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NEWS [February 1986]

Performances;

Miklós Rózsa's *Three Chinese Poems* of 1975 have never had an official premiere, and the composer says he has never heard them sung. But on 13 April, Frank DeWald will lead the Someko Singers (from Okemos [Michigan] High School) in the first known public performances of two of these choruses. The scheduled site is Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, 90th Street and Third Avenue, in New York City, at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, 13 April. There is no admission charge, but those who wish to attend should confirm time and date with either John Fitzpatrick or Frank DeWald in April.

Recent film music concerts included the Detroit Symphony Pops, Varujan Kojian, cond., on 26-27 July 1985 ("Parade of the Charioteers" plus music by Tiomkin, Korngold, North, Raksin, Newman, Goldsmith, Williams, Steiner, Conti and others) and also the Berlin RIAS Jugendorchester "Filmharmonic" concert, Mark FitzGerald, cond., on 16 February 1985 (BEN-HUR Suite plus music by Goodwin, Gould, Tiomkin, Waxman, and Korngold].

The Gabrieli Quartet has recorded Rózsa's String Quartet No. 2 for broadcast by the BBC. Also scheduled for broadcast is the OUO VADIS Suite, conducted by Carl Davis.

Recordings:

A young German conductor, Rainer Padberg, has teamed up with producer Christopher Palmer and the wind, brass, and percussion sections of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to make a new, digitally recorded album of Rózsa marches and incidental music from JULIUS CAESAR, THE STORY OF THREE LOVES, YOUNG BESS, KING OF KINGS, EL CID, and SODOM AND GOMORRAH. Also featured are Rózsa's *Festive Flourish* for the U.S. Bicentennial and the organ-brass fantasy (based on themes from YOUNG BESS) that he created for the American Guild of Organists' 1984 convention in San Francisco. Listed as Antares Records MR-01, this limited edition of 5,000 copies was scheduled to be in stores by November 1985, though we have not seen it as of this writing. The estimated retail price was \$20.50 (U.S.) or £14 (U.K.). For direct mail orders from MRS members the German producers have quoted the following prices: \$14 plus \$3 postage (U.S.); £10 plus £2 postage (U.K.). Further discounts will be offered for bulk purchases. The producers are Udo Heimansberg and Bernd Jürgen Schlossmacher, Postfach 1631, 5657 Haan 1, West Germany

A new Varese Sarabande album of Elmer Bernstein scores also signals the return of that composer-conductor's distinguished Film Music Collection series of the 1970s. The album is called *Digital Premiere Recordings from the Films of John Wayne* (VS 704.280) and it features suites from THE COMMANCHEROS and TRUE GRIT conducted by Bernstein with the Utah Symphony Orchestra. In addition to the V-S label, the album also bears the Film Music Collection logo. Inside is a postcard on which purchasers are invited to renew their association with the FMC and to vote for three scores they would like to see issued in the future. The FMC address is c/o Varese Sarabande.

Although the soundtrack album of SODOM AND GOMORRAH has been reissued several times (in Japan, Spain, and Germany), many U.S. members have been unable to find it. As a special service we have acquired ten copies for sale to U.S. or Canadian members on a first-come, first-served basis. Please make check for \$10 payable to John Fitzpatrick. This record is also currently available at Tower Records (various cities) and from IBR Classics, 40-11 24th St., Long Island City, New York, 11101, as Spanish RCA 43755.

(continued on p. 21)

ROMANTIC REVIVAL:  
THE EVOLUTION OF THE NEW ENGLAND CONCERTO  
by John Fitzpatrick

Some years ago, one of the very first questions I ever had a chance to pose to Miklós Rózsa was whether he had ever considered expanding the little piano concerto in LYDIA into a more substantial concert piece. "But I did," he replied. And thereby hangs a tale. However, the story he began to tell back in 1972 could not have been completed then. Only now has the LYDIA concerto attained its true fulfillment in this splendid realization of the New England Concerto.<sup>1</sup>

The musical moment everyone remembers from Rózsa's expansive, sentimental score for LYDIA (1941) is the montage depicting the on-screen performance of a concerto that the blind musician Frank Audrey has composed in honor of the woman he loves. The festive brilliance of the piece belies the sadness of the moment, for Frank's love is here revealed as a hopeless one. He soon learns that he has been imagining a nonexistent Lydia, the andante "describing"--this is a very 1940s movie--her blue eyes, and the allegro her golden hair. Whereas in fact, as Lydia soon tells him, she has green eyes and brown hair. What is more, Lydia, in a neat little demonstration of the power of film music to express contradictory feelings, is actually stirred by the music to thoughts of another lover. As the more lyrical portion of the concerto theme swells in the strings, we see in split-screen imagery that her heart still belongs to the dashing sea captain, Richard, who had deserted her years before.

All these complications make a lot of freight for this simple piano tune to bear, and indeed the old-fashioned little "concerto" is not one of Miklós Rózsa's more profound musical utterances. (What can you expect in 82 seconds?) But the tune was pretty, the break neck performance (actually played by Jacob Gimpel) was forceful, and it all worked as a cinematic whole. It was the kind of thing that people would mention to Rózsa some 30 years later.

There was even the added fillip of an eerie resemblance between the foreign-sounding screen composer-pianist and contemporary photos of the real composer. Could Rózsa have essayed an uncredited screen role in his early Hollywood days? No, the actor was Hans Yarray, an interesting figure in his own right, who turned up some 35 years later as the Count Sobryianski in another, more genuinely self-referential Hollywood movie, FEDORA.

Back to the concerto. As everyone knows by now, Universal wanted the not-quite-forgotten music for a 1947 drama called TIME OUT OF MIND, and Rózsa's friend Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco was called upon to do the adaptation. Like LYDIA, this film had a musical aspect to its story and contained several on-screen performances, including the concerto (again played by Gimpel) and a *New England Symphonette* that presented several of the LYDIA themes in a slower, statelier guise. Unfortunately, I have never been able to see TIME OUT OF MIND, and no one I know (including Dr. Rózsa) professes to have any detailed recollections of its score. The symphonette, however, has been doubly preserved to serve as a basis for comparison with later incarnations of the music. Acetates of the original soundtrack performance served as the basis of Tony Thomas's "promotional release" TT MR-4. There was also a tape deriving from a

Hollywood Bowl performance given by Rózsa at the time of the film's release: this performance later appeared on the bootleg albums Premiere PR-1201 and AE1-3104.

These two performances differ considerably. Rózsa's Bowl performance is much faster and more muscular than the soggy soundtrack version. He brings the work in at 5:53 vs 6:35 for the anonymous soundtrack conductor. And Rózsa is much more attentive to the counterpoint in the concluding section--a feature that was all but lost in the original performance. Even Rózsa's performance, however, is much statelier than the break neck dash of the original LYDIA concerto. And this reserve is appropriate, for these two works are essentially different. The expansive, lyrical second subject of the symphonette ("song without words") had made only one brief appearance in LYDIA, and that earlier score bears no trace of the symphonette's transitional passage between first and second subjects or the decidedly Tchaikovskyean fanfares that signal its close in more-or-less explicit homage to the nineteenth-century heritage of both movies. The authorship of the symphonette is thus somewhat problematical. Almost everyone agrees in assigning the film adaptation solely to Castelnuovo-Tedesco. (The exception is the Hollywood Bowl announcer, who says the film score was composed by Rózsa "in collaboration with" C-T.) It is obvious that the symphonette contains both thematic material and developmental passages totally absent from LYDIA. Yet the symphonette has always been credited solely to Rózsa, and Rózsa himself has no recollection of any collaboration on the music. There is a mystery here that only close examination of the TIME OUT OF MIND score and soundtrack will ever unravel.

All the above would be of merely archival interest were it not for the stunning impact of the new recording. The old symphonette, after all, was scarcely a profound piece of work in any of its incarnations, and neither its "rediscovery" in the early 1970s nor the announcement of a new recording a decade later caused any special excitement.

How wonderful, now, to be taken by surprise by this essentially new work, the *New England Concerto*, which at once reclaims the pianistic heritage of the original LYDIA concerto and reunites the concerto-symphonette with other piano and orchestral themes from LYDIA. A lot of restructuring has taken place here, as the accompanying chart will reveal.

Theme A, of course, is the original piano tune that started it all when the character Frank Audrey picked it out with one finger: "Do you remember, Lydia?" And b represents the sweeping middle section of this melody, associated by Lydia with her memories of the dashing seafarer. The transitional passage in both the symphonette and the new concerto does not appear in LYDIA at all, and B, romantically described in the score as a "song without words," has only a slight role in that film (as the fleeting leitmotif associated with Lydia and the lightweight George Reeves character. Bob).

It is with C (mysteriously called "seascape" in Christopher Palmer's sleeve notes) that the real surprises begin. The theme derives from a non-pianistic portion of LYDIA and is in fact one of the melodies that represent the heroine.<sup>2</sup> Lydia Macmillan is unique among Rózsa's female characters (or male ones, for that matter) in having no fewer than six different themes associated with various aspects of her personality. Four of these relate to the various men in her life and may be described as "love themes." In addition there is the famous waltz to express her effervescence, and this present theme, which I have labeled C,

LYDIA Concerto (1941)	LYDIA Concerto (1979)	<i>New England</i> <i>Symphonette</i> (1947)	<i>New England</i> <i>Concerto</i> (1984)
A a	A a	Introduction	Introduction
b	b	A a	A a
a	a	b	b
Coda	Coda	a	a
		Transition	Transition
		B (+ a)	B
		A (+ B)	C
		Coda	D (1-6)
			D6 + B
			B
			A (+ B)
			Coda
1:22	2:23	5:53 (6:35)	14:57

-----

to signal something deeper in her character--the quality that leads her to turn to philanthropy at her first exposure to the urban poor (this is its first occurrence in LYDIA) and that leads her to renounce all her lovers in the end (the last occurrence [out of only three in the entire film] during a dockside farewell scene).

As presented here in the concerto the music does not follow any particular scene from the movie. In fact, the immediate source seems to be the freely adapted "Farewell" movement of the piano suite that Rozsa put together for Albert Dominguez in 1979 (first issued on Citadel CT-7010, remastered for Varese-Sarabande STV-81166; this suite also contains a slightly expanded, four-handed version of the original concerto). In the new concerto the C passage functions as a sober, reflective interlude amid all the grandiose rhetoric of the big tunes. It is, I think, the loveliest music in the entire work, an island of tranquility amid these heavily churning seas. I am reminded of nothing so much as Wordsworth's phrase "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings arising from emotion recollected in tranquility." In other words, this is the true stuff of romantic poetry. And the scoring--note the shimmering mists of muted violins--has a delicacy rare in Rózsa that reminds us of his choice of *La Mer* for his desert island discography. Perhaps it is this aspect of the music that prompted Palmer's labeling. If so, it is a memorable seascape indeed.

From here the concerto takes on a lighter air in several subsidiary episodes (D) loosely based on Frank's piano diversions and other incidental music in LYDIA. The emphasis is naturally on the soloists for most of this cadenza-like passage, but for the last number, the depiction of sea and storm, we return to the full orchestra. The music seems to pause, only to gather new strength and work itself into a frenzy, with the trombones spitting out rapid-fire blasts of wind and spray. On top of this, the lyric theme (B) reenters and rises in brilliant and demanding trumpet writing to make yet another climax. This is a thrilling

moment--an entirely new Rózsa creation of 1983-1984 and one of the most powerful episodes in all his music. Elmer Bernstein seems perfectly at home in this idiom and fully in command of a fine orchestra that has just enjoyed the benefit--highly unusual in film music--of coming off two live concerts of the same scores. Though everyone must have been pressed to the limit by this extraordinary climax, all come through nobly, with only a slight sense of strain in the trumpets. I wrote back in 1976 that Elmer Bernstein's YOUNG BESS was one of the finest Rózsa "soundtrack" albums ever, if allowances were made for the obvious limitations of budget, personnel, and rehearsal time (PMS 17). Here no allowances need to be made. The performance is an out-and-out triumph.

The climactic storm music also amounts to yet a third "seascape" in the concerto, if we take the lyrical expanse of Ab\_ (Lydia's memories of the sea captain) as the first, and the quiet, central C\_ episode as the second. If there is a complaint to be made about this "New England" concerto, it is only that it is mistitled. The national ethos of the music is, if anything, Russian, owing to the quite deliberate nod in the direction of the Tchaikovsky-Rachmaninoff pianistic tradition. But the emotional heart of the score surely lies in the sea and its changing moods. These are the chief glory of the music and the great surprise of 1985. It is as if we had to wait forty-four years for time and creative renewal to tell us what LYDIA was all about. Now we can go back to the original with fresh ears to discover a far richer work than I had ever given credit for. LYDIA is a film score that bears much rehearing, with subtle beauties, such as the poignant theme for Michael (Joseph Cotten) and Lydia, that are not represented in the concerto at all.

If the musical denouement of the *New England Concerto* is on a somewhat less exalted level than the great climax that has gone before, it is still enjoyable. The big themes are combined (as in the symphonette, but much revised here), and the march finale is still escorted by those endearing Tchaikovskye fanfares from the symphonette. But there is a new close in Rózsa's familiar, slightly abrupt manner that leaves its own distinctive taste.

Once I wondered why anyone would bother to revive this 1940s period-piece imitation of a warhorse. Now I can see that Miklós Rózsa has not been content with a mere resuscitation. Instead he has given a little more feeling and individuality to the shopworn phrase "romantic revival."

\*

I see that I have said nothing about the two-piano arrangement (Christopher Palmer's contribution) or about the splendid pianism of the duo team that more or less commissioned the adaptation. Suffice it to say that the playing of Joshua Pierce (a John Cage specialist!) and Dorothy Jonas is both idiomatic and spirited and that it has been recorded by Varese with exceptionally full-bodied realism. Perhaps the editor will be able to coax Mark Koldys out of retirement to comment on the pianistic aspect, the merits of the expected compact disc version (it will have to be very good indeed to surpass this vinyl edition), and of course the other music on the album. I have a feeling that this is a record we are going to be discussing for a long time to come.

#### Notes

1. Digital Premiere Recordings from the Films of Miklós Rózsa: *Spellbound Concerto, New England Concerto, The World, the Flesh, and the Devil* (overture), and *Because of Him* (overture). Joshua Pierce and Dorothy Jonas, pianists; Utah Symphony Orchestra, Elmer Bernstein, cond. Varese-Sarabande 704 260.
2. Evidently this theme did appear in *TIME OUT OF MIND*, for Frank DeWald has discovered a published song of that title credited to Rózsa. It contains these immortal lyrics by one Jayne Glyde: "Do you remember,/Time out of mind,/Time out of mind,/When we were part of a love rhapsody?/I still remember/Time after time,/ Time after time./I dream but I can't recapture the theme/of that midsummer/When we danced 'till dawn,/For all the music/Has faded and gone./But I still hold you/So close to me,/In memory,/ That I'm still with you in time out of mind."

KING OF KINGS: AN ANALYSIS  
by Derek Elley

#### PART I

##### Introduction

If any of the historical epics of the 1950s and 1960s are due for serious re-appraisal, Nicholas Ray's *KING OF KINGS* (1961) must come close to the top of the list. Sandwiched between two undisputed masterpieces of the genre, *BEN-HUR* (1959) and *EL CID* (1961), it is often either mocked as the worst example of Hollywood piousness or quite simply forgotten. No one in their right mind would ever claim that *KING OF KINGS* is a major piece of cinematic art, but looked at in detail, away from the epic brouhaha of the early 1960s, it still possesses many striking qualities. For the growing number of its devotees who have been lucky enough to see it in its full glory in 70mm Super-Technirama it quite simply refuses to go away.

This is not the place to go into a detailed discussion of its contents (those who are interested are directed to my book *The Epic Film: Myth and History* [Routledge S Kegan Paul, 1984]), but it is worth pointing out a few facts as they relate directly to the musical score. *KING OF KINGS* is a deceptive work: underneath its open, primary-colour, Sunday-school look beats a polemical Zionist fervour, heard most clearly in the opening narration but visible all through the film in its manipulation of traditional characters (especially Barabbas). It draws its personalities in large, simple brushstrokes, with little emotional subtlety; it has an almost processional feel towards its inevitable climax, like a filmic tapestry; it wallows in its climaxes with a naive conviction of being absolutely right; and it has no time for the complex relationships on which *BEN-HUR* thrives and to which *EL CID* makes occasional reference.

Miklós Rózsa's score, as we shall see, reflects all these disparate qualities, binding them into an acceptable whole. In his memoirs and various interviews, Rózsa has recorded how the film was virtually put together in post-production

by himself, the editor Margaret Booth, and the writer Ray Bradbury who wrote the connecting narration) out of the mass of material left behind by director Nicholas Ray. Bradbury's narration was recorded in London in the space of one day by Orson Welles, who received \$25,000 for his work. The final Resurrection scene which ends the film was shot on a Californian beach long after Ray had left the project.

Rózsa first became involved in the film in early June 1960, when he stopped off in Madrid on his way to Italy for his annual holiday to write a dance for Salome. Samuel Bronston, who had got the project off the ground by using US companies' funds frozen in Spain, had started filming on 24 April 1960 but had run out of money and been bailed out by M-G-M (eager at the time to have control of any potential threat to BEN-HUR, then on release). Rózsa came as part of the package. He recalls how he wrote the music in the basement of the Madrid Hilton and drew applause from the kitchen staff next door. A temporary recording for flute, tom-tom and piano was made, and Rózsa left Madrid for his holiday in Italy. It was when he returned to Hollywood in the autumn that he began serious work on the music, taking some 4-5 months to compose the score in consultation with Booth and Bradbury. (Nicholas Ray had to stay in Europe, so gave virtually no advice on the music; Rózsa now only remembers him saying he wanted "a set piece like a symphony" for the Via Crucis, and Rózsa had no idea what he meant.) Most of the score was recorded during February and March 1961.

Stylistically, KING OF KINGS is closer to the later SODOM AND GOMORRAH than to any of Rózsa's other scores of the time. In its directness and simple grandeur it also recalls scores such as KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE from the 1950s. There is no denying the fact that Rózsa often switches into auto-drive when writing for films to which he does not feel emotionally committed: KING OF KINGS, SODOM, and others all have patches which reflect this. Yet curiously, it is often these scores which contain some of his most succulent melodic material, as if a superfluity of glorious tunes will both disguise the weaknesses of the film and also obviate the need for any truly detailed development of the material (requiring the sort of emotional commitment clearly lying at the heart of scores like BEN-HUR). The magic of KING OF KINGS is that the music works on its own terms--a BEN-HUR--like score would have been inapposite to a film of this sort.

Two other facts should also be noted. Unlike BEN-HUR, EL CID, QUO VADIS or SODOM AND GOMORRAH, the score contains no folk material. It is also Rózsa's longest score (at 130 minutes of music, including play-ins and play-outs, 10 minutes longer than those for BEN-HUR and EL CID) and his most densely scored film (with music for a staggering 75 percent of screen time, compared with some 65 percent for EL CID and a mere 55 percent for BEN-HUR) . Recorded, according to the official brochure, with a 75-piece orchestra and mixed chorus of 50 voices, it is, in every respect, a truly epic work.

#### The Score

The 3 1/2-minute "Overture," which survives in both 35mm and 70mm prints but not complete on disc, is one of the most "architectural" that Rózsa has ever penned. It carries the trademarks of the score in every bar--from relentless stepped bass-lines to the use of answering phrases which propel the music forward--and has a dark, slightly ominous quality which prepares one for the drama to come and the magisterial Main Title.

Against a background of heavy bass and parallel descending fifths (suitably archaic-sounding) on chimes, harps and piano, the Mount Galilee theme strides in on wind, four horns and mixed choir in a portentous E minor Andante (Ex. 1)



As the music then moves to a slightly brighter B minor, Rózsa starts to decorate the theme, with sopranos and altos magically rising to their brighter range as the tenors and basses stay with the theme on strings. After a brief climax in B major, the theme returns to E minor, *ff*, in perfect canon a bar apart between wind, upper strings shadowed by horns, bass clarinet, and violas. The tempo then slackens slightly, the choir fades away, and one of Rózsa's most touching melodies (on a par with "The Mother's Love" from BEN-HUR) swings in on tutti strings: the theme for Joseph and Mary (Ex. 2).



But for all its beauty and simplicity, twisting and turning in B minor, there is still an ominous undercurrent. The striding bass of the opening has gone, to be replaced by an equivocal major/minor pulse on harps and piano; an unsettling trill on the clarinets (hardly audible) further adds to the unease. The theme is developed, slightly syncopated, on violins and wind and finally returns whence it came. The music now has other ideas, considerably grander if no less portentous, and announces the John the Baptist theme (like Mount Galilee, in bare octaves and fifths) in a rugged E flat minor (Ex. 3).



The theme has a solid, liturgical feel, enhanced by the answering phrase in the bass and the flattened second in the tune. It struggles to find a way out but remains resolutely grounded in its solid E flat bass-line until the latter falls away, the key shifts to a warmer A flat and, via a phrase on horns, clarinets and violas, the theme magically transforms itself into the Galilee theme (which we now recognize as its close kinsman). The choir then returns to repeat the opening of the Overture, which winds to a pianissimo close, the driving pulse of the chimes and striding bass finally spent, in a peaceful E minor.

The stage is now set for the massive "Prelude" (main title). As in BEN-HUR, Rózsa screws up the tension to breaking point: a brief introduction full of fanfare figures (though not, here, played by the heavy brass) and scrambling strings climaxes in a massive tutti in D major as the main title appears (in golden lettering against a bright blue sky) and the commanding main theme sails in, *meno allegro ed esultato*, complete with mixed choir and organ (Ex. 4).



The theme is impregnated with many of the score's general characteristics--twisting and turning over a relatively small compass, echoed by answering phrases elsewhere in the orchestra, anchored in a typically solid, Rózsaesque bass line, built out of similar repeated note values, and with syncopated notes giving the music a fluid, unblocky character. But after several repetitions (with choral part-writing of amazing complexity, which can only be fully appreciated in 70mm prints), it takes an unexpected turn: the choir's Hosannas become fragmented, jagged, struggling to find the security of a confident key as the bass wavers uncertainly back and forth from A major to E flat major. Trumpets join the choir's jagged outbursts, shadowed by horns and trombones, and after a titanic, rhythmically syncopated struggle everyone finally reaches the safety of D major again as the main tune sails back in full majesty.

Yet again, however, Rózsa has a surprise in store. "Prelude" is only the first of a succession of cues which overlap to give solid music for the first 10 minutes of the film. There is no dialogue; music and narration carry the picture alone. "Prelude" does not, therefore, end in a neat climax: the male and female

voices divide in answering phrases which push the music forward and the climax (in a flurry of brass fanfares which recall the John the Baptist theme) overlaps into "Roman Legions March," in D minor (Ex. 5).



It is a classic Rózsa march--foursquare, tough, and unrelenting-- with the melody on trumpets and violins over a jagged ostinato of percussion, horns and trombones, plus heavy bass. To add to the effect, the wind also join in, alternating between the ostinato rhythm and portions of the main tune. It is one of Rózsa's darker marches (in tune with the film's scenes of Roman conquest), with a portamento up to a diminished fourth which not only intensifies the music's sense of hopelessness (by not hitting a clean perfect fourth) but also relentlessly pushes the music forward.

The narration enters ("And it is written that in the year 63 B.C . . . ") and the march gradually grows in intensity, moving to a higher and higher register to end in a triumphant but bitter F major. As Pompey's horse moves among the crowds of white-cloaked priests, the music segues to the bleak "The Elders," with a funereal theme in F minor played in octaves by low strings, bass clarinet, bassoons and piano, over an ominous trill on the violins (Ex. 6).



After this is repeated an octave higher, the melody develops into a full-blooded Jewish-flavoured lament in the unusual key of A flat minor (Ex. 7)



only to return to the original theme (again with that ominous trill), which is banished in a sudden flurry as the Romans hurl lances into the priests' bodies. The mood grows even darker as the music segues to "The Sanctuary," with the Roman March theme ground out *ben tenuto* in the bass under chromatic warnings from muted horns. There is a brief climax as Pompey slits the curtain of the sanctuary with his sword and the main Elders theme then returns, played darkly on *cor anglais* and tremolo strings.

As Pompey takes the parchments from the temple, the music pauses for a brief 30 seconds. But there is still no dialogue, only shocked crowd noises; the massive musical exposition is not finished yet. It returns with "The Scrolls" (essentially the beginning of "Pompey Enters the Temple" on the M-G-M album). This is a repeat of "The Sanctuary" but with the melodies in a more straightforward setting on low violins and violas, and in the less unusual key of G minor. Without more ado, the music segues into another brutal montage of Roman conquest ("The Subjugation"), announced by the narration, "Thus, for more than fifty years . . . ."

As expected, it is the Roman March which is the dominant flavour here; but the jagged ostinato which accompanied its first outing is replaced with simple syncopated fanfares on trombones and a less heavy bass. The theme also starts to develop itself, moving from agitated Scotch-snap figures to even more agitated triplets as the visuals grow in intensity. The triplets then change effortlessly into an accompaniment to the Sanctuary theme, which returns on clarinets, horns and trombones, now freed of its dragging portamenti. It is an invigorating, all-too-brief passage (even if the narration gives little to feel invigorated about) which disappears as suddenly as it came with the appearance of Herod the Great, his dark, Arab-flavoured theme rising and falling on clarinets and lower strings beneath tremolo violins. With its chromatic make-up, shifting time-signatures and snatched triplets, Rózsa leaves us in no doubt about his character (Ex. 8).



After a brief, even more "Arab" development of Herod's theme, the Sanctuary theme reappears in the bass as the narration becomes more hopeful ("But from the dust at Herod's feet rebellions of Jews rose up . . ."). The change of mood is, however, only temporary: Herod's theme returns to end the cue.

(To be continued.)

CINEMA, SENTIMENT, AND THE SOUNDTRACK:  
THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES  
by Samuel L. Chell

About the author . . .

Dr. Samuel Chell is a professor of English at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin. He is music and drama critic for the *Kenosha News*, teaches an occasional course in film or jazz history, and describes himself as a "weekend musician (piano or, as they say these days, keyboards)." A longer version of the following article first appeared under the title "Music and Emotion in the Classic Hollywood Film" in *Film Criticism* (Winter 1984) .

One of the obstacles to serious studies of the role of film music has been the notion--widely subscribed to--that the audience should not be aware of the music in film. Yet many distinguished films share with opera a melodramaturgy that elevates the music to a prominent, crucial position. Not to be consciously aware of, or at least receptive to, the film score is to diminish the pleasure of the fiction and to encourage incomplete readings of the text. One of the most highly esteemed of all film scores, Hugo Friedhofer's music for *THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES*, demonstrates how musical composition, no less than spatial composition, enables the spectator to understand each returning serviceman's endeavor to re-define his world. Music, because of its direct appeal to the spectator's emotions, can penetrate deeper into character than the camera, replacing the dimension that the photographer must take away. William Wyler, the director, himself stated, "I have never been as interested in the externals of presenting a scene as I have been in the inner workings of the people the scene is about." <sup>1</sup> When camerawork or staging strategies would not permit access to a character's internal being, the director wasted no time in turning to his composer. Concerning the climactic scene of *BEST YEARS*, in which the air force captain experiences a catharsis in a grounded B-17, Wyler told Friedhofer: "This is your baby from here in. You've got to try and express the inner feelings of Fred." <sup>2</sup>

Friedhofer's solution to this problem was at once original and derivative. The director, insisting on a score that would be different from the "Hollywood sound," nevertheless expressed disappointment when his composer failed to produce a seamless tonal canvas such as Alfred Newman's music for *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*.<sup>3</sup> Yet the methods employed by Friedhofer were essentially those worked out by the first generation of Hollywood film composers to complement the full and sustained sentiment of many filmic narratives. Insofar as such narratives generate improbabilities commensurate with the strong feelings they express, music becomes vital in promoting belief in the fiction. Friedhofer's contribution to "classic" Hollywood film scoring stemmed from a commitment to the traditional role of music in film coupled with an acute awareness of its limits.

The analogy between opera and film--especially the melodramatic, richly scored films of the so-called golden age of American film--was a natural one

for Hollywood's first generation of film composers. In fact, Erich Korngold regarded the film scenario as an opera libretto, and Miklós Rózsa speaks of the best films as equivalents of Wagner's concept of the *Gesamt-kunstwerk*. During many of Korngold's film projects, as well as those of Max Steiner and Alfred Newman, the richness of the scoring upstages and virtually displaces the image. It is at these moments that some present-day critics complain of emotional response being suffocated rather than elicited.<sup>4</sup>

Korngold entrusted the orchestration of nearly all his scores to Hugo Friedhofer. By 1946 Friedhofer was more than ready, when Alfred Newman turned down the assignment and recommended Friedhofer to a reluctant William Wyler, to undertake a major project all his own. The resulting score for *THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES* was a break from the nineteenth-century romantic tradition of most film music preceding it. Distinctly neoclassic in its employment of numerous leitmotifs within a modern harmonic framework, characteristically "American" in instrumental textures, and judiciously economical (music is present during one-third of the film), the score completes the transition in film music from a language that is derivatively operatic to one that is uniquely cinematic.<sup>5</sup>

As a complement to Wyler's sparing use of cuts, Friedhofer exercised comparable restraint in scoring the film. Rather than competing with or overwhelming the image, musical composition coalesces with spatial composition in suggesting the drama among and within characters. Where Wyler's and cinematographer Gregg Toland's deep-focus stagings are sufficient to engage the spectator's activity in the confrontations among characters, the score remains silent. Occasionally, spatial resonances receive amplification from the score, as during the veterans' initial aerial view of their home town. But for the most part Friedhofer reserves his contributions for tighter settings, such as Homer's bedroom, where concentration is focused squarely on one character. In such instances of limited cinematic space the score provides the resonances for the interior space which the camera can't reach.

Yet Friedhofer's music goes further than imparting a subjective depth to the flatness of photographed objects. It signifies, and even defines, the nature of the affect it generates. Consequently, a responsible reading of a film such as *BEST YEARS* requires close attention to the score as an indispensable code within the cinematic text. Located outside the fictional world, the score approximates a third-person narrator--signifying internal states, recapitulating events, even providing ironic commentary on those occurrences. Besides the score, "source" music--originating from within the film's story--completes the system of musical signification in film. Together, score and source music, text and context, initiate a play of signs that, as *BEST YEARS* demonstrates, frequently serve as powerful sources of affect as well as meaning.

Although Friedhofer's score has sufficient organic unity to stand up as a concert piece, it is in relation to the three returning servicemen that the composer's constructions achieve full expressiveness. The association of the significant musical motifs with Homer (Harold Russell), the seaman who has lost both hands, suggests that he is the central character, the heart of the film. The "Best Years" theme, which accompanies the main title, appears again, if only

fragmentarily, when Homer wakes up in the nose of the plane and looks down at Boone City, the Ithaca to which the three war-scarred veterans are returning. The opening notes of the theme, played ponderously in the lower strings, suggest somber memories of war, especially since the notes themselves correspond to the opening intervals of "Taps":



the garage window, shattering the glass and frightening the children:



The theme returns briefly as Homer looks in on his sleeping sister, but the orchestration and tempo have changed to suggest a tender lullaby. Besides signifying Homer's self-consciousness, the theme is another reminder of his loss of wholeness. Its innocent, childlike quality serves as an ironic accompaniment to the ensuing painful scene, in which Harold Russell views photographs of himself as a high school football and basketball star.

The musical scoring for Fredric March's confrontation with an early Hollywood glamour photo of himself is less subtle. The theme associated with Al, the middle-aged infantry sergeant, is "Among My Souvenirs," a blatantly sentimental relic from the popular songs of the 1930s:

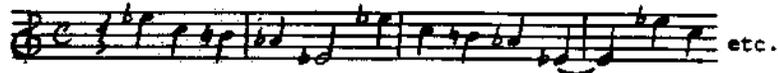


The song, incorporated into the score even before Hoagy Carmichael plays it in a tavern and prefaced with two notes drawn, appropriately enough, from Dvorak's *New World Symphony*, reminds us of Al's anxiety about what he has lost and wishes to retain--his hair and good looks, his clout at the bank, the love and respect of his wife and children.

For Fred (Dana Andrews), the air corps captain, Friedhofer's score is most reserved. The empty relationship between Fred and his bored, coquettish wife, Marie (Virginia Mayo), is either left unscored or accompanied by swing music originating from a radio. With Fred's discovery of Al's daughter, Peggy (Teresa Wright), a new theme is introduced, but its bluesy, whimsical quality emphasizes the tentative nature of the extramarital relationship:



The score further calls into question Fred's personal stability when its menacing dissonance dramatizes his nightmare about the war. A descending five-note ostinato figure is played nine times by the upper strings, beginning slowly, then gathering momentum until it culminates in a machine gun rhythm in the horns and drums:



As Peggy rushes into the bedroom and tries to awaken Fred from his nightmare, the music loses its atonality and begins to move toward the dominant of an impending

tonal center. Fred comes to his senses and the music suddenly resolves to a consonant D major chord as Peggy reassuringly tells him to go back to sleep.

The nightmare music is repeated in the film's penultimate scene, in which Fred climbs into the discarded carcass of a plane like the one he had nearly died in during the war. This time the music is especially foreboding because we sense a terrifying incongruity. The nightmarish world has been allowed to impinge upon the fully illuminated waking world of which Fred no longer seems a part. Dimly visible through the nearly opaque nose bubble, Fred looks like a corpse, indistinguishable from the immobilized wreckage around him. Unlike the first appearance of the nightmare motif, which was accompanied by hysterical shouting, no words are required to convey Fred's thoughts. The repeated, descending ostinato figure develops more quickly this time, becoming a musical vortex in which Fred's death wish is finally exorcised.

Although each of the three veterans experiences alienation and incompleteness because of the war, it is in the musical argument between the "Best Years" and "Wilma" motifs that the conflict between past and present is finally resolved. In a crucial scene we hear the former theme as Homer is lying in his bed, staring blankly at the wall on which his rifle is mounted. But the latter theme gradually asserts its dominance when Wilma comes up to Homer's room to observe his nightly ritual of taking off his hooks. At first the "Best Years" motif alternates with a morose "Neighbors" theme, evoking in turn the hold of Homer's war memories and the influence of Wilma's parents, who wish to separate her from Homer. But the "Wilma" theme is totally triumphant when Wilma buttons Homer's pajamas, almost matter-of-factly declares her love for him, and tenderly kisses him good night. During the scene, the "Wilma" theme is gently caressed by the violins, supplying the embraces of which Homer is physically incapable, until his loving "good night," at which point the theme is resolved on a radiantly shimmering unison. Even as the note is being sustained, the woodwinds provide a lingering echo of the theme as we see Homer cry. Homer's tears are likely to mirror our own, for the music has released us from the unresolved tensions of the opening title theme which has become associated with Homer's estrangement.

Music critic Frederick Sternfield, in an otherwise enthusiastic evaluation of the score, stated that the music for THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES loses interest only in the scenes in which Homer appears.<sup>6</sup> The statement demonstrates the danger of divorcing music from image and ignoring its dramatic function. The film text leaves no doubt as to the centrality of "Wilma's" theme, which is used to accompany the closing credits and serve as an uplifting recessional for the audience as it exits from the theater.

A breakdown of Friedhofer's score into its motivic elements fails to do justice to its complex subtlety and organic unity.<sup>7</sup> Since all the major melodic ideas are generated from the original triad of the "Best Years" theme, they share a vital musical relationship that resists the mechanical descriptiveness of some scores based on the Wangerian model. Moreover, Friedhofer is judiciously restrained when diegetic, or source, music is present to serve as a foil to the score's resonances. These contemporary allusions to the film's cultural context serve to underscore the difficulties of readjustment in a society dedicated, like Fred's wife Marie, simply to having a good time before the best years of life slip away. The music ranges from a Krupa-led swing band to a Latin orchestra to a scat-singing bebop vocalist to a commercial dixieland band. In each instance, frenetic music accompanies

crowds of people herded into the quest for fast action. Marie's attachment to the swing music on her radio reveals her single-minded preoccupation with self. When Fred elects to prepare dinner and tells Marie to go listen to her radio, he has in effect distinguished the opposing sets of values that make his marriage unacceptable.

In contrast to these contemporary musical allusions, a collection of anonymous ephemera, is the music of Butch, the piano-playing tavern owner. Homer is totally captivated by his music, which consists entirely of proven standards. Undoubtedly, the 1946 audience responded not to the persona of Butch but to that of Hoagy Carmichael, screen personality and composer of the phenomenally popular "Stardust." This identification made it easier to accept the older, traditional songs favored by Butch as well as the honest, stable values--the standards of judgment--they imply. While noodling "Up a Lazy River," Butch dispenses fatherly advice and philosophy to Homer, whose rehabilitation he also assists by teaching him how to play "Chopsticks." Finally, Butch's constructive presence is again felt when he plays the processional for Homer and Wilma's wedding.

Together, the score and source music of *THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES* not only complement one another but fuse with the visual dimension in an expressive whole. Film music need not be relegated to the background. In the best films, as Friedhofer and Wyler demonstrate, it can be at once interesting and functional, maintaining its own integrity of line while coalescing with all other filmic elements involved--as a frame, as a connective tissue, and even as the chief actor in the drama.

Notes:

- 1 Quoted in Michael Anderegg, William Wyler (Boston: Twayne, 1979), p.132.
- 2 Quoted in Royal S. Brown, "THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES: The Elements of a Film," booklet included with Entr'acte EDP 8101
- 3 "Hugo Friedhofer on Film Music," in *Film Score: The View from the Podium*, -  
- ed. Tony Thomas (S. Brunswick, N.J.: A.S. Barnes, 1979), pp. 67-68.
- 4 For example, Gerald Mast, in his chapter on film music in *Film/ Cinema/Movie*  
- (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), expresses impatience with the blatant .  
- excesses of early Hollywood scores such as Max Steiner's and suggests that -  
- a film like *THE INFORMER* succeeds in spite of a wretched score (p. 213).
- 5 Friedhofer credits Korngold with changing the direction in film scoring by  
- writing longer, interrelated themes to evoke general emotions. An ardent .  
- lover of chamber music, Friedhofer retained the thematic model but  
- introduced a far more economical approach--to orchestration, length of  
motives, and the amount of time the orchestra plays. Friedhofer himself  
affords *BEST YEARS* a central place in the evolution of film scoring: "By the  
time we came to *THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES* it was possible to employ even a  
chamber music sound. As an ardent lover of chamber music, I had grown up with  
an economical approach to the orchestra. . . . Even with a big sound in the  
orchestra, I like a certain transparency. I like the air to come through" (in  
*Film Score: The View from the Podium*, p. 67).
- 6 "Music and the Feature Film," *Musical Quarterly* 37 (April 1951), 521,

reprinted in PMS 25 (Winter 1977-1978).

7. See the "Analysis of the Score" by Louis Applebaum, included with booklet accompanying the Entr'acte recording. Though I have tried to avoid repetition, I am indebted to Applebaum for his notations.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL FOUND  
by Frank DeWald

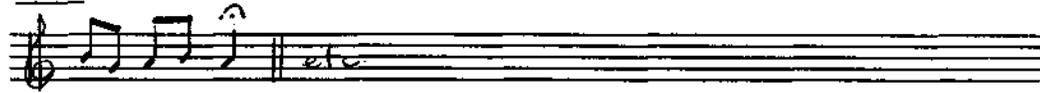
Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* has inspired more than a few composers through the years. Perhaps the most ambitious setting is Thea Musgrave's opera, premiered in 1979. Though "accessible" by the standards of contemporary opera, it is--for me, at least--lacking in the warmth and heart that make Dickens' tale such a treasured classic. For some time I believed that Bernard Herrmann had written an opera on the same subject for television, and I have often wished that I could hear what I hoped would be a more moving, more sympathetic operatic setting of the story.

By chance, a trip to a used-record store in December yielded an unexpected discovery. Shortly after Herrmann's death (12-24-75), Unicorn Records in England issued an album (RHS 850) with the following credits: "A Christmas Carol. Recorded Directly from the Soundtrack of the Chrysler Shower of Stars Production Presented December 24th, 1954. Starring Fredric March as Scrooge. Music and Songs Composed and Conducted by Bernard Herrmann. Lyrics by Maxwell Anderson." Was this the opera I had long wanted to hear? One playing of the disc clearly established that, whatever it was, it was not an opera, but a play with songs and dramatic music. Had I remembered wrong? David Ewen's *American Composers: A Biographical Dictionary* clearly calls it "an opera for television." Also, Christopher Palmer's liner notes to RHS 332 (Herrmann's String Quartet and Clarinet Quintet) refer to his "two Christmas operas for television (*A Christmas Carol* and *A Child Is Born*)." There is apparently some misinformation in print that I am pleased to rectify with this article. Not having seen the original broadcast, I cannot say if the contents of this album represent all of Herrmann's music for the production, but given the Scrooge-like length of about 30 minutes (including a lot of dialogue), one might at least hope that the unidentified producer has given us at least most of Herrmann's score.

Five songs are included on the album. "Holly, Pine, and Mistletoe," which I suspect is the show's opening sequence, is a lovely carol-like tune (Ex. 1) given a traditional flavor by its simple form and setting, its strict use of the aeolian mode, and its ambiguous accents. (Although I have notated it in  $\frac{3}{4}$ , not all of the accents seem to occur on downbeats!) It is an ABA melody, each section introduced by solo flute, sung a capella by a soprano soloist, then repeated, harmonized, by the (still a capella) chorus. Next, the full orchestra enters, solo horn takes over the idea previously introduced by the flute, and the tune is sung more vigorously by the choir with orchestral accompaniment. This time there are no internal repeats of A and B. Overall, it makes an auspicious musical



Ex. 1



Ex. 2

Bless us ev'-ry one.

beginning, its gentle yet sturdy minor aspect giving a warm but somewhat somber glow to the opening scene.

The second song, "Santa Claus," is less interesting. It is a short tune in 6/8 time, harmonized in seventh chords by the *a capella* chorus. It is repeated once, with solo flute doubling the melody and adding trills. There is a brief coda supported by horns and leading into Scrooge's "Humbug" speech. The song's somewhat playful, teasing contour, while not memorable as a tune, does serve the dramatic purpose of setting off a most disagreeable reaction in the irascible old man!

"What Shall I Give My Love for Christmas?" is a saccharine-sweet love duet that, although reminiscent of Jerome Kern, doesn't have Kern's polish and taste. Even the words are both coy and cloying! Predictably, it goes through her verse, his verse, their verse/coda--each in a different key. There is applause at the end of the track that would imply a realistic setting. Perhaps Herrmann was consciously employing a pseudo-early-musical-comedy style for the dramatic situation. The song is so far below the composer's usual level of sophistication that one must assume this to be the case!

The character of Bob Cratchit sings "A Very Merry Christmas," a delightful and straightforward ditty with an almost Rossinian sense of humor. It is built out of three phrases, each of which is repeated (to different words) the first time through, and the last of which concludes with a jolly mock cadenza. An orchestral interlude takes up the three phrases and develops them, after which the vocal resumes. This time the first phrase (a) is in slower tempo with heavy off-beat accents, then the original momentum returns for b and c. This number is a joyous, buoyant interlude amid the darker moments of Dickens' tale.

The principal song of the score is Tiny Tim's lovely "Bless Us Everyone." It is one of Herrmann's most beautiful melodies, mined from the same vein as the lyrical portions of *THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR*, touching and poignant without being maudlin or sentimental (Ex. 2). The compass and contour of the melody sound very

much like what a child might improvise, centering strongly on one note (b) and relying on repeated rhythmic and melodic patterns. The harmony is simple, too, with an implied "e" pedal almost throughout. This is interrupted only three times, the first and last of which are at the key words "Bless us everyone." Here a mixolydian cadence (VII-IV-I) adds a particular affective touch. Herrmann's accompaniment for strings and harp is the perfect setting for this jewel in his score. Not surprisingly, the composer reprises this song at the end of the show, where it is sung by the chorus and enhanced by an exquisite descant on the violins!

In addition to the songs, a small amount of underscoring appears on the record. "Humbug" follows directly after "Santa Claus" and is in fact based on the same melody, although greatly transformed by the dark colors of brass and woodwinds (a picture of Santa Claus, perhaps, as he exists in the mind of miser Scrooge?). "Marley's Ghost" contrasts the timbre of women's voices with men's voices (all a *capella*) in a slow-moving, other-worldly manner that recalls Herrmann's science-fiction scores (not to mention *The Planets!*). (This section should perhaps be considered a song because the label credits it to "Herrmann-Anderson." But although the men do seem to be singing words, they are indistinguishable!)

"Journey Into Christmas Past" begins with some gentle underscoring as Scrooge talks to the spirit, then segues to an exciting, effervescent country dance reminiscent of THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER. It is in ABA form, the A section having its own *aba* shape, and the B section modulating to the subdominant. Its extroverted quality is enhanced by the prominent octave leaps in the melody.

Scrooge awakes from his dream to a brief, turbulent passage characterized by syncopated horns and an anguished string melody. When he realizes he has a chance to make good on all that he has learned, the orchestra introduces a light, skittering theme, aptly representing his transformation into a happy, energetic keeper of Christmas. The two 16th-note scales that begin this theme are related to the country dance by the opening octave leap, telling us that Scrooge has recovered some of his past happiness. It is, indeed, with this theme that Herrmann brings his "Christmas Carol" to a close.

Not, then, the masterful opera I had hoped to hear, but an enjoyable discovery nonetheless. People lucky enough to own the album should treasure it; others should seek it out in collectors' corners and used-record shops.

Now, who will tell us something about *A Child Is Born*?

NEWS [February 1986]  
(continued from p. 2)

In Memoriam:

Two notable cinema musicians passed away last year, William Alwyn (12 September) and Franco Ferrara (7 September). During the years 1936-1963 William Alwyn scored more than 100 feature films, including many documentaries. His most famous scores include ODD MAN OUT, DESERT VICTORY, THE CRIMSON PIRATE, and SHAKE HANDS WITH THE DEVIL. Although he retired from films in 1963, Alwyn continued to compose

prolifically in later years. His works, including five symphonies and the opera *Miss Julie*, have been issued in a notable series of recordings on Lyrita. Alwyn's career was profiled by Alfons Kowalski in PMS 31, with additional filmography by Clifford McCarty in PMS 32.

About Franco Ferrara, Roberto Pugliese writes: "An extraordinary musician, the teacher of such conductors as Abbado, Muti, and Inbal, Ferrara was very active in Italian film music from the 1940s through the 1960s. As the leading conductor of the period, his credits include *THE LEOPARD* and *WAR AND PEACE* (Rota), *L'UOMO DI PAGLIA* (Rustichelli), and the major Hollywoodian scores of Mario Nascimbene. His influential essay "Conducting Soundtrack" was published in *Music and Movie* (Rome, 1959). He was also a composer for such films as *IL SACCO DI ROMA* (1954) and *ARRIVEDERCI* (1960)."

#### LETTERS:

Re Sir Adrian Boult and *LAWRENCE OF ARABIA* (PMS 43): I was once told that Boult was commissioned to conduct for prestige and commercial purposes. After conducting several of the cues at the session, he became so disenchanted with the quality of the score that he walked out and Jarre finished the bulk of the recording. Contractual reasons kept Boult's name in the film's credits, though not the album's. It was also rumored that a great deal of the quality of the orchestration and arrangements that do remain is the work of Gerard Schurmann, who has been responsible for a great deal of quality (though uncredited) supervision on various non-U.S.-based projects. I can't confirm any of this, but it sounds plausible.

I just saw *DEAD MEN DON'T WEAR PLAID* again on TV. Am I imagining it or was Dr. Rózsa's single-card, full-screen credit actually misspelled "Rózsza"?

Michael Lonzo, Los Angeles, California

Ed.: We spotted this misspelling at a New York preview and pointed it out to the producer, who was very apologetic and had it fixed in the general release prints. However, the error reappeared, bigger-than-life, in the network TV showing. Oddly, "Rózsza" is spelled correctly in the song credit at the end.

\*

The *LAWRENCE* misattribution is probably just another example of the typically sloppy production on soundtrack albums. ... It is always a pleasure to read one of John Caps's thoughtful essays. The recent one on *E.T.*, together with his insightful piece on film music criticism in PMS 34, makes me eager to see such talent applied to the great body of Rózsa's film music, most of which remains unexplored. I'm grateful to Robert Hyland for his letter on *SUNDOWN* (PMS 38), one of the many absorbing scores I've had to tape from the tube. He refers to it as an "unknown" Rózsa. But just how many of Rózsa's scores really are "known?" Speaking of things African, what does anyone recall of his beautifully detailed music for *THE MACOMBER AFFAIR*? And his vivid seafaring score to the otherwise routine *ALL THE BROTHERS WERE VALIANT*? What about his contribution

to a film European critics have long recognized as a minor masterpiece--Fritz Lang's nightbound moral fable MOONFLEET? For me this film is quite simply one of the most perfect meetings of music and image--The subtlety with which the main theme is woven in rich variation to illumine the elements of heroism, innocence, and elegy actually enables it to become a sort of character in the narrative. It threads through the loosely dreamlike episodes and helps' sustain dramatic unity. It is the work of a master musician.

Along similar lines, PMS could fulfill a much-needed purpose by providing extended general appreciations of such neglected but distinguished composers as Daniele Amfitheatrof, Leith Stevens (whose *American Rhapsody* should be recorded), David Buttolph, and George Duning.

Bill McAndrew, Lexington, Massachusetts

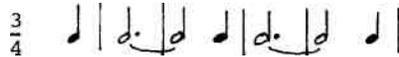
As a long-time reader of PMS, I have always admired the high literary and musical standard upheld by your publication. John Caps's "Anatomy of a Film Score," while being a timely, well-written, and perceptive analysis, was seriously marred by several musical slips that can only be attributed to well-meaning amateurism. The first things to attract my attention were the obvious errors in the notation of the examples: missing bar lines, stems placed on the wrong sides of notes, etc. Closer study revealed wrong notes and rhythms, plus a number of incorrectly used musical terms in the text. Here are a few examples:

1. Example 5: Everywhere I can hear this motive on the record, it is clearly in this rhythm:



For that matter, I suspect examples 1 and 4 should also be in  $\frac{3}{4}$ .

2. Example 9A: The melodic line in this example should be in this rhythm:



etc.

The accompanying part is not notated with the correct pitches.

3. The phrase "low unison chords" is antithetical: "unison" means one pitch; "chords" implies 3 or more pitches sounding simultaneously.
4. "Double time" is usually meant to imply a tempo twice as fast as the preceding. Mr. Caps uses it twice to mean shorter note values.

I could go on with more examples but then this letter would become another article and I hope my point has already been made. In a journal that prides itself on excellence, such amateurism should not have been allowed to undermine what is otherwise an excellent article.

I must also question the inconsistency of an editorial policy which seems ambivalent about the inherent quality of film music. Mr. Caps says that "being derivative, episodic, occasionally arbitrary, fairly uninventive" are "faults of the field," "part of the game." Somehow these remarks seem the very type that Mr. Fitzpatrick laments later in the same issue. With all the silly

anti-filmusic bias that exists in the "serious" music world, filmusic advocates should have their act more together.

H. Hill, River City, Iowa

Ed.: We will have to work harder to preserve the standard of excellence that Mr. Hill kindly attributes to PMS. We also hope, however, to maintain a degree of catholicity in our pages. Needless to say, opinions expressed in PMS are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Society. The issue Mr. Caps raised indirectly in PMS 43 (whether there is a degree of compromise inherent in commercial film music) is a valid one, and we hope that someone will explore it further in a future issue.

NO COMMENT:

Dave Grusin is quoted in *Digital Audio* (August 1985) about his score for THE GOONIES:

I had never worked for Spielberg, but I knew he was a real devotee of traditional film scores--you know. Max Steiner and Erich Korngold. My original intention was to get these Hollywood guys into the '80s, and because of the subject of the film--kids having an adventure--I envisioned an opportunity to compose a digital electronic score. After building some tracks electronically, I could dump them onto the Sony multitrack and then sweeten the sound with orchestra. But Spielberg wanted a real traditional score, with traditional acoustic music, so when I saw the handwriting on the wall, I had to give it a go with some sketches based on his suggestions. It wasn't disappointing; it was just another kind of a challenge. The result is not a pop score at all. It uses a traditional Hollywood orchestra with a little Prokofiev and Shostakovich. I stole from the same guys all the other traditional, classic film composers did.

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