *L'Association MR France*; "The Strange Music of Martha Ivers"; Tom DeMary on TV music; Ben Hecht on George Antheil; the usual reports on films, records, and recording sessions; and (we hope) some controversial letters.

AN MRS EDITORIAL:

Preston Jones spoke for many when he lamented the impossibility of putting more of THIEF OF BAGDAD'S score onto a single disc. Whenever the inevitable encore album is commissioned there will be voices raised to second his sentiments. People want to hear all of this splendid music, and they are making their voices heard.

But is anyone listening? We have recently had the fourth complete disc devoted to BEN-HUR, consisting largely of familiar excerpts. QUO VADIS and KING OF KINGS are in the works, and there is talk of EL CID for 1979. All advance reports agree that these will be splendid musical documents, and no one doubts the care and taste that are going into their preparation. Yet there is a problem. People are talking about it in private, and the matter deserves a public airing: familiar music is being recorded for (sometimes) the third or fourth time while equally worthwhile material remains untouched.

We cannot contest Decca/London's focus on the "epic" scores. A MADAME BOVARY or a LOST WEEKEND may be more urgently needed, but the big record companies want proven box office and recording "successes." That is their privilege. But we are not asking Decca to abandon its mine shaft, only to dig a little deeper. The epics themselves contain far more good music than the old records revealed. Here, then, is a list of suggestions: music from the four epics that has never been on record but ought to be. Incorporating so many diverse and often brief sequences will be no easy matter. All we ask is that responsible people start to give the matter some thought.

QUO VADIS

Additional dances, interludes, and fanfares . . . the Christian hymns (some of the most authentic music in the score) . . . Death of Croton (a surprisingly modernistic sequence) . . . "The Women's Quarters of Nero" (a fascinating unknown--reconstructed for the September sessions but not recorded then)

BEN-HUR

Overture (if only for its breathtaking hushed close) . . . Opening sequences (most of this music has been recorded, but, as Derek Elley recently pointed out, it must be heard in proper sequence if subtleties like the shofar-brass transition are to be fully appreciated) . . . Messala on the rooftop . . . Arrius' theme and naval fanfares . . . Reunion of Ben-Hur and Esther (love music with chilling undertones) . . . Act One Finale (powerfully complex interplay of leitmotifs--one of MR's greatest dramatic inspirations) . . . Death of Messala (with fanfares) . . . Balthazar's music (subtle variations on "Star of Bethelhem" and "Christ" themes) . . . Lepers at the gates of Jerusalem

KING OF KINGS

Overture and Intermezzo . . . Battle scenes (extending the familiar march) . . . Flight into Egypt (emotional treatment of Mary's theme) . . . Slaughter of the Innocents and Death of Herod . . . John in prison . . . Last Supper (including hushed Hebraic music) . . . Gethsemane (including an anguished treatment of "Thy will be done") . . . On the Cross

EL CID

Opening scenes (Moorish theme, the burned village, the emotional music for Rodrigo up to the introduction of the "Cid" theme) . . .
Spanish knights enter Burgos . . . Gormas's anger and entry of the vassals into Ferdinand's Court (a powerful transition and some of MR's most opulent musical pageantry) . . . Victory theme (musically essential to an album because it is transformed later when the Cid is defeated) . . .
Peasant girl at well (a lovely oboe tune, included in the piano score) . . .
Defeat of Alfonso

TORONTO/HAMILTON REPORT I by Charles W. Rileigh:

On September 20, 21, and 22, the Ontario Film Institute in Toronto sponsored a series of three evenings of films with scores by Miklós Rózsa. The films shown were THE LOST WEEKEND, EL CID, and THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, the last a substitute for PROVIDENCE, which never arrived. While attendance varied at the screenings, enthusiastic audiences keenly appreciated the opportunity to renew their acquaintance with the films and, perhaps of equal importance, to see and to talk with Dr. Rózsa, who had traveled from Italy to participate in this mini-festival and, later in the week, to conduct the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra in two concerts of his own music. After each film, Dr. Rózsa discussed the events which surrounded it, providing the drama and the human elements that had gone into its making and summarizing the meaning of working in the motion picture industry during the 1940s and 1950s.

Among the many stories Rózsa told during these evenings, the material concerning Billy Wilder was perhaps the most interesting. Rózsa mentioned how Wilder, influenced by the Heifetz recording of the *Violin Concerto*, patterned THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES around it. Stating that the original scenario was "more fascinating than the film you have just seen tonight," Rózsa discussed at length the original idea, which consisted of several unrelated episodes, some of which were cut by United Artists. "Over an hour [of the original film] was left out," Rózsa said. He also told how, requiring a balalaika orchestra for a portion of the film, he had to search all over London before he finally located a recording by the "London Balalaika Orchestra." After further searching, he found the orchestra--"some twenty young men with every imaginable kind of balalaika," --wrote arrangements for it and then recorded them for the film. He also recorded a section in which he conducted *Swan Lake*, for which he and the pit orchestra were to be dressed in Victorian-style tails. "My baton had been checked with the British Museum to see what type of baton was used about 1895," Rózsa relates. "They found out mine was wrong and corrected it. But you see nothing." Ironically, after all of the trouble to which Rózsa had gone, much of these two scenes was cut.

One question put to Rózsa concerned spiritual, personal or philosophical convictions which might account for the inspirational quality of his music. Rózsa replied, "You have to have certain beliefs, which I think I do have, and I don't think without believing something you can do the right job. You can't write a love theme without having been in love before. You can't write religious music without having written religious music before, which I have done, and believing in something."

During two of the three evenings, post-film receptions were held. The audience adjourned to the Cinema Bar, where individuals could ask further questions. Among the topics covered was THE FOUR FEATHERS: "My first big picture. . . . We have neither the score, nor the parts, nor the sketches left!" (Rózsa also referred to Charles Gerhardt's suite and to the incredible work of Christopher Palmer in preparing it for the record from a surviving BBC recording and the picture.) Also, on early film work vs. concert work: "Very difficult [to write film music in my early career] . . . I had no dramatic training . . . didn't know what to do . . . went to a shop to get books on writing film music . . . studied them . . . absolute nonsense! . . . I had to make my own mistakes."

Much of Rózsa's time in Canada was spent in rehearsals with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra which, being inexperienced, often had many problems of the type a more seasoned group would avoid. Attending these rehearsals was a vital learning experience, for here one viewed the hard work that must go into preparing any concert. Rózsa had before him an orchestra of approximately sixty pieces; there were deficiencies in the brass, and the ensemble as a whole could rarely project the depth and richness of a Rózsa score because of its relatively small size. Quite often there were serious intonation problems (which some larger, better orchestras admittedly also experience); occasionally, too, attention wavered in rehearsals, though this tended to happen fewer times as the group began to learn the scores. But Rózsa surmounted even such problems with time and patience. He always maintained a formidable appearance, presenting his directions to the orchestra in a clear, meticulous fashion and avoiding long discourses on the meaning of the music. At first it appeared that the orchestra was mildly frightened of him, but as time went on the players became less timid and more eager in their learning. For example, during the first rehearsal of the *Overture to a Symphony Concert*, there were several rough spots, such as the notoriously unexpected ending, which the orchestra had great difficulty playing; but after repeated rehearsal of the final five bars, the composer appeared satisfied with the results. There was also difficulty with the rhythm of the finale of the *Theme, Variations, and Finale*. Rózsa often had to beat his baton against the conductor's desk to demonstrate the exact rhythm. Occasionally he would halt the proceedings to sing the rhythm and to give the correct accents. At the end, he said to the group, "Very good, very good indeed."

Rózsa spent only half of an afternoon session rehearsing the film scores, for the orchestra learned these pieces quickly. In the BEN-HUR suite, problems did arise, however: the chimes were too soft in the Prelude (as they would be in the concerts themselves); and in the march, the attacks were poor (Rózsa told them, "I liked your first bar but not your second"). With further attempts the music went much better, only the ending being performed sloppily, perhaps because the orchestra was growing tired. But by now, the strings, which had earlier sounded thin and weak in attacks, began to blossom and have more bite. In the first run-through of the *Spellbound Concerto* the brass was much too strong and the balance was poor. Rózsa also discovered that the publisher had not sent the harp part for the piece, so he arranged to have it written out by hand from the conductor's score. And when the concertmaster came to perform his solo, his part was absent, whereupon Rózsa himself immediately wrote it out for him. In general there were only a few interruptions and very few errors, however, and Rózsa was able to correct these quickly.

During the final rehearsal, Rózsa ran through the entire program, correcting and touching up troublesome spots, e.g., the ending of the *Overture to a Symphony Concert*. The balance of the orchestra had improved considerably; partly, no doubt, because this rehearsal was being held in the concert hall of Hamilton Place instead of the auditorium of Mohawk College, which had been the site the previous day. Much of this third session focused on the final movement of the *Hungarian Serenade*, a difficult piece which had not gone too successfully the first day. (Scores had been incorrectly lettered in some cases--some strings were at letter K while Rózsa was asking for M, for instance--and much valuable time was wasted in correcting these publisher's errors.) Often the strings sounded hazy in their attacks, forcing Rózsa to repeat a passage several times to correct the problem. (He later stated that the music here was so difficult because of its transparent quality: mistakes became glaring errors. He also thought that the larger, louder pieces were much easier to play.)

Towards the end of the last session, the orchestra, which had earlier lacked a homogeneous sound, began to take on a really professional quality. Colors, so pale earlier, were now fresh and warm, with rhythms maintaining a clear, biting quality. The concertmaster's tone had changed from rather schmaltsy to bright and vital; the only real problem seemed to be the first cellist, who continued to have difficulties, though in all fairness he was a substitute player performing a very demanding part. His tone seemed reserved and cold where a warmer sound would have been better, and he also had occasional trouble with his intonation.

Much of the growth we witnessed during these rehearsals must, of course, be ascribed to the supremely professional quality that Rózsa brought to the sessions. Throughout he was even-tempered, even when the orchestra was tiring and not grasping his directions. He always remained the teacher, utilizing patience, an eye for detail, and an unusual ability to communicate rapidly his wishes to the orchestra. Using his hands, his voice, at times his whole body, he asked the very best of the ensemble, and in the end it was able to convey the power of this music with drama and passion. As he so often stated during the rehearsals, "Gentlemen, let's do it together." Rózsa took a class "c" orchestra (a community group) and transformed it into a shining, first-rate ensemble--a task achieved by extremely hard work during the seven hours of exacting, exciting rehearsals.

TORONTO/HAMILTON REPORT II by John Fitzpatrick:

The concerts of September 23 and 24 were not an anticlimax. Even though we all knew the music and some of us had been privy to the rehearsals that Charles Rileigh has described, there was still delight in the concert sound and fascination in seeing how the film music compared with the other works.

The difficult *Concert Overture* opened the evening with its difficulties mostly surmounted, though the climax and ending were never quite unanimous. The *Theme, Variations, and Finale* closed the first half of the program in a blaze of glory: it has been a sure-fire audience pleaser for 43 years, and the Hamilton audience did not fail to appreciate its orchestra's stand-out performance of the masterwork. For many, however, the *Hungarian Serenade* was the highlight of the program. Though recorded three times,

it is still less familiar than the other works, and none of us had previously heard Rózsa's own brisk and unsentimental interpretation of the piece. Even the cellist's problems and too-frequent applause from the "Pops" audience failed to dispel the five magical moods. The two slow movements, truly perfumed "*jardins dans la nuit*," cast a special hush over the house, but final applause, deserved and undeserved, greeted all of the many soloists as if in token of the *Serenade's* power to communicate in any sort of performing situation.

The tripartite film music half of the program was less polished than its predecessor because it was less rehearsed. It was also more revealing. One could suddenly see in the unison string bowing the relative simplicity of texture that distinguishes most of the film scoring from the concert music. At the same time there was a special opportunity to discover how carefully the large orchestral canvases had been crafted. In the *EL CID* Overture, for example, the string counterpoint sometimes suffered at the expense of a brassy and percussive sound. The ear might have suspected a faulty interpretation, but the eye revealed a simpler reason: a paucity of string players in the orchestra kept it from doing the music full justice.

None of this should imply that the film music failed to achieve its purpose, which in this particular program was not subtlety but solid visceral impact. Three passages from *EL CID* and the *Spellbound Concerto* were followed by a six-movement *BEN-HUR* suite whose organization clearly pointed up the emphasis on the flamboyant. Following the Prelude and two slow movements, the curve of excitement steadily rose through "The Burning Desert" (with its thrilling concert ending), "The Rowing of the Galley Slaves" (performed here as an orchestral showpiece), and the rousing "Parade of the Charioteers." If the amount of foot-tapping and arm-waving was any indication of the general mood, then more than a few members of the audience seemed ready to join the race by the end of the march. An encore was demanded and given: the love music from *THE THIEF OF BAGDAD*, performed in a mellow, almost Gerhardt-like fashion as if to set all the evening's musical passions to rest.

Two intriguing footnotes. Backstage Friday night someone commented to Rózsa that he tended to begin the galley slaves passage more rapidly in concert than in the film. The composer's first reply could have been predicted--"I don't remember the film"--but then he added, "Maybe tomorrow it will be different." It was--a fascinating adjustment for those who attended both concerts. Then, in the final performance of the march, even a mistake proved to be interesting. Rózsa's beat skipped one measure in the ending of the piece. Confusion could have ensued, but by this time the orchestra was in command of the music. They held together, the elongated phrase added to the effect, and the ovation was greater than ever--a tribute to all involved.

Among those present were: Robert Bowd, Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Dane (from New York), Vince Dorval, John Fitzpatrick, Alan Hamer, Mark Koldys, Mr. and Mrs. George Komar, Paul Levesque, the entire family of Peter Mauro (from Albany), Mary Peatman, Michael Quigley (from Vancouver), and Charles Rileigh.

LONDON REPORT by Alan Hamer:

While observing the centenary of the phonograph in 1977, Decca Records also commemorated the twenty-sixth anniversary of an important Rózsa recording in London. The original ten-inch disc of QUO VADIS, issued in 1951, contained twelve extracts recorded at Denham with the composer conducting the (uncredited) Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus. The same orchestra, with two violinists remaining from the original sessions, was featured a quarter-century later in the Kingsway Hall sessions of 3 September.

The Saltarello Choir was assembled this time not in the balcony (as for Sir Adrian Boult's HMV recording of Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony*, for example) but on stage with the organ. The orchestra was in front of the stage, with eager onlookers huddled under the balcony in the remaining seats.

The orchestra has plainly gained a healthy insight into the Rózsa output, and its empathetic response was highly enthusiastic. The choir, too, reacted with verve, and after twenty minutes' rehearsal time, two takes of the Prelude confidently ensued. The "Miracle" and "Finale," linked for this recording with some additional verses, similarly took about a half-hour to complete. The choir was then dispensed with until the afternoon's reduced-orchestra sessions.

"Ave Caesar" (the only suite movement recorded) and "Chariot Chase," both thrillingly orchestrated sequences severely impaired by effects in the film, took on exciting new life, especially with Rózsa himself assuming Nero-like poses in the trio of the march! The three-minute "Epilogue," chiefly consisting of a "Lygia" arrangement, was followed by "Burning of Rome," yet another scene whose score was nearly obliterated by the hysterical populace. This track, plus "Death of Nero" and "Marcus' Awakening," must be considered especially welcome highlights of the album, since they have never before been commercially recorded. Nero's death will be preceded on the album by "Death of Peter," a short elegy which climaxes vividly to choral accompaniment. Among several other tracks recorded were "Galba's March," "Lygia," "Fertility Dance" (of the Vestal Virgins), and "Assyrian Dance." Reconstructed as usual by the indefatigable Christopher Palmer (but not recorded due to time limits) were "Bacchanale," "Siciliana," and "The Women's Quarters of Nero," the last a regrettable omission which was never even included in the final print of the film.

However, at 5:25, when the weary but cheerful composer thanked RPO leader Barry Griffiths and admitted that things had been rushed, it was certain that not a minute of the six hours had been wasted.

The following month in London saw two noteworthy concerts: Eric Parkin gave his yearly recital at the Purcell Room on October 7 and performed the *Piano Sonata* with about as much virtuosity as this difficult work demands. Especially noteworthy was the moving *andante*, in which he was at his most expressive. Here poise, well-sustained lines, and shapely phrasing came to the fore. Indeed, at just over six minutes (cf. Dominguez' 4'59" on Orion), Parkin's restraint added a most meaningful comment without any loss of "heat."

This was, I believe, the first airing of the *Sonata* in this country since Pennario played it here in 1958, and the pianist seemed delighted with the impressive ovation that followed. The rest of the program consisted of other neglected twentieth-century pieces by Debussy, Ireland, and McCabe, and two unusual encores, Michel Legrand's "What Are You Doing for the Rest of Your Life?" (from *THE HAPPY ENDING*) and Harold Arlen's "My Shining Hour."



Decca QUO VADIS sessions at Kingsway Hall: chorus and organ on stage. This and the following photo by Derek Elley.



Under lamp at right center are Bertrand Borie and Alan Hamer. At far right, Charles Gerhardt and Christopher Palmer.

As a welcome footnote to the recital, it was later announced that Parkin would record the *Sonata*, the *Vintner's Daughter* variations, the *Kaleidoscope*, and another work for Unicorn Records--almost the whole of Miklós Rózsa's oeuvre for solo piano.

On 22nd October the Royal Philharmonic under Elmer Bernstein performed an attractive programme of film music at North London's Wembley Conference Centre. It was the second year running that Bernstein had conducted the orchestra at a London concert (see PMS 17), and once again there was much to satisfy the most discerning listener. Highlights were undoubtedly a three-part suite from *THE THIEF OF BAGDAD*, a longer "fantasy" culled from Kaper's *MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY*, and a delightfully fresh-sounding arrangement of the lullaby from *THE JUNGLE BOOK*, sung by Pat Whitmore. Her crooning interpretation illustrated just how adaptable this song is, and her improvised "oohs" were vibrantly effective. Incidentally, she joined the other fine soloist, baritone Bruce Ogston, in a cleverly arranged fifteen-minute medley from Sondheim's *A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC*, which has recently been filmed with Elizabeth Taylor in the lead.

Ogston was also featured in the opening of the *THIEF* suite, singing with more spirit and abandon than on the FMC record, in fact. The djinn and the closing scenes were also skillfully recreated, the one casualty being the start of the last movement, which threatened to fall apart as swiftly as Jaffar's horse until Bernstein tightened his grip on the reins.

The ten-minute *MUTINY* poem was thoughtfully adapted by Christopher Palmer, as were *THIEF*, *NIGHT MUSIC*, and *THE GUNS OF NAVARONE*. It was an exhilarating orchestral showpiece for one of Kaper's most memorable creations, the only miscalculation (to my ears) being the placement of the jaunty "Portsmouth Harbor" directly after the heavily scored drama of the *mutiny* itself, the sequence which opens the work.

Other worthy inclusions were Raksin's *LAURA*, Addison's *A BRIDGE TOO FAR*, Newman's *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*, Moross' *THE BIG COUNTRY*, and two movements from Herrmann's *Welles Raises Kane Suite*. To finish the evening, Bernstein conducted excerpts from six of his own scores, to generous acclaim from the goodly-sized audience, which included MRS members Haylyn Challis and Philip Windsor. It is reported that Bernstein may lead still another concert next autumn with Eric Parkin, a possible participant in film-derived concertos by Rózsa and Victor Young.

Finally a mention should be made of "Filmharmonic '77," which took place at Royal Albert Hall on 5th November, featuring the RPO again, conducted by Robert Sharples (for a TV-"classical themes" makeweight), Dominic Frontiere (for "50 Years of Paramount Film Music"), and John Addison (for a "Tribute to Joseph E. Levine," who was present in the audience). This annual event is not without musical merit but all too frequently lacks cohesion and degenerates into a nostalgic romp through standards and "theme song" trivia. At least Frontiere, Paramount's Musical Director in Hollywood, offered some worthy segments from *THE LOST WEEKEND*, *SUNSET BOULEVARD*, *SHANE*, *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS*, and, less successfully, *PSYCHO*, to partially alleviate the disappointment. The catholic programme ensured a rapturous capacity audience who will no doubt rush for tickets to "Filmharmonic 78"-guest conductor Marvin Hamlisch! Let us hope for a return to sanity in future proceedings.

FLESH-AND-BLOOD ANGEL by Mary Jane Matz:

[Reprinted by permission from the May, 1977, issue of *Opera News*, 1865 Broadway, New York, N.Y., 10023.]

"Five flights up," the building superintendent says, adding, "and the elevator doesn't work." On the top floor of an old building near Piazza Navona and the Pantheon in Rome, the scarred door has one lock, and that in the door handle. A child could probably pick it. Written in pencil on the crumbling plaster wall is a name, "ROTA." Here lives one of the most successful and active musicians of the century, composer of nearly a hundred film scores, plus operas, oratorios, symphonies, ballets and chamber works. Also director of Bari Conservatory for twenty-seven years, teacher and counselor to hundreds of young musicians, Nino Rota is heavily overcommitted, a man who lives for his work.

In Rota's Rome *pied-a-terre*, books line the walls. Sofas, chairs and tables are all heaped with papers, records, letters, scores, newspapers, notebooks. To seat a guest, Rota has to clear a chair, adding yet more clutter to the floor. Only the piano stool is free. Rota never sits anywhere else; he even takes meals at the piano. The house is as modest as the man himself. A gentle, funny person. Rota was dubbed "a flesh-and-blood angel" by Italian critic Fedele d'Amico. In his simplicity, the short, slight Rota suggests something quite pure, uncorrupted by Rome or the theater or this century. That essential self is reflected in his music, which is fresh and linear, spontaneous and unsophisticated. The Italian critic Franco Soprano has written, "The first mark of distinction and fascination displayed by Nino Rota in an unadulterated state is his total refusal to be identified with trends, schools, cultural movements, ideological factions of any sort. Supremely independent of the 'required' torments and agonies from the very beginning of his career . . . Rota reveals an unaffected inclination towards isolation . . . the frank, slightly cantankerous isolation of the artist who, having neatly staked out his own tillable land and carefully fenced it off with barbed wire, farms it patiently."

Virtually all Rota's scores are built on fragments he "discovers" at the piano, motifs that develop from a single musical phrase. Known as an exceptionally skillful improviser, he is the composer preferred by a dozen of the most famous film directors of our time, among them Visconti, Zeffirelli, Wertmuller, Coppola and Fellini--this last never having used any other composer's music for his films, all of which possess an exceptional musical sense. His track record is extraordinary--SENSO, ROCCO AND HIS BROTHERS, THE LEOPARD for Visconti, LA DOLCE VITA, LA STRADA (which he later adopted for a ballet at La Scala with Carla Fracci), NIGHTS OF CABIRIA, THE CLOWNS and AMARCORD for Fellini, ROMEO AND JULIET for Zeffirelli, THE GODFATHER, PART II for Coppola (for which he won an Academy Award).

Rota's role in the creation of a film is surprisingly large. He often composes all or most of his haunting, moody music before shooting begins, and the director knows much of the score by heart while he is shooting. Thus in a very real sense the composer gives both color and meaning to a film. Rota works with the director during the entire period of shooting, so his music is an integrated part of the whole. Only AMARCORD is an exception: "Fellini was right here. I had written only one piece of the music, the song played by the blind man. We had decided this would be the main theme of the film, but we needed something

else, less sad. I played dozens of things, but nothing worked. He was ready to leave, and--Ecco!--'What's that?' he said, and I played it again. *Oh, this is just a little thing,' I said, but it was what he wanted. That scrap became the theme of AMARCORD." Rota adds that Fellini also likes to listen to his music while actually shooting.

From one of his earliest postwar films comes the new opera for the opening of 1977's Spoleto Festival. *Napoli Milionaria* is taken from an Eduardo De Filippo play about Naples from the German occupation to the liberation by the Allies; later it was made into a film. Rota did the film score and has worked with De Filippo (who is directing the opera) on other theater projects. The Spoleto encounter between Rota and Menotti is yet another landmark in their lifelong friendship. Both composers grew up in Milan, their mothers being close friends. Menotti, through the intervention of Rota's mother (who knew Toscanini, who recommended Rosario Scalerò as a teacher in America), went to Curtis Institute, and Rota followed. The latter (born December 3, 1911) enjoyed one significant advantage over Menotti: everyone in his family was either a music teacher or a professional musician. Rota's mother, Ernesta, was a well-known concert pianist, his grandfather a composer and concert artist. Like Menotti, Rota began to compose before he was ten. As early as 1923, one of his oratorios, *L'Infanzia di San Giovanni Battista*, was performed in Milan and in France. That same year, Rota entered Milan Conservatory. Later, in Rome, he studied with Pizzetti and Casella at Santa Cecilia, graduating in 1930. As a student of Fritz Reiner and Scalerò he pursued conducting and composing at Curtis. Before he was twenty-five he had a degree in literature at Milan University. At this time Rota was dedicated wholly to contemporary music, much of his musical experience being shared with Stravinsky, whose close personal friend Rota was for decades. In 1937 he began teaching at the Conservatory of Taranto and two years later at Bari. In 1933 he had written his first film score.

But when Rota turned to opera--he had written one at fourteen, *II Principe Porcaro*, after an Anderson story--he began to look back to nineteenth-century models. His first staged work, *Ariodante*, was performed in the Teatro Regio of Parma in 1942 with a young tenor named Mario Del Monaco. The tenor recalls a strong musical line, a classical flavor and "a lot of Donizettian and Verdian accents." The first performance was interrupted after the first act by an air raid, and it was not until the second night that Rota got the chance to see the whole opera. Rota also wrote operas for radio as Menotti did. His next staged opera was a *farsa musicale* called *II Cappello di Paglia* (The Italian Straw Hat), written in 1946 to a libretto by Rota and his mother from the Labiche-Michel comedy, first given at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo in 1955 and later in Venice and Milan, this last in 1958 directed by Giorgio Strehler. It has also been recorded by RCA Italiana [TRL 2 1153], led by the composer. Other works followed, the most important of which is *La Visita Meravigliosa*, taken from an H. G. Wells novel about a Protestant minister who finds an angel near the rectory and brings the "marvelous visitor" home. The opera was given at La Fenice in Venice in 1970; it has moments of unforgettable beauty and emotion, run through with a thread of strong comic irony. Rota says he "felt" this work more than his other operas. Probably it is his most artistically successful opera score as well. In 1976 the Rome Opera staged a revised version of his *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp*. The most popular of his stage works is *Gian Burrasca*, directed by Lina Wertmüller (1965), about an aggressive little boy who

leads a children's revolution in a kind of Italian boys' reformatory. The work remains a monument in the annals of Italian television, and there is probably not one person in Italy who has not heard its hit theme, "Long live spaghetti with tomato sauce!"--"Viva la pappa col pomodoro!"--a patter song rich in nonsense and fun, which remains one of the best-selling records of all time.

Of all his compositions, Rota considers the oratorio *Mysterium* the most important. It is one of several religious works and *rappresentazioni sacre* (similar to early Renaissance dramas), which he has composed for various festivals and for radio and television.

A compulsive worker, Rota now looks forward to two big [1977] premieres: *Napoli Milionaria* for Spoleto on June 22, *The Italian Straw Hat* for Santa Fe on July 6, both of which he will attend. Hours daily are spent with copyists, translators and now singers, as rehearsals for Spoleto begin to get under way. For the fall, Rota would like to have more time for his only hobby, collecting rare books, but probably he will be busier than he is now. New commissions have to be carried through; and among the several film directors asking him to compose, Rota will choose one. Having brought his music to millions of people through films, he turns down most of the contracts offered him.

To Fellini, though, he never says no, just as he never has let down the conservatory and his students. In a lifetime of dedication and self-sacrifice. Rota has kept his humor, his sense of the comic quality of existence, his respect for the human condition.

IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE, IT'S ALLEGRO MOLTO AGITATO E TUMULTUOSO by John Fitzpatrick:

Every Rózsaphile of a certain generation has had the experience. Listening for the first time to the composer's opus 13, *Theme, Variations, and Finale*, one comes to the seventh variation, the one with the gong, the pounding drum, and the darkly swirling string figures. Immediately one is seized by laughter or shortness of breath--"That is Rózsa? But I grew up with it in the old Superman TV series of the early 1950s!"

The famous Superman moment involved a rampaging white gorilla (in a rather tacky costume) who threatened the Man of Steel. Actually the music was used in other episodes as well and even in different series, such as *Adam Squad* and *Rescue 8*. But it is from the "White Gorilla" episode that everyone seems to remember the music, and it was that episode MR himself heard one day while shaving, Nicholas and Juliet presumably having no idea that their television program was making peculiar use of one of their father's more abstract compositions. "It fit perfectly," is all the maestro has to say about the scene now, though he has been known to do a pretty good choreography of the gorilla's movements to make the point clear.

The source of the borrowing he did not know, nor did anyone until recently. Most of us assumed that the Vox or perhaps the Bruno Walter recording had been used. (Leon Klatzkin was credited with the series' music, but many scenes were obviously accompanied by library cues.) Now the actual source has come to light. It is a small disc (Paxton Records PR 459) credited to Walter Collins and the London Promenade Orchestra. The Rózsa variation is entitled "Tumult and Commotion." On the other

side is an equally violent piece with an Eastern European accent, "Men of Steel."

The *Superman* mystery of two decades is not completely solved, however. No one has identified the second piece, and the gentleman who showed me the record a few months ago did not leave his name. So amateur detectives still have their work cut out for them in completing this fascinating film music footnote.

FROM CALCUTTA TO KANSAS: A SALTER RENAISSANCE by Preston Neal Jones:

He has been nominated six times for an Academy Award, and his scores have won him world-wide admiration from film-music enthusiasts, but Hans J. Salter has never had a complete score available on a record--until now. With the recent release of *MAYA* (CT-6017) and *WICHITA TOWN* (CT-6022) on Citadel records (both in stereo), two of the composer's finest works can at last be enjoyed without intrusion of dialogue and sound effects.

Tony Thomas, owner of Citadel Records, has not limited this Salter celebration to discs. The veteran composer was interviewed by Thomas this past spring in his Filmex-UCLA Filmusic Series, at which time a clip was shown from Salter's 1943 *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN* (but not, as was reported in PMS 19, a clip from *SON OF DRACULA*, as the cost of renting both films would have been prohibitive; Universal, the only studio that insisted on charging for the use of a clip, provided a print with the worst sound quality heard in the six-week series). In addition, a piece by Salter will grace Thomas's forthcoming book. *Film Score: The View From the Podium*, in which a host of important composers discuss their art. Finally, *Cinefantastique* magazine will publish late in 1977 a cover story entitled "The Ghost of H. J. Salter," wherein the undersigned interviews the composer about his classic horror film scores.

Salter himself remains active as a composer and, at present, is at work on a short concert suite and a chamber piece. He does not miss the frenzied pace of his Universal days and enjoys the fact that his current compositions "do not have to be ready on Thursday." In the meantime, it is to be hoped that the new Citadel albums will prove to be Opus One and Opus Two of a long line of Salter records to come.

A MUSICAL YEARBOOK by John Fitzpatrick:

Derek Elley, ed.. International Music Guide: 1978
London: The Tantivy Press (£3.25)
New York: A. S. Barnes (\$6.95)

Moviegoers who have long found use for Peter Cowie's *International Film Guide* may want to investigate the new companion volume, now in its second year. The current issue offers some special incentives: Derek Elley is the editor, and Miklós Rózsa is one of the five "musicians of

the year," featured in four photographs, a brief appreciation, and another fragment of the same memorable interview sessions that made Elley's May and June *Films and Filming* pieces so important.

But you don't have to be a Rózsaphile to admire the *Guide*, which covers musical life in eighteen countries besides the U.S. and the U.K. Reading about 1977 musical events in lands as diverse as Hungary or India should be a fascinating experience for almost anyone. Hundreds of the year's most important classical records are reviewed succinctly, and there are sections on other fields, including film music. Those who seek specialist record dealers in other countries will find useful addresses here, and even a New Yorker might learn something about the resources of his own city.

Festivals, audio, books--everything seems to be here, if sometimes in rather compressed form. You will even find *PMS* described generously in the magazine section (though why not *SCN* or *Film Music Notebook*?). Especially intriguing is the mention of a previously unreported pamphlet on Bernard Herrmann--*Hollywood's Musical Dramatist*, in which Edward Johnson offers a 59-page sketch of that composer's career. The *Guide* is full of such surprises. Altogether a fine job and a useful tool.

RICHARD ADDINSELL (January 13, 1904 - November 14, 1977)
A TRIBUTE by Alan Hamer:

The English composer, Richard Addinsell, has died in London, aged 73.

Having read law in his home town of Oxford, he studied briefly at the Royal College of Music and began his career by writing incidental music for a number of plays by Clemence Dane. He also provided scores for radio plays in the 1940s, for revues, and, most notably, for more than three dozen films in Hollywood as well as his native country. His first film score was for Korda's *THE AMATEUR GENTLEMAN* (1936), and this was followed by *SOUTH RIDING* ('37), *GOODBYE MR. CHIPS* ('39), and *GASLIGHT* ('40--the British version, which starred Anton Walbrook). Then came his greatest success, the *Warsaw Concerto* from *DANGEROUS MOONLIGHT* ('41--U.S. title *SUICIDE SQUADRON*), which remains one of the most popular pieces of music ever written for the screen. That work is not typical of Addinsell's more lucid and often bittersweet style of writing, however. The true style is more discernible in such subsequent successes as *BLITHE SPIRIT* ('45), Hitchcock's *UNDER CAPRICORN* ('49), *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* ('51--described by Preston Jones in *PMS* 18), *THE PRINCE AND THE SHOWGIRL* ('57), *A TALE OF TWO CITIES* ('58), and *THE WAR LOVER* ('62).

Unfortunately, little of Addinsell's music has been preserved on record aside from the *Warsaw Concerto*, the chief exception being the rather undistinguished *LOSS OF INNOCENCE* ('61). Nevertheless, Richard Addinsell will be remembered as one of Britain's most accomplished "film composers" in a land not noted for such a breed, and he will be sadly missed by many.

THE PRIVATE FILES OF J. EDGAR HOOVER
A SPECIAL REPORT by John Fitzpatrick:

This is going to be a controversial film. Any work covering a half-century of American politics is bound to raise passions, but producer-writer-director Larry Cohen positively courts disaster here through his ambitious portrayal of four presidents and some of the key events of our recent history. He is further burdened by clumsy technique and a dubious thesis: that the late FBI director's authoritarian manner was somehow connected with his supposed sexual repression. Nevertheless, during its second hour the film does build to real dramatic power as the aging Hoover (Broderick Crawford) struggles to hang on in the face of pressures from the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations.

Miklós Rózsa's score is at the heart of the film and, therefore, the controversy. Like the drama, it really only gets down to business during the second half. After the long prelude, combining some of the forthright militant quality of THE GREEN BERETS with the orchestrational complexity of THE POWER, there is relatively little music for the documentary-style traversal of Hoover's career up to 1960. When music does occur in one feverish montage, it has to compete with gunfire, explosions, and the narration of Walter Winchell. The one early scene that stands out is the attempted seduction of Hoover by a woman friend, the music first gently lyrical then tense as Hoover backs off. The entire scene comes off as a cinematic miscalculation, so it is hard to judge the musical contribution on first hearing.

There is no mistaking the power of the second half, however. All three of the famous assassinations of the 1960s are touched upon, giving the composer full scope for music of a dirgelike character. Not all of these scenes are entirely relevant to the life of J. Edgar Hoover, but Rózsa faithfully enhances the film's appeal to national emotion by assuming his own ceremonial manner in the score. An "inspirational" speech of Robert Kennedy on the death of Martin Luther King is even given a background musical setting as if it were a modern "Lord's Prayer."

Still another musical highlight accompanies the key dramatization of Hoover's "repression." Having rejected another woman's advances, Hoover is shown returning to his office and experiencing a tortured sort of sexual gratification while listening to a tape recording of some official's hotel-room escapades. Without music the scene would be ridiculous. With Rózsa's agonized harmonic progressions the grotesquerie becomes a sort of mad passion play--not "tasteful," perhaps, but necessary if the film is to make its point.

There is much more to the music--even a fantasy for trumpets, paper shredders, and orchestra as the private files of the title are finally destroyed. And everything will doubtless take on new meanings at second hearing, always the most fascinating time to appreciate a good score. A record is certainly in order. American International Pictures has no definite plans in this department, but that company, RCA, Polydor, and perhaps Entr'acte or Citadel ought to be pressed on the matter.

CURRENT SCORES:

("First hearings" by our readers. Not meant to preclude the possibility of a feature review.)

Jerry Goldsmith: DAMNATION ALLEY.

A routine effort for the composer, stylistically right but uninspired. But then no one could have made sense of the *deus ex machina*, pie-in-the-sky ending, so one can hardly blame him for not trying. The "Sound 360" process amounts to little more than three-channel stereo with two channels behind the listener. M.K.

Ennio Morricone: EXORCIST II: THE HERETIC.

The "spook" music, though far in the background, is not ineffective. Unfortunately, Morricone's conception of "the power of good" sounds excessively simple-minded. J.F.

Dave Grusin: BOBBY DEERFIELD.

Dave Grusin comes up with an exquisite love theme with which, however, he does nothing beyond repeating it. Otherwise an adequate but not striking score; the film's ending, a miserable cop-out by director Sidney Pollack, is further debilitated by the incorporation of an ill-chosen song in a rather clumsy manner. M.P.

Television:

Laurence Rosenthal contributed an effective theme and some good scoring to several episodes of the prematurely cancelled *Logan's Run* series. TV's best music, however, is still being written by Elmer Bernstein, who has shone in several recent specials, most notable Jacques Cousteau's on the search for the sunken Britannic. M.K.

Rarely these days does a composer get to assassinate a film in the grand manner. Such, unfortunately, was the case with Maury Laws' score for *THE HOBBIT*, which may yet achieve theatrical distribution. A good story and not-bad animation might have made this a fantasy more substantial than the popular *STAR WARS*. The almost operatic format, with integral songs and ballad-like recitatives, offered a perfect musical opportunity. Even the antique, pseudo-Gregorian style of the early music seemed appropriate. Alas, Laws' total failure to dramatize or develop his material doomed the film. The rock-and-roll approach to the action sequences was only the worst of his score's many inadequacies. J.F.

CURRENT RECORDS:

Bernard Herrmann: TORN CURTAIN (Film Music Collection FMC 10).

Kudos to Elmer Bernstein for rescuing this heretofore unheard score from oblivion and preserving it in as fine a performance and recording as this one. The music does not make easy listening, especially with no visual remembrance to serve as a connection, but throughout the composer exploits fully the unique resources of the distinctive ensemble assembled. It isn't all new, however; Herrmann fans will find some of this same music in *THE BATTLE OF NERETVA!* M.K.

A worthy addition to the series, being both inventive and unique. Some of the score is repetitive, however, and it does not hold together well away from the film. I feel it should have been paired with, say, NORTH BY NORTHWEST or IT'S ALIVE. A.H.

David Shire & Richard Maltby Jr.: STARTING HERE, STARTING NOW: A NEW MUSICAL REVIEW (Original Cast Recording - RCA ABL 1-2360).

Most of the songs in this three-character revue were originally written for off-Broadway shows of the '60s (although two new numbers were written specifically for this show), and for those of us familiar only with David Shire's film music of the '70s, it is interesting to hear songs from this early phase of his career. Maltby's urbane lyrics are well melded to Shire's straightforward, mainly upbeat melodies. But the album will have greatest appeal to those who enjoy musical cabaret. R.B.

LETTERS:

GREGG STEVENS, Beaverton, Oregon:

Catherine Parr's theme in YOUNG BESS apparently has its origin in an anonymous Alman taken from the Fitzwilliam virginal book. It can be heard on the John Relbourn album, *The Lady and the Unicorn* (Reprise RS 6407). Except for a minor change, the first four measures are quoted exactly, after which comes a developmental section Rózsa did not utilize.

JAMES MARSHALL, Derby, England:

Unfortunately, there just aren't enough women film composers to make a decent article. I can think of only three . . . or perhaps three and a half. Doreen Carwithen, a noted composer and teacher here, is my favorite of the three, chiefly due to her score for MEN OF SHERWOOD FOREST (1954)--nothing authentic, just plenty of "Olde English" charm. Elisabeth Lutyens is a respected scorer of documentary shorts (more than 60 to date), but she has proven too inflexible for feature films. Let's face it, if you can't compose something interesting and imaginative for a film like DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS you may as well give up--and Miss Lutyens has. The third lady, Joan Shakespeare (also British) has only scored the most minor B films. Then there is Angela Morley, who seems far more successful now (as scorer/arranger of THE LITTLE PRINCE, THE SLIPPER AND THE ROSE, etc.) than as Walter Stott (CAPTAIN NEMO AND THE UNDERWATER CITY, WHEN EIGHT BELLS TOLL). Apparently the sex-change operation she underwent in 1972 has proven an artistic as well as an emotional benefit.

Can't agree with some of your Rózsa score ratings. SEAGULLS OVER SORRENTO begins and ends with a most rousing, sea-sprayed prelude--real soul-of-Rózsa stuff, I've always thought. And THE DIVORCE OF LADY X, although terribly old-fashioned, I find likable in its gaiety and frivolity. Opinions around the world will vary, of course, but does any Rózsa score really deserve the description "bomb"?

[Ed. note: We await more opinions, particularly when expressed with erudition like Mr. Marshall's.]

PRESTON JONES, Los Angeles, California:

Since writing the Salter article [p. 15], I have learned that MCA's French label has recently re-issued the Dick Jacobs-conducted album of horror-and-science-fiction excerpts, originally released by Coral in the early 1960s. The record includes four Salter selections, all but one performed atrociously and/or marred by superfluous sound effects, plus pieces by such composers as William Lava, Herman Stein, James Bernard, and Henry Mancini. An event that may prove more significant to admirers of Salter's work in this genre is Tony Thomas's announcement of a Citadel Records release containing a "Horror Rhapsody" by Salter. The piece is said to contain material from three of the composer's earliest fright films, THE MUMMY'S HAND, BLACK FRIDAY, and MAN MADE MONSTER. On the reverse side is John Cacavas's score from a recent British picture, HORROR EXPRESS.

ADDENDA:

NEWS: Sidney Harth is to conduct the JUNGLE BOOK Suite at an upcoming children's concert.

MRS EDITORIAL: Among those selections from QUO VADIS which we would like to see recorded, include "Abduction of Lygia."

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