PRO MUSICA SANA
QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF
The Miklós Rózsa Society

Volume VII, No. 1	Winter 1978-1979	MRS 25

IN THIS ISSUE:

Editor: John Fitzpatrick
Associate Editors: Mark Koldys and Mary Peatman
Production Editor: Ronald L. Bonn

NEWS [January 1979]:

Films:

THE PRIVATE FILES OF J. EDGAR HOOVER, having been screened with some success at the London and Edinburgh film festivals, goes into release this month in Britain, though without the controversial "tape recorder" scene, which has been deleted on account of poor audience reaction. At the same time, the film will be televised in some 40 American cities via the Home Box Office pay-TV system. American International's theatrical release plans remain indefinite pending the results of these showings. There are no firm plans for a soundtrack album; current negotiations are focused on the British record companies. A tape of the music has been secured, however, ensuring that MRS members will eventually be able to hear it in one form or another.

FEDORA opens here in February, though with significant musical cuts.

Miklós Rózsa's most recent score is THE LAST EMBRACE, a suspense drama from United Artists. The film was directed by Jonathan Demme, who scored a critical success last year with CITIZEN'S BAND (retitled HANDLE WITH CARE). It stars Roy Scheider and Janet Margolin. The music was composed in the fall and recorded in Hollywood in December. A reduced string section was the price that had to be paid for Rózsa's first Hollywood sessions in more than a decade. The film opens in April.

Following the completion of this film, Rózsa was preparing to score Nicholas Meyers' H G Wellsian "Time Machine" fantasy, TIME AFTER TIME.

Recordings:

1978 brought us an astonishing total of 13 records featuring the music of Miklós Rózsa (15 counting BEN-HUR and the Westminster Gold reissue, both of which appeared here at the very end of 1977). Reviewing, or even listing, all of them is impossible here, so we recommend a glance through the most recent issues of PMS for anyone who might have missed something in the flood. The two latest albums to appear are as follows:

Varese Sarabande VC 81058 is an improved remastering of Decca DL 9966, containing the *Concert Overture, Three Hungarian Sketches*, and *Theme, Variations, and Finale*. The composer conducts the Frankenland State Symphony, and the first two works are here given in their original, uncut form.

Varese Sarabande VC 81075 is a reissue of A TIME TO LOVE AND A TIME TO DIE, which was formerly available on Decca DL 8778 and on an expensive Japanese pressing.

Contrary to published report, KING OF KINGS was not recorded in London in September. The Decca Phase 4 program has been shut down entirely, and there are no plans for future recordings.

Publications:

Alexander Broude, Inc., has published *The Charm Bracelet*, a brief suite of piano pieces that Franz Waxman composed for his son John. The cost is $2.50. The same publisher expects to bring out Christopher Palmer's Herrmann biography in 1979.

Other:

The Society congratulates Juliet Rózsa, married in June to Juan A. Santander at the family home in Los Angeles.

In March, Andre Previn and the Pittsburgh Symphony will tape a televised film music program for the Public Broadcasting System,(PBS) with guests John Williams and Miklós Rózsa. The latter will conduct music from BEN-HUR.

The Art Institute of Chicago attained a special distinction last October when it presented the first known complete screening of JULIUS CAESAR (with overture) as part of a special historical series.

Society News:

We are pleased to announce two additions to the MRS staff. Lee Harding of Cornwall, England, will now manage our tape exchange service for Europe. Thomas Moore of Birmingham, Michigan, is assisting with business correspondence and new memberships.

Another change concerns PMS editorial policy. Original film-music reporting and scholarship have always been our primary concerns, and they will continue to be so; the occasional translation or reprint of an otherwise inaccessible article does not change this. It has been proposed, however, that we broaden our reprint program to include outstanding contemporary material in English, such as the Hans J. Salter interview, appreciation, and filmography in *Cinefantastique* or some of the exceptionally detailed reviews and interviews that Derek Elley has done for *Films and Filming* and *Records and Recording*. The high quality of such material is not at issue; the question is whether it needs to be reprinted here. All the publications mentioned above can be found in the larger libraries, newsstands, and cinema bookstores of the English-speaking world. But how many of our readers have access to such resources? We would like to hear from readers on this question. Your response will determine the course we seek to follow in the future.

Erratum:

PMS 24, p. 2: The quotation should read, "God [not Gold] told me not to."

LETTERS:

GEORGE and MARY ELLEN KOMAR, Rexdale, Ontario:

There was a special 70mm screening of EL CID in September at the Ontario Science Centre film theatre. Those in attendance were treated to a very special six-channel stereophonic print of the film that contained two "new" scenes that were not in the standard version. The two scenes occur together at the end of Act I, which traditionally ended with the Cid and his Chimene emerging through barn doors only to be greeted by a small army of self-exiled followers hailing the Cid. Here they march to the triumphant first hearing of Rózsa's El Cid March, and then both music and picture fade naturally into a palace scene (unaccompanied by music) in which King Alfonso relates to his sister Urraca a strange dream: he is killing his enemy only to discover that his enemy is his own right arm (supposedly his faithful subject, the Cid). The second scene involves the Cid and Chimene saying farewell to each other (hence the title of this sequence on the MGM disc) as he and his army leave her in the safety of a nunnery. The love theme returns here and builds into the El Cid March just as on the disc. Then there is a natural cut to the opening scene of Act II with the doors to Alfonso's court opening to admit a more aged and bearded Cid (there are a lot of doors in this film, the most

(continued on page 19)

SPELLBOUND CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK by Jeffrey Dane:

There were about 25 people present at the United Church in the Bronx when the festivities that were scheduled to be held on 14 October actually began. Those who attended were mainly members of Spellbound — The Miklós Rózsa Music Society headed by David Colon. Several MRS members had been invited; among those present were Jeffrey Dane, Lee Hern, Tony Kokinos, Frank Morales, Gary Swartz, and Ray Van Orden.

The schedule of the day's events called for 16mm screenings of BEN-HUR and KING OF KINGS with intervals for refreshments and conversation. Needless to say, we were all very pleased to learn, when the composer arrived, that he was indeed free for that entire day and that he wished to see both films that were scheduled to be shown.

Dr. Rózsa arrived with David Colon at about 12:30 p.m. and was welcomed by several of us at his car. With the rest of us in tow, he was taken by Mr. Colon through a long, dark corridor which ended at the room where the screenings were taking place. Although the first reel of KING OF KINGS had already just begun, the timing of Dr. Rózsa's arrival was still — and unintentionally — perfect for the occasion: he was seen by everyone at the threshold of the room just as *Music by Miklós Rózsa* appeared on the screen, and the viewers all broke into spontaneous applause. As the composer raised his hand in a gesture of greeting and appreciation, the film was stopped, the lights turned on, and greetings and introductions were exchanged between Dr. Rózsa and those present - most of whom, incidentally, were on this occasion meeting him for the first time. Within a few minutes, the film resumed from the beginning.

Many of us had the chance to speak with the composer during the break between the two films. Dr. Rózsa was asked to officiate by cutting the first piece of a large cake which was inscribed "Welcome, Miklós Rózsa," and the composer chose to cut the first piece "dagger" style, as though, he said, the cake represented a producer or a studio "music director." When asked if someone could take over with the serving at one point, the composer replied, "No, thank you — I am feeding the multitudes," a statement evidently made in consideration of the film we had just seen. After coffee, several of those present brought out albums for Dr. Rózsa to sign.

As we prepared to see BEN-HUR, the composer turned to all of us just before the lights went down and said, "See you in 3-1/2 hours." This was, in fact, not to be; although the flutter which characterized the previous film was not present in this one, insult was inadvertently added to injury at this point in the form of a conspicuously truncated print of BEN-HUR. Certainly this did not affect our enjoyment of what we actually did see. So intense can be the identification with a sequence (or an entire film, for that matter) that one viewer was seen dabbing his forehead with his handkerchief at the completion of the Rowing of the Galley Slaves sequence. One had to be there to know that it was due to the content of the scene, and not to the temperature conditions in the room.

We again had the pleasure of Dr. Rózsa's company and conversation after the showing of BEN-HUR. During these informal conversations, Stravinsky was discussed: it seems that Dr. Rózsa had known him well, and we were all given some insights into Stravinsky's work habits. He was, during his later years, in the habit of <u>ruling</u> his own staff paper with a special pen point and other desk paraphernalia which he used especially for this purpose. This procedure gave these manuscript scores an unusual appearance, but when it was mentioned by one of us that the manuscript score of *Le Sacre du printemps* looked quite conventional in its notation, Dr. Rózsa countered with the reply that "*Le*

Sacre was composed at a time when Stravinsky was still 'unruly.'" This subject prompted Dr. Rózsa's observation that Mozart, too, had had his own compositional peculiarities: he would compose (at least some of) his chamber works by writing out the instrumental parts, having already worked out the entire composition in his head; the actual score was left for others to construct from those parts.

The day inevitably had to end. Donning his hat and coat, Dr. Rózsa bade a personal farewell to all of us and expressed his appreciation to everyone for all that had been done. It was the finish of a very important day for all of us as the composer got into a car and was driven back to his hotel.

[Ed. note: A considerably expanded version of this account will appear in the third issue of the SPELLBOUND society publication.]

A TIME FOR PRAISE by Frank DeWald:

It is said that Sergei Prokofiev's intention in composing the *Classical Symphony* was to write the symphony which Haydn would have written had he lived in the twentieth century. Similarly, Miklós Rózsa might well claim that in writing his major choral pieces he was composing what Thomas Luis de Victoria would have written in the 1900s. There are striking similarities between Rózsa and his Renaissance predecessor: the interplay of homophonic and polyphonic texture, the episodic structure, the use of imitation, the flow of changing meters, the musical word painting. The music of both composers has a beautiful, austere effect that is as timeless as an ancient cathedral.

Yet in spite of Christopher Palmer's assertion that Rózsa's choral music is "grateful to sing," it poses technical and musical challenges which are not easily met. Rózsa's insistent use of dissonant intervals (2nds, 7ths, and 9ths), which are difficult to tune, is balanced by an equal preponderance of 4ths and 5ths, which easily expose an out-of-tune chord. The extreme ranges of the parts, the occasionally high tessitura, the frequent divisi, the episodic structure and sheer length of the motets - these demand choral singing on an above-average plane. On their new Entr'acte disc (ERS 6512) Maurice Skones and the Choir of the West have met and surpassed these challenges.

The least ambitious (and most recent) work on the program is *The 23rd Psalm,* published in 1974, a year after its first performance by the group which here gives its premiere recording. This tiny choral gem deserves the great popularity which this Entr'acte recording may help to establish. The prevalent musical devices are the composer's trademarks, including quartal harmonies, polychords, and imitation. The total effect, especially at the end, is almost rhapsodic, recalling passages in the better-known choral music of Randall Thompson.

The performance is excellent. The Choir of the West displays astonishing technical control, agility, and tonal purity. The dynamics are beautifully judged, the balance is always perfect, the rhythms are springy and forward-moving. The students' voices are rarely pushed beyond their essentially lightweight tone, and their sectional timbres are remarkably well-blended. When necessary the tenors can manage to sound like 2nd altos and the altos like 2nd sopranos. The occasional harshness heard at the climaxes might easily be explained by the fact that the choir begins a half-step high and gradually sharpens by yet another half-step, ending the piece on high Bs in the soprano! Many of the composer's indicated effects are beautifully realized: the *sussurrando* (whispering) at "I will fear no evil," the *marcato* bass line at "Thou preparest," the *dolce* tenor line at "Surely goodness and mercy," the *vivo* at the concluding "Alleluia." A very successful, enjoyable performance of an eminently likable work.

The Vanities of Life here receives its first commercial recording, having been previously available on a private disc recorded by The Choir of the West in an earlier, unpublished version. Although Palmer has claimed that this is the better of the two motets, I find the composer's approach to the text problematical. Each of the 18 biblical verses is set with its own musical idea, and although there are doubtless many subtle ways in which the sections are musically unified it is hard not to feel that this is a collection of separate ideas — all of them quite good — which are never sufficiently developed. Particularly frustrating are the promising fugal ideas of verses 3, 7, 8, 10, and 16, which barely get beyond the entrance of all four voices before they are abandoned. In spite of this reservation, there are many striking passages—notably the second verse ("Vanity of vanities . . ."), the onomatopoeic depiction of the wind, the climactic polychordal setting of "and there is no new thing under the sun," with its subsequent echo effect, and the mystical ending (a development of verse two), which recalls the final *Vintner's Daughter* variation with its triplets, polychords, pppp dynamics and tranquil character.

Again, the performance is good. Some of the vocal effects may not be realized to perfection, such as the accents over the opening chords; the dynamic contrasts are not always what they could be; and although the choir's intonation is excellent, they sharpen by a half-step as early as measure 49, which puts noticeable strain on the sopranos and tenors (note measure 406: "I perceived . . ."). But overall these singers, under their expert director, never cease to impress with their fine control of all parameters of the performance. Perhaps their strongest point, at least in this work, is the elasticity of their rhythm, which propels the music forward and minimizes the episodic structure of the piece.

This is the third commercial recording of *To Everything There Is a Season*, and it is far and away the best. As in *The Vanities of Life*, the musical structure is episodic, but here that is clearly called for by the text, and the resulting abruptness in the musical flow is more a strength than a weakness. The demands on the performers are great, and the conductor must pull it together to make it seem all of a piece.

Listeners who are familiar with either of the earlier recordings — both are out of print, and we now have no reason to desire the reissue of either — will find may delightful surprises in this performance. The Choir of the West is most impressive in this piece. Note how clear and well-balanced is the musical texture (even in the frequent passages where parts are divided). The ensemble and diction are superior, and again the rhythmic lightness is a joy to hear. Each phrase is lovingly and <u>completely</u> shaped (choral singers have a nasty habit of thinking their job is done once they first reach the last note of their phrase!) by subtle crescendi and diminuendi. The tendency to sharpen by a half-step is again present, but it has less detrimental effect here than in the other works. Occasional departures from the printed score involving tempi and dynamics are presumably composer-approved. The crowning achievment of this performance (and indeed one of Rózsa's most beautiful moments) is the final "Alleluia," where the excellent tone, ensemble, balance, blend, intonation, rhythmic lilt, and, above all, phrasing, coincide to conclude a marvelous rendition of a superb piece. And, as if that weren't enough, the final crescendo will raise the hair right off the back of your neck!

The disc is well-done on the production side. The pressing appears to come from Canada, and it is a good one, though the low-level recording necessitates rather high listening levels. The acoustic is natural, neither too distant nor too close, and texts are provided.

For all the fine attributes of this disc, let us hope Rózsa's choral music will receive more recordings in the future. The Choir of the West is a student group of amazing accomplishment, but these choral pieces merit professional performance as well. And although Mr. Skones has demonstrated remarkable affinity for Rózsa's style, these works would not suffer from another director's "interpretation," assuming it was a good one, of course. Vocal music is arguably the most subjective of the performing arts (see "James Levine on Verdi and Mozart" in December's High Fidelity), and Rózsa's vocal music has enough depth to reward additional soundings of the well!

MUSIC AND THE FEATURE FILMS by Frederick W. Sternfeld:

Editor's Introduction

Many of those who have contributed to the great surge of film music scholarship in the 1970s have been too little aware of their predecessors. Nevertheless, as Martin Marks pointed out in PMS 24, and as any decent bibliography will confirm, good criticism was written before 1970. With the present reprint, Pro Musica Sana inaugurates a historical series with a twofold purpose: to remind us all of our heritage and to make available once again some of the best writing on the subject.

Frederick Sternfeld's article on THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES is an especially appropriate beginning for this series. It recalls a time when a respected musicologist could write on film music for an established musical journal - something that has happened too seldom since then. And it appears now in celebration of a time when two companies have striven to put the music finally on records.(Entr'acte's version was recorded in October, the ailing Emil Newman having been replaced by another conductor, and Elmer Bernstein's Film Music Collection at last report was still awaiting Hugo Friedhofer's own reconstruction of the score.)

This article first appeared in The Musical Quarterly, 31 (1947), and is reprinted here by permission of the publisher.

There is no denying that the opportunities of hearing genuinely modern music are few. An avant-garde manages to keep abreast of contemporary works through the efforts of a few forward-looking schools and certain organizations devoted to contemporary music, but the ordinary citizen takes his musical fare from the standard offerings of concerts, broadcasts, and phonograph recordings. It would be extremely unrealistic to shut our eyes to the conservative hue of this repertory, despite some refreshing exceptions. In fact, so little have the vociferous protests of our distinguished critics and educators changed the general situation that it would offer scarcely any encouragement were it not for relief from quarters little suspected of straying from the hackneyed. To understand this curious phenomenon we must consider the factors that have preserved the anachronistic, 19th-century flavor of our musical life and also what circumstances, if any, might alleviate the rigid control exercised by these factors.

That the taste of our public, largely composed of people who do not make music themselves, is fashioned by hymn tunes and Stephen Foster songs, dance bands and juke boxes, long before the individual becomes a conscious listener, is only too well known. Thus conditioned by the harmonic and melodic idiom of his grandparents the concert-goer, by his acceptance and approval, influences management, to whom the commercial attractiveness of a safe bet, musical performances in an established and successful style, speaks more persuasively than all the protests or pronunciamentos on behalf of contemporary works. Curiously, and fortunately, the style and idiom of movie music are not so circumscribed, for the general public does not take <u>conscious</u> notice of the musical commentary attending a picture, however profound its effect may be. Hindemith's "secundal" counterpoint, presented in Carnegie Hall as absolute music, receives a cold welcome from a musically unsophisticated audience, but Hindemithian harmonies forming the counterpart of a duel on the screen, as in THE BANDIT OF SHERWOOD FOREST, are absorbed with keen emotional enjoyment. <u>Unconsciously</u>, the public has accepted dissonances and rhythmic complexities of a modern idiom in expressive and illustrative sequences. In fact, the average listener encounters this idiom so much more frequently in the cinema than in concert music that, paradoxically, he is apt to mistake the chicken for the egg. After a performance of a recent symphonic work of one of our distinguished contemporary composers, a layman was induced to remark that it 'sounded like the movies'.

Ideally, then, a cinematic score may serve a two-fold purpose: to fulfill its primary function as an important and integral part of a dramatic production, and to act as a wedge of modernity in our musty concert life. We say ideally since,- as in all walks of life,- there is here also too much stereotype and reiteration of formulas that may no longer be successful. Every sensitive musician is agonized by the merciless and monotonous repetition of a few clichés and the gruesome habit of "plugging" a tune in place of organized musical development. One may understand (though not condone) the excessive redundancy because of the necessity to produce shows the year round—after all, Italian opera had its clichés and pasticcios. But in the 18th century the idiom, at least, was contemporaneous. Today, we have fostered, nourished, and brought to near perfection a new art-form onto which we have grafted a musical complement that had already run its course by the end of the last century and now lives on in the superannuated romantic tear-jerker, the crash-bang climax, the standardized "hurry" and "tension" moods. It is the more gratifying, then, that of the hundreds of shows produced each year on the running band, at least a handful stand out by their originality and real musical merit.

Those composers who write as they please for this genre, unhampered by the dissenting musical tastes of producers, directors, and others, seem to fall into two classes: the famous "outsider", already accepted in the concert hall and engaged as guest-composer; and the regular Hollywood musician who has proved his mettle. The latter deserves particular notice because he influences and molds musical taste more continuously and, therefore, more effectively. Discriminating observers of the Hollywood musical scene have watched the work of Hugo Friedhofer with growing interest. He learned his craft the humble way, accepting as a matter of hard fact the subordinate role of the composer on the movie lot. With the score for MARCO POLO Friedhofer gained some general recognition, and in THE BANDIT OF SHERWOOD FOREST his score admittedly raised this technicolor 13th Century Western to a degree of distinction it would never have attained otherwise. Having thus proved his adeptness and flexibility, he was given full freedom of expression to write his *chef-d'oeuvre* to date, THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES.

This film, winner of seven Academy awards, among them one for the best score of the year, is an ambitious undertaking. The unfolding of Robert Sherwood's script under William Wyler's direction takes almost three hours; a timely subject, discerning photography, and some excellent acting all combine to create absorbing entertainment. It does not always hold that a dramatically superior vehicle is accompanied by a worthwhile score, but good music is hardly ever elicited by an otherwise undistinguished film. The breath-taking hunt of THE INFORMER, the philosophical smiles and tears of OUR TOWN, have inspired gripping music because they are good drama; the truism of the theater that a poor libretto will seldom bring forth a great opera applies *mutatis mutandis* to the screen as well.

The dramatic crux of THE BEST YEARS is the return of three veterans to civilian life. Separated from each other by branch of service, social background, age, and marital status, they have a common problem in the difficulties of readjustment that they and those dear to them have to surmount. It is fitting, therefore, that long before it highlights any of the individual protagonists, the music should characterize all three, as a collective hero, so to speak (Ex. 1).

Ex.1

The very first four notes, the most frequently heard version of the BEST YEARS theme, exhibit the simplicity essential to a phrase whose main function is to provide the material for musical and dramatic development. The two notes, G—B-flat, echoed an octave higher in reverse, B-flat—G, produce a melodic profile that is so simple, though at the same time distinctive, that the listener recognizes it even when it is modified. In this initial section the motif occurs, apart from fragmentary allusions, nine times. The characteristic contour, a rise in the lower range answered by a fall in the higher, is unmistakable even though the component intervals are not always the same.

This first subdivision of the musical score, accompanying title, cast, and credits, functions as a prelude and lasts one minute. The theme lends itself equally well to diatonic harmonization by seventh-chords or to a linear treatment by having only a few parts, proceeding in similar motion. Either form of statement, reminiscent of both Hindemith and Copland, stays refreshingly clear of the overly lush chromaticism so abundant in lesser scores that proceed from one emotional climax to the next. By his economy Friedhofer insures that the chromaticism used in a few tense scenes is really effective.

A word should be said, perhaps, about the term "BEST YEARS theme", since such labeling points to a practice that is widely used in the average film score and is, at the same time, definitely a threat to the spontaneity and variety of both movie and music. Stage commissions, whether for screen, ballet, or theater, provide a dramatic and emotional framework that, by its contemporary quality, has given rise to some of the most distinguished scores of our day. Here are patterns, fluid and flexible, which suggest forms that the composer of the 20th century may evolve for the music of today. For to the modern tone-poet the designs of the 18th and 19th centuries are perfect expressions for those times but, grafted on to the music of the present, they tend to be mere academic exercises devoid of organic meaning. It is the freshness of our best ballet scenarios that has made them such important points of departure for stirring music, and, intrinsically, the cinematic script should offer the same advantages. Unfortunately, though, the Hollywood score is so frequently organized by the method of the Wagnerian *Leitmotiv* that a good deal of the spontaneity and modernity of the genre as a whole suffers.

There are obvious conveniences to a system that employs the same succession of notes whenever the same character or situation appears. For copyright reasons new tunes must be tagged, and the trick of using the X theme every time X appears on the screen is facile and produces quick results. The proof of the pudding lies, of course, in the eating. If the technique is applied sparingly and thoughtfully, it will seem appropriate even to the critical observer, besides providing the necessary coherence for the entire fabric. But if used slavishly and mechanically, it will convey a feeling of monotony to the uncritical, while the sensitive listener will be both bored and irritated. On the whole, THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES uses its *Leitmotiv* with discrimination and without damaging the form or spirit of the script by mechanizing it. In fact, it is only where the script itself lags, as in the scenes involving the sailor and his fiancee, that the music, too, loses interest by excessive repetition.

The total running time of THE BEST YEARS is 170 minutes. Of these about 97 minutes are straight dialogue and about 58 minutes have a full-fledged musical accompaniment, expressive or illustrative. There are about 15 minutes of "stage music", such as the background music in night-club scenes and the piano-playing of Homer and his uncle, where it is part of the action rather than a commentary on, or revelation of, the plot. Since this portion belongs functionally to the straight dialogue section, the three hours of the picture's running time divide roughly into two hours of action without and one hour with music. One of the most effective techniques available to a composer of screen music is the judicious non-use of music in places where its absence is a more persuasive agent in enhancing the drama. Novices not familiar with the medium tend to write too much music — that is, to transform a drama with music into a melodrama. But the seasoned craftsman will use music sparingly and thus make an effective contribution to the over-all result.

The decision to follow the prelude, from which Ex. 1 is taken, with two introductory scenes minus music (minutes 2-11) was a wise one. These first shots of Fred, the handsome air-force captain, of Homer, the sailor who now has hooks instead of hands, of Al, the army sergeant, a successful banker in private life, acquaint us with the protagonists and introduce in the dialogue important elements of the dramatic exposition. But, informative as this initial portion of the dialogue may be, its emotional climate does not require the atmospheric qualities of a musical score. As the conversation comes to a temporary stopping-place, we are made increasingly sound-conscious by the hum of the plane engine on the sound track. Now music (minutes 11-17) expresses the intensity of the fears and hopes of these men better than words could do. Without fanfare, it enters quietly and tersely, in a contemporary idiom in which, quite apart from dramatic propriety, the composer shows he has something new and refreshing to offer. The lush strains of 19th-century Romanticism, so often imposed on a helpless audience—however far removed the actual situation from the emotionalism and exhibitionism of that noble period — are happily absent. A quiet, almost suppressed air surrounds the sparse octave imitation of 1a. When the camera shows a close-up of Homer a statement of 1b is extended into an anticipation of the theme later associated with Homer's home (Ex. 3). As the camera shoots through the nose of the plane, the music shifts from subdued intensity to the excitement of homecoming, once again strains common to all three heroes. In turn we have the relaxed happy mood (Ex. 2a), succeeded by swifter motion to portray the bustle of the home city (Ex. 2b), and a dignified variation of 2a to express pride. This thematic material is developed again as we view the city a second time from the taxi in which the returning men ride to their families.

Throughout there is little dialogue; photographer and composer convey the sentiments of the heroes. Very telling, for instance, is the use of the bracketed figure from 2b, first in original note-values when the new airport looms through the nose of the plane, then in augmentation when the veterans realize they are looking at a long line of planes good only for scrap. There are also the brief but pathetic statements of 1b and Id when the sailor waves good-bye to the other two, thus revealing hooks instead of hands to his waiting family and fiancee. Equally brief is the highly suggestive music depicting the excitement of Homer's little sister, again related to the bracketed figure from 2b. However, the characterization of Homer's relatives and neighbors and of his fiancee, by way of Exx. 3 and 4 is anything but succinct nor is it free from sentimentality. One's reaction is that these people are the salt of the earth, all right, but in overly long doses they stall the show dramatically and musically.

The music stops when Homer enters the house and does not return until Al, the army sergeant, ascends the elevator to his apartment (minutes 19-22½ and 27½-30½). His homecoming is from the dramatic standpoint so unlike that of the others that it calls for an entirely different musical treatment. He is neither a physical casualty like the sailor nor a social one like the air-force captain. All the complexities reside in the man's mind; he is nervous with pent-up emotion and self-conscious over the arrival of this moment. The composer has to portray hidden tenderness and potential pitfalls rather than overt crises. This effect is achieved not by presenting the material in self-contained units but by intertwining incomplete statements of motifs and phrases in such a manner that the listener senses an underlying unity and recognizes at the same time that these fragmentary references, suited to the present emotional complexity, are quotations from structural units to appear in complete form later in the film. In itself, the song "Among My Souvenirs" (Ex. 5) has no great distinction, and there is no trick to digging up and quoting a song popular twenty years before. But to combine it with the main themes of the entire drama (1 and 2) in so effortless a manner that it becomes part and parcel of this tragicomedy of postwar adjustment is, indeed, another story. The tune is never given out in the regular four-and eight-bar periods that are typical of the lyric but deadly to thematic development. Rather, it is extended, spun out with some unexpected, Schubertian major-minor touches and, after a fleeting appearance of la, almost becomes an ostinato, at which stage it is left in mid-air, as it were (Ex. 6a). But later a development of la glides organically back to a snatch of the tune, the very snatch with which the extension started, only to return to la after two measures.

Ex.5

Ex. 6A

Ex. 6B

With the use of the very first notes of 2b, while the wife recovers from her joyful shock, another complex achieves proper dramatic suspense through these fragmentary allusions. Several times the motif is stated in completely, then sequenced and followed by a series of descending seventh chords. When, at the end of the scene, these first notes reappear, we perceive in tones the "unfinished business" of Millie's happiness and Al's bewilderment.

The ensuing scenes (minutes 22½-50½) can be passed over without comment except to mention the excellent effect that is achieved in the third homecoming — that of Fred, the air-force captain, to the shabby house of his parents — without music track. His depressing background, in contrast to that of the other two men, is firmly established in a few bare shots. There is also the barroom scene, refreshingly unglamorous in its musical make-up, where a mere piano provides dance music ("Among My Souvenirs"). No fancifully orchestrated playing, here, with camera and soundtrack focused on saxophonist and drummer, but a faithful adherence to dramatic exigence. Actually, the understatement accorded the tune both serves the plot and produces a psychological spotlight on the song with which the audience, from the earlier scene, is already familiar.

But these are slight demands compared with the problems confronting the composer in Fred's nightmare scene. Here the music must reveal the bombardier's real emotional handicap, which is neither his sordid background nor his superficial wife, but the persistence of the fears and shock he experienced in his combat missions. The scene is short (minutes 50½-53½) but intense, and has a companion piece in the bomber scene towards the end of the film (minutes 155-158¼). Both have the same musical climax, a series of descending chords repeated four times. The straightforward repetition of the treble descent, not modified by sequence or variation, has a frightening impact, accentuated, of course, by the chromatically ascending middle parts, because that chromaticism has not been dulled by excessive and inappropriate use. The tonal din becomes a symbol of the mental dread from which its victim has each time to be awakened and rescued by external forces.

Ex.7

The stages preparatory to this climax, the quadruple statement in quarter-notes, vary. In the earlier scene where Fred is asleep, only four measures elapse before the ominous descent is anticipated in half-notes. These four introductory measures consist of an ascending second-motif followed by the chromatically ascending parallel fourths that then become the middle part of the nightmare motif in the final statement. The half-note version of this descent now appears in full and differs from the quarter-note climax, apart from tempo, by the chromatic ornamentation of the bass line.

Ex.8

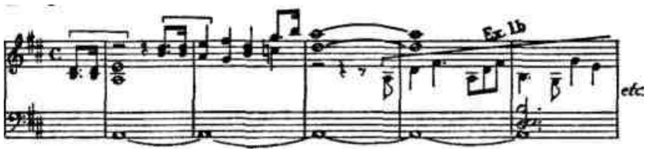
This slower, and therefore less intense, version is now worked upon for half a minute, to be interrupted only when the camera takes us to the adjacent room where the sleeping Peggy is awakened by the stir. As she enters the room and the camera returns to the dreaming, perspiring, and shouting man, the transformation of Ex. 8 into the climax of Ex. 7 takes place.

In the later scene, where the disillusioned soldier finds a dismantled bomber in which to day-dream, the introductory section is greatly extended and the climax – the same quadruple statement – seems terser, since it is not preceded by a slower rendering of the octave descent with its disjointed chromatic harmonization. The dramatic and musical continuity leading up to the nightmare in the empty plane is largely the work of photographer and composer, with a degree of coordination and integration rarely found.

The making of a film is usually completed before the composer is called in. He is obliged to deliver a score to fit the otherwise finished product in four to six weeks. Scenes where the music is recorded first and the actors consciously adjust their timing to that of the score are extremely rare. Whether or not the present sequence is such an exception, it demonstrates Friedhofer's skill and flexibility to the utmost.

When the bomber scene begins Captain Fred Derry is ostensibly not on the screen. As his father reads the Distinguished Flying Cross award the music enters with the ascending second-motif from the earlier scene and continues with a treatment of lb almost identical with that in the prelude.

Ex.9



It is given out softly until it reaches, as in the prelude, the heroic chords of Id. Now the entire passage is played again, continuing as a counterpoint to the actual words of the award. But as citation and dialogue come to an end the sound-mixer increases the volume of the music which now expresses in full-fledged sovereignty, better than words, "the heroism, devotion to duty, professional skill, and coolness under fire displayed by Captain Derry". As the camera shifts to the line of junked planes the ascending second-motif looms more important, the interval finally (after 8 repetitions) being extended to a fourth.

Ex. 10

Now we see the interior of the dismantled bomber, as the ex-captain enters and the music gives us, for the third time in this scene, the half melancholy, half martial treatment of lb with its heroic conclusion (Id). The obsession of reliving the deadly missions takes hold of the bombardier as we approach the climax, and while trick angles of the camera suggest an imaginary take-off, the progressive diminution of the ascending second-motif symbolizes the warming up of the engine and, more than that, the accelerated heartbeat of a frightened individual. Here, the trumpet statement of lb against the final diminution of the ascending second reveals, if not the psychological origin of this theme, at least its potential substitute, the

Ex. 11

signal for taps. The tension increases as an inverted pedal on E-flat, sustained for ten measures, accompanies a close-up of the perspiring hero and leads to the quarter-note descent of Ex. 7, in rhythm and pitch (E-flat) a replica of the climax in the earlier scene. The quadruple statement of this simple yet ominous five-note figure that has not been heard for almost two hours has a dreadful suddenness; yet it is nevertheless psychologically prepared.

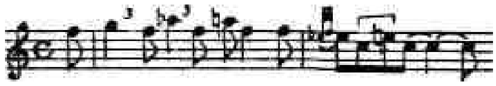
Taking an over-all view of these two critical scenes that could so easily have been degraded to the superficial sentimentality of the pulp magazines, one admires Friedhofer's economy of means as well as his careful timing of build-up, climax, and tapering off. Moreover, he has taken a perplexing problem of our own time and expressed it in contemporary musical terms. There is nothing self-conscious or recherche about this mode of expression; it is clean, neat, and fits its purpose with a functional smoothness that seems as characteristic of the forties as the various "schools" were of the twenties.

In addition, we perceive a musical pattern of intrinsic merit. For cinematic scores share with works of the concert hall the same elements of balance and contrast that in their organization and integration constitute form. Although musical designs for the screen differ in tempo, dimension, and texture, as well as in other details, they have in common with sonata form one fundamental characteristic: the statement of most of the important matter in an initial section and the following of this exposition with a development. The introduction of novel and spectacular material, long after the main components of the structure have been established, poses a particular problem in either genre. In a film, a new aspect of the plot, expressed by new musical subject matter, like the episode of sonata form, must make its effect by contrast and still be integrated into the work as a whole. Here, the inherent laws of an art that lives in time dictate the procedure, for such episodes must be recreated in time, in order to become an organic part of the total fabric. Yet, such recapture must not destroy the impress of freshness and novelty on ear and mind. The restatement can succeed only by a rare sense of timing and by the utmost economy. The two enactments of the captain's obsession in plot and music produce in us a delight in wrought form akin to that provoked in the opening movement of the *Eroica* by the reappearance of the episode in the coda or by the unexpected return of the brass fanfare in the slow movement of the Ninth. Here the film gives us truly dramatic music, not the usual cliché of dissonances that so often defeats itself by excessive use.

Since tragedies must have their satyr plays, and nightmares cannot go on forever, we turn next to the musical counterpart of the awakenings of captain and sergeant on the morning after their return (minutes 53½-55½ and 60-62½ respectively). The comedy in both scenes is handled with a light touch and in

Fred's case the musical fabric is woven in two themes, the homey Ex. 2a and a rather saucy, Gershwinesque strain which was first stated in the course of the revelry of the preceding evening.

Ex. 12



The contrast of the two themes is amusing in itself and the handling of the material is also not devoid of the comical. As the captain awakes, gradually and painfully, the oboe anticipates Ex. 12, never able to complete it, so to speak. In amazement, he watches Peggy enter and leave the room while a series of chords, the treble of which descends in fourths, is sequenced and cleverly gets nowhere; it is followed by Ex. 2a which is played slowly, extended, and finally runs out of breath (or at least motion) as the unbelieving captain blows at the dainty ruffles of the canopy. As he gradually gets out of bed Ex. 12 is played four times, by the oboe, the clarinet, the trombone, and again the clarinet. At the fourth playing the bracketed interval from Ex. 12 is extended upward from a third to a fifth and ridiculously reflects his groping about the room as it is echoed in the major and twice again echoed in the minor, the last two times in augmentation. The humorous climax is reached as Fred finds the shower; celesta and flute play Ex. 2a as a counterpoint to the strings which give forth, unmistakably tongue in cheek, "Home, Sweet Home."

Ex. 13

The companion skit, the awakening of the sergeant, is largely a portrayal of Al's hangover and his determined eagerness to shed military life. In this scene the thematic material itself is relatively unimportant, but there is the half elegiac, half whimsical mood achieved by thematic variation, a clever travesty of military scoring, and the chromatic frills that conceal an inherently diatonic harmony. As the sergeant gropes for his clothes a wailing figure of two sixteenth-notes creates atmosphere by procedure rather than by substance. When he picks up his army shoes, a snare-drum roll ironically points up the incident and the ensuing march makes emphatically yet ridiculously clear their erstwhile institutional significance. These exaggeratedly martial strains, remindful of Prokofiev's March from *The Love of Three Oranges*, now serve as a counterpoint to "Among fly Souvenirs." The song is played by a muted, distant trumpet, modified by the wailing figure from the preceding measures. Difficult to recognize at a first hearing, it is, even so, highly suggestive. As the march peters out it is punctuated by the sound track thud of the shoes, which our sergeant throws out of the window, and the sequence concludes with a harp glissando, synchronized with the falling Venetian blind. This is not a symphonic interlude, which would be quite out of place, but a fleeting sketch that is convincing because its character leaves so much to the imagination. Just as camera and sound track rely on only a few elements, so the composer, weaving a brittle and transparent fabric, proceeds swiftly and sparingly. In the making of films, the semantic significance of the terms movie" and "cinema" is too often overlooked, and long-drawn-out scenes defeat the essence of this novel and fascinating medium both dramatically and musically. THE BEST YEARS, with but few exceptions, is refreshingly free from this fault.

Both script and score lag whenever Homer, the sailor who has lost his hands, and Wilma, his fiancee, appear. The genuine and deep-felt sympathy that the young couple's difficulties elicit is attacked mercilessly in three scenes of about ten minutes each (minutes 83 ff, 138 ff, 159 ff). Of these, the wedding ceremony has no music track and may, therefore, be dismissed here, but the sequence in which Homer and Wilma decide to marry seems an almost endless series of repetitions of Exx. 1, 3, and 4. One wonders whether the inherently static script failed to inspire the composer. Because in the earlier scene, where the sailor crashes the window, the score certainly takes advantage of the faster tempo of the action as well as of the refreshing contrast offered by the children. The bluntness of these youngsters, mimicking the operation of Homer's hooks and staring with unrestrained curiosity at the couple through the window, is characterized by a traditional song:

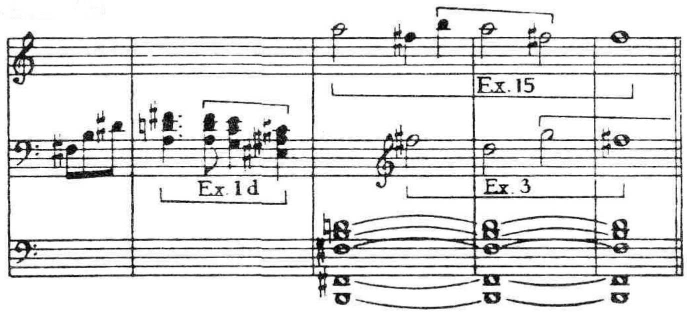
Ex.14

This straightforward and unsentimental tune acts as a counterpoise to the many melancholy statements of 3 and 4, just as dramatically the small fry rescue the scene from immobility. That this children's ditty should become important when the sailor perceives them unexpectedly at the window and in exasperation smashes the pane, is an obvious device. However, the slow tapering off of the climax shows an ingenious process of thematic transformation. As piccolo and celesta echo the first phrase of the song in G major, C-sharp minor, and C major successively, the change from the initial minor third to a major one reveals the similarity if not the underlying identity of Exx. 3 and 4, particularly as the succeeding variation of 3 employs the minor third from the children's tune as its first interval. It takes the composer only two more measures to demonstrate that 4, also, by the contour of its first four notes, belongs to this thematic family.

Ex.15

At the end of the scene, with a close-up of the unhappy, puzzled sailor, the heroic chords of Id, so prominent in the prelude and in the bomber scene, also enter this web of musical and dramatic relationships.

Ex.16



To have unravelled the mutual affinities of these ostensibly diverse strains a *posteriori* displays a keen sense of the dramatic. The logical way of procedure would have been the reverse, but with his psychological approach the composer succeeds in injecting variety where it is badly needed and at the same time reveals the underlying unity of the whole complex before its component parts and their interplay are lost sight of.

There are many other aspects of the film that show a real understanding of the limitations and potentialities of dramatic music. There is, for instance, the relationship between the air-force captain and his hard-boiled wife. The complete absence of music at their first meeting is as effective as the "stage music" to which the score is confined in the two following encounters, both of which are introduced by a frivolous dance tune coming from the radio. Later the same song functions as hardly audible background for a nightclub scene that involves our cynical protagonist again. The appearances of the tune are too far apart and too infrequent (minutes 79, 90, and 119) to be noticed at a first hearing; it is a clever manipulation of the *Leitmotiv* technique, for the theme is never predictable because its significance is never <u>consciously</u> felt – an illustration of the fact that the truisms of showmanship also apply to dramatic music. For the creator must stimulate the imagination and fancy of his audience but achieve his end without exposing his means. As soon as the listener becomes intellectually cognizant of the effort, the effect vanishes and the subtle and subconscious channels of reaction on which all make-believe depends become clogged. After all, it is only by a thorough awareness of the medium for which they are writing that dramatic composers of any school or century have survived. If those of today are to succeed in making movie music a vehicle that will establish their language as an idiom communicated to and understood by millions, their mastery of tones will have to be paired with the soundness and flexibility that practical considerations make imperative. The commissions of Hollywood resemble in their plenty the conditions that brought forth the incredible abundance of 18th century opera. The advantages of both systems are manifest, for the continuous box-office demand for novel entertainment provides a sound social basis for the composer who can write and live in and for his time. We must be grateful for a functional framework that offers the industry the opportunities of Maecenas and the musician a challenge he cannot ignore.

LETTERS:
(continued from page 3)

spectacular of course being the final scene with the gates of Valencia admitting the Cid into legend). My guess is that the producers decided to split the film into two parts with a dividing intermission only after having attempted to screen this version first. A friend of Mr. Gerald Pratley informed me after the film that this particular print had been in the can for a long time, suggesting that it may have been one of the earliest prints released. (Incidentally, it may well be, according to Mr. Pratley, the last time that a stereo 70mm print of this film may ever be shown; he had a terrible time locating this one.)

In addition, the entire last scene was shown uncut, the one in which the Cid and his forces drive the Moors into the sea. All other prints have always had an awkward cut in the picture and in the music. The film ended gloriously with organ and chorus as the Cid rode out into eternity.

One other thing we noticed in this film (besides the many doors and gates) was the number of crosses in the film, suggesting the Cid as a Christ figure. There are obvious hints to the Messianic calling of the Cid . . . the cross that Heston rescues from a burning church, the crosses in the leper sequence. One thing that we've never noticed before: the people of Valencia are holding palm-like leaves as the Cid marches into the captured city after conquering it with bread (Palm Sunday and the miraculous feeding with bread). Finally, of course, there is the resurrected Cid driving Islam from the shores of Spain. This, indeed, is a very religious picture, far more inspiring (and inspired) than Bronston's KING OF KINGS.

Rózsa wrote some of his most gorgeous music for the first court scene in which we are introduced to King Ferdinand, Sancho, Alfonso, and Urraca; the fanfares are just beautiful and the music is proud and heroic, the finest of its kind. It just begs to be recorded for stereo disc. Later when the Cid is sent by Ferdinand on his first mission as the King's champion, Rózsa adds a cute Messianic touch: a fanfare based entirely on the opening line of his KING OF KINGS theme! El Cid is definitely Dr. Rózsa's most joyful score; you can't help but sing when you leave the theatre!

Gerald Pratley and I independently, as far back as August of 1977, suggested to the people in the Hamilton Philharmonic offices that we get John Williams for the '78 (this was just before Williams peaked in fame with his CE3K score) concert season; no results. The best we got was a STAR WARS-CE3K concert conducted by Boris Brott back in June (which was actually quite good); it was just last week repeated, this time with William Shatner, laser lights, the whole bit — it bombed (I had the prudence not to attend the second one). Mr. Pratley and I had hoped that an annual Film-harmonic event could be set up, each year with a new film composer, but now there seems to be very little hope of that. Too bad! It would be nice to have another Rózsa concert here and get to meet the whole MRS gang and Dr. Rózsa again.

<u>Ed. note</u>: We remind readers of another EL CID oddity, pointed out by Munro Teale in PMS 10. The musical selection portraying the death of Gormas and Chimene's grief, thought to occur only on the Polydor reissue, can also be found on some very early British copies of the original MGM disc.

RONALD E. MARTIN, Long Island City, New York:
Gary Grossman's book *Superman: Serial to Cereal* may contain the answer to some of the mystery about M.R. and the *Superman* series (PMS 21). The book is published by the Popular Library Film Series:

> The "Superman" theme, and background music from the first two years of production however, have a more interesting history. Leon Klatzkin scored the theme. His other television credits include "Gunsmoke." As for the early incidental music, Bob Maxwell hired Hershel Burke Gilbert ("Four Star Theatre," "The Rifleman," "Wanted Dead or Alive"), Alexander Lazlo ("Rocky Jones Space Ranger"), and Darrell Calker. Finally, the fight music accompanying "The Golden Vulture," "Jungle Devil," and "The Clown Who Cried" in 1953, was written by Miklós Rózsa who is more widely known for his soundtracks for EL CID, THIEF OF BAGDAD, SPELLBOUND, KING OF KINGS, MADAME BOVARY, JUNGLE BOOK, FOUR FEATHERS, BEN-HUR, and LOST WEEKEND. (p. 256)

COURT ATTINGER, Seattle, Washington:
I was extremely proud to meet Dr. Rózsa, when John Lasher of the Entr'acte Recording Society brought him in the Bon Marche downtown record shop in Seattle. (He was here to record with the Pacific Lutheran University Choir, I believe.) Rózsa was kind enough to autograph some of his records, and seemed pleased that there was a special section with his name on it in the film music section.

I buy for the store and am delighted to be able to offer autographed copies to our customers. I'm only sorry I didn't have any advance warning; I believe I have every record of his except BRUTE FORCE, and they were miles away and remain unautographed.

JOHN STEVENS, Albury, N.S.W., Australia
I agree with Bill Gray's comments in PMS 23 about films being taped from start to finish to <u>preserve</u> and appreciate the scoring. I think the <u>classic example</u> of this is the argument scene in BEN-HUR! The menacing Messala leitmotif means so much more when it is heard <u>immediately</u> after this dialogue. Its Satanic power envelops audience and players as Ben-Hur asserts, "Then I am <u>against</u> you!" Here dialogue and music are both one—even though they are separated!

MRS DIRECTORY:

INQUIRIES, SUBSCRIPTIONS, EDITORIAL MATERIAL, POLICY MATTERS:	MARY PEATMAN JOHN FITZPATRICK 319 Ave.C. No. 11-H New York, NY 10009
TAPE RECORDINGS:	MARK KOLDYS 7545 Manor Dearborn MI 48126
EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE:	ALAN J HAMER 86 Bow Lane Finchley London N12 0JP United Kingdom
WEST COAST REPRESENTATIVE:	RONALD L. BOHN 308 Westwood Plaza #558 Los Angeles, CA 90024