

PRO MUSICA SANA  
QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF  
**The Miklós Rózsa Society**

VOLUME X, No. 2

Spring 1983

FMS 38

IN THIS ISSUE:

NEWS: Korngold operas . . . Waxman's <i>Tristan</i> ... EL CID developments . . . Tracking DRAGONSLAYER . . . Import distributors.	p. 2
<u>HERRMANN'S HEIGHTS</u> : Our correspondents tell of the long-delayed world premiere of Herrmann's masterwork.	3
THE RÓZSA SOCIETIES: A.C. Robbins traces the development of a surprising number of organizations devoted to Miklós Rózsa.	4
SOME REFLECTIONS ON <u>DOUBLE LIFE</u> : John Fitz- Patrick suggests that the new autobiography offers food for thought as well as fascinating anecdotes.	6
WILLIAM WALTON (1902-1983): A remembrance by Alan Hamer.	9
LETTERS: Pantheon endorsed . . . Guenzel rebutted . . . NEEDLE appreciated.	10
DIRECTORY	16

Editor: John Fitzpatrick  
Contributing Editors: Alan Hamer and Mark Koldys  
Managing Editor : Mary Peatman

© 1983 The Miklós Rózsa Society  
ISSN 0361-9559

NEWS [April 1983]:

This issue of *Pro Musica Sana* is labeled as Spring 1983. No, you haven't missed an issue. It's just that as we get our length back up to standard, our schedule seems to suffer, which makes "quarterly" more an ideal than an achieved goal. Of course a subscription to PMS still brings you four (or eight) issues—no matter how long it takes.

For the future we still anticipate Mary Peatman on KING OF KINGS and Frank DeWald on either THE PRIVATE FILES OF J. EDGAR HOOVER or SPELLBOUND. Despite our (somewhat puritanical?) bias toward film music proper ("filmusic"), we still welcome reviews of record albums.

Performances:

Our best information for the Viola Concerto premiere is spring 1984 in Pittsburgh. Details will follow when available.

The new Rózsa "work for organ and brass," to be premiered at the 1984 convention of the American Guild of Organists in San Francisco, has been revealed to be a concert fantasy on themes from the film YOUNG BESS.

In addition to the Herrmann premiere described below, the operas of Erich Wolfgang Korngold have been enjoying a revival lately. The Berlin Deutsch Oper mounted a new production of *Die tote Stadt* in February and will give more performances in June. A lecture and a screening of THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD preceded the first performance. And in New York the Manhattan School of Music staged *The Ring of Polycrates* (in English) on 17, 19, and 20 March. C. William Harwood conducted a thoroughly effective performance of this astonishing sixteen-year-old's work. Though based, as the title implies, on a Greek myth, the opera turns out to be an updating: a joyous and hysterically funny comedy of manners set in the *Rosenkavalier* world of eighteenth-century Vienna. There are echoes of Strauss in the early pages, but the really amazing thing is the way the young Korngold had already developed something very close to his mature style in this, his first opera. Thus there are also "pre-echoes" of several of the famous film scores of 25 years later. The *Ring* was premiered (by Bruno Walter) in 1916 on the same program with its successor, *Violanta*. Let us hope that the earlier work will now follow the later one onto records. CBS has had some success with its two-disc *Violanta*. The *Ring* would make a good companion single.

Few are aware that in addition to his famous *Carmen Fantasie*, Franz Waxman also composed a violin work based on Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. Plans for a recording collapsed last year, as the violin part proved difficult to master, but there may be a premiere performance in the U.S. this coming season.

Recordings:

The Varese LAST EMBRACE is due in stores any day. The coupling will be a remastered version of Albert Dominguez' piano suite from LYDIA, formerly released on Citadel. To follow are the narrationless suites from THE THIEF OF BAGDAD and JUNGLE BOOK. The latter work, by the way, was performed by the Hanover Radio Orchestra on 6 November 1981 and then broadcast at the time of Rózsa's seventy-fifth birthday. Werner Albert conducted and Rolf Becker narrated on that occasion.

The Italian association of discographic columnists and record reviewers recently chose EYE OF THE NEEDLE as the best soundtrack album of 1982.

HERRMANN'S HEIGHTS: A PREMIERE IN PORTLAND

Bernard Herrmann's legendary opera *Wuthering Heights* had its world premiere in Portland, Oregon, on 6 November 1982. To those of us who have long been familiar with the 1967 Pye recording (later on Unicorn, now deleted) , the report of a premiere may come as something of a surprise. After all, we have known the work for years. But although Herrmann put a good deal of himself into the records (even to the point of financing the venture), the fact remains that *Wuthering Heights* was never staged during his lifetime.

The opera's roots go all the way back to 1943, when Herrmann's passion for the Brontes was first roused through his cinematic encounter with *JANE EYRE* (1944), Later he would incorporate the main theme from that film score as the prelude to Act IV of *Wuthering Heights*. The opera also includes a great deal of music from *THE GHOST AND MRS. MJIR*, most notably the Act I duet "On the Moors" (based on the "sea" theme from *GHOST*) and the orchestral "meditation" in Act IV (derived from the nostalgic mother-daughter reverie near the end of *GHOST*).

Actual composition seems to have begun in 1946 (although the title page says 1943) and to have proceeded fairly rapidly, as Herrmann accepted few film assignments during the following years. The score itself testifies to the date of completion: 3:45 p.m., 30 June 1951. But no performances followed. The chanciness of actual operatic production is of course one reason for the decline of the medium in the twentieth century-- and one of the reasons why Miklós Rózsa has never attempted an opera. Very few large-scale operas are composed today except on commission. Rózsa, by the way, was one of those who made an effort on behalf of *Wuthering Heights*, by bringing Herrmann together with the director of one of California's university opera theaters. Unfortunately the prospective collaboration soon ran aground on the jagged shoals of Herrmann's intense personality. The first name mentioned in casual conversation was that of a South American musician friend of this director's. "He was a Nazi!" stormed Herrmann. After a few minutes of conversation in this vein, says Rózsa, "he [the director] wouldn't have touched Herrmann's opera if it had been the *Meister-singer*."

For whatever reason, Herrmann had no better luck anywhere else. The three-and-a-half-hour length of the work must certainly have been intimidating, and Herrmann could scarcely have been an easy man to approach about the suggestion of cuts. Also there were strictly musical difficulties. According to Frank Kinkaid (*Opera News*, November 1982), the role of Cathy requires a light lyric soprano voice to sing heavy and dramatic lines against a very full orchestral accompaniment. And the role of Heathcliff sometimes pushes the baritone voice uncomfortably high into the tenor region, as in the final duet. So the opera languished.

It was Art Guenther, owner of Portland's Music on Records store, who brought the opera to the attention of the Portland company, in the person of Herbert Weiskopf, its former director. Weiskopf died in 1970, but his successor, Stefan Minde, continued to fight for the project in the face of some resistance. He won out in the end and the work was scheduled for 1980-1981, although it was subsequently postponed until this season.

And the performance? It is best described by those who were there. They included Lucille Fletcher, compiler of the libretto (which uses Emily Brontë's words exclusively), her daughter Dorothy, and violinist Louis Kaufman. Our thanks, also, to John Waxman, who helped to assemble the materials that follow.

According to Craig Reardon, "Some of the edited material I rather missed, but all in all a lovely, loving enterprise. Some portions of the music which I felt were perhaps too long on record did not seem in the least overlong (even unedited) when combined with the imaginative staging. That's a credit to the talent and zeal of the personnel who mounted the production, but also a posthumous credit to Herrmann's unerring dramatic sense. Herrmann might not have countenanced the edits, but I think he would have been well pleased with the production, which moved the audience to a long ovation at the final curtain."

For *Opera News* (15 January 1983), "Given that the cinematic Heights requires a technical tour de force and offers little dramatic action, the two [designer Cary Wong and director Malcolm Fraser] ignored Herrmann and went their own way." This was especially true in the "eternal night" on the stage--even for the sunlit Act I duet. "There was also a corporeal Cathy frolicking on the moors watching Heathcliff die, their spirits becoming mimes who walk off into the sunset to find happiness in death. This hokey solution (also used in the 1939 movie) is bad Brontë and bad Herrmann . "

And John Lasher: "I loved the performance. Minde's tempi were certainly brisker than those on Benny's recording, which of course were much too slow. The cast was good, particularly Victor Braun (Heathcliff). The staging was good, though hardly inspired. Some objected, as did I, to the scrim (a somewhat erotic-looking sketch of Cathy, which looked a bit like Olivia Newton-John), since we felt it removed the viewer from the *mise en scene*. The premiere was, in the words of one critic, a 'magnificent failure,' though I would not have missed it for the world."

#### THE RÓZSA SOCIETIES

A SURVEY by A. C. Bobbins

Toward the end of his *Double Life*, Miklós Rózsa is kind enough to mention the various societies that have been founded out of a common interest in his music and the shared desire to advance it. (What is it about Rózsa that arouses this particular form of enthusiasm? Other composers have equally ardent partisans, but only Rózsaophiles have been so repeatedly compelled to organize themselves.) The publication of *Double Life* makes this a good time to offer a brief survey of the various groups.

Attempts to found a Miklós Rózsa Society go back at least as far as 1951, when Mr. Paul Kaufman of Philadelphia proposed to organize one. At that time, and again in 1962, he was dissuaded from doing so by the composer himself. A British organization was announced, via the "Letters" page of *Films in Review*, in the late 1960s, but it, too, came to nothing. The honor of establishing the first enduring group goes to two Belgian gentlemen, Andre Everaert and Andre Gerlo, who bonded together in the mid 1960s. Centering around a small group of friends,

their *Fondation* (or *Stichting*, as Belgium is bilingual) was much appreciated by Dr. Rózsa, who has visited them several times. Despite all the paraphernalia of formal organization, such as membership cards and a formidable-looking letterhead, this group has never really done anything to involve people in other parts of the world. The group still exists, we believe, and anyone passing through Belgium is certainly welcome to contact M. Everaert at Jan Delvinlaan 37, Gent 9000.

The practical model for an active composer-oriented society, one that would link its members through a more or less regular publication, was established by Albert K. Bender's Max Steiner Music Society (1965-1978?). It was more or less on Bender's administrative model that the present Miklós Rózsa Society was founded in 1971. In addition to John Fitzpatrick, the major roles were undertaken by Mark Koldys of Detroit, who still directs the recording service; by Ken Doeckel of San Francisco, who still contributes occasionally to *Pro Musica Sana*; and by Page Cook, who for reasons that have never been explained, dropped out before the publication of the first issue of *Pro Musica Sana* in early 1972. The history of this organization can be read in the pages of its journal, and there is no need to pursue it further here.

It was during the mid 1970s that societies really started to proliferate. Tracing their origin from this period are the Miklós Rózsa Cult (Australia), L'Association Miklós Rózsa (France), and Spellbound--The Miklós Rózsa Music Society (U.S.). The French group can be dealt with briefly. From 1976 to about 1978 it published, in French, a series of elaborate "dossiers" devoted notably to PROVIDENCE and to KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE--two of the most detailed discussions of Rózsa film scores ever published, though the latter is marred by inaccurate musical examples. And then nothing. Although there have apparently been some local gatherings in France, we have had no reports of them and there have been no subsequent publications. We are as eager as anyone to hear what happened. L'Association Miklós Rózsa was (is?) directed by Bertrand Borie, 44 Quai Carnot, 92210 St. Cloud, France.

The Australian "Cult" and the other American group share several characteristics. (Indeed, they were formally linked for a time, and the MRMS journal is still produced in Australia.) Both organizations have published semiregular journals. Both cleave to the Steiner Society model rather more closely than *Pro Musica Sana* has done, with the result that their contents are often more extravagant, emotional, and impressionistic. Some readers may find a degree of excess in the approach of these journals. On the other hand, readers who consider that PMS tends toward the dry and the technical may well find these other journals more to their liking. It is a matter of taste.

The Cult published nine "Newsletters" (well-illustrated, and professionally typeset and printed) between 1975 and 1979. There was an even more lavish journal in 1981: "Ben-Hur--The Miklós Rózsa Appreciation Music Society." We are not certain of the current status. Inquiries to John Stevens, Flat 11, 436 Macauley St., Albury NSW 2640, Australia.

The New York-based Spellbound--The Miklós Rózsa Music Society was founded by David Colon in 1978, with John Stevens initially printing the journals in Australia. Two publications were issued that year, and several more in 1981-1982. The MRMS has actually produced one record album (in collaboration with Tony Thomas' Medallion label), the fourth recording of the Op. 20 Piano Sonata (ML 314). Another album, the Op. 3 Rhapsody for Cello and Orchestra,

is planned for spring release in a piano-cello version. Early issues of the group's publication experienced some difficulties, and one of them actually did print this remarkable sentence (in an article on Mahler's Sixth Symphony): "In Edward Blakes's words: 'the world in a grain of sand . . . and eternity in an hour; has a unusual but direct correlation with the mental musical structure of Gustav Mahler". Recent issues, however, are much improved. The latest (no. 5) is forty pages long and includes some reprint material (such as a fascinating old SODOM AND GOMORRAH poster—it looks depraved even by today's standards!). But there is also much original material, most notably pianist Robert Hammond's reflections on performing the Sonata and Kevin Scott's fine appreciation of the *Notturmo ungherese*. The MRMS may be contacted through David Colon at 750 East 153rd St., c/McKinley Plaza, Bronx, NY 10456.

\* \* \*

Ed. note: Despite what was said in the first paragraph of Miss Robbins' article, a number of societies have been founded to honor other composers associated with films. The following three are all operated by members of the MRS:

The Bernard Herrmann Society, c/o Kevin Fahey, 5080 Brighton, San Diego, CA 92107.

The Robert Farnon Society, c/o David Ades, The Orchard, Bank Hill, Woodborough, Nottingham, United Kingdom.

(Newly founded) The Jerry Goldsmith Appreciation Society, c/o Roger Smith, 1, The Pines, Kempston, Bedford, MK42 7RF, United Kingdom.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON DOUBLE LIFE by  
John Fitzpatrick

Most of us know Miklós Rózsa only through his music. That is as it should be. Like most creative artists, Rózsa believes that he can say best what he has to say through his chosen medium. In a very real sense we know more about him through the *Notturmo ungherese* and the "Parade of the Charioteers" than we could ever learn from the occasional social encounter. "If it is in the music, it is in the man," he once said about the pounding violence of the Piano Concerto and similar emotional outpourings. And if we have not seen "it" in the genteel courtesy of the public man? Well, perhaps we should count our blessings!

So at least runs the argument of most creative artists. But of course no one's curiosity is ever stifled by such protestations. If we are human, we want to know the man. Rózsa himself admits to the very same urge in confessing his desire to meet his own creative masters. So it is doubtless to satisfy this very human need on the part of his admirers, as well as to express his own artistic credo more clearly, that Rózsa has now provided this autobiography. It is a very successful book at what it sets out to do, namely, to present the urbane image of the Rózsa one might meet socially. Is this persona the whole man? Of course not. But the persona is well worth meeting.

Over the last eleven years I have met Miklós Rózsa several times. On a number of these occasions various Society members have been fortunate enough to be

present. As anyone will recognize who has spent an hour in Rózsa's presence, it is as a storyteller that he truly excels. On the details of his own composing procedures (especially for movies) he can be evasive, forgetful--or is it "forgetful"? Discussing abstract concepts he can be, well, abstruse. But as a raconteur I have never heard his equal. Whether recounting his own misadventures in the Hollywood jungle or transmitting his awestruck encounters with the greats of the music world, Rózsa knows supremely how to hold his listeners.

Such an art is not easily learned. I have come to associate it primarily with gentlemen from the Old World, which description happens to fit Rózsa perfectly. Still less can the art be mimicked. A great raconteur is inimitable. Over the years we have had occasion in *Pro Musica Sana* to transmit a great deal of information about Miklós Rózsa. Much of this data has derived from tales of his own telling. Elsewhere in this issue, for example, we relate, at second hand, a story Rózsa once told about Bernard Herrmann. The telling here is perfectly accurate. Yet how much is missing! I remember how Rózsa spun the story out for a quarter of an hour, how he had a roomful of listeners hanging on every word. Rózsa has all sorts of ways to make his audience attend him: dropping his voice at crucial moments; backtracking to add suspense just before the punch line. This is not an easy art to capture in prose. In *PMS* we have rarely even tried, usually settling for mere information instead. But the prose of *Double Life* does about as good a job as we could ask for. Christopher Palmer, who transcribed--in a sense translated--from taped recollections, has absorbed the idiom well. The "voice" we hear in these pages resembles Rózsa's far more than it does Palmer's own grandiloquent, rhetorical style. So to fully experience the Rózsa presence through this book, all we need do is make an act of imagination. Envision a corner table in the cafe of a quiet hotel, a group of rapt devotees bending forward, straining to catch every accented word . . . .

If I have here captured anything of what it is like to be spellbound by the Rózsaean narrative voice, then my job is done. There is no need for a "review." Anyone reading this page will eventually come to the book--if he has not done so already. But *Double Life* is not merely a series of anecdotes, as was (I am told) the Hungarian memoir, *Eletem Történeteiből*, published in 1980. It is a thought piece as well; and as such it deserves to stimulate discussion in a number of respects. Many Rózsaophiles, particularly those who have never met the composer, are going to be surprised by some of the directions taken by that thought. Indeed the book will challenge some of our most cherished assumptions about Hollywood music. Most especially it ought to lay to rest once and for all the "Golden Age" myth. Let me explain. In the eyes of many, Rózsa was but one exemplar of the "great composers" who practiced their art during a shining era known as the Golden Age of Film Music. This era, roughly coincident with the Golden Age of Hollywood, is variously situated during the 1930s or 1940s but in any case before the advent of television and the demise of the studio system. According to the myth, the Hollywood hills were supposed to have been a second Parnassus where trod such immortals as Max Steiner, Alfred Newman, Franz Waxman, Dimitri Tiomkin, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, and so on. This view, which is eloquently expressed by such writers as Tony Thomas in his *Music for the Movies*, is too familiar to need further description. In a sense all of us have been shaped by it.

But it is not the view of Miklós Rózsa. As early as 1942 he went on

record as opposing the "factory methods" that characterized studio music departments of the time. In fact that statement, given in New York in the first flush of a successfully renewed acquaintance with the concert world, actually made Rózsa *persona non grata* in Hollywood for a time. We tend to forget that he did not really become a successful Hollywood composer until after FIVE GRAVES TO CAIRO in 1943; all his previous credits were with the alien and transitory Korda organization.

Rózsa's viewpoint is a recurring leitmotif in *Double Life*. Here is its first statement:

I made serious efforts to get to know the music of my new colleagues in the film world, but frankly I was not impressed. Each score was credited to a different composer, but the music all sounded much the same. The only man whose music I found in any way worthwhile was Erich Wolfgang Korngold, and he, of course, was a composer with an established reputation in Europe, (p. 95)

Hollywood may have been a Parnassus in the 1940s, but the immortals Rózsa looked to were Igor Stravinsky and Aldous Huxley and Thomas Mann, not the "film composers" of the day. Of all the musicians listed above only Korngold is praised as a composer in this book. Far more space is given to the question of why the real composers in residence--Antheil, Toch, Stravinsky, Schönberg, Castelnuovo-Tedesco--did not get more film work. There is, for example, a warm tribute to the underappreciated Castelnuovo-Tedesco on p. 193.

Of course Rózsa's view of the Hollywood scene is not entirely negative. In fairness we should note that on other occasions he has praised the friendship and/or musicianship of almost all the composers listed above; that several of these men did not really mature as composers until after 1942; and that many other significant film scorers--also praised by Rózsa--did not become active until after that date. There is here, then, no *vetetta* against Hollywood. In fact, as one wonderful review has already pointed out, "his ironic tone when writing about the cultural life of Hollywood and the machinations of the film industry . . . more effectively makes his point than would overt testiness. . . . He has given the Hollywood memoir a touch of class" (*Publishers Weekly*, 25 Feb. 1983).

Indeed he has. But the "class" that emerges here is not separable from a certain complexity of vision. Rózsa achieves his distanced view by being both in Hollywood and yet not of it. His own explanation of this comes in the prologue, where he relates how he has tried to keep his "public" career separate from his "private" music making in order to prevent the sort of psychic dislocation that befell the hero of the 1947 film. Personally he has succeeded. I know no saner man.

And yet one cannot help but wonder at some of the more resonant remarks that come later in the book. As he continues, well into his eighth decade, to embrace film activities with apparent relish--and without economic necessity as an excuse--he can also say, "I have never actually liked the cinema very much" (a sentiment that friends of the composer have long sensed but that he has never before made so explicit).

Perhaps the book's epigraph sheds some light on the mystery: *Res severa verum gaudium* ("serious matters are the true joy" or "true joy in hard work"). I don't know the literary source of those words, which

Rózsa first encountered on the facade of the Leipzig Gewandhaus; but they might well be Vergilian—a call from the oriental delights of Carthage to the stern duty of Rome. For anyone who would understand the author of *Double Life*, it would be well to remember these words. They might even be taken as a motto for our own listening some of the time. The next time you are about to relax with the *Spellbound Concerto* for the hundredth time, pause and give a try to the Opus 22 String Quartet instead. Or perhaps even a quartet by Beethoven or Bartok. To know the whole man, we must know the "hard" side of his music as well as the soft. Only then will we appreciate his double life.

\* \* \*

*Double Life* is jointly published, in identical editions, by Midas Books of Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and by Hippocrene Books of New York. For those MRS members who had placed orders for autographed copies from New York, the books were finally shipped in early February. The original plan was for a cover price of \$25 and an MRS discount price of \$20, with the Society receiving no recompense for its administration of the project. However, at the last minute the cover price was lowered to \$22.50 and the MRS price to \$18, giving us an unanticipated "profit" of \$2 per copy. In view of operating needs, and because purchasers had agreed to the \$20 charge, we decided not to refund this money to individual purchasers. If anyone considers this unfair, however, we will be happy to refund his or her money on an individual basis. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for this purpose.

The book is no longer available through the Society. Future orders should be directed to Hippocrene Books, 171 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. At this writing a few autographed copies were still available.

SIR WILLIAM WALTON (1902-1983) by Alan Hamer

Sir William Walton, one of the greatest English composers of this century, died on 8th March, aged 80. He had contributed brilliantly to all forms of composition. Most notable are his great orchestral works, which are monuments in British music and have enriched the world's repertoire. His film scores are amongst the most frequently performed and best loved ever written. Most prominent are those written for Laurence Olivier's series of Shakespearean adaptations, but let us not forget that there exist over a dozen highly effective, tunefully memorable classics written for the screen.

Walton's early Facade music for Edith Sitwell's poems, the large-scale oratorio *Belshazzar's Feast* (1931), and the concertos for violin and viola are probably his most profound concert works, although others in the front rank must include his two symphonies (1935 and 1960); the opera *Troilus and Cressida* (produced at Covent Garden in 1954); the *Variations on a Theme of Hindemith*, written as a tribute to the German composer who had premiered his Viola Concerto; and several exciting chamber works.

Walton was born in Oldham, Lancashire, in 1902 and soon entered Christ Church, Oxford, as a chorister, there later to become an undergraduate. There also he met the Sitwells and Constant Lambert; the uproarious Facade

was born in 1923. Success after success followed and by the Second World War he was undoubtedly the outstanding figure among the younger British composers.

Jascha Heifetz commissioned the Violin Concerto in 1939 and Gregor Piatigorsky the Cello Concerto nearly twenty years later. Many conductors championed his music, amongst them Hamilton Harty, George Szell, Adrian Boult, Malcolm Sargent, Andre Previn, and Charles Groves. Walton's style is warmly melancholic, richly exciting and rhythmically pulsating with a bitter-sweet romanticism. His last project was to adapt his 1976 *Varij Capricii* into a ballet, to be premiered at the Metropolitan Opera (New York) on April 19th. He had just sent eight bars for the final curtain to his publisher from his beautiful Ischia retreat in the Mediterranean; on Sunday he rang to confirm it was in the post; on Tuesday he was dead. He will be remembered as a very great composer; his music was of cultured character, of modest individuality, of noble, elegiac purpose. He wrote music for the heart as well as the mind and achieved a great loving respect in so doing.

#### LETTERS:

Upon listening repeatedly to the Pantheon disc of Rózsa's Cello and Piano Concertos (FSM 53901), I am compelled to write a few personal reflections on my membership in the Society. The reason is that I suspect many members pass up Dr. Rózsa's concert music in favor of his film music, without ever exploring this man's great, original musical mind as expressed in his orchestral and chamber works.

Perhaps some members are like myself in having discovered Rózsa's music through films like *BEN-HUR* or *EL CID*. Because I was quite young during the original releases of these films, the impact of the powerful music in them taught me in a direct way how feelings and emotions can be evoked through music, and remained in my impressions for years. It was only much later that I began to explore great classical music and, through some basic musical training, recognized originality in all great composers. Thus, I was very anxious to hear a recording such as the new Pantheon disc.

Some music lovers may not realize the importance of listening more than once to a fine work for the true impact to "sink in." Thus, I wish to encourage fellow members to purchase this latest record, and other classical works of Rózsa, and to listen with open mind and heart to these beautiful works. They contain so much of his personality and original musical ideas. They need, perhaps, more hearings to fully explore the depths than do his film scores. However, the rewards are well worth our time.

Listen, for example, in the Piano Concerto to the sweeping opening theme (just after a dramatic kettledrum flourish) in the first movement. Here is the beautiful effect of a piece by Rachmaninoff, or Shostakovich, yet it is original and no copy of any other composer. And in the third movement, I find the headlong excitement of the music irresistible, especially the ending, which always leaves me breathless. In the Cello Concerto, listen to the typically optimistic "onward and upward" nature of the main theme in the opening movement. The cello then soars and sings this theme and its variations in a fashion typical of Rózsa.

Again, I wish here to encourage more support from us for the fine classical works of Dr. Rózsa so that, hopefully, more good recordings will be forthcoming. Remember that we now have the privilege of supporting music which, while reflecting our own modern times, keeps faith also with the great musical precepts of the past.

Rea B. Culpepper, Jr., Charlottesville, Virginia

I am not in the habit of writing letters to the publications I subscribe to, but I simply must make an exception.

I am appalled at the letter from Dan Guenzel in PMS 37.

Point One: Guenzel states that nothing in the past twenty years has been written to compare with the "classic" scores of the past. I suggest he listen to the following scores, all written in the past twenty years: BLUE MAX, PATTON, CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND, PROVIDENCE, WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?, THE ELEPHANT MAN, TESS, HAWAII, DRESSED TO KILL, and FIVE DAYS ONE SUMMER!

Point Two: Guenzel bemoans the fact that Herrmann "wasted" his last years on "junk" like TAXI DRIVER and OBSESSION. But many, including Guenzel's beloved Page Cook, feel that OBSESSION is one of Herrmann's finest scores. TAXI DRIVER, of course, is one of the most critically acclaimed and influential films of the 70s.

Point Three: Guenzel is upset that John Caps takes rock music seriously. Rock obviously is not to his taste, but surely it is as valid a form of music as classically composed film music. Dr. Rózsa would be the first to point out that the composer's job is to serve the film. Would SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER and EASY RIDER have been better served with Miklós Rózsa scores?

Finally, a question: Why are so many film music admirers obsessed with the past? Do book critics attack new authors for not being Faulkner, Fitzgerald, or Hemingway? No! They are judged by their own work. Can't we do likewise with film music?

Thom Santiago, Studio City, California

\*

I think it worth reminding Mr. Dan Guenzel (PMS 37) that *The Gordian Knot Untied*, *The Virtuous Wife*, and *The Moor's Revenge* are, mercifully, no longer performed. Fortunately Purcell's music for them is. We can only be grateful that Mr. G was not around to dissuade him, else we'd have been deprived of Britten's splendid variations, too.

It is no overstatement to say that most of the film music we prize was written for films of inferior quality. FOREVER AMBER is an anemic melodrama in which the sets and costumes give the best performance. But Raksin, with Pepys for reference, provided a sumptuous score that radiates all the emotion the film lacked. CHEYENNE AUTUMN was populated with cigar store Indians, but North produced music of proud and tragic grace.

Hugo Friedhofer was a composer who had plenty of experience with clinkers (THE BARBARIAN AND THE GEISHA, PRIVATE PARTS). I was fortunate enough to correspond with him in the 1950s when he was composing THE YOUNG LIONS. (Capitol was interested in recording it; the sound would have been better if it had.) He told me the two scores that best expressed his theory of film music were THE HARDER THEY FALL and BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL, not exactly cinematic masterworks. But listen to them.

What I resent most about Guenzel's pseudo-argument is that it represents not discernment but self-satisfied snobbery. Which is why, of course, he is so attached to Page Cook. He describes Cook's style as "somewhat earthy." "Earthy" means natural, robust, lusty. Cook's style is constricted in syntax and vindictive in tone. Like all crippled critics, he himself is the ultimate subject of his own reviews.

It is said there is no disputing taste. I disagree. Taste is a reflection of values, and values are an extension of character. And I suspect it is finally a grace of character that distinguishes good from bad in criticism as in art. Guenzel apologizes for getting "carried away in spots." But getting carried away is exactly the condition he shares with Cook--and which invalidates his argument. Both he and Cook seem to be operating from an area of black-and-white sensibility (overpraise or no praise at all). They are modern Manichees. . .

EYE OF THE NEEDLE was a slow yawn from beginning to end. I saw it with about a hundred people on a rainy Sunday night. When the end--title music segued into the roll--up and Rózsa's poignant love theme blossomed into a full orchestral statement, most of the audience remained seated. And those in the aisles stopped and turned to the screen to listen. If Dr. Rózsa had been there, I think that moment would have meant more to him than all three Oscars.

Frankly I'm grateful for any film that allows me to hear new music by this wonderful composer. He, like Friedhofer, Raksin, Waxman, and the few other masters of this medium, is proof that true craftsmanship and imagination are never compromised by bad films. They serve according to their own light and leave a luster in the dark.

Bill McAndrew, Lexington, Massachusetts

NEWS [April 1983]:  
(continued from page 2)

EL CID Developments:

According to David James in *Soundtrack!* (March 1983), "Miklós Rózsa's EL CID score will be re-recorded in Berlin next June. The composer will conduct the RIAS-Jugendorchester [youth orchestra] for Celine records in West-Germany." Dr. Rózsa advises us that, as of late March, the project was still in the talking stage. Also, he thinks it unlikely that he would conduct--at least not in June--as he is still recuperating from a recent illness. The film EL CID is in the news for another reason also. Kino International has acquired the distributorship and has made available some beautiful new 35-mm prints. This version includes the intermezzo but not the overture or the choral exit music. It also includes two sequences that have not been seen in many years and that may never have been seen in some locations. The scenes--they were first described in PMS by a Canadian member several years ago--come at the end of the first act: After Rodrigo marches off at the head of his exile army, there is a sudden cut to Urraca's bedchamber. Alfonso bursts in, distraught, to reveal his nightmare--that he has just cut off his right arm. Urraca comforts him. The next scene is more leisurely. It has Rodrigo depositing Chimene at her convent and then saying farewell to her. Once again, he rides off at the head of his army.

How effective are these "new" scenes? It is difficult to be fair when the old version is such a fixture in the memory. Any change is likely to seem disturbing. Nevertheless, we feel that the extra material contributes little and that the film is better without it. We are too involved with the lovers at this point to be jerked back to the political context for a brief and merely symbolic episode. And the emotions of the farewell, while poignant, were already expressed more powerfully in the earlier scene before the barn door. As for the music, there is interest, but no great gain, from the restoration. The Alfonso-Urraca scene has fairly conventional "dream" music: effective but too brief to make a strong impression. The "farewell" is of course the passage we know from the record, with violin and cello solos. It is a beautiful treatment of the love theme, but there are many such treatments in the score and the omission of one of them was no catastrophe. The first act then concludes--just as it did before--with the march theme and the march version of the El Cid theme. It is a stirring close--somewhat longer than what we hear on the record--but there is no need to have it twice. In sum, this new EL CID is a fascinating document, beautiful to behold after years of television-butchered showings, but not the best possible version.

Record Hunting--Label X and Others:

DRAGONSLAYER, the two-disc, 45-rpm, \$39.95 Alex North extravaganza, is fast becoming one of the most talked-about albums in recent memory. But where is it? DRAGONSLAYER is the first project of Label X, John Lasher's successor to Entr'acte. Other projects are CHEYENNE AUTUMN, NIGHT CROSSING, and BODY HEAT (announced); and DEAD MEN DON'T WEAR PLAID (contemplated). The North score was announced for January, but at press date (18 April) it has not yet been seen in stores. On the other hand, Royal S. Brown's enthusiastic review of the record appears in the March/April *Fanfare*, and must therefore have been written by at least January. Mr. Lasher advises that the record is definitely on the way. More on this in the next issue.

Lasher also advises that--contrary to rumor--he can supply the Entr'acte catalog, with the exception of KING KONG, SISTERS, and THE BATTLE OF NERETVA. Label X and Entr'acte are handled by Southern Cross Record Distributors, 1200 Newell Hill Plaza, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. Following is a list of some dealers that were scheduled to handle Label X. It may also be useful to readers in search of other hard-to-find soundtracks. An asterisk indicates that the dealer is a mail order specialist:

Discs (Boston); Belmont Records\* (Springfield, Mass.); Dayton's (New York); Sound Track Album Retailers\* (Quarryville, Penn.); Serenade Records (Washington, D.C.); NostalgiaPhon\* (Columbus, Ohio); Rose Records (Chicago); International Classic Recordings Society\* (Dallas); Cine Monde Records (San Francisco); Sound Distinctions (Concord, Calif.); Music on Records (Portland, Ore.); Fifth Avenue Records (Seattle); Aron's Records (Los Angeles); Records International\* (Goleta, Calif.).

For U.S. readers in search of imported soundtracks, two other distributors deserve mention: Musicrama, P.O. Box 1275, Long Island City, NY 11101; and International Book and Record Distributors (IBR), 40-11 Twenty-Fourth St., Long Island City, NY 11101. Musicrama's initial list of French, German, Italian, and English albums is described by Royal S. Brown in *Fanfare* for March/April.

LETTERS (2):

Allow me to continue singing the praises of a "unknown" Rózsa score, *SUNDOWN*, as I did in PMS 27 and as William Gray did in PMS 25. Here are excerpts from two articles I found while doing some research at the Motion Picture Academy Library the other day. First, from *Film Music Notes* (November 1941):

This thrilling story of arms smuggling in Africa, with Bruce Cabot in the role of civil commissioner of an English desert outpost and Gene Tierney as the supposed half-caste girl who carries on her dead father's trading posts, is gorgeously photographed, understandingly directed and excellently acted. The music, from the first sound of the native drums and the singing of the male chorus (the St. Luke's Choiristers, to the closing memorial service conducted by Bishop Coombs-Sir Cedric Hardwicke) in a ruined cathedral, adds greatly to the value of the picture. It has African flavor, excellent choral effects and some expert orchestration. Unlike the scoring of many pictures where the audience is aware of it only in the highlighted spots, it here, never overpowers the action. It flows in a steady rhythm tremendously effective in its underlying significance. The locations where scenes were taken for this picture are at Acoma Rock, New Mexico, Mojave desert and Crater Lake in Oregon. A short article by Dr. Miklós Rózsa will interest our readers:

"I have been interested in primitive folk music since the days when I collected peasant songs and music in Hungary, and therefore, was delighted when I was asked to write the score for 'Sundown' which would require primitive themes. The first picture that I scored with African music was 'Four Feathers' and had an Arabic character.

The music for 'Sundown' was influenced by pure African and partly Arabic music as the action takes place in Kenya and the British East African Colony. I had an opportunity to study the music of the various tribes in this territory from authentic recordings made by several expeditions in Africa. I tried to create an atmosphere by imitating the sound of Negro chants and dance rhythms with drums and primitive instruments. The music consists of three different themes:-

1. Negro folk music, as rhythmic drumming, ceremonial songs and instrumental music
2. Atmospheric background music, using themes with Arabic influence
3. Background music of European origin

The music of the Habari, one of the mysteries of Africa, is a piece which portrays the monotonous and occult atmosphere of an African night and I used a mixed chorus with background of drums and musical saw to express the whining unfathomable sounds of this scene."

This next bit is from a review in *Pacific Coast Musician* (18 October 1941):

The musical score by Miklós Rózsa is of real interest.

The main title opens proceedings with a male chorus in a sort of barbaric thing more rhythmic than melodic. Employment of reeds achieves a nice oriental effect a little later as the story begins to unfold. All through the film there is expert and effective use of oboes, clarinets and flutes. Often they are employed singly with percussion background and, as often, in combination. A combination of brass and winds is effective in marching sequences. The same combination is almost spectacular in one or two dramatic scenes.

As a whole, the score is unmelodic with moving and weaving harmonics mostly in suspension. Rózsa has contrived effective musical atmosphere without descending to the obvious "oriental" effects so often heard in like circumstances. The achievement is as much by musical suggestion as by any other means and lends tremendously to the general attractiveness of the film.

I really wish some sort of recording could be made of this interesting score, either from the sound track or as a suite of highlights.

Robert J. Hyland, Los Angeles, California \*

If any members have a tape of the Rózsa Violin Concerto as performed by Jacob Krashinsky with the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell during the 1957-1958 season, I should be very pleased to hear from them. It was originally broadcast by the CBS network.

Greg Terian,  
"Rosehaven"  
Grafton Road, Worcester Park  
Surrey KT4 7DN  
England

Ed. note: Mr. Terian's query is a reminder that there are doubtless quite a few broadcast tapes "out there" still unknown to most of us. In PMS 14 (out of print; \$3 for a xerox copy) we published a "tapeography" of all performances then known to us. Our list has grown since, but surely there are many tapes that remain unknown. This ought to be particularly true of Europe, where concert broadcasts have been more of a tradition than in America. But even for the U.S. there are obvious gaps. For example, we have the 1968 Philadelphia Piano Concerto (still the finest performance) only in a tape deriving from a New York rebroadcast. Surely the live Philadelphia original would be more impressive sonically. But who has it? We urge any member with information in this area to contact the Society as well as Mr. Terian.

\*

Recently a German-dubbed version of *THE LOST WEEKEND* was shown on TV, and to my surprise, in the cloakroom scene following the *La Traviata* opera performance which Don Birnam attends, I detected (amid the Verdi) snippets of "My Love and I," a song which Erich Wolfgang Korngold had written for his 1936 film operetta *GIVE US THIS NIGHT*.

I haven't seen the original English version of THE LOST WEEKEND, but I'd be interested to know if the Korngold song has been used in it also. Both films, after all, were made at Paramount.

Olaf Keiner, Berlin, Germany

Ed. note: We've never heard this story before, but Dr. Rózsa tells us that he once saw an Italian-dubbed version in which the *La Traviata* drinking scene had been rescored by Victor Young! It seems that the Verdi was still copyrighted in Italy in 1945, and Paramount didn't want to pay the fee.

As for Dan Guenzel's letter (PMS 37), I personally find it very hard to take him seriously. The observations following his letter were very well placed and balanced the tirade begun by Mr. Guenzel. This sort of Page Cook journalism hardly benefits the genre, since it tends to demean anyone who dares appreciate things the journalist decrys.

Ken Satak's comment reminded me that Rózsa's march from BEN-HUR was also used during the lion-tiger show at Belmont (Calif.) Marine World-Africa U.S.A. The sight of a dozen lions and tigers marching into a caged arena in the open sunlight, in time with Rózsa's stirring "Prelude," was, needless to say, highly effective.

Randall Larson, Sunnyvale, California

Thank you sincerely in making my life happier with tape recordings, articles, etc., about the greatest composer of our century: MIKLÓS RÓZSA. I am greatly indebted to you for the wonderful work you are doing in that sense. I wish I could speak the English language better to express it in the most exact words but by heart speaks instead.

Christian Roy, St. Augustin, Quebec

#### MRS DIRECTORY

##### BUSINESS/EDITORIAL:

John Fitzpatrick  
Mary Peatman

##### TAPE RECORDINGS:

Mark Koldys

##### EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE:

Alan J. Hamer

##### WEST COAST REPRESENTATIVE:

Ronald L. Bohn