



FILM MUSIC NOTES



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FOREWORD:

"Out of the needs of the war, the Motion Picture Industry is enjoying new life and vitality. It is applying itself to the film of fact..the documentary..bringing its talent and its crafts to the important business of disseminating information and to the great task of helping shape a new world immune to the blight of war. When the war ends, we shall have developed a system of world-wide communication through the documentary film. The Government speaks to the American people from the screen and, through the cooperation of the Hollywood Producers and the newsreel editors, picture goers are receiving the kind of information which will better enable them to help win the war." "We believe," said Lowell Mellett, Chief, Bureau of Motion Pictures, Office of War Information, at the Annual Conference of the National Board of Review, "that the motion picture can sustain the national morale in two ways; one, by providing the relaxation of entertainment and, two, by aiding in a basic understanding of why we are fighting and the things we are fighting for."

"MUSIC," says Lyman Bryson, also from O.W.I., "keeps people physically and mentally fit both in the armed forces and in civilian life. Pictures showing the Russian, British and Chinese as well as the American armies, demonstrate the fact that the fighting men are singing their marching songs and singing in their military drill!"

Each year better pictures are being released and music becomes more necessary in establishing the mood and atmosphere of the dramatic action. FILM MUSIC NOTES, the only publication given over exclusively to music in films, brings to you reviews of the best in pictures.

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Those desiring the complete year's file of FILM MUSIC NOTES, Oct., 1942 to May, 1943, (eight issues) may receive them by sending \$1.00 to 6162 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood.

"I have read the recent issues of FILM MUSIC NOTES with considerable interest. This bulletin affords an excellent channel through which much valuable information about music in the motion picture industry may be found, and it serves a definite need in this particular field of musical endeavor. A widespread circulation of FILM MUSIC NOTES should call attention to the already fine accomplishments in this field, and should provoke increased interest in the furtherance of such work.

My best wishes to you for success. Kathleen Davison, National President
Sigma Alpha Iota

SIGMA ALPHA IOTA is a National Professional Music Fraternity with chapters in all the leading universities and schools of music. The requisite for membership is a high standard of excellence in music study. Alumni Chapters are also maintained and with many of the finest musical artists as patron members, the National organization accomplishes much for the cause of music. A cottage is maintained at the Peterborough Colony, N.H., where creative artists may live while composing.

The following article headed "HANDS ACROSS THE COUNTRY" appeared in the October issue of the Hollywood Spectator (Welford Beaton, Editor), written by Abe Meyer.

"Some of the best friends of Hollywood studios musicians can be found among the members of the National Federation of Music Clubs. This fine organization which has organizations in almost all the cities of the United States, has taken an especial interest in motion picture music and the convention held here last year with the Hollywood Bowl concert will long be remembered. Mrs. Grace Widney Mabee, chairman of Motion Picture Division, knows most of the studio musicians personally and her efforts in the advancement of picture music are highly gratifying. The indefatigable Mrs. Mabee is now compiling a MUSICALLY SPEAKING WHO'S WHO IN THE FILMS for distribution among the clubs and schools throughout the country. This volume, which I believe is the first of its kind to be prepared, should prove of great value and interest to the large group of followers of screen music, and we are looking forward to its publication."

Virgil Thomson's score for the Documentary film, THE PLOW THAT BROKE THE PLAINS, has been arranged into a CONCERT SUITE and was played by the Philadelphia Orchestra on the Mutual Net Work on January fourth.

Over 10,000 Victor Record Albums of Miklos Rozsa's Suite from "Jungle Book," with Sabu as narrator, were sold in the first five months. An excellent program for a music club.

Sergei Prokofieff continues active in writing film music. He has just completed scores for "Kotovskiy," a picture of the war of 1918; also for "Partisans in the Ukrainian Steppe," dealing with the present struggle in Russia. He is now working on a two-part historical film, "Ivan the Terrible" in conjunction with Serge Eisenstein. Prokofieff says of his fellow composers, "Some are fighting, arms in hand at the front; others by their militant compositions call for valor and heroism and fight for Victory."

Alexander Tansman, who has recently completed scoring the picture FLESH AND FANTASY for Universal Studios, will appear with the National Symphony in Washington, February third and, also, is to conduct his latest symphony with the Cincinnati Symphony on February fifth.

Eugene Zador, noted Hungarian composer and film orchestrator, had his new Children's Symphony given its premiere by the Philadelphia Orchestra recently - Eugene Ormandy conducting.

Rumors are afloat that Igor Stravinsky will score the Sam Goldwyn picture NORTH STAR.

The Coordinator of INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS announces the first of a series of 16 mm sound films devoted to THE AMERICAS offered free for non-theatrical use. "We are no longer two continents but one Hemisphere - twenty-one liberty loving Republics". AMERICANS ALL - two reels. Write above, 444 Madison Avenue, New York City.

SCREEN MUSIC ASSUMES NEW STATURE

By Nat W. Finston

Head of Music Department, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios

In the days of Beethoven, Liszt, and other great creators of the past, those who gave the world its fine music were allowed to starve quietly in some obscure garret, to be recognized years afterward. But today, largely thanks to the motion picture, this is no longer true. And it is not philanthropy that causes the studios to force pens and contracts onto musicians of every type, from great composers and conductors to the leading dance bands of the day.

Music on the screen is good business. In nearly thirty years of musical association with the screen I have watched music grow. I remember when a theater orchestra had a book of themes for heroes, villains, romance, etcetera, with which to embellish silent pictures. Then better orchestras began to appear, better music, theaters assembled music libraries, and leaders like Roxy, Hugo Riesenfeld and others realized that the public not only liked music, but liked good music.

When I came to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer music had already established itself in the talking picture field. Great scorers like Herbert Stothart had already impressed studio executives with music's value. But, like the talkies themselves, the idea was still in its infancy. I have watched it grow. I have watched as great conductors and composers, at first inclined to scoff, have gradually become interested, and finally, largely convinced by the improvement in recording which makes possible fidelity in presenting great music on the screen, have capitulated to the new state of affairs and come into the fold.

Here at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer today we have Albert Coates, the great symphony and opera conductor and composer, collaborating with Herbert Stothart on the score for Gregory Ratoff's RUSSIA. Jose Iturbi joined us to present music ranging from the Shostakovich United Nations Victory March to "jive" for PRIVATE MISS JONES. We have the eminent symphony composer Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco with us, creating themes for scores. Other great musicians who have composed for us include Dr. Eugen Zador, Daniele Amfitheatrof, Oscar Straus, Jerome Kern. In lighter music we have welcomed Cole Porter and other contemporary operetta creators.

On the popular side, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer today boasts such name bands as those of Duke Ellington, Jimmy Dorsey, Tommy Dorsey, Kay Kyser, Vaughn Monroe, Harry James and others, who figure in our popular types of musicals. The studio owns many valuable operetta properties of the better sort.

Whether grand opera will ever come to the screen except in excerpts of opera sequences cannot be foretold, but operatic arias have figured largely in many of our musicals, such as those starring Kathryn Grayson, such as the present "Strike up the Band," in which she sings the Sempra Libera from "La Traviata," as well as Grofe's "Daybreak" and popular numbers, and Iturbi conducts Meacham's "American Patrol," Rimsky Korsakov's "Capriccio Espagnol" and, on the piano, plays Liszt's Eleventh Hungarian Rhapsody in addition to other musical treats.

In the scoring of dramatic pictures is found a wide opportunity for symphonic music, operatic airs, and classics. These are woven into original composition to fit and embellish dramatic action on the screen. Thus Herbert Stothart used the ancient Palestrinas, music of Shakespeare's period, Tchaikowski's "Romeo and Juliet" fantasy and other famous music in the score of "Romeo and Juliet." He has done the same with all his important scores. Notable among them is his new score for THE HUMAN COMEDY.

(continued on next page)

Bronislaw Kaper, David Snell, Lennie Hayton, and Scott Bradley likewise draw heavily upon the classics, and Georgie Stoll, who handles the popular musical, very often can't resist the temptation to work in music of symphonic caliber when his score permits.

Producers now realize that, while Mr. and Mrs. John Public probably wouldn't take the trouble to go to a symphony, not realizing what it would give them in terms of enjoyment, they absorb symphonic music greedily in their picture scores - and love it. The result is further incursions into the symphonic and classical field with every new picture. Sometimes such music is actually worked into the action of a picture, as the Tchaikowski music was utilized for a dramatic point in "The War Against Mrs. Hadley." Similarly an opera act, worked out by Herbert Stothart from the same composer's Sixth Symphony, was utilized for one of the most dramatic points in "Maytime." Incidentally, this device has opened up the entire field of symphonic literature for new operatic sequences, if we ever run out of existing operas.

The Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer music library, under George Schneider, today includes about two million items. One may find almost any written work. In addition one may find African aboriginal chants, never written until, after being recorded in the jungle, they were transcribed by the studio's research staff; Eskimo songs transcribed in the same manner, Chinese music translated from Oriental to occidental notation.

All this wealth of material is instantly accessible to our composers and scorers. Much of it is used in the form of paraphrases, sometimes counterpoint is worked out for several pieces of material at once. There are no limits to the devices our music creators may go to.

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NOTES FROM MR. LOUIS LIPSTONE - MUSICAL DIRECTOR OF PARAMOUNT
As Interviewed by Margery Morrison

Only as short a time ago as "Fantasia" the music for the better films was generally adapted from the classics or semi-classics. In that way the public, willy-nilly, absorbed much good music as background. "But times have changed," says Louis Lipstone of Paramount. "The music is of growing importance. It is written to fit the mood and situation, expertly synchronized, and enhances the value of the whole production."

We were speaking of the prophecy a year or so ago that the days of the musicals were numbered. Today seven pictures are in production at Paramount where the music is essential and an integral part. First in importance and starting February ninth, is FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS, with Gary Cooper and Ingrid Bergman. To Victor Young comes the honor of scoring this picture and it will be a major achievement in his brilliant record. Nineteen reels must be set to music.

DIXIE will give us the story of Dan Emmett who wrote this irresistible tune. Dorothy Lamour and Bing Crosby are featured and many songs of the period have been written for Bing. Robbins and Rainger collaborated on these before Rainger's untimely death and Joe Lilley of "Jingle Jangle" fame will contribute.

RIDING HIGH, tale of a Dude ranch in Arizona, is one of the most elaborate productions ever undertaken by this studio. Milt Britton and his "crazy" orchestra provide the musical flavor with special and original choruses. Dorothy Lamour sings and dances, playing opposite Dick Powell. Indian maidens with Hollywood glamour, cowboys and girls, officers and gentlemen, will give color to this extravaganza with its background of teepees and tom-toms.

In serious mood and with characteristic music is the story of the nurses on Bataan - SO PROUDLY WE HAIL. Also, for FIVE GRAVES TO CAIRO.

Watch for these scores. They promise to give us something out of the ordinary.

REVIEWS OF CURRENT PICTURES FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF MUSIC INTEREST COMPILED BY THE
MOTION PICTURE COMMITTEES OF HOLLYWOOD AND NEW YORK.

Grace Widney Mabee, Hollywood Chairman, Mme. Adelaide Gescheidt, New York Chairman

HITLER'S CHILDREN, RKO-Radio. Dir: Edward Dmytryk. Musical Dir: Roy Webb
If one were to create a propaganda picture, one might well select such photographs and incidents as are pictured in this grim and forceful drama...unhappily we know that it is all factual. The whole national outlook of the country represented in it has been deliberately and permanently brought about by a perverted psychology, and the problem the picture leaves with us is: how are we going to change this psychology if, and when, we win? The film is well acted throughout and Mr. Webb has written for it a thoughtful and authoritative score. The music cues in from the RKO signature to the Victory (Beethoven's Fifth Symphony) theme; there follow inversions, distortions, and finally transition to a dirge with tramping feet (all this during introduction and credits), and the mood is thus set for the picture. There are some lovely piano sequences in which the action and tempo of the story continue unbroken. The out-of-door music for the picnic in Germany at its best - until interrupted by the incident of the boy undergoing punishment. From this point on, the music is an ominous commentary, skilfully orchestrated for the desired effects. Mature-Family.

THE MEANEST MAN IN THE WORLD, 20th-Fox. Dir: Sidney Lanfield. Music: Emil Newman
This fairly amusing comedy forms a good basis for the talents of the popular Jack Benny. The score is very well and cleverly done. Adaptations are aptly introduced and arranged with the familiar Benny violin signature (Rose in Bloom) running throughout. The Mendelssohn for the scene with the pigeons - the Irish lilt in the policeman's dialogue about exceptions, and similar entertaining comments in appropriate settings, add much to the entertainment value of the whole. Mature-Family.

SHADOW OF A DOUBT, Universal. Dir: Alfred Hitchcock. Musical Dir: Charles Previn
Absorbing, well-constructed, and with all the tension and suspense to be expected in any picture directed by Alfred Hitchcock, this film has a special appeal for the reason that it is projected against a background of wholesome, American family life. Telepathy is also brought momentarily into the picture with good effect. Characterizations throughout are excellently drawn, with Teresa Wright, in particular, giving us a complete emotional gamut, which is never overdrawn, and Joseph Cotten cool and sinister under his assumed charm. In the music Charles Previn has used some very interesting effects. By the clever use of chromatics he has succeeded in projecting the ominous note from the beginning, and the emergence of the Merry Widow Waltz in the introduction is exceedingly well done, as is also its persistence throughout. Suspensions and out-offs help the tension and interest, and frame certain incidents. The piano is used with some exceptionally good effects, setting tempo and discordant moods. This observance of the psychic value of silences, rests (but integrated), and the orchestral possibilities of the piano used in this way lend especial value to Mr. Previn's always skilful direction. Mature-Family.

CHETNIKS, 20th-Fox. Dir: Louis King. Musical Dirs: Hugo Friedhofer, Emil Newman
An arresting presentation of guerrilla warfare in present day Jugoslavia, with the human equation (i.e., the balance of imponderables against a system) its chief interest, and the picture so well constructed that at times the tension is almost unbearable. Dorn, Kosleck, and Basch are especially well cast and Anna Sten is a real acquisition. Right values are displayed in the musical score, with the background subordinated throughout so that one is hardly conscious of it except for subtle warnings and tragic changes of mood. The splendid singing of the men on the march, on the other hand, stands out magnificently by contrast and will long be remembered. Mature-Family.

HAPPY GO LUCKY, Paramount. Dir: Curtis Bernhardt. Music Dirs: Robert Emmett Dolan, Frank Loesser, Jimmie McHugh

With the story nothing more than a frame on which to hang the exaggerated tunes and rhythms beloved of our present day young people, this elaborate musical nevertheless provides good entertainment, with beautiful costumes and lavish settings in Technicolor. The opening is especially delightful, rich in tropical color, native American songs and many original angles and shots. Dick Powell and Mary Martin are a fine team and "Happy Go Lucky" a nice bit of fantasy. Mature-Family.

IMMORTAL SERGEANT, 20th-Fox. Dir: John Stahl. Musical Dir: David Buttolph
Beautifully acted by a competent cast, headed by Henry Fonda, we have, in this film, a convincing representation, set in an unfamiliar locale and with a new motivation. The theme is an interesting and subtle one - that of the character building effect of active service in war. The North African scenes are realistic and harrowing, but the playback consistently used throughout the picture relieves the tension, and only at the end do we see Valentine herself. There are places where the film drags a bit, and the long dialogue between the men near death from starvation and exhaustion, seems stagey and injects a false note in the otherwise generally fine tempo of the performance. Music in the picture occupies an important place (though in general its function is strictly background), and is exceedingly well done. It is typically British in character, with recognizable Irish and Scotch rhythms blended in skilfully throughout, with the sound effects anticipating and perfectly setting the mood for what is to follow. Mature-Family.

THREE HEARTS FOR JULIA, M.G.M. Dir: Richard Thorpe. Musical Dir: Herbert Stothart
Amusing and entertaining comedy, verging on slapstick when the pie enters the sophisticated atmosphere, but abounding in unusual and funny situations. Both Melvyn Douglas and Ann Sothern turn in first rate performances. The music is naturally injected and some pleasing excerpts of popular classics are tastefully presented including snatches of the "Ride of the Valkyries" by Wagner, "Andante Cantabile" by Tchaikovsky, and an especially fine recording of the Rimsky-Korsakov "Sheherazade" with a beautiful violin cadenza. The various groups photograph and play with dignity and skill. Bressart typifies the old-school conductor with emphatic emotional beat, and as usual is a lovable character. The average audience will be delighted with the clever medley of American tunes played for the army, ranging from the "Mocking Bird," to "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree." "Zampa" is used most effectively; the key mounting as Douglas does! "I've Been Working on the Railroad" makes its appearance in the introduction and ties the score together, and the synchronization of music with the orchestra is very good throughout. The production closes with an "Army Caravan Show," depicting a real life incident in our national victory effort which emphasizes the need of good music regularly in Army life. Mature-F.

STAR SPANGLED RHYTHM, Paramount. Dir: George Marshall. Musical Dirs: Robert Emmett Dolan, Johnnie Mercer, Harold Arlen

Modern streamlined vaudeville, with the acts expertly tied together into a gay and, at all times, absorbing spectacle, is this eminently satisfactory picture, as star-spangled as its name implies; replete with unusual shots, amusing situations, and laugh provoking dialogue. Blackouts are introduced to good purpose, and outstanding are the sequences of the mad ride in the jeep; the clever card game; that of the dining car, with Martin and Powell, and the quartet of waiters; the charming Zorina fantasy; Rochester and Dunham and the inimitably spirited Harlem episode; the crazy attempts of Betty Hutton to scale the wall; and last of all the stirring "Old Glory" sequence sung by Bing Crosby in a beautifully effective contrast, providing exactly the right ending to a show which is tops in orchestration, arrangement and balance, and sure to delight any audience which can enjoy nonsense, girls, good acting, and, above all, rhythm. Family.

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AIR FORCE, Warner Bros. Dir: Howard Hawks. Music by Franz Waxman

One of the most powerful pictures yet presented on the screen, AIR FORCE is not a creation in the artistic sense but a graphic historical transcript of epic events. Few can see this film without the feeling of having been on that trip of the B-17 and lived through the horrors of Pearl Harbor, Manila, Wake Island and the Battle of the Coral Sea. And to those of us who stay home it brings, as nothing else could, some realization in the wonders of achievement of our men in aviation. Casting, acting, directing, sound effects and story are of the finest and so beautiful is the photography that many of the shots, especially showing studies of sea, clouds and sky, could be made into a notable series of prints. Franz Waxman's music gives perfect support to the whole. His introduction is heroic, adventurous and anticipatory in mood. The Lincoln Proclamation has a stirring muted background in John Brown's Body - The Battle Hymn of the Republic. Characteristic cut-offs give interesting and mounting suspense, in noble style. Throughout the score the "Song of the Air Force" is dominant in interwoven and effective arrangements. At times the music is a thin expressive thread on just one note; at others, full and arousing; never intrusive but always accentuating the feeling of the listener. Mature-Family.

THE AMAZING MRS. HOLIDAY, Universal. Dir: Bruce Manning. Music: Charles Previn

An excellent vehicle for the popular actress-singer despite the improbability of the story which is cast in the familiar pattern. Photography and direction are good and the music at all times expertly synchronized fits Deanna to perfection, with a sentimental background which is never overdone but sensitive in treatment throughout. Home and domesticity are duly stressed to make the picture one of popular family appeal. The moire background for the titles is subtle and good, with the music striking at once a characteristic note and this is as it should be because Deanna is in a class by herself. Her voice has gained in focus and overtone and the recordings of "Mighty Lak A Rose," "Rockabye Baby" (in Chinese) and "Vissi D'Arte" have distinction. The blend of oriental color and rhythm in the Chinese scenes is well handled with the combination of gongs and low frequencies giving a terrifying effect in the Japanese approach. It is in the tonal release of the cut-offs and the mounting sequences that the horror is built. Family.

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AURORATONE MOTION PICTURE PRODUCTIONS

There is a new medium through which one may find strange scenes of significant spiritual beauty through "seeing" the world's great musical masterpieces in moving color-patterns of light. MUSIC IN COLOR was made possible through the discovery of a young scientist by the name of Cecil Stokes of Hollywood, California. To see these pictures, one experiences the thrill of being bathed in a glorious sea of breathtaking color-patterns which are created by the Auroratone, a scientific instrument which involves the intricate manipulation of musical compositions and light energy, thus making it actually possible to PAINT WITH MUSIC.

The AURORATONE makes visible otherwise invisible color-patterns. These ever-moving are photographed at the time of processing onto motion picture film, the sound which created them is recorded on the film sound track and thus we have available 16 mm kodachrome motion pictures of our favorite musical compositions.

Mr. Stokes has just completed his first motion picture for the United States Treasury Department - THE MOONLIGHT SONATA (the first movement). Compositions of Brahms, Schubert, Debussy, Chopin, Stravinsky, Wagner and many others are now in production and will be available to music clubs, schools and other organizations who love beauty.

Special prints of the "Auroratone Tapestry" series have been made and are en-route to army camps all over the world and to battleships at sea.

Prints will also be made available for organizations at a small charge for handling if a projector and screen are provided. Write FILM MUSIC NOTES for details.

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