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Editor: John Fitzpatrick
Associate Editor: Frank K. DeWald

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NEWS

Concert Works. The *Tripartita* (Op. 33), recorded last year by David Amos and the London Symphony Orchestra, has been issued on Harmonia Mundi 906010 with works by Gould and Menotti. For an account of the U.S. premiere of the work, see PMS 15 (1976).

The *Viola Concerto* (Op. 36) has been recorded in Nuremberg under the auspices of Tony Thomas and Colosseum Records. A late-summer release has been announced by Colosseum in Europe. Varese Sarabande will issue the American version at a later date. Richard Kaufman conducts the Nuremberg Symphony in the concerto and two accompanying orchestral suites by Lee Holdridge. The soloist is Maria Newman, the twenty-eight-year-old daughter of Alfred Newman, who also performs on the initial recording of Rózsa's last completed work, the Introduction and Allegro for solo viola (Op. 44). That debut recording—the world premiere was given by David Sills at St. Peter's Lutheran church in New York City on 10 June 1990—is on Bay Cities BCD 1020. The album also includes the Sonata for Solo Oboe (Op. 43); a Suite for Harp (arranged by Susann McDonald from five piano pieces in the Opus 12 *Bagatelles* of 1932 and the Opus 19 *Kaleidoscope* of 1946); a suite

of three waltzes (from A WOMAN'S VENGEANCE, PROVIDENCE, and BLOOD ON THE SUN), arranged and performed by the guitarist Gregg Nestor; and a 26-minute selection from the sound tracks of THE PRIVATE FILES OF J. EDGAR HOOVER (nicely arranged into a very listenable sequence despite the noisy and somewhat unbalanced sound).

The previously mentioned Sonatina for Ondes Martenot (no opus number, contra PMS 48) is not included on the above recording, but it has been published by Cambria Music of Los Angeles. That work and the Suite in the Olden Style (period film themes for small ensemble) will appear on a future disc collection. Bay Cities' current release (BCD 1027) features the Duo Sonata for Violin and Piano (Op. 7) and the Korngold Violin Sonata. The performers are Stacey Wooley and Scott Wooley. The Sonata for Violin Solo (Op. 40) has now received its third recording, on Bayer BR 100058, performed by Susanne Lautenbacher .

Live performances include the String Quartet No. 1 (Op. 22) with the Portland (Maine) String Quartet on 3 May and the *Sinfonia Concertante* (Op. 29) by the Saint Louis Symphony under Leonard Slatkin in early May. (Slatkin is the son of the violinist-conductor Felix Slatkin and the cellist Eleanor Aller Slatkin, both of whom played with many of Rózsa's film studio orchestras.) Andra Ulrichs performed the Viola Concerto as part of her degree studies at the Sydney (Australia) Conservatory.

Film Music. Notable CD reissues include the Charles Gerhardt Classic Film Scores series on RCA. The Rózsa volume, called SPELLBOUND, is on 0911-2-RG and is encoded for Dolby Surround playback. Varese Sarabande has issued LAST EMBRACE and EYE OF THE NEEDLE on a single CD for members of their "CD Club" (VCL9101.9). Information from Varese at 13006 Saticoy St., North Hollywood, CA 91605. A mono CD version of SODOM AND GOMORRAH has been issued on Cambria 1050, produced by Tony Thomas from the composer's private tapes. With the choral sections and much of the connective material removed at the composer's suggestion, this version contains 64:34 of music (cf. the approximately 98 minutes on the hard-to-find Italian stereo LP set of 1987, produced by Sergio Bassetti and Maurizio Buttazoni). Sony Music Special Products has issued a two-CD set of music from BEN-HUR (A2K-47020). Included are the original two M-G-M albums of the score, now interleaved for proper sequence, and also the overture and prologue music taken from the film itself. Although three different orchestras, conductors, and recording venues are now jumbled together, this is the most nearly complete BEN-HUR issue to date. An album of HOW THE WEST WAS WON, with similar restorations, is part of the same series.

The EL CID planned by Silva Screen remains on hold because it turns out that only about half of the parts have been preserved. Reconstructing the balance of the score remains a formidable task. However, Tony Thomas reports that Christopher Palmer has put together new orchestral suites from DOUBLE INDEMNITY and THE LOST WEEKEND for a possible future recording. Next on the agenda is THE KING'S THIEF. Broude Brothers will shortly be publishing a suite of piano music drawn from THE THIEF OF BAGDAD.

Errata. Editorial errors and difficulties with a new word-processing system account for several serious mistakes in the "Film Music of the 1980s" symposium in PMS 48. Two lines were lost from Ken Sutak's article. The passage beginning at the bottom of page 17 should read:

The first contains the works of . . . composers whose careers commenced in the 1930s and 1940s . . . and composers who once

comprised a couple of overlapping "New Wave" generations. . . . A second category, excluded from this first list, embraces the composers whose careers started in the 1970s or even the 1980s.

On pages 18-19 the last sentence about E.T. should read:

This was the most unforgettable film score of the decade, and one of the most emotionally binding film music works since Max Steiner accompanied King Kong up the Empire State Building.

More seriously, an entire score was dropped from John Caps's list on page 11. Here is the lost paragraph:

RETURN TO OZ (David Shire). Exciting grab-bag of musical styles: fanfares, marches and rags and dances and a woeful viola solo. The score worked very hard to animate and humanize this misguided Disney film and, finally, is more colorful and "visual" than the movie. Tremendously likable.

Please note that the tabulations of most frequently cited scores and composers on page 22 remain correct, since they were made from the authors' manuscripts and not from the defective printed version. Our apologies to Ken Sutak, John Caps, and David Shire.

Editor's Note. The inevitable slowing-down of news from Hollywood, a current paucity of article manuscripts, and various editorial problems here in New York--these are the chief reasons why we offer this small issue after so long a delay. But interest in the music of Miklós Rózsa remains high, and our budget remains more than sound. Pro Musica Sana may appear as a smaller, less formal publication than before, but continue it will--as long as there are members to lend support to the hope expressed in our very first issue: "It's your Society." We plan another large issue, with Frank DeWald's analysis of EL CID, for late 1991 or early 1992. If reader response warrants, there may be a smaller issue before that one.

A LAMP FOR THE SCREEN
John Fitzpatrick

Christopher Palmer, *The Composer in Hollywood*. London and New York: Marion Boyars, 1990. 346 pages; 11 illustrations. U.K. £19.95; U.S. \$35. Distributed in the U.S. and Canada by Rizzoli International.

We have long expected a magnum opus from the prolific and exceptionally qualified Christopher Palmer. Word of a film music study in progress had been emerging fitfully for nearly two decades, and the announced title of the work suggested a remarkably thorough examination of a particular musical culture--a world in which such giant figures as Stravinsky and Schonberg played major roles even if they stayed mostly outside the gates of the movie studios. The present volume is not that great work. Hemmed in by what I take to be the constraints of commercial publishing, Palmer has instead created another introduction to the "classic" Hollywood movie score for the benefit of the general reader.

The territory staked out here is remarkably similar to that covered by Tony Thomas in *Music for the Movies* (1972): Hollywood film music of the period 1930-1950, with the emphasis on the composers. For a really contrasting approach to the same period, with the emphasis on the filmic result rather than the music itself, see Claudia Gorbman's *Unheard Melodies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987). Although Palmer, as a trained musician and long-time assistant to several notable composers, brings a greater musical sophistication to the subject than the journalist-enthusiast Thomas, he concedes this advantage from the start by announcing his intention to write for the layman with an "absolute minimum" of technical discussion. The two books thus share a great deal in common, and the prospective reader may wonder about the need for this new one.

The chief difference is the roster of musicians discussed. Where Thomas treated twenty-four composers, ranging all the way to Jerry Goldsmith, Palmer has restricted his study to eight key figures whose careers flourished during the studio era: Max Stelner, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Alfred Newman, Franz Waxman, Dimitri Tiomkin, Roy Webb, Rózsa, and Bernard Herrmann. A concluding chapter points toward the future with very brief considerations of four transitional figures: North, Bernstein, Rosenman, and Moross.

If the matter is not new and the approach not particularly scholarly (chatty rather than documentary notes; perfunctory bibliography; no filmographies or discographies; lots of typos and incidental mistakes), what is the point here? One very good reason for writing this book is that, nearly two decades after Thomas, much of the general public still needs to have its ears opened. A voice as sophisticated and seductive as Palmer's is wanted in the public forum, and his book deserves a wider exposure than it so far seems to have achieved. But those of us who are already involved in the field of film music need something more than a honeyed voice seducing us into listening for the first time. We will want to know what that distinctive "voice" is actually saying.

Christopher Palmer once wrote a book called *Impressionism in Music*. The title was apt, for Palmer has always been the chief critical impressionist on the film music scene. In criticism, whether literary or musical, the application of impressionist techniques—essentially the painting of word pictures designed to make the reader share the writer's experience—has long been derided as a schoolboy's mistake. The pitfalls are obvious. If the critic's responses are idiosyncratic, they will have no resonance for the reader; but if they are commonplace, "normal," they will command no special interest. The impressionist critic runs the the double risk of cliché or incomprehensibility. Taken to extremes, as in some of the writing of Page Cook, critical impressionism can combine with emotional rhetoric and invented musical jargon in passages of truly monstrous musicology.

Happily, Christopher Palmer writes on a higher level. His musical knowledge is never in doubt (though sometimes one could wish for greater textual familiarity with some of the films), and his emotional responses are well under control. If a case can be made for an impressionistic survey of film music, this book is it. Here is a typical example:

The moment is manoeuvred musically in quasi-operatic style: trumpets and horns in purple and gold; a huge tidal wave of orchestral sound marshalling itself and poising precipitantly; a flourish of trumpets; then, as . . . appears, the imperial sweep and passion of the main title music as . . . advances to the throne, (p. 60)

Purples, golds, tidal waves--there is no denying the vividness of metaphor. But is such language useful? Do the sumptuous words evoke one particular scene in a very special way or might they apply equally to any of a dozen costume spectacles? Erich Korngold's genius painted a throne room like no other in *THE PRIVATE LIVES OF ELIZABETH AND ESSEX*. Christopher Palmer's words are inevitably less specific.

Again and again Palmer essays his peculiar brand of verbal tone painting in prose of undeniable color and passion. Most readers, I think, will share Palmer's enthusiasms, but often they will be left wondering just how the composers achieved their magical effects. Take the remarkable paragraph on Newman's *SONG OF BERNADETTE* (pp. 82-83). We are told that the music "emphasizes the heaviness and weariness of (Antoine's) actions but also expresses the hopelessness and sordidness of the task." Reference is made, in an interesting footnote, to the reappearance of this theme in *THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD*. There is an effortless segue to an Eisensteinian metaphor on the "sculptural" power of film music, and then we are brought back to Newman with this comparison: "Newman does not merely 'paint' the two scenes just described in his music. . . . Instead he sculpts them, views them from that multiplicity of angles which alone can give them their fully realistic, 'three-dimensional' character." This is all very impressive, even learned. (Although Palmer maddeningly, and typically, fails to give us the exact Eisenstein reference.) But we are never really told how Newman achieves his effect.

Of course to do so would involve a degree of technical analysis beyond the scope of the present book. And I cannot quarrel with that. Within his chosen range Palmer does succeed. I cannot imagine anyone reading his description of *BERNADETTE* and not wanting to experience the film and test his responses against Palmer's claims. I know I was sent back to the glorious originals on many such quests. That is one mark of good criticism. But I trust I am not alone in hoping that someday Palmer will go beyond the circumscribed territory of impressionistic appreciation and really tell us how some of this great music works its magic.

So much for the style. In matters of content, Palmer reserves his longest discussions for Bernard Herrmann, Miklós Rózsa, and Dimitri Tiomkin. The latter two chapters naturally show much debt to the books, sleeve notes, and other writings that Palmer has already devoted to these composers. Still, the attentive reader will sometimes be rewarded by a fresh detail, as in the unexpected comparison of Rózsa with Giacomo Puccini. Palmer has long been an advocate of Tiomkin--against considerable critical odds--and for those unfamiliar with his 1984 study of that composer, there will be much here to stimulate fresh thought. Palmer is particularly good on the unexpected quietness of some of Tiomkin's "epic" overtures and on the effective orchestration of *HIGH NOON*. The Herrmann chapter also derives from previously written material, although we are fortunate to have it here since Palmer's late-1970s manuscript on Herrmann remains unpublished.

Palmer is everywhere a champion of neglected artistry, most obviously in his chapter on Roy Webb. Here is a composer even the buffs have ignored. If we know any of his music on records, it is likely because of Palmer's own efforts--the *SEVENTH VICTIM* suite on an obscure Stanley Black collection (Decca Phase Four PFS 4432), the *NOTORIOUS* music on Charles Ketcham's Hitchcock anthology (Varese Sarabande VCD 47225). But Palmer does not hesitate to compare Webb with the established masters:

Webb, throughout the forties, showed consistent sympathy with the world of film noir and skill in translating its nuances into musical terms—largely through a wide spectrum of modern harmonic resource and an understanding of the atmospheric properties of orchestral colour, of texture, and of understatement. If Webb lacks Steiner's melodic distinction, harmonically he is more sophisticated. In his use of chords built up of fourths and in the linear orientation of much of his music, Webb's idiom grows closer to the neo-classical austerity of Hindemith than to romantic prototypes. . . . All his best films show him exerting a species of manipulative control arguably unrivalled among Hollywood composers for its subtlety and nuance, (p. 166)

There are plenty of individual case studies offered for support—all of which should send curious listeners back to the originals. It is enough to make one wish Palmer had devoted an entire book to the obscure byways of film music history. It also makes one wish for a filmography, which is practically essential toward gaining a sense of Webb's career. Tony Thomas's book had excellent filmographies compiled by Clifford McCarty, and it would have been a simple matter to have extended them here.

If in the end *The Composer in Hollywood* is not as deep a study as Palmer might have written, it is still a useful addition to the growing film music shelf. It is jacketed by a genuinely beautiful still from *THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS*. Foreground musicians in silhouette frame a romantic couple in the deep-focus background. It is a lovely metaphor for the shadow world in which film music has often existed—and on which Palmer's study now casts some welcome new light.

THE SAGA OF A FILMHARMONIC CONCERT
Frank K. DeWald

On November 3 the Greater Lansing Symphony Orchestra joined the growing ranks of American orchestras presenting concerts of film music. The GLSO, established in 1929, is a professional, metropolitan orchestra that presents six subscription concerts, three chamber orchestra concerts, a *Messiah* production, two Pops concerts, a Symphony Youth Competition, two Young People's concerts, and various outreach programs each season. Music Director Gustav Meier is chairman of the conducting program at both Tanglewood and the University of Michigan.

Prior to the concert, Meier was eager to consider repertoire but already expressing dismay at the difficulties he was having in locating performance materials. In the event, the program that was eventually presented was essentially a copy of one Meier had given last spring with his other orchestra, the Bridgeport, Connecticut, Symphony. All of the scores and parts came from John Waxman's firm Themes and Variations in Westport, Connecticut. They included the following pieces:

Jarre	LAWRENCE OF ARABIA: Overture
Herrmann	PSYCHO: Suite for String Orchestra
Gold	EXODUS: Rhapsody for Cello and Orchestra
Korngold	THE SEA HAWK: Overture
Waxman	SUNSET BOULEVARD: Suite
Williams	RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK: Raiders' March

Also included were the opening section of Richard Strauss's Also sprach Zarathustra (from 2001) and, as a special tribute, Leonard Bernstein's ON THE WATERFRONT suite. (Meier had known Bernstein via his Tanglewood connection.)

Most of this music is well known to PMS readers, but the EXODUS piece has not been recorded and so merits some comment. Not an excerpt from the score but rather a short (6'30") concert piece, it consists of variations on Ernest Gold's "Main Title" melody. The solo cellist begins the piece, starting in the middle of the theme. Soon he is backed by divided tutti celli and timpani. As the soloist plays the entire theme in his warm middle register, other solo instruments echo fragments until the theme is taken over the the violins. The first variation is primarily for brass; the second is for solo cello in the form of a quasi cadenza. The third and final variation pits the second half of the theme in the solo cello against tremolo violins until the brass intone the melody as a chorale with relatively adventurous harmony. The piece ends quietly in a serene D-flat major. The Rhapsody represents exactly what any film composer likes to do: take one of his best tunes and explore it musically without the tyranny of a producer, director, or stopwatch! It should be recorded and heard more often.

When the concert was over, I was left with two concerns. The first, which I alluded to earlier, is the difficulty in obtaining reliable performance materials for film music. The problem is twofold. First, scores and parts are not available from the same sources as most orchestral literature; they have to be sought out from specialized collections and libraries. Many of the publishers who hold the copyrights on such music do not appear interested in promoting it. Second, some of the material that is available is poorly reproduced and/or difficult to read. For example, the first score of the LAWRENCE Overture that Meier received was a xerographic reproduction (two generations removed from the original) of Jarre's conductor score in Gerard Schurmann's orchestration. It included numerous conductor's markings for cues, meter changes, etc. The xerography was so poor that black marks covered some to the clefs and time signatures in the left margin, and some staves were so broken up with gaps that you had to guess exactly which pitch was indicated! There was also at least one very clumsily managed "cut and paste" job in the middle of the score. Fortunately, Waxman and Jarre realized the problem and had a new score and set of parts made up in time for the concert. The RAIDERS march was a much cleaner score, devoid of extraneous markings, but it was rather small and therefore a bit difficult to read. the PSYCHO score was, by contrast, a model of readability. it was a "clean" score, written in a large, neat, professional hand. It was, in a word, much more "user-friendly." Undoubtedly organizations such as Themes and Variations and the Society for the Preservation of Film Music are doing much to alleviate this condition, yet if conductors such as Meier perceive it to be too difficult to locate readable scores and parts, it may be a long time before they venture again into the realm of film music when programming their concerts.

My second concern is about the attitude of some of the musicians in the GLSO. At the final rehearsal, the orchestra manager began by announcing that ticket sales for this "movie music" concert were doing extremely well and that the management was excited about the prospect of an annual "Filmharmonic." This was greeted by hissing from some of the players. I cannot be sure exactly what this meant, but I gather that some of the musicians deemed it somehow beneath them to play film music. If that is the case, then there is evidently a great deal of proselytizing that remains to be done among professional musicians before film music stands a chance of being accepted in performance alongside standard concert repertoire

Fortunately, Waxman reports that "business is booming" for his firm and that film music performances are proliferating throughout the country. It is most heartening to speak to him because he so obviously cares very deeply for this music, which he says has "taken on a value of its own." He believes in its artistic merit but he is also a practical businessman who knows that the "product" must be sold. This means making high-quality performance materials readily available and assisting conductors in programming music with which they may not be entirely familiar. Everyone who enjoys film music owes him a debt for his perseverance in preserving and promoting this music.

Let us hope that the GLSO Filmharmonic concert succeeded in establishing a newfound respect for the musical values inherent in music written for films among the large audience, broadcast as well as live, as well as among the musicians who played the music so very well as to make the concert a total success.

TWO NOTES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In his *Double Life*, Miklós Rózsa made this remark about his film work during the early Korda period: "When not actively engaged in films of my own I sometimes did odd musical jobs like helping other composers with orchestration. Once I even ghost-wrote an entire score for another composer, who shall be nameless" (pages 91-92 of the Wynwood edition). Has anyone ever identified this score? Villu Viksten and Ray Van Orden speculate that the film may have been *LIVE AND LET LIVE* (also known as *SPY FOR A DAY*), a Two Cities comedy production starring Duggie Wakefield and Felix Aylmer, and directed by Mario Zampi. The score is credited to Nicholas Brodsky. The picture was shot in late 1939 and is known to have been reviewed in a *U.S.* trade journal in January 1940. The onrush of the war (which also resulted in the disappearance for many years of *ON THE NIGHT OF THE FIRE*) may have doomed this picture in its native England. Do any readers have further information on the picture or its music?

A recent issue of *Fanfare* (Nov.-Dec. 1990) features an interview with the Hungarian harpsichordist János Sebestyén, who tells how his taped broadcast interviews with Rózsa, beginning in 1963, were instrumental in making the composer better known in his native land. A book based on these interviews, *Eletem Történetéből* (Stories from My Life) was published in 1980, and according to Sebestyén, the contents are quite different from *Double Life*. We have a copy of the book, which has never been translated into English. Is there any Hungarian-speaking reader who might care to search for and translate some of the variant passages?

SUBSCRIPTIONS/EDITORIAL

John Fitzpatrick
319 Ave. C
Apt. 11-H
New York, NY 10009

EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE

Alan J. Hamer
86 Bow Lane
Finchley
London N12 0JP
United Kingdom

TAPE RECORDINGS

Mark Koldys
7545 Manor
Dearborn, MI 48126