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FILM MUSIC NOTES

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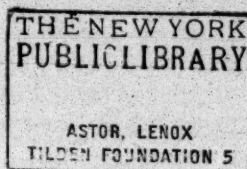
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FOREWORD:

There has been of late no better illustration of the power of music to lift the spirits and to sustain a high patriotism than its skilful use in wartime films. The retention of some of the finest present day composers by the Government and the film industry to score both the documentary and the feature films which have a war theme and the effect on public morale of inspiring scores they have produced are, I believe, a substantiation of the long time contention of the NATIONAL FEDERATION OF MUSIC CLUBS, that Music has a vital place in the war effort.

At our coming Biennial Business Meeting in New York, May 6th to 9th we are to be privileged to see one or more of the finer examples of this musical scoring in a special film showing arranged by our National Chairman of Motion Picture Music, Mrs. Grace Widney Mabee. This has been scheduled for 5:00 P.M. on Saturday, May eighth. I believe it will offer much that is thought-provoking and interesting and I urge as many of our members as possible to attend.

Anne M. Gannett, President
National Federation of Music Clubs

Those of our readers living in and around New York are invited to the showing of above film and may receive further information by calling at headquarters of the Federation, Biltmore Hotel, New York City during National Music Week.

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Those desiring copies of FILM MUSIC NOTES for the past year, from October, 1942 to May, 1943, inclusive, may receive the year's file for one dollar.

NEWS ITEMS.....COMPLENDATIONS

"I have read FILM MUSIC NOTES with the greatest of interest. I believe you have something of real value both to the films and music." Caroline B. Parker, Editor, Church Music, D. Appleton-Century Company.

The Appleton-Century Co. has been assisting the cause of good hymns by furnishing radio and motion picture music departments, copies of their fine hymn books.

ELIJAH, THE PROPHET, a musical drama with music from the oratorio ELIJAH, by Mendelssohn, written by Vida Mulholland and Margaret Hamilton, collaborator, is something we wish to recommend for a film production...a most timely subject.

The Biennial convention of the National Federation of Music Clubs was cancelled this year but a business session will be held in New York during National Music Week. The four National Broadcasting Stations will broadcast certain programs and the usual contests in voice, piano, and violin will be held. The motion picture chairman will arrange a showing of some film which gives emphasis to music.

The Festival of Motion Picture Music held in the Hollywood Bowl during the 1941 Biennial was the first time a demonstration had been given of film music scores without the picture. Critics declared it was one of the most significant events in the history of the Federation and the first such recognition given to the excellent composers of film music. It proved the fact that many film scores are worthy of performance independently and the leading orchestras of the country have recognized this by given performances of such works. Copland's *The City*; Gruenberg's *Fight for Life and Commandos Strike at Dawn*; Thomson's *The Plow that Broke the Plains*; Herrmann's *The Devil and Daniel Webster*; *Symphony Moderne* by Steiner; *Jungle Book* by Rozsa; scores by Prokofieff and Alexander Nevsky, as well as many others have been presented. Excellent music critics have been loud in their praise. This new idiom of music composition is a challenge to the American composer.

Dr. Miklos Rozsa, composer of music for *Jungle Book* and *Jacare* is scoring *FIVE GRAVES TO CAIRO* for Paramount; also, for Columbia, *SOMEWHERE IN SAHARA*.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold is now recording his original score for *DEVOTION*, story of the Bronte sisters, produced by Warner Bros.

Victor Young, the veteran composer at Paramount, has almost completed his original score for *FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS*. Symphonic recording began March 30th, with an orchestra of 75 musicians. Mr. Young is using music from eight different sources in Spain including Catalan, Castillian, Aragonese, Andalusian, Sevillian, Arabic, Gypsy and Moorish, but avoiding use of the generally known Spanish music. In addition to the musical themes given each character, musical themes have been given to chapters in the story to further heighten emotional quality. Two full weeks will be given to the recording, a far longer period than is usually assigned.

Anthony Collins, composer-conductor, born in England attended the Royal Conservatory of Music in London. Among his many compositions are two one act operas, a number of Symphonies, Cantatas, Chamber Music and a large amount of music for schools such as two-part songs and edited classics. He founded and conducted the London Mozart Orchestra and since coming to America has conducted some of the leading orchestras of this country aside from his work in the films. His most recent film, *Forever and a Day*, has received unstinted praise from all music critics. (See review).

Gail Thompson Kubik, head music consultant of the OWI has entered the service and is stationed at Camp Upton. Mr. Kubik is one of our best young American composers whose compositions have been receiving much praise from the critics.

A Visit to the Music Recording Stage at Warner Bros.
by Margery Morrison
Voice Coach, Opera Shorts, Member N.F.M.C. Previewing Committee

Leo Forbstein, Head of the Music Department of Warner Bros., belongs to that fortunate and courageous group of musicians who have made history in the great movie houses. When we say Roxy, Radio City, Rivoli, Rialto, Newman, Grauman - we salute Roxy, Rapee, Riesenfeld, Finston and Forbstein who have pioneered in synchronizing, adapting and directing music for screen and stage spectacles. During a golden period they felt the pulse of the musical public and prescribed its entertainment.

Now Forbstein, as Director of Music at Warners, is surrounding himself with an outstanding group of experienced and cosmopolitan composers and conductors - Steiner, Waxman, Korngold and Deutsch. They are pioneers in a new medium: creating screen music that builds mood, sustains climaxes, determines pace and tempo, that finds a rhythmic and emotional common denominator with the drama and with the photography. Ultra-modern in method and conception, their idiom is now being humanized. The Stravinsky "Fire Bird" first became intelligible to us through the genius of Nijinsky of the Diaghileff Ballet. When translated into fluid motion and dramatized, the huge audiences understood and shared its beauty. So in the EDGE OF DARKNESS (score by Waxman), in MISSION TO MOSCOW (Steiner) unusual chromatic harmonies, suspensions, masterly and deft counterpoint find explanation as the picture proceeds. Our eyes and ears are subtly developing far beyond primary colors, orthodox progressions, "blue" rhythms and theme songs! Nuance, inflection, suggestion enter our comprehension. And how much mental static is eliminated in these days of coordinated production! Long, tedious explanations are out. A few musical bars suggest a long sequence. Kaleidoscopic photography suffices to recall extended scenes. When these results are synchronized you have the streamlined result our present tempo demands.

It was Mr. Forbstein who introduced me to the recording stage at the Warner Studios and to Max Steiner who was rehearsing and recording the final scenes of MISSION TO MOSCOW. It was a most illuminating and thrilling experience...down to the last split second! Unhurried, never didactic but with absolute knowledge of the effect he wishes to obtain, Steiner has innate feeling for balance, color and timing.

A swift glimpse of devastating catastrophe was on the screen with a somber Russian theme as background, then the scene shifted to Madison Square Garden. A huge mass meeting - Walter Huston, as our Ambassador to Russia, Joseph E. Davies, making a calm, authoritative speech, music in low frequencies. Vigorous opposition was registered in high frequencies, discords short and sharp, as various dissidents rose to their feet. Use of close-ups gave an immediate atmosphere of tense excitement. This scene had evidently been timed and rehearsed and was being recorded.

Then began a rehearsal of music alone. National themes in brief counterpoint battling for supremacy, the blare of "Es braustein Ruf" with the steady swing of Russian rhythm winning to a suspended climax out of which "Taps" emerges. There follows, briefly, a noble, sustained theme and a chorale finale.

What would be the pictured sequence? Kaleidoscopic glimpses of vast forces in motion, supreme councils, windstorm, fleeting figures, great spaces, all types of warfare, aftermath of battle, "Taps" and its symbol, and the chorale. Truly Russian in its floating and sustained power, it has not been surpassed in movie music. The law of the physical world is gravitation; but the law of singing is levitation! Herein its potential power in a devastated world.

You have reports of Waxman's score for EDGE OF DARKNESS elsewhere in this bulletin. Now Hitler has forbidden singing of "The Mighty Fortress" in Norway!

I hope to tell you later of the Korngold scores for DEVOTION (Bronte Sisters) and for THE CONSTANT NYMPH. You may also be interested in the arrangement or disposition of the orchestra for balanced recording.

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

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

ASSIGNMENT IN BRITTANY, M.G.M. Dir: Jack Conway. Musical Dir: Lennie Hayton

An exciting war drama, excellently photographed and beautifully acted under expert direction, with an espionage angle giving added interest. The film is beautifully balanced to keep the suspense mood at a high pitch, with plenty of action, intrigue and movement, all building up to a superb climax. The accompanying music at once strikes a somber, presaging and adventurous note. The lack of it in many sequences significantly emphasizes the dramatic clashing of steel, the stealthy movement of men and equipment which definitely points up the necessity of surprise attack in the present conflict. But it is used, too, to underline emotionally poignant scenes and is well developed for mood and action, courage, valor and gallantry. The oriental color for the first episode is well handled. The orchestration is interesting; never too heavy; often there is an effect of transparency. Suggestions of the Marseillaise weave it together, culminating in the scene of the shooting. Au Clair de la Lune and other French melodies appear, keeping the elemental flavor. The editing of this picture is especially to be commended, as each shot covers a long angle of the story. The interiors, the Brittany landscape, and atmosphere seem authentic; the little villages really come to life. Mature-Family.

THE DESPERADOES, Columbia. Dir: Charles Vidor. Music: M. W. Stoloff

Though a far better than average Western, well constructed, and expertly cast and directed, the real star of the picture is Technicolor! So beautiful is the photography, it overshadows everything else. Melodrama, action and even the priceless comedy supplied by Edgar Buchanan as Uncle Willie are subordinate to it. The authentic background of southern Utah is breathtaking in its magnificence and lifts the value of the picture to great heights. Mr. Stoloff's music is a further important contribution to a picture which can be seen and will be enjoyed by everyone. F.

EDGE OF DARKNESS, W.B. Dir: Lewis Milestone. Music: Franz Waxman

Powerful, grim and stark in the extreme is this tragedy concerning the realities of war in a Norwegian fishing village, but it sounds a triumphant note in the faith and courage resulting from the inner strength of a democratic people as depicted here. From the standpoint of photographic composition, angles, depth and balance make instantaneous impressions of mood, pace and color. The opening shots are superb; swirling mists from far above descend to the level of the fjords, with the evil ships emerging far below. The rhythm here is sensational. An expert cast makes the film live under our eyes and the music score is a noteworthy achievement, ranking high with any topnotch score presented at any time. In establishing and maintaining mood it synchronizes meticulously with action and theme, bringing to dramatic heights the simple faith of the villagers by elaborating a church hymn (A Mighty Fortress is Our God) into a symphony of formal musical structure with gigantic theoretic precision. It is an outstanding example of music's importance in sustaining emotional development. The combination of this Reformation hymn, the Norwegian National Anthem, and a Wagnerian ideology which typifies the Nazi regime, provide thematic material which is presented with great originality, strength and suspense. They are linked by some beautiful string sequences for sentiment and vitalized by brutal recurring accents which grow more ominous and formidable until the pattern culminates in the Siegfried funeral march. Mature-Family.

Sigmund Spaeth comments: "Waxman's music for this horror film has plenty of stark realism, but it still remains properly subdued, with some of its best effects produced by soft discords in the low strings. He uses the theme of Martin Luther's A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD for the continuous development of atmosphere, and his rhythms often suggest the Chopin Funeral March. When the downfall of the brutal Nazis is at last assured, the composer breaks out with savage satire in a direct quotation from Siegfried's Death in Wagner's Twilight of the Gods. The entire score is modest and restrained, in the best traditions of screen music, but it delivers its message with completely convincing power."

HARRIGAN'S KID, M.G.M. Dir: Charles F. Riesner. Music: David Snell

A typical American story, unpretentious, but excellent family fare. Frank Craven and William Gargan are good foils for each other and Bobby Readick plays a difficult role with understanding, conviction and ability. Instead of a "Dead End" gang we have a lively group of potential jockeys winning their spurs in a hard but professional way. Good sportsmanship is stressed in this film, which gives us an inside view of the great sport of racing, from its finest angle. The music steps off with verve and speed, and it has youthful appeal and is well balanced throughout. Family.

HELLO, FRISCO, HELLO, 20th-Fox. Dir: B.Humberstone. Music: C.Henderson & E. Newman
This colorful musical (to be shown in San Francisco under the title of "Hello, San Francisco, Hello") can be recommended as sprightly and entertaining for the average audience. Considering that the story is laid in the old Barbary Coast of San Francisco, it is a remarkably clean and wholesome one, and in it Alice Faye with a slenderness almost exceeding that of the proverbial willow wand, is appealing and lovely, while Jack Oakie brightens and speeds up the entire picture. The old song favorites are well chosen, though by no means all of the period presented. The plot is nicely studded with laughs and pathos and the nostalgic flavor of the music should prove a good asset. Photography of the film in Technicolor is superb. Mature-Family.

HIT PARADE OF 1943, Republic. Dir: Albert S. Rogell. Musical Dir: Walter Scharf
Elaborately staged, pleasantly blended variety musical with a slightly better-than-average plot. Its three orchestras (Count Basie, Freddy Martin and Ray McKinley) and its many hit tunes tailored to fit them will be enjoyed by the younger generation and those who relish the modern idiom in song and dance. Family.

THE HUMAN COMEDY, M.G.M. Dir: Clarence Brown. Music by Herbert Stothart
Perhaps more than any other picture recently shown does this one exemplify the tremendous strides made by the motion picture during the last ten years. It has a four dimensional quality in its understanding of human life and even what may lie beyond it is revealed in a story utterly simple, utterly human, concerning every day Americans in every day surroundings. Action, direction and production are so fine that only for fleeting moments does the beholder have the sense of looking at a film at all. Music, wherever used in the film, is beautifully synchronized and blended into it. In the prologue an unresolved, stinging dissonance is sustained in the background throughout the brief prelude, abstruse yet provocative. Then when the spirit of Marcus Macauley began to speak one realized that only in that way could the mystery and freedom of the riven soul have been expressed. Overtones are so rich, so varied, so complex, the release of the fundamental so potential that the shades of mood and feeling may find instant counterpart. What happened to change the subtle mood? When in this picture did the singing, insistent high vibration of sound merge the upper octave of light; and the light exemplified in the superb cloud photography become the iridescent shimmer which represented the presence of a soul? Such fascinating queries may lead one far afield with guides like Stothart, Newman and others. One often realizes the disturbing, disintegrating effects of the low frequencies. Wagner only broke the surface when he synchronized music, drama, and color. We use color, light, sound, emotion in different cycles of octaves with one central vibration....Then the simple questions of a child bring us, at once, to earth with his joyous reactions. Nothing technical, but vastly human. Throughout the picture music becomes a component part. Very fine is the spontaneous sequence in the train and the excellently chosen "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms," done to the accompaniment of the seldom heard concertina. The harp seemed a bit out of keeping with the modest home of the Macauley family until we learn that Father Macauley had paid installments on it for many months in order to perpetuate his wife's girlhood attainments; then it all fitted into the scheme of portraying the family as of good taste, high ideals and the determination to have a few of the higher things of life at the price of honesty and hard labor. Family.

THE MOON IS DOWN, 20th-Fox. Dir: Irving Pichel. Music by Alfred Newman
Under the thoroughly artistic direction of Irving Pichel, we have been given a truly exceptional picture, compelling and spiritually satisfying. The psychological effect of the German military band; the terrible ascending scale as the lieutenant mounts the steps to his doom; the strong hymns of the Norwegians, indomitable in their strength and purpose; the more-than-eloquent silences, as the stark drama of emotions is unfolded - all are unforgettable. Mature-Family.

Comment by Sigmund Spaeth:

"Alfred Newman handles the music for the Steinbeck story with the confidence of his accustomed mastery. He also makes good use of Luther's great hymn, but for a climax of contrast and paradox, rather than as an underlying motif. The Norwegians sing 'A Mighty Fortress is Our God' because, in spite of its German antecedents, it perfectly expresses the courageous, devout and simple spirit of a people ready to sacrifice everything for an ideal. Newman drives home his point by letting a German band play, in direct contrast, the cheap silly tune 'We are Sailing Against England' which like the flatulent 'Horst Wessel' and other Nazi masterpieces, emphasizes the complete sterility of German art, and particularly music, since the New Order began its destruction of all culture."

THIS LAND IS MINE, RKO-Radio. Dir: Jean Renoir. Music by Lothar Perl

A vivid propaganda film based on the inner drama of character rather than surface emotions. Tense and exciting, it is given sincere, dignified and eloquent treatment throughout by a cast who make no attempt to exploit themselves but are keyed to the mood of the picture and sustain the interest in the grim events from start to finish. In recent pictures many approving points of view have been presented by the characters, but in this one there is occasionally a didactic speech that interrupts the natural flow of the story. Nevertheless, the psychological angle is sufficiently convincing so that the final speech, where the inner man emerges, is logical. Although like Chaplin's, at the close of The Dictator, we argue with it and many may consider it the real message of the picture. Others will find that it overbalances and, moreover, it seems implausible that Albert should have been allowed to proceed with it. Laughton's reading of the "Rights of Man" on the other hand is a classic. A forceful musical score, with the Victory theme as its text, helps drive home the strength of the picture. Mature-Family.

ONE DAY OF WAR IN RUSSIA (March of Time), 20th-Fox

Valuable and informative factual record of 24 hours in war-torn Russia as shown by 160 cameramen in many different sections of the vast area of the U.S.S.R. Music is used chiefly as accompaniment in the background and to set the mood, but one bit in which a famous pianist is shown playing to the troops at the battlefield is indicative of what aid it can be in lifting the morale of the fighting men. Family.

PLAN FOR DESTRUCTION, M.G.M. Short Subject Music by Nathaniel Shilkret

There was general interest in the announcement not so long ago that Nathaniel Shilkret had joined the musical staff of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Here is one of the most practical and experienced showmen of music today, and even a two-reel subject is sufficient to point out the rare value of his individual abilities. Mr. Shilkret is given excellent material for a musical score in the brief but telling exposition of the development of the Nazi menace. (Would that all the bickering armchair generals and homefront politicians could be made aware of this menace to world freedom). The composer is modest but thoroughly effective in his tonal commentary. He knows what he wants and gets it. Hollywood can make good use of a Shilkret, and the music of PLAN FOR DESTRUCTION emphasizes that fact.

Films Recommended from a Musical Point of View
by the Hollywood and New York Preview Committees

COMMANDOS STRIKE AT DAWN, Columbia. Music by Louis Gruenberg

RANDOM HARVEST, M.G.M. Music by Herbert Stothart
JOURNEY FOR MARGARET, M.G.M. Music by Franz Waxman
SEVEN SWEETHEARTS, M.G.M. Music by Franz Waxman
THE HUMAN COMEDY, M.G.M. Music by Herbert Stothart
KEEPER OF THE FLAME, M.G.M. Music by Bronislau Kaper
CABIN IN THE SKY, M.G.M. Music by Vernon Duke

HOLIDAY INN, Paramount. Music by Irving Berlin
TAKE A LETTER, DARLING, Paramount. Music by Victor Young
THE AVENGERS, Paramount (British). Music by Richard Addinsoll

HITLER'S CHILDREN, RKO-Radio. Music by Roy Webb
FLIGHT FOR FREEDOM, RKO-Radio. Music by Constantin Zakaleinikoff
FOREVER AND A DAY, RKO-Radio. Music by Anthony Collins
JOURNEY INTO FEAR, RKO-Radio. Music by Roy Webb
SALUDOS AMIGOS, Disney-RKO. Music by Charles Wolcott

SUICIDE SQUADRON, Republic (British). Music by Richard Addinsoll
FLYING TIGERS, Republic. Music by Victor Young

THE BLACK SWAN, 20th-Fox. Music by Alfred Newman
THE PIED PIPER, 20th-Fox. Music by Alfred Newman
THE MOON IS DOWN, 20th-Fox. Music by Alfred Newman
THE IMMORTAL SERGEANT, 20th-Fox. Music by David Buttolph

SHADOW OF A DOUBT, Universal. Music by Dmitri Tiomkir
THE AMAZING MRS. HOLLIDAY, Universal. Music by Charles Previn

JUNGLE BOOK, Alexander Korda-U.A. Music by Miklos Rozsa
JACARE, Mayfair-U.A. Music by Miklos Rozsa
IN WHICH WE SERVE, U.A. (British). Music by Noel Coward

YANKEE DOODLE DANDY, Warner Bros. Music by Ray Heindorf and Heinz Roemheld
AIR FORCE, Warner Bros. Music by Franz Waxman
NOW, VOYAGER, Warner Bros. Music by Max Steiner
CASABLANCA, Warner Bros. Music by Max Steiner
EDGE OF DARKNESS, Warner Bros. Music by Franz Waxman
THE HARD WAY, Warner Bros. Music by Heinz Roemheld

MOSCOW STRIKES BACK, Documentary. Music by Dmitri Tiomkin
SPRING SONG, (Russian). Music by Kabalosky

Cartoons

THE SPIRIT OF VICTORY, Disney. Music by Oliver Wallace
DER FUEHRER'S FACE, Disney. Music by Oliver Wallace

ALL OUT FOR VICTORY, Paramount Terrytoon. Music by Paul Shreib

Short Subjects

THE WORLD AT WAR, OWI. Music by Gail Kubik
RING OF STEEL, OWI. Music by Morton Gould
PARATROOPS, OWI. Music by Gail Kubik
FARMERS AT WAR, OWI. Music by Gene Forrell
WE ARE THE MARINES, OWI. Music by Jack Schaindlin

WHAT MUSIC ARRANGING DOES FOR THE PICTURES

by

Vernon Leftwich .

Secretary of the American Society of Music Arrangers

"Most of the movie-going public have begun to sense the value of music in the pictures and they are sometimes sufficiently interested to take note of the composer's name, but few realize the importance of the music arranger's contribution to the picture. Without him it would be impossible to get the music ready in the space of time allotted by picture producers. The latter are willing to devote weeks to the production of a picture, but upon the completion, they become almost hysterically aware of the large sum of money tied up in the picture and the importance of getting it to the public with a minimum of delay. The composer is therefore allocated a minimum of time in which to compose the music and it is practically impossible for him to orchestrate as well as compose the music. This is the point at which the music arranger enters upon the scene. He receives from the composer a sort of glorified piano part with suggestions for orchestral coloring (generally known as a sketch) and from this the music arranger, or as we really classify him in this case, the Orchestrator, makes the finished score. This is the general form of procedure followed in the case of background music. When we come to consider 'musicals,' then the orchestrator becomes an arranger or, if you please, a composer as well as orchestrator. He has to work out special introductions, interludes and novel forms of presenting the theme. Some of our highest paid music arrangers specialize in this field and many of them now receive the screen credit which they so richly deserve.

"Because of the tremendous demand for this work in the studios, most of the leading music arrangers of the country came west. It was here that the American Society of Music Arrangers was founded in 1938 with Russell Bennett as its founder president. It now numbers among its members practically all of the country's leading music arrangers, and is now headed by Arthur Lange, President, with the writer as secretary.

"The music arranger plays an equally important part in the field of Radio and his contribution to the exploitation of a new song is indispensable, but space does not permit of our elaborating upon this aspect of his work. Suffice to say that the music arranger is not only a composer but a master of the difficult art of orchestration, occupying a vitally important niche in music in pictures and the radio and he is really entitled to more recognition from the public than has hitherto been the case. Henceforth, let us give him his due."

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Vernon Leftwich was born in London where he received his musical training at the Guildhall School of Music. He came to this country many years ago and became a naturalized American. He is secretary of the American Society of Music Arrangers, secretary of the Musicians' Guild, Regional Vice-president of the American Composers Alliance and was recently elected to membership in the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. He has been active for many years as a composer, giving most of his attention to chamber music and orchestral compositions. Among the latter, his Reverie for String Orchestra, Symphonic Overture, Elegy, Nocturne, Sunken Ships (symphonic poem), two Orchestral Suites - What the Moon Saw and The Dream Ride, Valse de Ballet, and a Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, have all been presented by American Symphony Orchestras. Leftwich has just completed his first Symphony which is now ready for performance and will no doubt be heard this year. His Tone Poem for small orchestra "In a California Garden" has proved popular with radio orchestras and it was last played over the Mutual Network under the direction of Leo Arnaud.