

FILM MUSIC NOTES

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NATIONAL FILM MUSIC COUNCIL

FILM MUSIC NOTES

250 EAST 43rd STREET

New York 17, N. Y.

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MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL FILM MUSIC COUNCIL

TO OUR READERS:-

The letters that come to our desk confirm daily our belief in the endless ramifications in the field of film music. Many of our correspondents are educators. We quote at random from several on the college level. "We are interested in using the releases put out by your Council on the current pictures, in our music appreciation classes required for all freshman students, for noon assemblies, for school choral groups, orchestras and bands." "Information of film scores available for orchestra or piano will be appreciated." "There are no text books on the subject, and your magazine contains articles by the composers, with excerpts from their scores analyzed by authorities, all of which is most valuable to us who are working for Master's degrees."

These are typical high school requests, "I am interested in finding 16mm films to use in my instrumental classes this Fall." "I am especially interested in materials for beginning bands, grade school music for choral groups." "Your magazine fills a very definite need in our music courses," says an Indiana Board of Education, which gets twenty-one copies. And from a teacher: "Your FILM MUSIC NOTES helps me to know when and where I may take my music classes in piano. I prepare my students before-hand so they may see and hear intelligently."

We hear from the music clubs: "Texas music clubs are working closely with the theatre managers and your recommendations are considered." "Our music club (Pontiac, Mich.) will receive 25% commission on all tickets we sell for the picture, Carnegie Hall. This money will be given to the Veterans' Hospital Fund." From Wyoming: "We have the full cooperation of our Farm Bureau, and we will have the films you recommend shown. Our music club is most enthusiastic over the plan." "We, in outlying places removed from active centers, are deeply interested and must rely on sources such as your Council offers," writes a Minnesota club. The Baltimore Public Library supplies three of its departments with FILM MUSIC NOTES and says, "As soon as a picture is released, we have countless questions about the music. I do not know what we would do without it."

Letters like these give us some idea of the diversity of our readers and their wants. We wish to do everything we can to be of use to them. We intend to issue several special bulletins which will analyze important film scores and present other points of musical interest. Occasionally our desire to further film music leads us to feature a picture with an excellent score disregarding the fact that it is of lesser merit otherwise.

Our plans include articles on the choral organizations, bands, and various musical groups who work in films, as well as the soloists who are ghost-performers for the screen-players. We have had much appreciation of Lawrence Morton's series on THE MUSIC MAKERS in the Hollywood studios--the well-trained, able musicians who make up the orchestras. We are most happy to announce that Mr. Morton has become a member of our Advisory Committee. Another member of our Advisory Committee, Edith M. Keller, sends some constructive ideas which we hope to put into effect. We print her comments at the end of this message. We urge our readers to continue to tell us how FILM MUSIC NOTES can be of help to them, and to inform us of the use they make of its material.

Our hearty good wishes for the holiday season.

Sincerely,

Grace W. Mabee
Marie L. Hamilton
Editors.

FILM MUSIC IN OHIO

Edith M. Keller
Supervisor of Music
State Department of Education
Columbus, Ohio

Many of us are concerned with the importance of good music films for teaching purposes in our schools. There is a real need to inform teachers and school administrators about the ones which have musical and educational value. There are

some which have music background and will be valuable for the work in social studies and their use can be effectively planned by music teachers and classroom teachers in charge of this area of instruction. Unfortunately there is not a wealth of any of this material available. Our Ohio committee is hoping to preview some of the films which can be secured and to compile a list which we can actually recommend. Our committee members are very much interested and eager to serve.

We believe also that we should capitalize more on the fine commercial films of special musical interest to schools and community organizations. I am planning to give more publicity to the valuable informational material found in FILM MUSIC NOTES.

JOHN
HUNTLEY

William Alwyn is a specialist in the integral type of score; his music is so closely bound up with the picture itself that it is often meaningless on

its own. In Odd Man Out, the main theme of the film - Johnny's Walk - was written before the film ever went into production. A special recording was made at the outset, and before every single take in which James Mason appeared in his part, the music of Alwyn was played over loudspeakers to the whole unit so that the atmosphere and tempo of the scene should be set. James Mason practiced his walk in time with the music. Alwyn, whose music was used for Great Day and Notorious Gentleman, is a film composer of the Royal Academy of Music.

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NEWS and COMMENTS

BALLET MUSIC Several pictures recently have recognized the national interest in the ballet. In Columbia's "Down to Earth," Daniele Amfitheatrof has written the Greek ballet in which Terpsichore makes her earthly debut; For another debut - that of Margaret O'Brien, as ballerina in Metro's "Unfinished Dance"- Herbert Stothart has made effective arrangements, establishing mood by opening the film with "Le Cygne", and using in later sequences the waltz from "Faust", David Rose's "Holiday for Strings" and "Butterfly Dance", and excerpts from "Swan Lake" and "Prince Igor"; The composer-hero's ballet is an important part of Warner's "Escape me Never". As interpreted by Erich Wolfgang Korngold, it plays an equally important part in a noteworthy score.

* * * * *

16 mm PROJECTORS It is estimated that during 1946 fifty thousand 16 mm projectors were manufactured, and schools are rapidly buying them for use in assemblies and the classroom. Before the war there were less than fifteen thousand such projectors in the United States. California will spend more than five hundred thousand dollars this year on 16 mm films and equipment, with expenditures of two million dollars within the next few years, reports the State Department of Education. FILM MUSIC NOTES has a preview committee constantly trying to find 16mm material for school, club and church use. If our readers will let us know their needs in this field, we will be able to recommend production of suitable films.

* * * * *

FILMS CONCERTS A Film Music series in which the musical value of the films is being made the selling point, has been inaugurated by the Vogue Theatre in San Francisco. The series, called a Light Opera Festival, will run for three weeks. Among the scheduled features are "The Great Mr. Handel", "Moonlight Sonata", "Life and Loves of Beethoven" and the "Seventh Veil". Short subjects include Richard Bonelli singing the "Pagliacci" prologue, "Myra Hess", "Instruments of the Orchestra", Ponchielli's "Dance of the Hours", and the cartoon, "Rhapsody Rabbit". Booklets describing the programs and illustrated with pictures of the musicians represented, have been mailed to members of musical organizations in and around the city. Why can't other theatres do the same?

* * * * *

COMING FILMS Lewis Milestone will produce and direct for Enterprise Studios and United Artists release, a film version of Offenbach's opera, "Tales of Hoffman", photographed in color and in modern dress. Musical versions of "Pride and Prejudice" and "Ah Wilderness" will be released by Metro sometime next spring. Lotte Lehman's lovely voice will be heard in Metro's "The Big City" in whose score Nathaniel Shilkret has used rare Creole tunes. The public is looking forward to the Shakesperean production, "Macbeth" which is to be released by Republic, Orson Welles, producer and Bernard Herrmann writing the music score. Rouben Mamoulian with "Porgy", "Oklahoma" and "Carousel" to his credit states that he is transferring to the screen a technique which he developed with historic success in the above musical plays. He says, "It has been my steady belief for years that there was an authentic musical genre growing up in this country, and I can't see any reason why it could'nt be expressed on the screen as well as on the stage."

* * * * *

JERRY MOROSS Jerry Moross, associate of Emil Newman, head of music at the Goldwyn Studios has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for musical composition. His assistance on the Hugo Friedhofer scores for "Best Years of our Lives" and "The Bishop's Wife" merited this honor.

FOREVER AMBER --- NOTES ON THE MUSICAL SCORE

by David Raksin.

When I was first assigned to FOREVER AMBER, before I had seen the film, I thought it might be an interesting idea to score it in the style of the time, allowing perhaps a bit of leeway for anachronism, since the old English orchestral music with which I was most familiar (and which I most favored) was that of Henry Purcell, whose music came after the period of the film. However, after seeing the rough cut of the picture I decided that this was the wrong approach. The problem, as I saw it, was that of a dramatic story and not a period piece; I felt that within the limitations of the 17th Century English style (leeway considered as well) I could not write music expressive enough to speak my part of the story to today's audience.



David Raksin

There would be a great deal of music (nearly two hours, as it turned out) and the deadline was disconcertingly close because of the studio's Technicolor commitment. No time could be spared for serious research. I read what we had on hand on English music, borrowed some Purcell "Catches" with extremely rude, but reassuring lyrics from my friend, Cyril Mockridge, and was off.

After a bit of preliminary self-mortification on the subject of style--- Schubert would have written forty songs, Tchaikowsky nine letters to his brother--- I decided that I would aim for unity of musical feeling throughout the score without limiting myself as to style. The dramatic music would have the flavor of the story -- conferences with Otto Preminger, the director, were indicated. The locale music, such as that of the first shots of London, would be in a style which I hoped would bear the same relation to the music of the period as does Prokofieff's "Classical" Symphony to its models. One such set piece is facetiously called

"The Royal Waterworks Music", another "The King's Mistress", a third "Anachron Overture", which is a comment on its nature and a run on the overture "Anachron". In this music I had fun in the most direct sense with the music of the time; the allusion to Prokofieff is in reference to this, and is not intended to be comparative.

In the munificent time of two and a half weeks I dug for themes during the day and read "Forever Amber" at night, the last being considerably more fatiguing than the first. The film breakdowns were now ready, and I began composing to cue. At first, the problem of style still troubled me, but I kept to my original plan with the help of a motto I had once projected for avant-garde composers. It was intended to help them avoid romanticism, and was to be printed over an engraving of Paul Revere's Ride; "One if by Land, Two if by Sea, Three if by Brahms". After the first week's work, the last vestiges of indecision vanished. From then until the very end, when I was finally so tired that indecision briefly returned, I was able to plan my music in long sections, sometimes two or three reels at a time, within my overall plan of the score.

For instance, the music that begins when Amber is committed to Newgate Prison, continues through the Christmas Eve scene and the birth of Amber's child at Whitefriars and ends with the robbery in which Jack Mallard is killed, was carefully worked out from beginning to end before a note of the actual scene music was put down. This plan included thematic placement and development, key relationships, general color, and technical matters such as overlaps, reel changeovers, and even the use of two different click-tracks in the scoring of one scene. All of this may sound a bit elaborate, but unit planning in this way enormously

helps the ultimate dramatic effect, helps to anticipate musical and mechanical problems. The seemingly complex double click-track was actually a simpler way of solving a situation in which two tempos were necessary. If we had had to record our small male chorus simultaneously with a slightly berserk solo viola, the only way in which I can visualize the singers retaining their sense of the music would be to have taught them their parts in what I choose to call Catatonic Sol-Fa.

One bit of thematic material proved extremely durable. Its metamorphoses are in a way a measure of the score itself. Alfred Newman (who conducted the orchestra), Maurice de Packh, Herbert Spencer, Edward Powell (who orchestrated the music) and I often joked lamely but gratefully about its usefulness. It began as a short thematic phrase over a repeated scale, or ostinato, in the bass. This ostinato, incidentally, was a motif in its own right and became the cantus-firmus of a scherzo sequence which I named "Quasicaglia" because it managed to avoid being either a Passacaglia or a Basso Ostinato while combining the worst features of both.

The little theme became, in a new guise, Amber's theme:

Fig. 2 Moderato (with a lilt)

The musical score is handwritten and consists of two systems. The first system includes staves for Violin I and II, Viola, Cello, and Bass. The second system includes staves for Clarinet and Bass. The music features a melodic line with slurs and a bass line with a repeating eighth-note pattern. Handwritten annotations include 'Fig. 2', 'Moderato (with a lilt)', and various performance markings like 'mp' and 'p'. Large numbers (4, 6, 8, 9, 12) are written below the staves, possibly indicating measures or rehearsal marks.

Space forbids giving other excerpts of the Raksin score. If readers wish other excerpts provided, write us.

DAVID RAKSIN'S SCORE FOR "FOREVER AMBER"

by Louis Applebaum

Twentieth-Century Fox spent enough money on FOREVER AMBER to finance a good part of the Marshall Plan. An impatient audience was kept waiting for two or three years until the final and much-publicized touches were provided for the manoeuvres of an inconsequential though notorious literary heroine. Now it can be viewed in all its painfully expensive Technicolor glory. On display is the 17th century London of the Great Fire and the Great Plague, the costly frippery of Whitehall, Newgate Prison in pretentious sordidness; duels and dogs, murder and misery, courts and courtesans. One cannot be blamed for expecting a full-blooded adventure story set in exciting times, and adorned with all the lavishness and extravagance that Zanuck's talented helpers could devise.

What a disappointment! Despite its rich and beautiful production it is just too shallow and tedious to be excused. Linda Darnell's sexless and empty "Amber" and the weary performances by most of the other actors have been adequately assailed by the newspaper and magazine critics. And as is the habit of film critics, they have ignored the film's expert music score.

It is a little surprising that Fox and Alfred Newman should have entrusted the music for such an expensive showpiece to a young and adventurous composer. Maybe they hoped a little spirit would thus be injected into the costume-heavy epic. In any case we can be thankful for that small mercy, for David Raksin's music helps create a few of the more enjoyable moments of the film. But really, the studio was playing it pretty safe. Raksin had not only proved his talents in his previous scores, but it is evident to anyone hearing his work that he is a man of prodigious ability, with a marked gift for melody. Not often does one see in a score of the length of AMBER such contrapuntal complication, such as easy manner with involved musical problems; and we should add, such an ability-- so necessary when long works have to be turned out quickly -- to make most out of little.

By far the most effective parts of the AMBER score are those written in the style of the Restoration period (or close to it). This music has clarity and directness; the kind that the film itself should have, but never quite achieves. As an example there is the piece Raksin calls "The King's Mistress":

THE KING'S MISTRESS

Handwritten musical score for "The King's Mistress" by David Raksin. The score is written on five staves. The top staff is for Eb Trumpet (TPT), the second for strings (str.), the third for strings (str.), the fourth for strings (str.), and the fifth for strings (str.). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "mf" and "col'ra". Handwritten annotations include "add oboz", "vlns.", "trump", "VLANs", "etc", and "etc col 8 vnbasso".

There is the music used in the theatre scenes:

**ANACHRON
OVERTURE**

f *col 8 vca*

p *etc col 8* *f*

truu *STRG* *etc col 8*

There is the little modal piece with a charming cadence, played by an oboe d'amore and lute. (Why not when they're available?) (See top of page 3.)

MODERATO
OB. D'AMOUR

TAVERN
MUSIC

p LUTE

CELLI + BASS

p

VLA

And there are several others in the same class, all neatly turned, and treated with the right amount of simplicity. On the other hand there are scenes like the Newgate Prison episode, which Raksin describes elsewhere in terms of click tracks and overlaps and reel-changeovers. Much effort for little avail. Wonderful ingredients for inspired film making (the prisoners in Newgate are given a Christmas "banquet") are lost in overproduction that lends nothing but snobbery to a scene potentially rich in irony. The music too goes the way of all Amber. Singers and instrumentalists, soloists and choruses, and appropriate songs are well mixed.. too well mixed. The singers are well schooled, the chorus harmonizes beautifully, the solo viola plays with a tone achieved only a couple of decades of conscientious practice; and therefore the whole effectiveness of the music is ruined by super-slickness and polish. The fault is not Raksin's of course. But that is the kind of misplaced emphasis that is sadly characteristic of the Fox version of the Amber saga.

The bulk of the score is concerned with material growing out of the falling scale passage which Raksin describes in the adjoining article. As you see, many thematic ideas grew out of this germ. Raksin's own description of his conniving with this meager bit of a musical idea speaks well enough for his considerable technique. In the Main Title music we are treated to 32 versions of his ostinato bass (he calls it a "Quasicaglia"). Nowadays that takes nerve, especially since Raksin avoided contemporary harmonic idioms and stuck tenaciously to one key. Unfortunately the idiom he chose is not that of Pepys and Charles II and Amber, but sits neatly on the fence in the lushness of the 19th century.

Perhaps Raksin's comments about style have excused him. To me he is much less effective with this music than he is with the music described earlier, and worse, it leads him almost helplessly into traps. Note for instance the almost corny figures he uses to heighten his material for the Plague and Fire sequences. (Both of them!)(See the first two bars of Raksin's fig.11,). It is as though his musical ingenuity sometimes became constricted by being concerned too long with machinations on the falling minor scale, and Tchaikowsky looked good for an easy way out. And it is interesting that he could justify the use of identical versions of this "Quasicaglia" for the major part of both the Fire and the Plague scenes. Maybe, though, the pressing deadline did his justifying for him.

To be fair, however, Raksin performed wondrous things with this ostinato. It provided the "Amber" themes, which are all appropriately "gooey", and good tunes besides. Their style can certainly be excused by their context. One of these, not previously quoted, Raksin calls "The Wench". It provides one of the score's few samples of chordal writing.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a piece titled "THE WENCH". The score is written on five systems of staves. The first system is labeled "THE WENCH" in a box on the left. The music is in 4/4 time and features a complex harmonic structure with many accidentals and chromaticism. The notation includes various chordal textures, such as triads and dyads, and some melodic lines. There are several key signatures changes throughout the piece, including D major, C major, and B-flat major. The score is annotated with various markings, including "3" over a triplet, "2" under a pair of notes, and "etc." at the end of the fifth system. The handwriting is clear and legible, with some corrections and additions visible.

The use of the major triad from the adjoining key, in bar 5, adds one of the rare bits of harmonic coloration. Raksin must have liked that too, for he uses this as his End Title, treating it in canon, and adding a third key at the cadence for good measure.

In all, Raksin deserves much credit for having been able to turn out so much good music in so short a time. We cannot be held responsible for the fact that not all of it reflects inspiration of the highest order. The music is largely the creator of the few moments of charm and quality that can be found too rarely in this overblown extravaganza. If the film can boast of colorful and authentic production, the score can boast of many bits of delightful and fascinating music. And, together with the film, the music occasionally gets stuck in a bog of pretension and hypocrisy out of which it barely can crawl. The heavy-footed ostinato bass gets in the way, the elaborate orchestra gets in the way, and only Raksin's abundant talents manage to inject a little good taste and spirit into a film that hardly ever displays those admirable qualities.

* * * * *

The Composer:

David Raksin is best known for his music for the film, LAURA, from which the song of the same name was drawn. He was born in Philadelphia and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania where he played in dance bands and radio orchestras. He followed in his father's footsteps who was a composer and conductor. He has studied with such noted teachers as William Happich, Harl McDonald, Isadore Freed and Arnold Schoenberg. He served on the staff of Harms, Inc., headed by Robert Russell Bennett with whom he arranged many Broadway shows and radio programs. In 1935 he went to Hollywood on a call to arrange the music of the Chaplin film, MODERN TIMES. His compositions are numerous, he having written for ballet, comedy stage, and also in the larger forms of symphony and chamber music. His recent film scores receiving special recognition beside his LAURA score are SMOKEY, The SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY, and FOREVER AMBER and soon to be released, DAISY KENYON. RCA-Victor is releasing an Album of Music from the score of FOREVER AMBER, conducted by the composer.

THE MUSIC MAKERS

By Lawrence Morton

"Concertmasters in Hollywood," it is often said, "are a dime a dozen." If the remark is meant as a tribute to the artistry of string players in the studios, it is true. If it is intended to indicate that Hollywood values its artists slightly, it is false. In any case, Hollywood has as fine a community of string players as will be found anywhere. Nevertheless they are at a premium; for the musical director does not exist - in symphony, studio or theatre - who is not eager to improve his orchestra in one way or another. Thus, every season, there are changes in the personnel of the studio orchestras. What conductors seek is not so much skill (which is almost taken for granted) as style, versatility, an ability to "fit in." They are always aiming for that indefinable something that makes a string section capable of the most eloquent expression, the quality that makes the Boston or NBC orchestras, for instance, superior to almost all others. Yet, as Hollywood's string sections stand today, they are capable of such marvelous playing as is heard in David Raksin's score for FOREVER AMBER, in Hugo Friedhofer's for THE BISHOP'S WIFE, in Adolph Deutsch's for WHISPERING SMITH, and numerous others.

An important factor contributing to the excellence of the studio orchestras is that the musicians who play in them are constantly active in musical events outside of their studio work. In this respect, to be sure, they are not different from their colleagues in other cities who play in the local symphony orchestras. But their requirements for extra-curricular activities are perhaps greater because of the demanding nature of their work and because, one regrets to say, there is frequently very little genuine musical satisfaction to be had from the performance of some film music. Anyway, string players are notoriously a gregarious lot, and there is hardly one of them who won't put an end to a political argument by saying to his opponent, "Let's get together and play some quartets."

Naturally, then, there are numerous ensembles among the studio musicians. The RKO orchestra, for instance, is so full of devotees of chamber music that the director, Constantine Bakaleinikoff, often turns to an imaginary observer when difficult passages slow up a rehearsal and says in comic exasperation, "So, this is what I get for having an orchestra full of quartet players!"

The first to smile at such a remark is his concertmistress, Eudice Shapiro. If her "boss's" remark were a serious indictment, she would have to plead guilty on many counts. For besides the job of mastering such difficult solo passages as those in Hanns Eisler's WOMAN ON THE BEACH, she takes time to pursue the career of concert violinist which began so auspiciously when she won the prize of the National Federation of Music Clubs in 1937. She still makes an annual appearance in one of New York's concert halls; and the trip east is generally the occasion for a solo performance with one or another of the network orchestras. Wherever she plays, she never fails to introduce a new work by an American composer - Piston, Harris, Jacobi, Ives, Creston and Dello Joio having already profited from her evangelism.

Sitting at her desk in the RKO orchestra, she looks straight across Mr. Bakaleinikoff's podium at her husband, Victor Gottlieb, first cellist. Such an exchange of glances doubtless means more now than it did during their student days at Curtis, where they met. Mr. Gottlieb graduated from this famous school into the ranks of the Philadelphia Symphony. One season under Stokowski was

followed by five with the Coolidge Quartet - which meant performance at the Library of Congress, at Columbia University, at USC, trips to Mexico and Canada, recording for Victor, radio broadcasts. Then followed a brief association with the Pro-Arte Quartet and the music faculty of the University of Wisconsin, which was cut short by the war and several years of service with the AAF Radio Production Unit at Santa Ana, California.

Inevitably a string quartet was formed with the Gottliebs providing the top and bottom voices. Inevitably, they were joined by the violist, Virginia Majewski. The three had already played together at Curtis; and even before that, the two girls had been fellow-students at Eastman. Miss Majewski, after earning her B.A. at Lady of the Lake College in San Antonio, had gone to Eastman to prepare for a career as public-school music teacher. But viola playing proved more attractive; and so did summers in Maine which, she says, was one of the reasons she joined the Kneisl Quartet. Coming later to Hollywood, she joined the MGM orchestra where she has been solo violist for eight years. Of course she renewed her personal and professional friendship with the Gottliebs.

The fourth member of the American Art Quartet, as the group has been known for two or three seasons, is Marvin Limonick, one of five Limonicks who claim music as a profession in Los Angeles. Father Louis Limonick plays violin at MGM; brother Harold plays bass with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Marvin himself left the Philharmonic to join Alfred Newman's orchestra at Fox. His first professional job, like his brother's, was in Stokowski's Youth Orchestra. His career, like those of so many young artists, was interrupted by the war, and he spent three years in the AAF orchestra at Santa Ana. Here he was a "buddy" of Gottlieb's; and mutual respect for one another's playing led to further association in the quartet.

The American Art Quartet has appeared frequently throughout Southern California communities - on the Music Guild series with Artur Schnabel; at Evenings on the Roof, a local cooperative enterprise; at the Coleman series in Pasadena; and at Santa Barbara, La Jolla and other neighboring cities. Repertoire includes all the classics, especially late Beethoven, and such moderns as Prokofiev, Bartok, Toch and Diamond.

Another domestic team, Warwick Evans and his wife Lysbeth LeFevre, both cellists, contribute to the homey atmosphere at RKO. Mr. Evans is another of the chamber-music experts upon whom director Bakaleinikoff casts that ironic look. A founding member of the London String Quartet 40 years ago, Mr. Evans still plays with the group as presently constituted with violinists John Pennington and Laurent Halleux, and violist Cecil Bonvalot. (Mr. Pennington, by the way, was one of Miss Shapiro's predecessors at RKO.) Mr. Halleux is the other RKO Londoner. The chamber-music habit is deep-seated in him since he was one of the original members of the Pro-Arte Quartet which made such a great name for itself as a producer of new works by contemporary composers. Mr. Halleux came to Hollywood in 1943 to join the London Quartet, taking the chair of the late Thomas Petre.

Mr. Bonvalot occupies the principal violist's chair at Universal. He comes from Cambridge University, from the Royal College of Music in London, from the Coldstream Guards, from the International and Philharmonic String Quartets of London, and from extensive European concert tours. He has championed the works of English composers - Delius, Bax and Ireland in particular. This is his first year as a confirmed studio player, although he has free-lanced

between concert engagements and teaching appointments since he came to Hollywood six years ago.

This season will witness the debut of another quartet of studio players - a still unchristened group. Its first violinist is Israel Baker, a newcomer to Los Angeles who is free-lancing since he has not yet fulfilled the residence requirements established by the union for studio work. The second violinist is George Barres of the Fox orchestra. The son of a long-time member of the Philharmonic, he slipped gracefully into the pattern of local musical activity and has worked in symphony, studio, radio and chamber groups. The violist is Milton Thomas of Eagle-Lion, one of the younger men who earned a good reputation in just a few seasons of chamber and solo playing in local concert halls, notably in the Music Guild Ensemble which Otto Klemperer conducted in a memorable Bach series. Thomas's playing can be heard on Alco records in Bax's Elegiac Trio and in Hindemith's Sonata for Viola d'Amour.

Willem Vandenburg, the quartet's cellist, had a varied career as soloist, orchestra player and conductor before coming to Hollywood and settling himself in the first cellist's chair at MGM. He is Dutch by birth and studied at The Hague, in Paris and at the Curtis Institute. For seven years he was Stokowski's first cellist in Philadelphia; and subsequently he was first cellist and assistant conductor in San Francisco, conductor of the Sacramento and San Jose symphony orchestras, and first cellist in the Hollywood Bowl and Janssen orchestras. He also has recorded for Alco-- Grieg's Sonata in A-minor. This fall he joins the faculty of the new Los Angeles University, teaching conducting and a master class in cello, as well as leading the University Orchestra.

Mr. Vandenburg is only one of many string players who have a real interest in conducting. Among them is Felix Slatkin, concert-master of the Fox orchestra. He was a Zimbalist pupil at Curtis and a member of the symphony orchestras of St. Louis, Philadelphia and Hollywood Bowl. The Fox composers, (like those at Warners where he used to be concertmaster) rarely miss an opportunity to write effective solo passages for him; there are several brief but telling ones in CAPTAIN FROM CASTILLE and FOREVER AMBER. It was during the war that he had his best opportunities for conducting, as a member of the Santa Ana AAF orchestra. His assignments here were mostly to conduct radio shows and the Tiomkin scores for AAF films. Last fall he conducted some exciting works for the Beverly Hills Philharmonic Society. His conducting, like his violin playing, is broad, expressive and very rhythmic.

Mark Levant of the Society orchestra is another concertmaster with strong leanings toward conducting. He had been one of the top men in the music business in New York before coming to Hollywood, having been associated with Loew's for thirteen years as well as having been concertmaster at the Radio City Music Hall, for the New York City Symphony and for the Metropolitan Opera. His Hollywood career began at Universal where he was both concertmaster and conductor - - but not simultaneously. In a latter role he conducted scores for the Sherlock Holmes films. Since coming to the Society orchestra he has found time for free-lance conducting - mostly for film scores by Dimitri Tiomkin and Michel Michelet.

Manuel Compinsky, one of Mr. Levant's colleagues in the Society orchestra, has recently organized the Pacific Sinfonietta which can be heard on Alco records in music by Bach and Toch. Some years earlier he had conducted the Los Angeles Pops Orchestra - unfortunately a war casualty. But the baton is secondary to the violin, which he had studied with Auer and Ysaye and later played in the London and NBC orchestras. Together with his brother Alec (a free-lance cellist) and his sister Sara (pianist and teacher) he works diligently in the Compinsky Trio, which has been prominent for many years in Los Angeles chamber-music circles. The trio has recorded for Alco and has been heard regularly over the radio in an extensive repertoire of classic and contemporary works.

Henry Svedrofsky of Eagle-Lion's violin section was for many years assistant conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and appears frequently as conductor of the Standard Hour's west-coast Sunday broadcasts. Nathan Abas, also a violinist, played for many years in the San Francisco Symphony and conducted the WPA orchestra there. Nowadays he plays in the orchestra at Republic, teaches, is a partner in the music-publishing firm of Delkas and has conducted the Beverly Hills Philharmonic. Cyril Towbin of RKO's violin section has just organized a string orchestra which will make its debut this season.

A special group among Hollywood musicians are the instrumentalist-conductor-educators, men who play in the studios and devote their leisure hours to the training of young musicians. Perhaps the most famous of these is Peter Meremblum, Paramount violinist. He is an Auer pupil with considerable orchestral experience under Koussevitsky, Schneevoigt and Stokowski - experience which he is now transmitting to the teen-age youngsters who compose the Meremblum Junior Symphony. Under his shrewd and knowing guidance, this youth orchestra has not only earned appearances in several films but has also been a training school for many of the younger men and women who have now taken their places in studio orchestras.

The Bronson Symphony Club is another training group. Every Sunday morning from October to July it meets in the music hall of City College to study the symphonic repertoire under the guidance of Ilya Bronson, a free-lance cellist. The hundred players include both students and professionals, and many of the finest studio performers made their first acquaintance with symphonic literature under Mr. Bronson's instruction. He himself graduated from the conservatories of Odessa and Leipzig. For seventeen years he played in the Philharmonic and Hollywood Bowl orchestras, and has been guest conductor for both on many occasions.

Third of the conductor-educators is Julian Brodetsky, violinist in the Columbia orchestra. He is a graduate of the Petrograd Conservatory; and he taught violin and chamber music at the Riga Conservatory. He came to America to join the San Francisco Symphony in 1921, and later came to Los Angeles to play under Rodzinski. Studio work was at first an incidental part of his activity, but it became his main occupation when he discovered that it allowed him free time to develop his scheme for training young people in chamber music. The Brodetsky Ensemble is an augmented string quartet of approximately 30 players; its repertoire is mainly that for four stringed instruments although on occasion it has been extended to the literature for string orchestra. But whatever the repertoire, the style is consistently that of chamber music. This means that Mr. Brodetsky makes his youngsters play with purity of intonation, technical exactitude, unanimity of vibrato - striving always for the perfection of performance that is often by-passed in orchestral playing in favor of over-all effectiveness. Until the war deprived the ensemble of a large share of its personnel, a half-dozen concerts were given each season. Readjustments are now being made, and it is hoped that the Ensemble will resume its concert activities this year.

Another group of artists consists of those who prefer solo performances to chamber playing - although there is no sharp line of demarcation here. One such is Adolph Kodolfsky, violinist at RKO. In spite of his Slavic name he is English-born, a pupil of the Belgian Ysaye and the Bohemian Sevcik, and was for four years a member of the Canadian Hart House Quartet. Besides being that kind of an internationalist, he must also be rated as a musicologist since he discovered seven unpublished concertos of C. P. E. Bach which he introduced in a broadcast with Wanda Landowska. The same antiquarian interests led him to play, last spring in Los Angeles, the American premiere of some violin sonatas by Heinrich von Biber, the 17th-century German composer and virtuoso. But he is no dry scholar; a pioneering spirit lured him to Alaska early this year where he broke the ice as the first concert artist to make a tour of that territory.

Kurt Reher of Fox is one of the truly great soloists working in the studios. He completed his studies under Emanuel Feuermann at the Berlin Hochschule and then returned to Los Angeles to join the Philharmonic where he played for twelve years, the last three as principal. He is now beginning his third year at Fox. Studio work has fortunately not interfered with his concertizing. One of the stalwarts of the cooperative Evenings on the Roof, he has performed Kodaly's massive Sonata for cello solo three times in a half-dozen seasons, besides numerous works of the classic repertoire such as sonatas by Brahms and Beethoven and Schubert, and in several chamber groups. On records he can be heard in Hindemith's Sonata for cello solo (Alco).

Another fine cellist is Eleanor Aller Slatkin of Warners, who is already familiar to readers of Film Music Notes through the stories that have appeared here on her performance of the Korngold Cello Concerto in DECEPTION.

The name of Toscha Seidel is of course familiar to all concert-goers. This illustrious pupil of Auer, Glazounov and Liadoff, now heads the violin section at Paramount. For many years one of the top-notch stars of the concert stages of Europe and the Americas and Australia, he settled in Hollywood shortly before the war broke out in Europe; and after Pearl Harbor he joined the navy as a bandsman, serving in the famous San Diego outfit. Now, in addition to his studio work, he teaches at the Los Angeles Conservatory.

The list could be continued in this manner almost indefinitely, for the studio string players number nearly 250. A few tabloid accounts will have to suffice for some of the others, and the author's apologies for the omission of the rest.

- HAROLD AYRES:** Violinist, Paramount. Formerly concertmaster with Minneapolis, Janssen and Hollywood Bowl orchestras.
- ALEXANDER BORISOFF:** Cellist, MGM. Educated in Russia and Germany. Odessa Symphony, Odessa Art Quartet, principal with Los Angeles and Hollywood Bowl symphonies. Has composed for cello, quartet, orchestra.
- LEON FLEITMAN:** Principal violist, Paramount. Graduate of Petrograd Conservatory. Many European orchestras; first viola Cleveland Symphony and NBC Symphony in New York; NBC Quartet, soloist with ABC Symphony.
- FRANK KUCHYNKA:** Bass, MGM. Graduate of Prague Conservatory. Bohemian National Orchestra, New York Symphony under Damrosch, Minneapolis, San Francisco.
- KOLIA LEVIENNE:** Principal cellist, Republic. Graduate Leipzig and Petrograd Conservatories. Played under Nikisch, Glazounov, Orloff, Tcherpnine; and with Careno, Bori, Pavlova, Chaliapin; international concert tours.
- DAN LUBE:** Concertmaster, Warners. Scholarship student at Juilliard and Chicago Musical College; Berlin Hochschule. Concert-master Chicago Little Symphony, Chicago Little Symphony, Chicago Theatre, NBC; Former concert-master, Par. Col.
- ANTON MAASKOFF:** Violinist, Republic. Graduate Royal College Music, Manchester. Soloist with London, Halle, Scottish, Vienna and other European orchestras. Faculty University of Southern California Music School; member Hancock Ens.
- ALEXANDER MURRAY:** Concertmaster, Republic. McCormack String Quartet ten years; Penstemur Trio; West Coast recitals; soloist Hollywood Bowl; concertmaster Janssen and Kansas City symphonies.
- ERNO NEUFELD:** Concertmaster, Universal. Graduate Liszt Academy (Budapest) and Curtis Institute; pupil of Hubay and Flesch. Soloist many European orchestras. Has played many radio network programs and in most of major studios.
- LOU RADERMAN:** Concertmaster, MGM. Scholarship pupil of Kneisl, graduate of Damrosch School. Volpe and Russian symphony orchestras; radio with Frank Black and Kostelanetz; Victor Recording Orchestras. Acted role of Mendelssohn in the MGM short on that composer.
- ABRAHAM WEISS:** Principal violist, Society orchestra. Graduate San Francisco Conservatory; advanced study with Primrose and Dounis. Los Angeles and Hollywood Bowl orchestras ten years; frequent soloist with chamber groups.

(To be continued)

HOLLYWOOD'S BOY CHOIRS

What music can do to the savage breast has never been any secret, and it is equally well known that topping all other forms in efficacy, is the boy choir. There is something about the innocent young voices that moves the most worldly listener and often reduces sentimental souls to gentle tears. After the coming of sound to the screen, movie-makers were not long in availing themselves of a medium of such power. Boy choirs proved to be essentially fitted for screen work since their particular tonal quality records extremely well and their pictorial appeal is unfailling. Producers found that there were two excellent sources of supply for their demand, the St Luke's Choristers and the Mitchell Boy-Choir.



St Luke's Choristers

St. Luke's Choristers of Long Beach, California, were organized in 1930 as the choir of St Luke's Episcopal Church under the leadership of William Ripley Dorr. With Mr. Dorr's training, the boys develop a distinct style of singing that has built up a many-voiced choir, with an unusually fine alto section. Their sound musicianship allows them to learn readily and usually only two ninety-minute rehearsals a week are needed. The boys' health, schooling and recreation are most carefully supervised, with a resultant scholastic standing and general morale that is markedly high. Discipline is reduced to a minimum by entrance requirements that weed out boys who might become troublesome. Being easy to work

Concert Hall scene in SONG OF LOVE

with as well as capable accounts for the Chorister's appearance in almost eighty pictures, "The Corn is Green", "Our Vines Have Tender Grapes", "Bells of St Mary's" and "Song of Love", among them. The subject matter of a picture must be acceptable to Mr. Dorr before the choir can be engaged, and they may not sing popular music. In recent years the Choristers have made recordings and their albums of carols and hymns have been widely successful. No outside activity, however, interferes with each Sunday's singing at St Luke's church. Mr. Dorr has proved in the program he has set up for his young charges, his belief in their motto - "BETTER MUSIC, BETTER BOYS". Their considerable earnings are handled in a contract between their parents and Mr. Dorr that has proved completely satisfactory.

St. Brendan's Church has given Hollywood another important boy choral group, the Robert Mitchell Boy-Choir. (see front cover). The two choirs have certain resemblances. Both have continued to be primarily organizations of church singers, as they began. Both are under the direction of leaders whose chief interest lies in perfecting them. It is to be expected that these two musicians vary somewhat in their methods. Mr. Mitchell believes in constant rehearsal. If there is no studio assignment, the boys spend four hours in the Hollywood Professional School in the morning and three hours rehearsing in the afternoon. One of their busy days include a High Mass, a studio appearance and a radio program. Under Mr. Mitchell's system, his well-trained lads have always ready a repertoire of amazing variety. He not only teaches the boys to sing Swing, but makes arrangements himself, with lively interesting results. The choir is inter-denominational, and any boy who meets entrance requirements at the frequent auditions, may become a member. As a recreational and self-disciplinary measure, Mr. Mitchell has organized the boys into a Scout Troop. Working in films like "Going My Way", "The Jolson Story", or their current "The Bishop's Wife" has a special pleasure. There are material profits, too. Like the Choristers, the boys are paid according to the Screen Actors Guild, and their earnings are often enough for their later education.

ODD MAN OUT

by William Alwyn

The first thing I knew about Odd Man Out was the arrival of the book by post with a note from Carol Reed to say that he thought this was the subject he was looking for - - what did I think? I had worked with Carol before on the two war pictures, The Way Ahead and The True Glory and we had often talked of the ideal picture we should like to make with music playing an essential part in the story. Well, here it was - - I read it - - the novel was magnificent - - and the scope for music obvious. By a strange chance only two days before, I had returned from a visit to Belfast - the wet - wintry November Belfast of the story - - the very city and the very month in which the tale was set. My first job was to sketch out a theme for the central character of the story. I played it to Carol at his flat - - while he paced up and down the room, visualizing "Johnny's Walk."



James Mason as Johnny

For the moment he was Johnny MacQueen, the hunted chief of an illegal organization, mortally wounded and struggling through the city to inevitable death. I made a first quick orchestration and from Carol Reed's mind the film character of Johnny sprang into being and James Mason walked and stumbled through the long weeks of production to the final great climax of the finished picture, in time to the slow and relentless rhythm of the music.

Here then is a film in which the music was conceived even before it went into production - - it is also a picture in which the music starts from the very first flicker on the screen. Let me explain - - just before a film begins, you are shown the censor's certificate. The cinema organist usually accompanies this. Then there's a lot more bits and pieces to do with the renting organization and so on, including two big bangs on a gong for J. ARTHUR RANK PRESENTS.

I was very anxious that the right atmosphere of the picture should be established at the earliest possible moment, and at the suggestion of Muir Mathieson (who so brilliantly directed the music), we took the unusual course of starting the music on the censor's certificate and even made the two gong beats take their rightful place in the score.

To me, it is of first importance that the musical score of a film should be conceived as a dramatic whole - - that first, as the director shapes his picture to a climax, in the same way the composer should shape his music. In Odd Man Out this was essential. However emotional and exciting were the individual scenes, I had to keep in mind the slow and steady build to the climax of the film in the last reel. This was achieved by a gradual increase in the texture of the scoring - a building up of orchestral sonorities.

Odd Man Out gave me many opportunities for musical characterization, for example the music for Shell, the little man with the bowler hat and budgerigars and the promise of a precious particle of faith. You may notice, when you see the film, how cleverly the sound effects have been woven into the texture of the picture. Great credit for this goes to Harry Miller, who built up a wonderful sound track - a track, which for once does not interfere with or obliterate the music. Like everything else in the film, Carol Reed's direction is immaculate to the last detail. Another point - - there is very little music lost behind dialogue - - every note tells. From this moment right to the end of the picture, music takes control of the scene - - to Johnny's most poignant meeting with Kathleen and his last walk to his death.

T eaching P ossibilities in C urrent F ilms

by

Stanlie McConnell

REHEARSAL

16 mm film produced by Leslie Roush Productions for The Bell Telephone Co., featuring Ezio Pinza, Blanche Thebom, Donald Voorhees and The Bell Telephone Orchestra. Available free, at their local offices. Running time 24 minutes.

The rehearsal is in session as the film opens. The conductor and the orchestra, attired for work, are diligently perfecting the opening number of the forthcoming broadcast.

Overture to the Bartered Bride

Vivacissimo

Smetana



Stopping the orchestra, Mr. Voorhees tells the strings that the fifth measure past letter C must be played non legato. A string part is shown as a player marks his music. The rehearsal continues and we hear a major part of this Overture. During this time Mr. Pinza enters the rear of the studio. Dismissing the orchestra for a rest period Mr. Voorhees and Mr. Magill confer with Mr. Pinza as to the tempo, interpretation and timing of his first song.

L'Ultima Canzone

Allegro

Tosti



M'han det - to che do - ma - ni, Ni - na, vi fa - te spo - sa,
'Tis whis-pered that to - mor - row Ni - na your troth you plight,

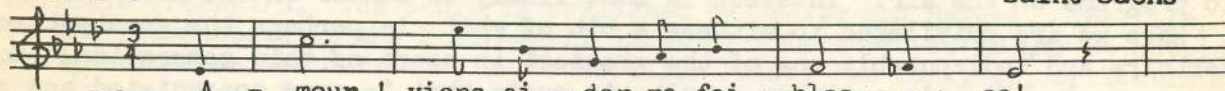
Satisfied, Mr. Voorhees suggests Mr. Pinza sing the second stanza. "That's one-fifty, I think that will be fine for us," says Mr. Magill, who has timed the song.

Agreeing they should rehearse his announcement, Floyd Mack steps to the microphone and reads: "Blanche Thebom sings now a dramatic aria from Saint-Saens opera Samson and Delilah. It occurs in the scene where Delilah summons the power of love to help her betray Samson. Miss Thebom sings "Ah love help me in my weakness;"

Amour, viens aider ma faiblesse

Moderato

Saint-Saens



A - mour ! viens ai - der ma fai - bles - - se!
Ah - love help me in my - weak - - ness!

Mr. Magill interrupts saying, "We're O.K. on balance. Why not move down to the last part and save Miss Thebom some singing?" Mr. Pinza who has been enjoying the aria joins Miss Thebom for their duet. "Our evening now takes a romantic turn," reads the announcer, "as we present both of our guest artists in a selection by Mozart. It is the charming duet from the first act of his famous opera Don Giovanni. In it the Don proposes marriage to the hesitant Zerlina.

La ci darem la mano

Mozart

Andante

p Là ci da - rem la ma - no, là mi di - rai di sì;
Give me thy hand, oh fair - est, Whisper a gen - tle "Yes,"

After the commercial by Tom Shirley the concluding number is announced: "One of the songs which Ezio Pinza does exceptionally well is Flegier's Le Cor - the song of the Hunters Horn. In this he tells the tale of a hunter who imagines he hears horsemen pursuing a stag through the moonlit forest with the sound of the horn echoing like a voice."

Le Cor

Flegier

Allegro

mf J'ai-me le son du cor, le soir, au fond des bois,
I love the sound-ing horn, at eve, in for - est far,

During this song the sign on the wall changes from "Rehearsal" to "On the Air". The clock reads 9:24. The participants now in evening dress are performing before a studio audience. At the conclusion of his song, Mr. Pinza acknowledges the applause, sharing it with Miss Thebom and Mr. Voorhees. The film ends with the familiar theme that weekly closes the Telephone Hour.

- - - - -

Valuation- The Educational Review Committee of the National Film Music Council were unanimous in their praise of the sound of this film. Screened under favorable conditions, in a projection room at New York University, they found it to be of such quality as to make its showing an artistic and completely satisfying musical experience. High praise indeed for the 16 mm. Under less favorable conditions the music was still inspirational. REHEARSAL is filmed in a natural straight forward manner with a gratifying absence of arty photography. This combined with the informal atmosphere of its setting makes a plausible and interesting background for its fine music. It is indeed a welcome contribution.

Educational and Cultural Possibilities, Through experimentations this film has been found to interest both the musically young and untutored and the experienced. It is ideal for any group interested in music or radio, and suitable for those merely wanting to be entertained. The music, of the best of classical literature is also universal in its appeal. Children as young as the fourth grade found it very much to their liking. In the hands of the expert it can be an excellent teaching tool offering innumerable leads such as an interest in one or all of the operas represented, the difference between art and operatic songs, Pinza's skillful use of his half and full voice, a comparison of different types of voices, the success story and art of Miss Thebom, stage presence and manners, rehearsal and broadcasting procedures, and very important, an incentive to listen to one of the best radio programs on the air. Interest is most likely to center on the duet from Don Giovanni. Here we are privileged to witness a bit of what is perhaps the greatest role in Pinza repertoire and undisputably one of the greatest in opera of this generation. Mozart's melodic measures plus Pinza's artistry results in music that is once appreciated and enjoyed. Nor is it beyond the reach of most for what is more simple and singable than this duet's final section.

The Film Program of A. T. and T., based upon public interest, at present includes a music film every two years. The company considered publishing a guide for this film but abandoned the idea because of insufficient demand. What do you feel is necessary to insure such a films most effective use? They would appreciate your opinion. This review endeavors to present information we think will be useful. Lack of space prohibits including additional materials such as translation of the songs and short biographies of the artists.

16 mm FILMS NEWS DEVELOPMENTS

The problem of film evaluation can be approached from several directions. A most obvious viewpoint to seek is that of the school-room music teacher. One is impressed by the divergence of opinion among them, which however is appreciably narrowed when comments are invited from teachers viewing a film together. Classroom and projector management are immediate to the teacher and capable of some direction and control by her.

Now what is the general quality of classroom showings? In the writer's opinion, based on conferences with visual education experts, and general observation of film usage in schools, it is very poor. On the average it is in no way comparable to the standard phonograph in the home or the movie at the commercial theatre, or even to many of the other various visual aids used in the school room. Too often the in-coming class stumbles into the room over wires and speakers. Film-readiness is achieved above and around preliminary checks on speaker, screen or lighting conditions. Follow-up likewise is often done to the accompaniment of a film re-wind or breakdown of equipment. The classroom visitor is often acutely aware of improper balance of sound frequencies from the speaker, of excess time lag between sight and sound, of light streaks, blurred or fluttering images, or unnecessary shifting of volume and frequency response by the operator. The typical classroom often contains acoustical difficulties which the best of film and projection equipment can never overcome. The concerned teacher is referred to a number of manuals and publications available which suggest the fine points of handling film equipment.

A word is in order in regard to the use of care and skill in leading the group into and away from film. This will be dictated by the physical conditions for showing the film. The bridging of the gap between class discussions or teacher comment and the opening frames of the film is as critical as guiding a general discussion. Likewise, emerging from a film need not be a rude awakening but a logical or psychological transition from one type of observation and study into a related activity.

The National Film Board of Canada has issued a collection of Christmas carols in a 16 mm short that runs eight minutes. O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL -- WHAT CHILD IS THIS -- JOY TO THE WORLD and SILENT NIGHT are well presented by the Bell Singers under Dr. Leslie Bell. Quaintly simplified animated drawings illustrate the carols, and are particularly attractive in Kodachrome. The film is also available in black and white. Information may be had from the distributors, Sterling Films, 1186 Broadway, New York, or the National Film Board of Canada, 620 Fifth Ave., N. Y.

INSTRUMENTS OF THE ORCHESTRA. Both the score and the recordings of the music, Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell, composed by Benjamin Britton for this film, are now available. The records are Columbia Masterworks MM 703, The Young Persons Guide to the Orchestra, Sir Malcolm Sargent conducting the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. The score is published by Boosey and Hawkes. The film, reviewed and recommended in the March-April issue of FILM MUSIC NOTES may be obtained from British Information Services, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, 20, or Eastin Pictures, 707 Putman Blvd, Davenport, Iowa. Three twelve-inch records, \$4.00

Information on published music and records available used in motion pictures, can be obtained by writing the National Film Music Council, 250 East 43rd Street, New York City, 17, New York.

The New York Preview Committee is busy previewing 16 mm films and hopes to have some interesting films, suitable for school, club and church use to list in the next issue of FILM MUSIC NOTES. We welcome inquiries on the needs of such films by our readers.

CURRENT FILMS

Colorful periods and settings in recent films have been emphasized by their scores. Gypsy tunes were sung effectively by Murvyn Vye and Marlene Dietrich with a chorus, in Paramount's Golden Earrings. Victor Young used gypsy musician Bela Schaefer as advisor. Sweet Marie, Just a Song at Twilight and similar popular turn-of-the-century songs add flavor to Max Steiner's gay score for Life with Father (Warner Brothers). Frank Skinner has a hand in the dramatic impact of Universal's Ride the Pink Horse, where Robert Montgomery and some sinister characters meet in Mexico. A moody score by Daniele Amfitheatrof intensifies the dark atmosphere of another Universal melodrama-- The Lost Moment. Victorian and Venetian this time. It is based on Henry James' "The Aspern Papers". And for lighter hearted entertainment there is Rene Clair's Man About Town, with Maurice Chevalier showing how the French made movies in the early 1900's. George Van Parys supplied the proper Parisian melodies and musical background.

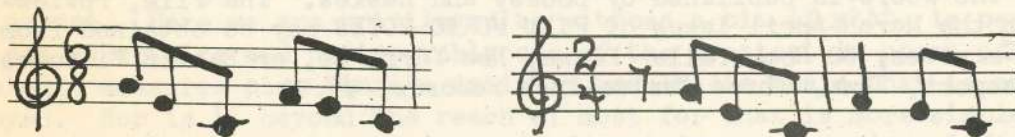
THE BISHOP'S WIFE.. RKO Radio: Cary Grant, Loretta Young. Directed by Henry Koster. Musical Director, Emil Newman, Vocal Arr. Charles Henderson.

BODY AND SOUL.. United Artists: John Garfield, Lilli Palmer. Directed by Robert Rossen. Both scores by Hugo Friedhofer.

Two current works by Hugo Friedhofer, The Bishop's Wife and Body and Soul maintain for this composer the position he earned with his Best Years music. Of the two, considered here, I felt that Body and Soul, with its flashback construction and frequent use of montage, offered more opportunity for composition of incisive and vigorous (and, to my ear, interesting) music than The Bishop's Wife whose lengthy script requires an accompaniment full of whimsical Mickey Mouse effects. On the credit side, Mr. Friedhofer's thematic materials are distinctive and ingratiating, and he employs them to fit many different contexts. Here are three such fragments from the Bishop's Wife. It should be interesting for the careful listener to observe how many times they or their variants occur during the course of the film.



Body and Soul is even more rewarding in this respect. Apart from extensive use of the title song, one element, much simpler than those quoted above, is made to serve as the germ of several scherzando montage backgrounds:



The passages thus developed have a certain quality of completeness--almost as if the picture had been cut to fit the sound track, instead of the other way about. Such a procedure should, I think, be most helpful to composers in cases where timing of action and dialogue are not critical. In The Bishop's Wife, the action dictates a large part of the music, and, where this happens, corn abounds. The orchestra is forced help to slam doors and to assist in the performance of Cary Grant's miracles (strings, high, tremolo, with celesta, or, sometimes, glockenspiel). This practice is not only redundant, but tends to increase the

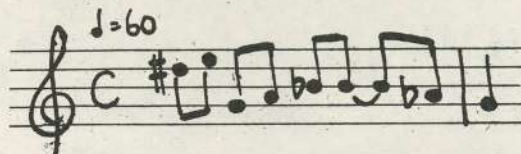
picture's effect of preciousity and archness. Voices are effectively introduced in the score in the opening sequence (Hark, the Herald Angels Sing) and later as part of the action in an arrangement in the Fred Waring manner of an anthem by Gounod called O Sing to God. These chores are executed efficiently enough by the Mitchell Boychoir. In this same scene, the Hammond Organ is employed in an attempt to imitate the harmonium shown on the screen, and in another, to mimic the organ in the nave of the church. Apart from the use of this make-shift, one may object to seeing what seems to be a fairly live room, at the same time hearing sounds as they might be heard inside a padded cell.

W. H.

GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT.. 20th Century-Fox: Gregory Peck, Dorothy Mc Guire. Directed by Elia Kazan. Music by Alfred Newman. Orchestral Arrangements, Ed Powell.

Alfred Newman's music for Gentleman's Agreement is quite ordinary, the more noticeably because the picture is so distinguished in most other respects. There is a certain negative virtue in the fact that music is used here very sparingly, but when it does occur (with the titles, in the few seconds preceding the final clinch, and on one or two occasions at dinner in between) it sounds perfunctory and trite. The title music, which should - in the manner of an overture - give some impression of the material to be dealt with, is merely a specimen of the David Rose-Ray Block school, possibly intended to convey how much Gregory Peck loves Dorothy McGuire, a matter which is not really the principal burden of the picture. Also, in connection with scene-setting, when the locale is to be New York, I hope that composers in the future will use something other than:

W. H.



NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.. Universal-International; British; Derek Bond, Sir Cedric Hardwicke. Directed by Cavalcanti. Music by Lord Berners.

Although the cutting-room appears to have been quite merciless with Lord Berners' score for Nicholas Nickleby, enough of it remains to be a great help to the picture as well as to testify to a considerable talent. The style of the music is brilliant and the orchestration lavish -- reminiscent occasionally of Richard Strauss, but entirely without that composer's characteristic soggy romanticism. Lord Berners writes always with a smile and a wink, and his gracious and winning presence in this fine film is most welcome. His name should appear much more often in the credits than it does.

W. H.

ESCAPE ME NEVER .. Warner Brothers: Errol Flynn, Ida Lupino. Directed by Peter Godfrey. Music by Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

Escape me Never has one of Korngold's richest scores. Indeed, it is one of the best to be heard in any recent film. Perhaps the most interesting of its characteristics is its flexibility. It runs in, out of, and around the picture to give it dimension, taste and drama. At one moment it provides delightful and simple accompaniments to on-screen singing of an old English round or Ida Lupino's humming (which are made even more pleasurable because of their roles in the action of the story rather than specially-staged musical performances), while another time it underlines with strong implication some tragic element in the plot, and still another time rises out of an orchestra pit to accompany a ballet.

This latter function of the score relates, in kind, too much to that series of special film compositions which got their patterns set by the Warsaw Concerto to be entirely satisfying. Or, perhaps it was the ballet choreography itself which was not interesting enough to inspire better treatment (provided, of course the planning went that way). However, there is so much skill and beauty in the rest of the score to make it rate high for the interested listener.

G. F.