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

NEWS [December 1981]:

Publications:

For Rózsaphiles the publishing event of 1982 will be the appearance of the composer's memoir, *A Double Life*, in June. In England the publisher is Midas Books, 12 Dene Way, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0NX. In America, Hippocrene Books, 171 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. The U.S. list price will be about \$25.

MRS members outside the U.K. will be able to order an autographed copy at a special discount. Details in PMS 35.

The book will be approximately 350 pages long, with 80 photographs.

A new German publication, *Filmmusik Info*, is offering thorough and massive coverage of film music and soundtrack recordings. Issue number 3 has 60 large-format pages. Almost half of this issue is devoted to Miklós Rózsa, including an essay by Hansjorg Wagner, an interview by Hans Hanssler, and a massive filmography and discography. Address: Arbeitskreis Musik und Film, c/o Gerd Haven, Am Hackenbruch 68c, A000 Dusseldorf 1, West Germany.

A recent biography of Andre Previn by Martin Bookspan and Ross Yockey (Doubleday) makes frequent mention of Rózsa. The authors interviewed Rózsa for background about Previn's early career, and his answers contain a good deal of information about the M-G-M period.

Films:

DEAD MEN DON'T WEAR PLAID is the title of Miklós Rózsa's current project. It is an unusual Hollywood film, starring Steve Martin and featuring the appearances of twenty-nine old-time stars in film inserts.

Records:

It has taken two years for someone (Alan Hamer) to bring to light, but there is an omission from Frank DeWald's authoritative concert discography (PMS 27). The Op. 27 Clarinet Sonatina has actually been recorded twice. Before Ralph Gari's Citadel version, there was a performance by Charles MacLeod on Grossmont Records FM 74051 AB. The record, which appeared around 1974 and was never listed in Schwann, also includes clarinet works by Doran, Karg-Elert, Stravinsky, Stutermeister, and Wellesz. Grossmont's address is: 10550 Rancho Road, La Mesa, CA 92041.

The long-awaited Piano Concerto/Cello Concerto disc, with Pennario and Starker, will be released in April on Pantheon Records. Pantheon is a new label, George de Mendelssohn's successor to the Vox group, which has been sold to new ownership.

Some years ago, John Williams scored a London stage musical based on the life of St. Thomas a Becket. This show was an immediate flop, but a new limited-edition recording of *Thomas and the King* has become a hot item in London shops.

Performances:

The Miklós Rózsa program at Meadow Brook (Detroit) in August included the Concert Overture, *Notturmo ungherese*, and Theme, Variations, and Finale,

plus music from BEN-HUR and THE NAKED CITY, and the entire QUO VADIS suite, the first time this work has been heard in its entirety in quite a while. Among those present were Frank and Ingrid DeWald, Gene Kohlenberg, Mark Koldys, Charles Rileigh, and Michael Yacura.

We are still unable to give a definite date for the Viola Concerto premiere in Pittsburgh. Other concert premieres by serious composers in film include the Corigliano works cited elsewhere in this issue and Paul Chihara's (PRINCE OF THE CITY) Symphony No. 2, subtitled Love Music, which will be played by the Los Angeles Philharmonic on 18, 19, 20, and 21 March 1982.

Other:

Director Steven Spielberg is to be honored by the Composers and Lyricists Association of America for promoting quality in film music. David Raksin, a former president of the Association, has himself recently received the signal honor of an Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge commission to compose a work for chamber orchestra with voices and narrator. This effort will be premiered at the Library of Congress in the spring of 1983. Past awards of the Coolidge commission have resulted in such works as Schonberg's Quartet No. 3, Stravinsky's *Apollon Musagete*, Bartok's Quartet No. 5, and Copland's *Appalachian Spring*.

John Caps, whose article on film music criticism appears in this issue, has produced a series of "Cinema Soundtrack" programs for National Public Radio. The programs are available from the Public Radio Cooperative in Boston, and interested listeners can seek further information from their local NPR stations.

DRAGONSLAYER-TWO NOTES:

Has Alex North laid to rest the rumors concerning his retirement with his dazzling score for DRAGONSLAYER? Or is it to be his final film opus? I hope that the former is true and we will see a more frequent return of Mr. North to the film medium. His score for DRAGONSLAYER evidences all the hallmarks of greatness in a film composer. The half-serious, half-mocking mood of the music captures the prevalent tone of the film to perfection.

An opening scene in the sorcerer's lair contains music very reminiscent of the composer's own "Fire-divination" cue from CLEOPATRA, but with a tongue-in-cheek bristle. Notable, too, is the end title music, which with its jaunty bewilderment of notes takes the film out with a laugh, rattle, and a bang. Throughout the film, the score retains a finely crafted and functional integrity that adds to the general aura of believability. The "National Symphony" has recorded the score with much verve and polish.

Where are Varese or Cerberus?

. . . William Finn

I agree. Last year's CARNY, spare, sour, and perfectly on-target, was vintage 1950s North, though it did not make for pleasant listening. DRAGONSLAYER seems to have struck some of the SPARTACUS fire from this unpredictable composer. A film that combines the wizardry of Ralph Richardson with that of Disney and (Coppola's) Zoetrope and (Lucas's) Industrial Light and Magic clearly needs a magical score, and that is what the best of North's music provides. The gloom-and-doom heavings emitted by North's Wagnerian complement of low strings and brasses are here seasoned with enough sharp modernisms to give the picture a tang often lacking from script and direction. When an invincibly American scherzo breaks out at the close, you know that-like it or not-you have been in the grasp of a commanding composer. Encore, please.

. . . J.F.

SCORING ALTERED STATES:
AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN CORIGLIANO

These days we are used to seeing new "film composers" develop slowly. Watching the apprenticeship and growing mastery of men like Jerry Goldsmith and John Williams has been one of the more rewarding experiences of the last two decades. But sometimes a composer of established talent bursts like a supernova on the film music scene. Such is the case of John Corigliano [Cor-el-YAN-o], whose ALTERED STATES is clearly one of the more exciting and adventurous scores of recent years. (For two long and sympathetic reviews, see *Fanfare*, May/June 1981.)

If his name is not yet a household word, Corigliano has certainly established himself as a force in the music world. His works have been performed by major American orchestras for over a decade. An oboe concerto has been recorded by RCA (ARL 1-2534), and recently a spectacular new recording of his Clarinet Concerto with Stanley Drucker and with Zubin Mehta conducting the New York Philharmonic has garnered much attention (New World NW 309; includes interview, bibliography, and discography). The work is typical of its composer in that it aggressively and eclectically employs the materials of musical modernism while still managing to maintain a communicative rapport with concert audiences. Later this season Christopher Keene, who conducted for the film, will give "Three Hallucinations" from ALTERED STATES in Syracuse and New York; and flutist James Galway will premiere the *Pied Piper Fantasy* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic on February 4, 5, and 7, 1982.

Corigliano is now at work on a commission for the 1983 centennial of the Metropolitan Opera, based on the third book of Beaumarchais' Figaro trilogy. Since he is that rare specimen, a film composer in New York, we sought the earliest opportunity to interview Corigliano about his experiences in the new medium. His trip to Hollywood for the Academy Award ceremonies intervened. There he was asked by John Williams to write a short piece for the Boston Pops 1981 season, thus necessitating a further postponement of the interview. Finally in June we spoke at Corigliano's Upper West Side apartment. There, amid tape decks and the modern composer's array of electronic equipment, the room seemed to be dominated by the half-filled page of full score for the Figaro opera at the piano. Though the work will not premiere until 1983, its first act was already about to fall due to conductor and cast. It was in this setting that we spoke.

Q (John Fitzpatrick): Can you tell us how you became a composer?

JC: My father was a violinist and played standard repertoire mostly. So I heard a little bit of symphonic music, but mostly Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Beethoven. I got interested in contemporary music when I got a high-fidelity set and a Capitol records-Full Dimensional Sound!-which had on it the gunfight scene from *Billy the Kid*, with the bass drum and snare drum and all that; and I was showing off my fifteen-inch speakers. First I gloried in the sound; then later on was the dance-the strange harmonies and rhythmic schemes that Copland had, the spacings and chords; and I would go to the piano and try them out. And that fascinated me with the possibilities of twentieth-century music.

Q: Were you a moviegoer? Did you pay much attention to music in films?

JC: No. I enjoyed movies, but the music was just part of the film; I never really thought about it much.

Q: Did you have any favorite composers who worked in films? Scores that influenced you?

JC: Well, last night PSYCHO was on—a very good score by Bernard Herrmann. Very dated-sounding now, but I remember that the windshield-wiper sequence was done very well.

Q: Dated in what sense? Because it has been imitated so much?

JC: No; it's just the sound of "modern music of the forties." Prokofiev . . . very entrenched in that sound, very ostinato-oriented. When I heard it last night, it didn't have the freshness that I remember it having, but then many years have passed. It was right for its time.

Q: You've done an earlier film yourself?

JC: Yes, a documentary for Williamsburg, Virginia; but that's completely different than any Hollywood film. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation has a whole series of films. It was an interesting experience because I conducted it, which was what taught me not to conduct my film scores. I had done it all to the picture, with a Moviola in my house, and then got to the studio and they said no, we're going to do it with the timings instead. Nothing was going right, and the producer got very angry and left town. I found I should never conduct a film because it's a very specialized craft, with the synchronization.

Q: Is that film still on display?

JC: Yes. It won one of those Cine Golden Eagle Awards. It's called A WILLIAMSBURG SAMPLER.

Q: Are you aware that Bernard Herrmann himself wrote a score for WILLIAMSBURG: THE STORY OF A PATRIOT? Sponsored by the same organization, I believe. Nobody knows much about it.

JC: . . . Their previous things weren't always satisfactory to me. It was always lush Hollywood music and the people dressing up in early costumes, and to me that didn't really jibe. So I used harpsichord and oboes and string quintet—instruments that could be used in that day. But I never saw the Herrmann score.

Q: How did Ken Russell "discover" you?

JC: He heard the Clarinet Concerto at a concert of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He got all excited and decided he wanted me to do it at that point. When I saw that they wanted me to do it—in the sense of my kind of experimentation rather than a more conventional Hollywood score—I thought I really ought to do it.

Q: How much time did you have?

JC: About 2 1/2 months, but it's an hour and ten minutes of music.

Q: You felt the pressure, then?

JC: Oh yes. But it's a different kind of pressure than this opera now. In the film I always feel like I'm serving a need. In the opera there's that plus the "eternity" business of classical music. Instead of just writing an opera like one writes a musical show—for "now"—unfortunately one always has the centuries of greatness towering above. Film music is very pressured, but it's a different kind of pressure.

Q: As a composer, what did you think of Ken Russell's musical "biographies"?

JC: I like them very much. I love the one on Delius [SONG OF SUMMER], and I happen to love the Tchaikovsky one [THE MUSIC LOVERS], although most people don't seem to like it. That's exactly what the demented mind of Tchaikovsky must have

thought of his own life, which is very interesting. The distortion of reality, if you read his diaries, was part of his life. I enjoyed it very much.

Q: How did you work with Russell?

JC: There was not a lot of time. He was on the West Coast and I was on the East Coast. There was a meeting; then we spoke on the phone. But he never heard a note of the score until the recording session. It was a trial, because I know very well that movie people are not like symphony people; if they don't like it, they change it, throw it out, or whatever. Ken was telling me about some film he did with Richard Rodney Bennett [BILLION DOLLAR BRAIN], where he didn't like what Bennett had written, so he stuck in the "Battle on the Ice" scene [from ALEXANDER NEVSKY] and Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony.

Q: He told you this proudly?

JC: Not proudly, just matter of factly. But luckily it never happened on ALTERED STATES. You see, that's one of the problems with film music: you're an employee.

Q: They have all rights to the music?

JC: Not concert rights. I have those. But they have the right to use it backwards, forward, upside down, and to add things on top of it. To change it so entirely that it becomes a different experience. In movies you are like a stagehand or designer—serving a function of the imagination of a director. So if you don't fit his image, then he simply changes it or throws it out. And you have to accept that. Until someone goes to a movie and puts down some money because you had something to do with it, you have no power. The day that happens, you can go to the director and say, No, you can't make that change.

In fact, there were areas of the movie where I did make some suggestions about script. Editing out some absolute nonsense. I said I couldn't set this. It's soap-operatic enough that if I set it, it becomes worse. I finally convinced them that the dialogue itself was so terrible that what they really ought to do was just get rid of it. And they did. But usually they think that the composer doesn't know anything about anything except composing. They never even let him in the dubbing room, where he could be very valuable mixing in the music with the dialogue. They think all he's after is to get his music shown off, and that's not the case. He is after the same thing the director is after—something good.

Q: Many composers have argued for less music.

JC: Absolutely. Many times I thought there should be silence where he wanted music. And there were places where he had the volume up too loud. There's a scene in the end of the movie ... I see it and I cringe. Just two flutes begin it and it's very soft. The two of them are naked and holding each other—and the volume is way up to the roof. It ruins the mood completely. Whereas in sections where ferocity is needed, very often the music is dropped because one dog has a bark and they want to hear the bark. Take the famous thing in ON THE WATERFRONT, where Marlon Brando had a belch at one point. It was the middle of the love theme. It was soaring and soaring, and almost at its peak they turned the volume all the way down. He belched, and they turned it all the way up. That's why Bernstein doesn't want to do movies.

Q: Does that discourage you from doing more films?

JC: No. I'd love to do more; I just can't do them now because of concert work. I turned down a whole bunch of them.

Q: All horror movies?

JC: Not all. ENDLESS LOVE . . . things I'm not sure I would have done anyway, but automatically I had to say no at this point because of the opera.

Q: Do time pressures force you to use an orchestrator?

JC: I did not use an orchestrator. It's a big mess. There's a credit for orchestration [John David Earnest]. There's a union payment for orchestration. But I orchestrate the music and give it in short score, which labels every single thing that happens, and he lays this out, gives it back to me, and I fill in details. In order to get paid properly, he had to be listed as orchestrator. But on the record it's "score preparation."

Q: And Sheldon Shkolnik?

JC: That's different. That's a more creative aspect. Shelly is a pianist, who wrote a score of his own recently, TELL ME A RIDDLE. Terrific movie! It did very well at Cannes, but here didn't do as well as it should because it's so sad that people couldn't take it. He's a very talented fellow who is able to conceptualize with me. Like this opera. I'll call him long distance and talk for hours. He's a very good "other pair of ears."

Q: Did you have to understand all the complicated, rapid-fire montages in ALTERED STATES in order to score them?

JC: They were not very hard to decipher. Freudian psychology—rather simple stuff. But they would change. That's part of the problem. All those hallucinations were recut after I wrote the music. They cut the music up. . . . I was very surprised—to put it mildly—to see the music start in the middle then have this dubbed over that. No one told me about it. What you see and what I wrote are not the same. The record is what I wrote. For the first hallucination they cut half . . . it started in the middle. The first half, where all the elements are introduced, isn't there!

Q: Are the whisperings you hear on the sound track a musical device?

JC: They're Ken adding stuff on top of the music. Ken's fault—if you want to call it that—is that he never, never believes in understatement. Whenever I kept something down, tried to build something lighter, he would always add things. He is a very talented man, but he does not trust any areas of relative calm. He is a very tense man, and I think he feels the energy level goes down, and so he wants to zap energy in everything. I asked him not to in some places. I said, please leave it low-level here, because it's going to be high-level in a minute and a half and it's much more exciting to go from a low to a high than from a high to a higher. But that isn't his artistic credo.

Q: How about the "chain rattling" sounds as the ape-man escapes?

JC: Those were musical sounds, but they were very strange ones made with strings hitting the side of the instruments. I didn't have time to put it all on the record, so I compressed the ape-man sequence. It's rather long enough, I felt. I couldn't even take that much. It's one thing to watch, another to hear it alone. The score is very hyper and wild. The problem on the record was pacing it to have enough lyrical music. There wasn't a lot of lyrical music in the movie because there was not a lot of lyricism.

Q: Did you add the trio for the record?

JC: No, that was part of the Mexican hallucination: It was dance, sandstorm, and Garden of Eden sequence (the two of them eating ice cream, with the boa constrictor going up his leg). The Garden of Eden sequence, with the trio, was 1:45 straight through. But the Warner Brothers people felt that the

Mexican dance was not hallucinatory enough--too logical. So Ken intercut the entire section into the dance; and that means he used it up and didn't do it later. So the trio went. But it is on the record because I needed it for lyrical relief.

Q: Was Glenn Dicterow [concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic] brought in for this?

JC: He was there. He was the concertmaster of the Los Angeles Philharmonic when they did my Clarinet Concerto. I heard him do the violin solo very well, and I asked to have him as concertmaster of the orchestra in the film.

Q: The wall-banging at the end of the film?

JC: I did that with synthesizers for the last two hallucinations: down the throat and pounding the walls. I told them I thought it was necessary to put a synthesizer track down first, then write orchestral music to support it; because you can't notate synthesizer music and you can't quite imagine what it's going to be before it *is*. You have to experiment. So the synthesizer was used twice: first for the last two cues as a basis; then, after the whole thing was over, a synthesizer was added to touch up certain areas of the score.

Q: What are your thoughts on the structure and organization of the score? It's not the usual variations on leitmotifs.

JC: It is variations on leitmotifs. There are two intervals the ape-man has. There is a religious hymn through the whole thing--"Rock of Ages," which is distorted and never quite heard in a realistic manner. At the end I had a terrific effect, which Ken did not use. It was to have an organ, which I recorded in Trinity Church here, playing the "Rock of Ages" hymn when he's in the box and the pipes start bending in the lab. I wanted to have "Rock of Ages" come back because in a way the religious symbolism is carried through the whole movie, from the first hallucination. I recorded the soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voices, each on a different channel, so that I could fool with each one. Then I got a device called a harmonizer, which can "bend" sounds without changing speeds. I could take any voice and oscillate the sound up and down. I started with the hymn being played in a regular manner, and then I started bending one voice, then another ... so that as the pipes were bending you heard this hymn starting to shatter and come apart. And then the orchestra and synthesizer would come in at the end and totally zap it out--which I thought was extremely valuable because it would have tied together the wrecking of all this religious fantasy from the first hallucination. It would have come to fruition there, before he went through the body.

Ken said it didn't work. I know it could work, but I wasn't there to make it work. That's the biggest problem with the movie business; the composer, as an employee, is told to hand the tapes to the director, who then uses them but doesn't realize their full potential. It's not a lack on Ken's part. He is a very musical man. It's just that I happen to know more about my music and what it can do than anybody else. I should be there helping to make it happen. I've been a producer for Columbia Records, and I know how to work sound electronically. I could have helped him make that sequence into something quite shattering. Not that it isn't good, but I think it could have been better.

Q: For the record, you made your own choices?

JC: Yes, I produced the record ("produced" in terms of the sound, not the packaging). Ken was in England and he fully expected me to produce a good

record. He wrote a lovely quote about how much he loved my music, which unfortunately RCA didn't get in time to put on the record. We have very good feelings about each other. I didn't mean to ever suggest that I don't respect the man. It's just that there are aspects of film production that aren't fully realized. It's too compartmentalized. For example, the people who record music and mix it are not the people who then dub it. And so the people who dub get the three-track tape and they don't know what's on the 24-track. If something isn't working on the three-track tape, they don't know that perhaps they could go back to the 24-track and remix and get it to work. And that's silly. *** *They never even let the composer in the dubbing room. They think all he's after is to get his music shown off, and that's not the case. He is after the same thing the director is after--something good.*

A WORD ABOUT FILM MUSIC CRITICISM by John Caps:

It is not wrong that the music written to accompany movies is extracted and studied out of its original contexts for its own merits. The composers who write for films deserve a critical attention alongside any other musicians. And yet, the kind of criticism that has evolved to cover film music has proven to be so faulty, self-serving, and contradictory that by now the commentators themselves who have attached their names to this field deserve a critical inspection in return. I take myself to task as well.

In the earliest days, it was rare that a film score was even noticed. Exceptions were films like *THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES* and *OF MICE AND MEN* whose music was given column space in a number of purely musical journals of their day. Now, with the proliferation of movie magazines and film societies, movie components (actors, directors, composers) are being talked about individually, and there are several writers in circulation who do nothing but review the latest film scores. Not all of that attention and exposure is gratifying to the film composers, though. By its excesses, it can cast a cloud of ill will over the whole idea of film music. As I have said, the presence of critics in the field is not the problem. It is the nature of much of their criticism, haughty and dispatching on the one hand, or blindly worshipful on the other. The damage that can be caused harms the very object of their attentions.

The three sins of film music criticism that have emerged are the sins of all criticism. The first of them is exemplified by the long reign of Page Cook in *Films in Review*. His consistently haphazard, hateful, and crippling biased views on current movie scores remain a source of amazement to serious readers. The personal slander to which he exposes those composers of whom he disapproves is only one unprofessional trademark of his methods. Another is the crude (and I keep coming back to the word "hateful") use of emotional, nonmusical adjectives to describe a composer's work. An obviously knowledgeable man in musical detail, Mr. Cook must have private reasons for reverting to name-calling in place of actual musical analysis. Phrases like "a carnival glibness" referring to Nino Rota's music for Fellini films or "a mawkish collage" referring to the patchwork of styles in Lalo Schiffrin's career are reasonable, descriptive, slightly angry, but valid ways of reviewing. But substituting insults for analysis should not be acceptable to any major national publication. Yet the National Board of Review, which sponsors

the magazine allows him to go on year after year calling one score "bird droppings"; another "constipated, regurgitated"; another "ossified fucus"; another "dimwitted gibberish." That is not criticism, that is ambush; a tantrum of words that does its damage and then, because of its irrelevance, preempts any rebuttal. To call anything "bird droppings" is not to analyze it; it is to dismiss it with a telltale disgust. Sometimes, in supreme conceit, he will use the phrase "music is by someone called ..." and then name the well-known but thus insulted composer. Continuous years of that kind of writing seem to indicate an extreme intolerance for all but a sheltered few favorites of his own, whom he supports in equally flamboyant, non-musical, and unverifiable phrases. A critic cannot act like that; any outsider reading him would probably dismiss the whole film music field as incoherent and minor.

Cook seems to be a disciple of the John Simon school, reviewing a work of art not for what it is but for what it "ought" to be; which is opinion, not analysis. The difference is that Simon (National Review) is literate and Cook is quite awfully verbose—the ape of literacy. All he does is dip a personal opinion in a vat of adjectives and come up with what apparently passes today for a critical stance. The National Board of Review does not seem to care. The reason most music seems to disgust him is that he measures everything against some obscure, personal, rhetorical standard and only a few of his favorites fit. Again, a critic cannot act like that. A critic, by definition, is someone who is aware of the tradition and the trends of his art, who then wipes the slate clean of expectations as each new artwork presents itself, lets it speak to him, then goes away and tries to set it somewhere into that historical perspective. Film music may be only a subcategory of film art and a subcategory of pure music, but it still deserves that same critical process. Next to Cook's failure in that regard, his illiteracy is a minor matter. Still, we should mention that his impossibly evasive writing style seems to corroborate the notion that his critical stance is a phony one. One incredible sentence of his actually reads: "Mediocrity is a not uncommon problem trait in their works and the materia musica of their profileless birdsong obscures the directional and intimated thrust of their filmic intent."

One cannot be expected to take him seriously, and yet he is the most publicly available regular voice before the general movie audience with commentary about film music. Mr. Cook is a category of film music criticism all to himself.

The second category is the sort of "bargain style" of reviewing to be found in the brief one-paragraph record reviews in magazines like *High Fidelity*. I have written for them before and so I know that this is a simple matter of carelessness and haste, this second sin. When their writers review a current soundtrack in generalizations that are based on that single disc, it is understandable. The critic is a music writer and really doesn't have to be aware of the particular composer's full career or the history of film music. He is only listening to that one album and listening musically. By making the score into a record album, the composer has let himself in for that kind of critique. But when such a writer carelessly ignores the film contexts for which the music was written, then he is doing wrong. He may say in a record review all sorts of simplistic, one-sided things which distort the issues. Critics have suggested, for example, that Michel Legrand's music for *THE GO-BETWEEN* would have been "more provocative" if it had added third-stream jazz fusion atop the Bachian language. That is not only useless second-guessing again, telling us what the score did not do instead of what it did, it is also carelessly irrelevant. (In fact, *THE GO-BETWEEN* did

have a jazz-tinted score by Richard Rodney Bennett originally, but the director wouldn't accept it.) Meanwhile, Legrand's score retains the stigma (in the reader's mind) of the reviewer's disappointments, none of which has anything to do with what is actually on the record.

By the same token, the soundtrack reviews in a magazine like *Stereo Review* will tend to mislead the reader for the sake of argument. If they really knew the contexts of Elmer Bernstein's career, they would not spend space worrying that "he has been scoring pop films lately" (and has been doing it superbly). Again, they are confusing the reader by pointing to a personal gripe, the traditional disapproval of pop music, which is not germane to the discussion, certainly not the point of a survey of Bernstein. It is an easy way to raise a discussion though. It is a bargain method, careless of the full contexts.

You usually get that kind of reviewing because the critic is trying to write interestingly (to keep his job) based on only first impressions of the music (because of his deadline). To such writers I would suggest one firm rule: Listen Three Times before any Critique—once to gauge the territory; once to begin to sort out your subjective impressions from your objectivity; and once to begin to listen from the composer's point of view. No one should commit to print his impressions from the early stages of such a process.

The more frequent violators of that code are the writers for the in-house private journals. Theirs is the third sin of film music criticism; a carelessness based on inexperience. The desire to heap praise on a favorite composer or pin a disappointing score with a clever label is part of any amateur (which is to say "volunteer" and uncopyrighted) critic's makeup.

There are no rules of custom governing these in-house journals; their writers go on dangerously unguided and I count myself among them. I constantly have to remind myself of the rules I've been surveying here. It is a sign of carelessness that in such pages I reviewed the "Leia" theme from STAR WARS as being "like a Puccini aria" when what my ear was groping for was the similarity to *Scheherazade*. It is another sign of carelessness to review a record like *THE NIGHTCOMERS* when I obviously had so little to say about it that was helpful. But it is another kind of carelessness, one hurtful to film music in general, when I took on Richard Bennett's *NICHOLAS AND ALEXANDRA*, saying that it "comes off better on record than in the film" and not telling why, saying what the score concept seemed to lack and not concentrating on what it had, saying that its themes were derivative when what I really meant was that I had expected something more avant-garde. That kind of noncommittal, cavalier reviewing casts a fog over the whole field of film music until no one can see the real issues anymore. It was perhaps uncalled for, too, to say anything so personal as I did about Jerry Goldsmith in my *Soundtrack!* (SCN) survey of his work (though I did think carefully about doing so), and it is again indicative of the careful process of reevaluation that all reviewers ought to go through each time they sit to write, questions we private commentators often amateurishly ignore.

These PMS pages, too, have to be more careful. Some outrageous things get said here under the auspices of the personal essay that are not supported: dispatching Legrand again for his "schmaltzy" *SUMMER OF '42* music without a word of discussion, or asking rhetorically (and therefore without discussion), "Is there any difference between Jerry Goldsmith's *CASSANDRA CROSSING*, *DAMNATION ALLEY*, and *COMA*?" The question is not why I disagree with these statements but why they are not supported. One does not have to nail down every statement of an essay, but comments like those are scoldings from professed authorities. They carry steeper obligations.

The three sins of criticism, then, are these: careless inexperience; haste which leads to misrepresentations; unfeeling opinionizing. In combination, they are damaging the current film music renaissance, perhaps permanently. Critics have the power to send the emerging craft back into the underground again, not by neglect but by abuse. The film composers I know are embarrassed to have to explain to their purely musical friends the sort of Indiscreet, unthinking criticism that I have been surveying here. "First," said one composer to me, "they just don't seem to know enough (such critics), and second, they just don't seem to care."

In the end, valuable criticism for any medium begins in an affection for the art being discussed. And that is the real Rule Number One for a commentator of any kind. The other rules, which I keep working on in myself, come after that. A critic is a watchdog, a conscience of the arts, but unless he is motivated by real concern and sympathy and unless he moves with great care, keeping watch also over himself, he'll do more harm than if there were no watchdog at all.

_____ Film music does need critics, but careful and caring ones.

Late Note: Miklós Rózsa will be honored at the Santa Fe Film Festival on April 29, and will be present for a screening of THE RED HOUSE on that date.

We are told that a new recording of the *Dschungelbuch* Suite has appeared in Germany on the Colossus (?) label.

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 P. O.
Box 3599 Hollywood,
CA 90028