



FILM MUSIC NOTES



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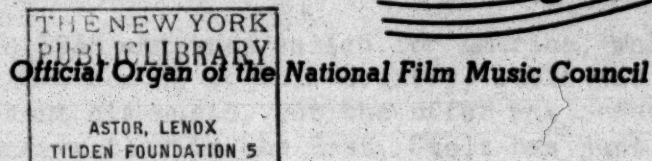
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FOREWORD:

As we enter this New Year which we so fervently hope will draw us each day nearer to victory and world peace, it is interesting to note that the trend is away from motion pictures depicting war and its attendant horrors and is now toward subjects inspirational and uplifting. Elsewhere in this issue we quote from an article by a New York Times correspondent listing some of the pictures that have been and are to be made along these lines, and it is our privilege to illustrate in our musical portfolio this month some of the beautiful themes used by Mr. Newman for THE SONG OF BERNADETTE, the story written in gratitude for his escape from the Nazis by a Jew, about a Catholic, and made into a picture to be seen by men and women of all faiths...a plea for tolerance and understanding in itself!

It has long been agreed that music is one of the greatest morale builders of this war. Recently we were sent a little mimeographed copy of a Christmas service held in the Solomons, in which music played the major part...music selected and performed entirely by the service men themselves. The now famous open air performance of the Shostakovich Seventh by Mr. Stokowski at one of the training camps last year was proof that the serious as well as the light appeal, but there is no question judging from the letters that have come home from our men that, whatever some of us may feel regarding some of the recent movie musicals and the vaudeville trend, the dances, laughter and songs they contain, the gay and colorful settings, and above all the pretty girls, are giving our boys just what they need! As one sergeant says, "We like something to make us forget the war...we like a good musical comedy, with famous dance bands...we like newsreels, community singing, short features, etc...we like good grade A serious movies, too, but without any propaganda angles."

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NEWS ITEMS

Robert Stolz, world famous composer and conductor, arrived recently from New York to begin work on a Hollywood motion picture - eager to meet some of his many musical friends here to interest them in taking an active part in a plan he has discussed with Federal officials in Washington of presenting outstanding music after the war to nations now over-run with Germans.

A voluntary exile from his native Vienna, Stolz believes the children of Germany and those of the countries conquered by Hitler will have to be re-educated in cultural subjects and they will have to learn the value of music. "Since the time Hitler came in power, no new music has been brought to the people of Germany," the composer stated.

Stolz left Austria in 1938 and then sailed for America, which he says will now always be his home. Before coming to this country, Stolz was asked by Hitler to come to Germany and present his music, but the offer was refused.

Interrupting an extensive tour in the East, Stolz has just completed the score for Arnold Pressburger's production IT HAPPENED TOMORROW. The composer worked with Pressburger in several films in Europe. He has composed 38 operettas, 54 motion picture scores, a grand opera and many orchestral works. Of his 1200 songs the best known is Two Hearts in Three Quarter Time.

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"Films of an inspirational or religious character promise to figure most importantly on studio production schedules for 1944. The trend toward this type of picture is no doubt traceable to the phenomenal reader interest in Lloyd C. Douglas' novel The Robe, Franz Werfel's The Song of Bernadette, and other recent best-sellers and the industry acceptance of the tradition that during wartime there is a more general tolerance toward things spiritual. All major studios will produce at least one picture in this category during the year. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer will make no less than four, in addition to the company's proposed remake of the spectacular story of early Christianity, Quo Vadis.

"Last week this studio signed Mr. Douglas, whose The Robe is to be made at an estimated cost of \$2,000,000 by Frank Ross for RKO, to write a story directly for the screen under the title of the old stage play, The Rosary. The new story, it is explained, will have no semblance in plot to the original; instead, it will deal with the religious faith of soldiers in the present war. Metro also will make two pictures which thematically will pay tribute to Saint Dismas, the repentant thief crucified with Christ. These will be The Church of the Good Thief, dealing with the chapel within the walls of Clinton Prison at Dannemora, New York, and The Hoodlum Saint, a film to be based on the life of the late Dempster MacMurphy of Chicago, who engaged in philanthropy in the name of that saint. Also the company is considering a remake of Hall Caine's The Christian, with Marlene Dietrich and Walter Pidgeon.

"Twentieth Century Fox was first in the theaters with a religious subject. Its THE SONG OF BERNADETTE was a world premiere here Christmas Day. Also scheduled for production by this company in the spring is the A. J. Cronin novel, The Keys of the Kingdom. Paramount has announced the probable re-issue of the Cecil B. DeMille picture The Sign of the Cross and Warner Brothers last week engaged Wolfgang Reinhardt, son of the late Max Reinhardt, to produce his father's famous play, The Miracle. Coincidentally, it is noted that in almost every script about the war, now being prepared, the writers are including incidents dealing with the activity of chaplains at the front, with prayer or religious faith."

By Fred Stanley - New York Times

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Dimitri Tiomkin has reported to Universal to score LADIES COURAGEOUS for Walter Wanger. He has just finished scoring THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY, produced by Ben Bogeaus for United Artists release.

(NEWS ITEMS cont'd)

To Margery Morrison, Associate Editor

Somewhere in New Guinea

Thanks so much for the Christmas greetings and clippings. I always like to see articles about the things you are associated with. I see Tyroler assisted with music in Phantom of the Opera.

I would like two copies of the FILM MUSIC NOTES. Will put one in the day room and forward the other on to Australian musical friends. Will you check up and see if you can send subscriptions to Australia? I would very much like to send gift subscriptions to five or six musicians there. Let me know and I will forward the money if the U.S. postal authorities will let them go through.

Your letter of November 14th came some days ago. Am thrilled to know you are associate editor. I think it is a splendid work and should have great possibilities for developing into a musical magazine of national interest - yes, international, too. A number of men have been conscious of immense improvement in the musical score of pictures. The field for movie music is unlimited and I should think your magazine would be of great interest to every national Federation of Music Clubs, every church choir in the U.S., and every other musical club or society. The university approach should open many doors. I thought the review of For Whom the Bell Tolls was splendid - glad to know you did it. Haven't seen the picture yet. Would I love to sing Valentine's aria for you? Am afraid I have slipped again. I don't have much pep after the day's duties and this sultry weather tires me but occasionally I tap in and get the old dominant aggressive fire in my voice.

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"What does a music research specialist do at a studio? Every large studio maintains at least one such person on its staff, sometimes several.

"Since sound invaded Hollywood and boomed it into the cosmopolitan center it is today, music has assumed a most important place, so far as films are concerned. To heighten emotional effects, it is invaluable; to key scenes, nothing tops it. To provide a sense of time and place, swift action, lapse of time, characterization, it is potent and direct.

"In THE CANTERVILLE GHOST, montage shots covering 300 years of English life at the old castle which the ghost inhabits are heightened by the use of themes obtained by the musical research department. Ecclesiastical music, tunes to which madrigals were sung, and dances performed, folk songs, and such sources, have been used. Even a person unaware of musical history cannot fail to recognize the atmosphere created by these old bits of melody"...New York Times.

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The symphonic arrangement of the musical score of Bataan, which was favorably received when played at the Hollywood Bowl, is to be played this week by the Salt Lake City Philharmonic, with Albert Coates as guest conductor. The Bataan score was composed by Bronislau Kaper.

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Erich Wolfgang Korngold has been set to do the score for BETWEEN TWO WORLDS, adapted from "Outward Bound" by Sutton Vane, at Warner Bros.

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As his first assignment since he left Universal to freelance, Charles Previn will be musical director for Charles R. Rogers' SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD, a United Artists release.

RHAPSODY IN BLUE (Warner Bros.)

A Day on the Gershwin Set

By Constance Purdy

Bright California sun outside, but on the vast sound stage a hubbub of voices, where an elaborate drawing room has been set up. Scores of extra players, the women beautifully gowned in very short evening attire of the late '20s, mill around ceaselessly or sit about on the satin furniture enjoying it while they can, for they know there are hours of hard grueling work ahead. Electricians are adjusting the great arcs and overhead lights; painters, carpenters, grip men seem to be everywhere. A property man brings in a huge punch bowl and places it on the lace covered cloth of the long refectory table, just under the beautiful glittering crystal chandelier. All the trappings of a party, including a bar covered with signs in French, a small piano made entirely of flowers and other floral greetings, are everywhere in evidence, for this is to be a surprise welcome to George Gershwin, just arriving from Paris, and these are the friends who will greet him.

Conspicuous in the foreground are the two grand pianos which will be an important part in the scene, one a silent, the other, which Oscar Levant will play, a regular Steinway concert grand. An assistant director calls an order. The extras rise to attention and group themselves accordingly. Some move up to the bar. Waiters pass with laden trays of supposed Champagne and cocktails. There is a hum of conversation, a simulated atmosphere of laughter and gaiety. The director - dark, handsome Irving Rapper - appears; the principals emerge from their dressing rooms and the rehearsal begins. Joan Leslie, looking like a little girl in her slacks, takes the arm of Charles Coburn. They speak the few lines of dialogue. Then she goes to the window and calls that George's taxi is downstairs, the guests throng around the doorway, glasses in hand, amid calls for silence, the front door opens and George makes his entrance with the lovely Alexis Smith on his arm, as a tumult of welcome breaks forth.

The scene is rehearsed again and again until the director is satisfied, then the lights are shifted, the floor is swept, the set is all rearranged, the principals disappear to be properly glamorized, the extras retire to the outskirts, and the stand-ins take over. When everything is ready, all are called back and the scene is shot. This party sequence, short as it will be in the picture, will take about a week in production, involving as it does the showing of Oscar Levant and George Gershwin playing together, and the singing of some of the earlier Gershwin songs.

No one who has not actually worked in a picture of this type can form any conception of the amount of time, care and labor which goes into the making of each sequence. Take the matter of George Gershwin's playing, for instance. Robert Alda, chosen for his resemblance to the late composer, and hitherto a screen unknown, who is getting his big chance in the picture, does not play the piano at all. This means the sound will have to be dubbed in, but, and what a big BUT it is, every movement of his hands must correspond with that sound. He must look as if he actually were playing, and this has meant incessant work on his part. And indeed as I watched them in that part of the party scene in which he and Levant play together, it seemed to me young Alda's timing, and the rhythmic responses from his fingers, was a job which might do great credit, not only to himself for his own hard work in achieving this miracle of perfection, but to his teacher as well. Ray Turner, responsible for the music on the set, and for the coaching of Alda, says proudly of his pupil: "Alda will never have to work any harder in his whole life than he has done in this picture - he didn't even know how to hold his hands when he first started and look at them now - and sometimes he will practice until midnight or later."

(RHAPSODY IN BLUE cont'd)

This seems as good a time as any, by the way, to pay tribute to the Ray Turners, the serious hard working musicians in the big studios, whose hours on the set are apparently endless, who work with the stars and those who are actually going to sing and play the exacting solos you will see rendered by the stars. For every Oscar Levant and Rise Stevens there are ten stars who can neither sing nor play but who must appear to do so, and it is up to the Ray Turners to see that they accomplish this. Ray is here, there and everywhere, conferring with the musical director or other officials of the music department, rehearsing the choruses, trying out individual voices for the solos of "Embraceable You" and "Bidin' My Time," which are to be sung in this sequence...and here is another thing - hidden away in the ranks of these dress extras who will sing, are names well-known to concert audiences, and to the musical world. It is a pity credit cannot be given to the lovely voices, the years of training and experience which have produced them, instead of their having to be shrouded in the anonymity of this kind of work. But to go back to Ray - he listens to sound tracks, to recordings, to complaints, to suggestions from the director, from the principals, from almost everyone involved, even the dynamic Mr. Levant himself. Yet he, like the singers above mentioned, will not be named on the credit sheet, despite the fact that he is directly responsible for what you will see and hear as regards the music of the sequence. An orchid, therefore, from those of us "in the know," to Mr. Turner!

And now to Mr. Levant, who not only acts in the picture representing his inimitable self, of course, but is technical adviser also. That he knew the late George Gershwin well, those who are familiar with his delightful book, "A Smattering of Ignorance," are aware, but somehow it is difficult to reconcile this boyish-looking, unactorlike person with the *Enfant Terrible* of Information Please and points East and West in the musical world! Between takes he sits down at the piano (either the one on the set or the one off the set to one side, used for rehearsals) and plays or improvises indefatigably to a varying, but always admiring, audience. His hands are marvelous to watch, his personality always so aggressive and definite away from the piano becomes merged with it the moment he begins to play. He is fascinating to observe and hear, and in the atmosphere of informality we are absorbing, whether consciously or unconsciously, much good music. Beautiful Alexis Smith, in a costume of diaphanous white in which she seems almost to float, drifts in and out, posing for photographs, practicing a dance step, being introduced to visiting celebrities, but whenever she can, sitting in a chair close by the piano where Oscar, nothing loath, seems only too glad to hold forth for her particular pleasure.

Paul Whiteman, who will direct much of the music in the picture, has not yet arrived to work on it, but Ray Turner, who will play all the music supposedly played by Gershwin, except the actual Rhapsody from which the picture takes its title, which Levant especially asked to do, pays him warm tribute. "He has helped more musicians to get a start than anyone knows. I was with him three years and knew Gershwin, too - in fact, I played with him when he last played the Rhapsody here. He's a grand person and I'm glad he's to be with us on this picture."

AFTERTHOUGHTS

By Sigmund Spaeth

Warner Brothers have a convincing demonstration of how musical comedy can be handled on the screen in their new Technicolor version of Sigmund Romberg's THE DESERT SONG. The familiar numbers, like "One Alone" and the title song, are still there, but much of the rest of the score is specially adapted to the spacious outdoor presentation that was utterly impossible on the stage. The atmosphere of Morocco and the desert itself is created not only by beautiful photography but by characteristic music. THE DESERT SONG is now an absorbing piece of natural action, with authentic sound effects and a truly symphonic background, instead of merely a conventional operetta.

* * * *

Another great contemporary musician places his stamp of authority on motion pictures with the elaborate score composed by Alexander Tansman for Julien Duvivier's FLESH AND FANTASY. This creative and interpretive artist shows an immediate grasp of film music technique and succeeds in going far beyond the average score in the originality of his effects, without ever stepping beyond the limits recognized as permissible from the standpoint of the public. The success of Tansman's music for FLESH AND FANTASY should encourage every outstanding composer to try his luck in Hollywood if given a chance.

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A modest but effective score is provided by Cyril J. Mockridge for MacKinlay Kantor's HAPPY LAND, newly released by the Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. It is a homely and human film, in the manner of Saroyan's THE HUMAN COMEDY (which it preceded in book form), and the music is just right, especially in its quotation of well-known American tunes. Naturally one hears a lot of "Hail, Columbia, Happy Land," which was originally "The President's March," written for George Washington's inauguration, with the words added later by a son of Francis Hopkinson, our first American song writer and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. HAPPY LAND should please a large public.

TO OUR READERS -

We received an interesting and provocative letter from the Music Supervisor of the public schools of Newark, New Jersey, anent the Hollywood approach to classical music. To the effect that thereby a public is reached which straightway "discovers" a composer.

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It occurred to us that it would be most stimulating to publish each month the best letter concerning film music received from music students, music lovers or young composers. (For the best letter received during the current season, we offer a year's subscription to FILM MUSIC NOTES...the prize winning letter to be published in the June issue). The judges will be heads of our Hollywood and New York preview committees. Please limit to 100 words and send your copy by the 10th of the month for the current issue. We would like your name, address and musical affiliation.

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The following pictures, released during the year 1943, are of especial interest from a musical viewpoint. We ask you, our readers, to check those you have seen and also check the picture you consider to have the best music and return the sheet to us, together with any suggestions or opinions you may wish to add. We will publish the resulting poll in an early issue of the bulletin.

IN WHICH WE SERVE

THE SONG OF BERNADETTE

AIR FORCE

LASSIE COME HOME

CABIN IN THE SKY

PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

EDGE OF DARKNESS

FLESH AND FANTASY

THE HUMAN COMEDY

THOUSANDS CHEER

THE MOON IS DOWN

ACTION IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC

I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE

FLIGHT FOR FREEDOM

STAGE DOOR CANTEEN

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

MISSION TO MOSCOW

SAHARA

THE CONSTANT NYMPH

THE NORTH STAR

THIS IS THE ARMY

OLD ACQUAINTANCE

WATCH ON THE RHINE

THE BATTLE OF RUSSIA

MADAME CURIE

REVIEWS OF CURRENT PICTURES FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF MUSIC INTEREST

THE SONG OF BERNADETTE, 20th-Fox. (Inspiration and Uplift). Director: Henry King
Music by Alfred Newman

When a phrase like "Our Lady of Lourdes" becomes pregnant with meaning, when we seem to live again in a forgotten period and a little French village comes alive, furthermore, when by the magic of art these scenes and events pass before us in rightful sequence, when they are presented with the traditional atmosphere and appeal of enveloping music, then the cinema marks high water! The sensitive direction, the underlying sincerity, the sure characterizations, the exceptional photography, each shot and interior a work of art, and lastly, the appropriate score are all here combined in a picture beautiful for all time - a masterpiece of its kind. We have come to expect a Newman score to be conventional, highly artistic and finished. This time it is in different and plastic vein. The introduction gives us a deeply religious spiritual note, then with the prosaic beginning of the story the music withdraws from the scene. When the vision comes to Bernadette the overtones of the wind and its natural scale blend into the high frequencies of voices, the ethereal music, unearthly cadences and we enter a mystic realm. This transition occurs with each visitation. A richly imposing strain with organ texture indicates the Dean of Lourdes throughout the story. The effect of the sisters singing their office, heard in the chill and echoing distance from Bernadette's cell is like a Gregorian chant, and is admirably done. While this score offers nothing original to film music, it vitalizes and enriches the story and adds to its mystic and inspirational appeal and value. This is a film especially to be commended in these troublous times, when people are turning to God. It is absorbingly emotional and dramatic, never veering toward spectacular effects to detract from its tempo and tenor and is made in such good taste that it can offend no one. As the foreword to the picture reads, "To those who believe in God, no explanation is necessary. To those who do not believe in God, no explanation is possible." Family.

TENDER COMRADE, RKO. (Modern War Brides). Director: Edward Dmytryk
Music by Leigh Harline

Though it contains a fine American idea, is played by an excellent cast, has some good psychology and is clever in spots, the picture, as a whole, is disappointing. The construction is badly planned, interrupted by overlong speeches with which we doubtless agree, but in pamphlets! It is all good propaganda, but hardly a picture. Moreover the star is unflatteringly photographed in many scenes when just the opposite is called for. Best musical effects are in the charming interludes with their long perspectives and ethereal quality. An especially fine horn passage occurs in the introduction. Mature-Family.

THE DESERT SONG, WB. (Modernized Version). Director: Robert Florey
Music adapted by H. Roemheld. Orchestral arrangements by
Ray Heindorf. Musical Director: Leo F. Forbstein

Entirely pleasing to the eye and with an exceptional dancing scene from the point of view of authenticity and enchanting color, the picture is less so to the ear. Those who saw the stage and earlier screen version will miss the virile and unforgettable singing of John Boles, the charm of Myrna Loy as Hajy in the latter and a performance that had in it infinitely more punch, both musically and histrionically. However, those who are seeing The Desert Song for the first time will find in the picture satisfactory and colorful entertainment. This type of film lends itself well to technicolor, there are good bits of comedy interspersed for contrast, and which make one regret more than ever the untimely death of Lynne Overman. The heroine is charming in the modernized story and the riding and cafe scenes seem authentic and are beautiful, especially the latter, in which the Ouled-Nail girls are like a page out of Dulac. The music is sufficiently effective, with the Desert Song just recognizable, running like a thread throughout. The mingling of sound effects, shots and military music is well done and the skilful combination of swift action, romance and the lovely Romberg songs all makes for definitely worthwhile, if not outstanding entertainment. Family.

SONG OF RUSSIA, MGM. (For Lovers of Music). Director: Gregory Ratoff
Music by Peter Ilyich Tchaikowsky and Modern Russian Composers
Adapted for the screen by Herbert Stothart

A noble picture, exceptionally satisfying. And to those who love music, of special appeal. The score, woven mostly of Tchaikowsky themes, is beautifully adapted. The bridge passages and background music are so skilfully cued in from the moods of the master that it seems like one and the same idiom. This heart-revealing music springs from the inner consciousness of Russia and foreshadows the elemental passions and tragedies that this generation is experiencing. But the finales are electric in confidence and vision and we still feel their impact and drive. Impressions of Moscow, night life, great spectacles, village life and festivals are all portrayed with an authentic touch, and the singing of the soldiers, etc., is expertly and joyously done. Of especial interest to Californians is the appearance of the Meremblum Junior Symphony Orchestra, as part of the film. Family.

THE LODGER, 20th-Fox. (Jack the Ripper). Director: John Brahm
Music by Hugo W. Friedhofer

Sufficiently absorbing, if decidedly unpleasant, is this horror tale based on the sensational exploits of a killer of the '80s, and adapted from the famous thriller by Mrs. Belloc Lowndes. It is well performed by an able cast, there are creeps and shivers galore and plenty of murk and darkness. The photography is imaginative, impressionistic and mysterious and the score presages the whole, but gives no continuity nor development. It fits the mood of the eerie story and its texture is woven into the fog and slime of Whitechapel. In contrast, the music hall sequences are particularly engaging and tuneful. Mature-Family.

THE SPIDER WOMAN, Universal. (Sherlock Holmes at His Best). Director: Roy Wm. Neill
Musical Director: H. J. Salter

This latest and best to date of the Sherlock Holmes series is both suspenseful and interesting - nicely balanced, with a mature and clever plot, polished acting and music used with a fine sense of discrimination. The ingenious build-up of ominous sequences in the introduction, each adding richness of orchestration and culminating in a dramatic suspension, indicates the quality of the story. The musical background cleverly vanishes into the natural one of wind and the sound of the brook. There are long, grateful periods without music as the plot develops. In the finale the interest centers in the feel of the noisy crowd...sound effects are well amalgamated. Mature-Family.

TARZAN'S DESERT MYSTERY, RKO. (Back to the Jungle). Director: William Thiele
Music by Paul Sawtell

Excellent of its type - absorbing, well photographed and directed, and with the abnormally clever Cheeta, as always, stealing the show. Music is most appropriate throughout in characteristic Eastern mood, rhythm and color. There is a fine string sequence in the scene between Boy and Connie just before she delivers her message to Prince Selim, and a good background of Oriental drums in the introduction makes imposing entrance music for Boy, the elephant and Cheeta in the jungle. Family.

THREE RUSSIAN GIRLS, UA. (Brave Women in War). Dirs: Fedor Ozep and Henry Kesler
Music by W. Franke Harling. Conducted by Irvin Talbot

While it is nowhere nearly as convincing as Russian films made along the same lines, this is nevertheless a good picture, well made and absorbing. The unusual background of a Russian hospital established in ruins during the siege of Stalingrad, and the showing of first aid to ski troops by nurses who keep up with the men, with their requisite skill, courage and resourcefulness - all this makes absorbing dramatic material, aided by beautiful photography. A brave and militant folk theme punctuates Mr. Harling's score, and Russian work, play and war songs are interpolated in pleasing and popular fashion. Mature-Family.

DESTINATION TOKYO, WB. (Cruise of the Copperfin). Director: Delmer Daves

Music by Franz Waxman. Musical Director: Leo F. Forbstein

A forceful and suspense-packed submarine picture based on actual fact and performed by an exceptionally competent cast, headed by Cary Grant and John Garfield. Photography is superb, especially the shots of the emerging submarine against storm and night background which are of high artistic value. The low E riverbed of Wagner's Rhine which was stationary while waves moved above it, becomes with Waxman an oscillating frequency for the depths of the sea. This sense of movement, although unchanging, gives an entirely different character to the fundamental. The use of wide or exploratory intervals, fourths, fifths and ninths in progression or suspensions, helps free the imagination in adventurous sequences. The descending scales, when the submarine dives, are never hackneyed and the orchestration is worth noting. The initial epic theme is developed each time it occurs by the addition of woodwinds, and often dissonant brasses. With the entrance to Tokyo harbor comes a Japanese idiom. All in all, a very fine imaginative score, well fused with the story, though there has been no effort to make it stand alone. Mature-Family.

GUNG HO, Universal. (Work in Harmony). Director: Ray Enright

Music by Frank Skinner. Conducted by H. J. Salter

This grim and starkly realistic battle picture is based on current history - the U.S. Marine raid on Makin Island in August, 1942. It is authentic and stirring and is ably performed by a cast that is all-male except for one actress. Military band music and songs of the Marines give a conventional and real background, varied by songs of the men with the accordion as they wait for action. Mature-Family.

THE HEAVENLY BODY, MGM. (Comedy, or What Have You). Director: Alexander Hall

Musical Score by Bronislau Kaper

Disappointing, to say the least, is this farce comedy teaming the beautiful Hedy Lamarr and the suave and highly competent Mr. Powell. The opening scenes are well done and amusing but later the whole thing is allowed to degenerate into burlesque and not even the work of an exceptionally good cast, not the unusual setting of the great observatory and the handling of its famous telescope can save the story or retain one's interest in it. The score, however, is delightful and sophisticated. Light and graceful entrance music develops a smart pace in the opening of the picture. Strings predominate in the early orchestration and follow Hedy in a definitely wistful character. The comic side of the predicament is emphasized by bassoons and piccolo and comedy rhythms. The psychological device of chimes softly ringing the little bell of concealed thought is again in evidence. As the professor becomes more and more involved the comedy pace becomes swifter and a hurrying figure with descending chromatics suggests Shostakovich. The Russian sequence is deftly handled in the score in a way that will amuse the average audience - the vodka and the Volga being well mixed! The songs with the guitar bring us down to earth. Adults.

THE GHOST SHIP, RKO. (Blow the Man Down). Director: Mark Robson

Music by Roy Webb

A sinister study in psychology, absorbing and suspenseful, with a typical Roy Webb mystery-horror score in which music, photography and story are fused. Especially fine is the prelude where the slow moving bulk of the ship is symbolized by low frequencies, as the hardly perceptible lift of the sea, starts the basic rhythm. The introductory theme is scarcely defined. It hardly emerges from the swirling fog-wreaths indicated by vague higher frequencies without pattern. This enveloping atmosphere gives just the right background to the dark story, humanized by sequences of "Blow the Man Down" and other sailor songs with accordion and pipe. Mature-Family.

CALLING DR. DEATH, Universal. (Hypnosis and Horror). Director: Reginald Le Borg

Musical Director: Paul Sawtell

Although this picture has a story which is original and fairly absorbing, the photography and music, being of high caliber, supply its chief merits. Just as many of the Brahms songs are in the subjective realm and so to be delivered, this score links itself with subjective values to a greater degree than any other in this

(CALLING DR. DEATH, cont'd)

category. The photography and music for the hypnosis scenes are extraordinary. The recurring beat of the optical metronome give the point of departure for the musical pattern which enters another realm, muted with mysterious and unusual overtones. The devices of sustained nonotones either in high or low frequencies with vaguely moving rhythms below or above; suspensions, dissonant intervals (particularly at the outset), muted chimes, are all keyed to the mood and used with telling effect. There is material here for an original series. Family.

WHAT A WOMAN, Columbia. (High Comedy). Director: Irving Cummings
Music Score by John Leipold. Musical Director: M. W. Stoloff
Gay, fast-paced comedy, replete with clever dialogue and amusing situations, and with ultra-smart Rosalind Russell her most sparkling and humorous self. A well-chosen cast headed by Brian Aherne and with Willard Parker, a newcomer to the screen, a welcome addition, gives the star perfect support. Direction is admirable, settings and photography excellent - in fact the picture is very nearly a model for its type. The music, never obtrusive, is particularly well handled, the opening title measures starting out with a verve finely anticipatory of the delights ahead for the audience. There are long stretches of grateful silence in which the story moves forward and the dialogue is allowed to scintillate unaccompanied. The background music is occasionally and imperceptibly interpolated for sentiment or comedy element. Strings predominate in the fine orchestration, of which the values and dynamics are especially good - never too loud nor too soft except in the amusing dance scene suddenly cued in to awaken Pepper. Deft comedy is indicated by pizzicato effects and eccentric rhythms, and again we have, as in Madame Curie, a delightful midnight intermezzo centered about a grandfather clock. The avoidance of all unnecessary details and complete lack of slapstick makes this one of the most genuinely refreshing pictures of the season. Mature-Family.

HIGHER AND HIGHER, RKO. (Sinatra's Film Debut). Director: Tim Whelan
Musical Director: C. Bakaleinikoff
Songs by Jimmy McHugh. Lyrics by Harold Adamson

Over-advertisement has resulted in most musicians looking upon Frank Sinatra with, to say the least, suspicion. But in this Cinderella story which serves simply as a background for it, the young man's singing emerges as one of the surprises of the season, for it is genuinely good. Mr. Sinatra has a sympathetic voice, an accurate ear and a fine sense of timing. Moreover, he himself appears throughout the picture graceful, natural and sincere. The studio has made no effort to make him less homely than he is and perhaps it is the sort of wistful helplessness which he seems to emanate that makes him so appealing to these young ladies all over our country who have made him their darling! As always when Mr. Bakaleinikoff directs it, the music of the film is well balanced and the songs of Messrs. McHugh and Adamson are pleasing and tuneful, with a gay opening, leading into "It's a Most Important Affair." In this song, however, the women's voices all sound alike in the contrapuntal sequences and as if one woman only were doing the singing. A good cast works hard to put over the slight story, but an actress of Michele Morgan's caliber is wasted in the part of Millie, lovely though she appears in the earlier sequences and at the end. A beautiful bit of photography occurs in the charming minuet scene in the attic. But as this picture is made presumably with young people in mind it is a pity that it should open as it does with an elderly debauchee staggering around as he recovers from a drunken bout. All this is not only repulsive for the "bobby sock" trade but is distinctly unhealthy material. It is to be hoped that soon a film may be written around the refreshing and appealing personality of Frank Sinatra, which will give opportunity for his undoubted gift to come to a higher fruition. Family.

NOTES ON ALFRED NEWMAN

Alfred Newman was born in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1901. He migrated to New York at the age of ten, and studied piano with Alexander Lambert and Sigismond Stojowski, and composition with George Wedge, Rubin Goldmark and Arnold Schoenberg.

Toured the country as a boy, giving piano recitals and appearing as piano soloist with various symphony orchestras. Started to conduct at a very early age on Broadway, and was Music Director for many of the late George Gershwin shows before coming to California.

Mr. Newman was invited to come to the Coast by Irving Berlin, for a three months period. He has been here fourteen years, first as General Music Director for Samuel Goldwyn, and then acting in a like capacity for 20th Century-Fox Studios.

As guest conductor, he has appeared with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. He is a two-time Academy winner.

Among his picture scores are: DODSWORTH, ARROWSMITH, GRAPES OF WRATH, BLOOD AND SAND, HOUSE OF ROTHCHILD, MARK OF ZORRO, SONG OF BERNADETTE, STREET SCENE, WUTHERING HEIGHTS, HURRICANE, GUNGA DIN, HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY, THE BLUE BIRD, THE RAINS CAME, THE MOON IS DOWN, DARK ANGEL, THESE THREE, THE YOUNG MR. LINCOLN, BEAU GESTE, THIS ABOVE ALL, PRELUDE TO WAR (War Department), BATTLE OF MIDWAY (Office of Strategic Services). Music Director for ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND, TIN PAN ALLEY, CONEY ISLAND, MY GAL SAL, THEY SHALL HAVE MUSIC (Jascha Heifetz), METROPOLITAN (Lawrence Tibbet).

Concerning this score, Mr. Newman says:

"It is difficult to comment on the music for SONG OF BERNADETTE without assuming that the film has been seen and the book read by those who peruse this paragraph. The problems were many and delicate.

"The dramatic approach (musically) to a subject which at once deals with the powerful elements of nature, faith and fanatic, political skepticisms, and the ever subtle presence of the infinite, was to me, at least, a challenge.

"Mr. Franz Werfel feels that we have achieved these varied dramatics through music, and to him I am deeply grateful for his help and understanding.

"Once I decided upon a completely subjective approach, the going was easy and gratifying. There are long silences in the film which offer architectural opportunities from a musical standpoint rarely enjoyed by composers of film music, because of the vertical nature of the medium."

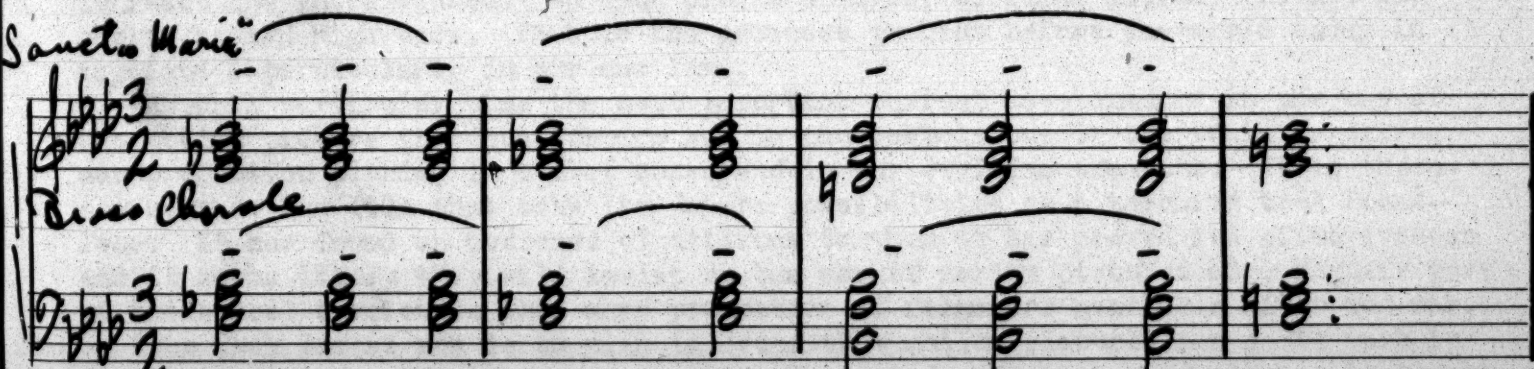

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As reported by Mildred Norton of the Los Angeles Daily News, Mr. Newman had this to say concerning the score: "The theme was fragile and yet loaded with dynamite. It was not simply a question of belief or nonbelief in the appearance of the Virgin in a grotto of Lourdes. It was an affirmation of the strength and singleness of heart engendered in any person, in any age, by a complete faith. It is the story of a simple peasant girl who saw a vision, and who chose to serve that vision all her life. To that degree, and in a unique way, it is a love story - the love of Bernadette for her 'Lady'...The response of nature is what I tried to express in my music. And I emphasized the natural world all during the scenes in which Bernadette spoke merely of the beautiful lady. Not until she actually kissed the feet of the Virgin and, later, identified her as the Immaculate Conception, did I allow an ecclesiastical mode to enter."

Bernadette Soubirous: The Song of Bernadette Alfred Newman
(1943)

Y. L. I. 
Hrs. 
V. I. (Soli) 
Women's Voices 

Sadness of Bernadette 
ob. 

Sanctus Maria 
Chorus 

Antoine and Bernadette 
Stgo. 