FILM MUSIC NOTES

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FOREWORD:

We have to thank the Army Signal Corps and in particular that branch made up of 99% writers, directors, producers, photographers, musicians, and technicians from the motion picture studios, for what it has done to show us just how tremendous a step has been accomplished in the field of documentary films.

MEMPHIS BELLE, TUNISIAN VICTORY, THE BATTLE OF RUSSIA, and THE NEGRO SOLDIER IN WORLD WAR II...who can measure the effect of such films as against even the finest description in a text book?...They are war films, to be sure, but as Col. Frank Capra says: "The motion picture screen is a window that looks out over the world - not only of today but of tomorrow."

And what applies to the eye applies equally to the ear, for not one of these films but what has music incorporated into it as a vital and necessary part. The work of Corporal Gail Kubik, the beautiful scores of Dimitri Tiomkin, are remarkable in this respect and deserving of the highest praise. Some of their films the general public will never see as they are made primarily for our armed forces. Nevertheless, we owe them a debt of gratitude for what they are doing not only to help the war but because they are building for peace in furthering the cause of visual education and music in the films.

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COMMENTS....NEWS ITEMS

This month we are happy to welcome fifteen new subscribers from "Down Under," two of whom are in the service. This brings Australia very near to us and makes the Good Neighbor feeling a reality, through the bonds of Film Music.

On the Army Hour of March 26th, it was gratifying to learn how much the sending of motion pictures to the front has been appreciated, and of the great effect on morale they are having. Lieut. Jones told us an amusing story of the synchronization of a bomb at an appropriate moment when the boys were seeing the last Jean Arthur film; we heard of The Song of Bernadette in the Pacific area; that Sweet Rosie O'Grady met with popular favor, with others of the latest pictures being shown; and that the Battle of Russia did not lack for an audience though that audience sat through it in a pouring rain. From Algiers came the word that comedy, MUSICALS and shorts are especially liked.

The Director of the Department of Music of the University of Mississippi, Mrs. Laura T. Martin, writes us: "FILM MUSIC NOTES has been very useful to the Department of Music here. Information found in the issues has been used by our instructor of Music Appreciation and by our students. There is a complete file of them in my office and they are used for references constantly. Valuable information is found in them that cannot be secured otherwise. I shall be glad to serve as State Chairman of the National Film Music Council. Already I have introduced FILM MUSIC NOTES to a number of musicians in the state and they appreciate its value immediately! Wishing you great success in your work, I am, etc."
Our sincere thanks, Mrs. Martin!

Latest among the City Libraries to include FILM MUSIC NOTES in its files is the St. Louis Public Library, at Olive, 13th and 14th Streets, St. Louis, Missouri, thus following the example set by New York, Detroit, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Los Angeles and others. Latest among the Universities to subscribe is Boston University, at Boston, Massachusetts.

The following review of BATTLE FOR MUSIC taken from the February, 1944 issue of the Monthly Film Bulletin, British Film Institute, will be of interest to our readers. Produced by Strand; distributed by British National; director, Donald Taylor. Running time - 80 minutes.
Documentary. The film tells the story of the ups and downs of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. At the outbreak of war its backers withdrew their support, but in the nick of time Jack Hylton came forward with an offer for them to tour the provincial halls and all went well until the air raids of 1940, when the theaters emptied. The situation was saved this time by the help J. B. Priestley gave them. A final blow was the loss of their instruments when the Queen's Hall was burned in May, 1941, but with the aid of the B.B.C's SOS for instruments they managed to carry on and are now firmly established again. Here is an unusual and pleasing film. The story is the simple and appealing one of the faith of a group of men in the power of music. The message is eloquently expressed and the audience is given a feast of music which includes excerpts from Tschaikowsky's "Romeo and Juliet," Mozart's 40th Symphony in G Minor, Elgar's "Cockaigne" Overture, Grieg's Piano Concerto in A Minor, with Eileen Joyce as the soloist, Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto with Moiseivitch as the soloist, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Berlioz's "Carnival Romain." The film has been sympathetically directed and in every case has justice been done to the brilliance of execution by the high technical qualities in the recording and photography. In this connection, special mention should be made of the close-up of Moiseivitch's hands on the keyboard.

(COMMENTS....NEWS ITEMS cont'd)

Lunching at the Paramount Commissary with Victor Young -

It is always a pleasant experience to lunch in this charming, modernistic setting and especially so when one is not limited by having to return to the set at a given time. So the other day, at a table not far away from the one where Mr. DeMille was beaming under the reception just given him in Washington at the premiere of THE STORY OF DR. WASSELL, we were able not only to relax but also thoroughly to enjoy ourselves as the guests of Victor Young, the modest and very busy director and composer responsible for some of the finest scores Paramount has ever turned out.

A graduate of the Warsaw Conservatory, music director and conductor of the Westinghouse Radio program in addition to his work at the studio, Mr. Young has done a little of everything. In fact, one might say that he has come up the hard way. But he looks on it all as valuable experience and is strong for the theory that if you have something to say in music it will come out, no matter what your surroundings. "It isn't necessary to go down to Palm Springs or shut yourself away from things to get an idea," he says. "Sweet Sue," which is still being sung and whistled and loved, came to him as he was standing under a lamp post! He took it to a friend and together they developed the music and lyrics, and next morning the new song was ready for the world!

A discussion of the music of Shostakovich led to his saying that symphonies should not be written, or at least so pretentiously titled until the composer has reached years of maturity through experience and living. "Call the earlier compositions suites, tone poems, rhapsodies, but not symphonies," he said. The question of the harpsichord in FRENCHMAN'S CREEK, which will supply (somewhat anachronistically, it must be admitted, since they came into use only after the period of the story) the music to be played on a still earlier instrument, the clavichord, in the right period and yet absolutely fitting. Mr. Young doesn't believe in too much use of so-called themes, and he chooses to give us for this issue a full page devoted to one, the lovely "Stella Song," which can be played through instead of using several to a page as we have done heretofore. He told us he had received many requests for it, which is not surprising for it is lovely music, as is, in fact all the music for "The Uninvited," as we said when we reviewed it in an earlier issue. We spoke then of the challenge it represented and of the research he did to impart genuine Spanish feeling into "For Whom the Bell Tolls," and of the American background for the lusty "Reap the Wild Wind," and of many other things pertinent to music and musicians in pictures - altogether a most fascinating and profitable hour!

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The state convention of the Federated Music Clubs of California was held at the Los Angeles Ebell Club, March 30, 31 and April 1. Honored by the visit of Mrs. Guy P. Gannett, president of the National Federation of Music Clubs, the meetings were inspiring and fruitful. It was Mrs. Gannett's message that, despite the limitations imposed by war activities, the Federation must continue its work with renewed effort, young music students must be encouraged and helped, and the great healing power of music in these critical times must be recognized.

Chief speaker at the closing banquet meeting on Saturday evening, April 1, was Mr. Adolph Deutsch of the Music Department of Warner Bros. Mr. Deutsch, born and educated in London, England, where he specialized in music, languages and history, has contributed greatly to the development of film music scoring. Among his best original works and arrangements are the music for THEY WON'T FORGET, THE GREAT GARRICK, and HIGH SIERRA. His score for UNCERTAIN GLORY is discussed in this issue. The highlight of his presentation to the convention was the importance of developing new talent in this highly specialized field.

QUESTIONNAIRE FILLED OUT AND RETURNED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF SOUND FILMS, MUSIC EDUCATORS' NATIONAL CONFERENCE - by Sigmund Spaeth

A. PURPOSES TO BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE USE OF EDUCATIONAL FILMS BOTH IN MUSIC CLASSES AND THROUGHOUT A SCHOOL AS A WHOLE.

Spaeth's answer: To give general information in a most attractive form (it has been found that films are most useful in military training); to stimulate interest in subjects handicapped by unfamiliarity. To present good performances of music and drama not otherwise available to school audiences. To vary the concentration on detail through relaxation. To associate knowledge with practical aspects of human life. To eliminate the feeling that information can be acquired only in unpleasant ways.

B. SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW EDUCATIONAL FILMS MAY BE PRESENTED IN ORDER MOST EFFECTIVELY TO ENRICH THE MUSIC COURSE OF STUDY.

SPAETH: Certain films should be shown in assembly to the entire student body. These should stimulate interest in music for its own sake, drawing attention to the lives of great composers and the interpretation of great compositions. A more detailed study of music through films can be made in the classroom, limited to students of music. Films having an outstanding musical accompaniment should be shown to as many students as possible. Some pupils may be interested in the study of film scores as an art.

C. A DESCRIPTION OF WHAT THE MUSIC EDUCATOR NEEDS IN EDUCATIONAL FILMS AND SUGGESTIONS AS TO FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS FIELD WHICH ARE DESIRABLE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE MUSIC EDUCATOR.

SPAETH: Films dealing with the lives of composers (Beethoven, Schubert, Handel, Foster, Chopin, Victor Herbert, etc., are already available). Some of these are full length pictures, some short subjects. FILMS interpreting actual compositions on the screen. FANTASIA is the best example. Many Disney short cartoons have musical importance. Fischinger's experiments with abstract interpretations, the Wilfred Color Organ, etc., have great possibilities. Entertaining short pictures, like those made by Sigmund Spaeth, have great educational value. There is need of more such material, as well as more detailed instruction in musical theory, history, individual instruments, etc. Some operative films are available, but not enough, and generally not sufficiently attractive. ERPI made some pictures of the history of musical instruments.

D. SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING WAYS IN WHICH COMMERCIAL FILMS CAN BE USED TO MOTIVATE THE WORK OF STUDENTS IN MUSIC CLASSES AND THE DESIRABILITY OF PERMITTING THE CONTENT OF MUSIC COURSES TO BE FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THESE POSSIBILITIES.

SPAETH: Commercial films of real musical value can always be adapted to school use. The best of them should be shown in assembly. Others can be used as relaxation for music classes. Films encouraging community singing are also valuable, and many of these have been made. It should be clearly understood that no subject can be taught entirely through films or radio or any other indirect approach. But every subject can be made more attractive and exciting with the help of motion pictures. The only real problem is that of properly apportioning the time, and this rests with the individual teacher and the school concerned. In many cases it can be argued that it is more important for a large number of pupils to be honestly interested than for a small number to become experts.

(QUESTIONNAIRE cont'd)

E. A CONSIDERATION OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MUSIC EDUCATOR IN DEVELOPING INTELLIGENTLY APPRECIATIVE RESPONSES TO MOTION PICTURES AND METHODS OF PROMOTING THIS DEVELOPMENT.

SPAETH: Educators should draw attention to good films in local theaters. They should urge the use of visual education of their own schools. They can prepare the way for specific films by outlining their contents and explaining their significance in advance. They should ask the film manufacturers for more such material, specifying the types needed. Emphasis should be placed on short subjects, which are far more practical than feature films.

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REPLIES TO ABOVE QUESTIONNAIRE (MUSIC EDUCATORS' NATIONAL CONFERENCE) returned by Grace Widney Mabee, Chairman NATIONAL FILM MUSIC COUNCIL, 70 Fifth Ave., New York

A.
To teach students to learn and to remember through visual educational methods and to become familiar with this new idiom of music composition which will eventually demand many new composers. An outlet for many of our budding composers.

B.
A study of films---their background of music, whether arrangements or original. Study of various types of music in films: comedy, dramatic sequences, love sequences, war, etc. Students should practice composing for these various types - strictly musical, opera, operetta, musical stories, etc.

C.
Music educators should familiarize themselves with the history of music in films. THE VOICE THAT THRILLED THE WORLD, short produced by Warner Bros., should be seen by every teacher and student.
A list of films in all classifications should be studied.

D.
Schools should provide themselves with projectors suitable to show these films. Many of the films shown in the theaters today have been made into 16mm. and are available for use in schools. Teachers should cooperate with the theaters in their community and see that the recommended pictures are brought to their city.

E.
A teacher can be responsible for the appreciation or lack of it of any picture a student sees either at a commercial theater or one shown in the school. Have them see the recommendations and see that they write their own viewpoint. Discuss the music in the film in the class. Study the biographies of the composers in the studios, their special gifts of writing. The arranger, the orchestrator, the choral director, the cutter...all their duties should be studied. Some of your students may be working in the music department of a studio some day. The field is large and there is much to learn.
There are available now for use by schools in 16mm. some excerpts of feature films and short subjects whereby the film can be shown separately, with and without music. These films would be excellent for study classes. Compositions from films are also available for orchestras.
The National Film Music Council's preview committees attend all worthwhile films as well as many poor ones and their recommendations are given in their monthly bulletin, FILM MUSIC NOTES, along with excellent articles by film musicians.

The Following List Will Suggest 16mm. Films on Music Suitable for School Use

ERPI, History of Musical Instruments, a series not widely used as yet.
Bell and Howell, with branch libraries in many cities can supply 16mm. films on instruments, musical history, lives of composers and operatic selections. Main office, 1801 Larchmont Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.
Brandon Films, 1600 Broadway, New York City, also distribute many musical shorts.
Walter Gutlohn, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York
Catalogs may be obtained by writing above addresses

Various Types of Films Available from Brandon Films -

AMERICAN FOLK SONG SERIES, TALL TALES, the first of a new series prepared by the Division of Music, Library of Congress
MOONLIGHT SONATA, 67 minutes, with Ignace Paderewski, 16mm. or 35mm.
THE MOLDAU, 10 minute short, interpretation of symphonic poem of Smetana by Prague Orchestra
MUSICAL MOOD SERIES, shorts, featuring Dance of the Hours, Brahms Waltz, Liebestraum, etc.
OPERAS, shorts, full scenes from Aida, Rigoletto, Traviata in Life of Verdi (102 minutes); excerpts from Mozart's operas recorded by Sir Thomas Beecham and London Symphony, (74 minutes)
LIVES OF COMPOSERS, feature length and shorts
BRITISH, RUSSIAN, AND MEXICAN FILMS featuring their composers
MUSIC HATH CHARM, instruments of China, India, Korea, Egypt, etc.
SCHUMANN HEINK, originally produced by Pathe and re-edited in 1936
SIGMUND SPAETH, produced by Pathe News
WALTER DAMROSCH, originally produced by Pathe and re-edited in 1936
MUSIC OF THE NATIONS, originally produced by Pathe and re-edited in 1936
OLD TIME BALLADS, originally produced by Pathe and re-edited in 1936
PILGRIMS' CHORUS FROM TANNHAUSER
SING, AMERICA, good film for general auditorium use; should be of value also in choral work
SONGS OF STEPHEN FOSTER, Columbia production available only to schools
STAR SPANGLED BANNER, three films of this title, one telling of Francis Scott Key, other two play the anthem with appropriate scenes
STARLIGHT NIGHT, story of the writing of "Silent Night"
ARCHAIC AND UNUSUAL INSTRUMENTS, originally produced by Pathe and re-edited in 1936
GOLDEN MOUNTAINS, Dimitri Shostakovich accompanied by Moscow Orchestra

Various Types of Films Available from Gutlohn Films

MUSIC OF THE MASTER SERIES, 10 minute ~~shorts~~ featuring:
JOSE ITURBI, PIANIST
VITYA VRONSKY and VICTOR BABIN, DUO-PIANISTS
COOLIDGE QUARTET, STRING ENSEMBLE
EMANUEL FEUERMANN, CELLIST
MILDRED DILLING, HARPIST
IGOR GORIN, BARITONE

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Virgil Thomson said at a conference of the NBR, November, 1940, that movies are the most popular art form in the world. There are various kinds of movies: documentary, comic, animated cartoons and naturalistic fiction, and each has a different kind of music. Through representative films there would be possible a study of these differences helpful to the music student.

BRITISH FILM MUSIC

By John Huntley - "Sight and Sound," January 1944

In the days of the silent film, especially at the beginning, music was largely employed to blot out the noise from the projector. Film music began in the dingy surroundings of show booths and shop fronts as did the film itself. However, the noisy projector was soon suitably enclosed in a sound proof compartment, so this ceased to be a motive for the music. As Kurt London puts it, the main motive is undoubtedly "the rhythm of the film as an art of movement." We are not used to observing movement in an artistic form, he says, without some accompanying sound. And to break the silence of the first twenty-five years of motion pictures, music was essential.

For a quarter of a century the general public heard music on a scale rarely equalled before or since. Every type was called into service to provide the film art with its third dimension - the rhythm of movement. And so the public heard a lot of semi-classical music for the first time, even if it was unconsciously. But no serious contribution to music appeared during the whole of the silent film era.

The coming of the sound film at first brought even greater artistic nullity than before and for the first three or four years a mighty theme song wave swept through movieland with devastating results. "All talking, all singing, all dancing" was, if anything, an ever greater factor in the cinematic depression of the early 1930s than the economic chaos that reigned in the outside world.

It was about 1934 when Kurt Schroeder, then musical director for the newly formed "London Films" under Alexander Korda, retired to make way for one Muir Mathieson. Now 32, Mathieson has devoted all his life to film music; a student of the Royal College of Music he argues that if British films were to have the best stars, the best directors and the best cameramen, they should also have the best composers and the best musicians. Korda agreed and from then on British film music was put on a solid basis. The London Symphony did the recording and men like Bliss, Walton, Bax and Vaughan Williams wrote it. He got results and in 1935 we saw the first fruits when Arthur Bliss, one of the modern British symphonic composers after Elgar, whose work has remained so lively and up-to-date, wrote the score for the H. G. Wells epic "Things to Come." Here for the first time in twenty-five years was motion picture music that was accepted by the concert hall audience, the "highbrows," who so far had scorned the motion picture as an art form.

As a concert suite Bliss' music won fame; 1935 marked the beginning of a new music - the music of the screen - modern, progressive, offering new possibilities and new scope for experiments. Talking it over with music lovers I doubt if any film music before or since has made such an impression.

In the same year another modern English composer, William Walton, entered the cinema with a score for "Escape Me Never" featuring Elizabeth Bergner. Since then Walton has been writing regularly for the screen for films such as "Next of Kin," "Major Barbara," "The Foreman Went to France," and a great many other first class productions. One of his latest works, "Spitfire Prelude and Fugue" from "The First of the Few" (released as "Spitfire" in the United States), is among his finest scores and, despite wartime restrictions on raw materials, H.M.V. have issued a disc of this piece arranged as a concert suite and played by the Halle Orchestra conducted by William Walton. It has received the approval of the critics and Walton is today perhaps our most consistent and brilliant film composer.

Only since the war has Vaughan Williams composed screen music, for two of our best war films - "49th Parallel" and "Coastal Command," both examples of the new documentary style so successfully developed in the last two years. This great contemporary composer has done much to enhance the new art, but although we were more or less promised a commercial record of "49th Parallel" none has so far turned up.

The case of Richard Addinsell is one of the oldest in film music annals. For years his scores for famous British movies like "Gaslight," "Goodbye Mr. Chips," "The Lion has Wings," "Contraband" and many others were recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra in collaboration with Muir Mathieson and passed unnoticed. The film "Dangerous Moonlight" called for a rather special composition to be a vital part of the plot, and for this he wrote the "Warsaw Concerto." It was a tremendous hit with the public, and it undoubtedly served its purpose in the film. It has not been accepted to any extent by the serious music minds of this country due, perhaps, to its lack of any real individuality. Many claim it as a direct imitation of Rachmaninoff, others as Chopin or Sibelius and so on. It is not Addinsell's best work, and I would instance "They Sail at Midnight" as a vastly superior score, but it made the general public film music conscious in a big way and this alone is sufficient to justify its careful consideration in any review of this kind.

Michael Spoliansky gave a recital of his film music not so long ago, for he too worked on a number of London Film Productions such as "The Ghost Goes West" and "Don Juan"; he also gave us some fine Paul Robeson songs for films such as "King Solomon's Mines."

Sir Arnold Bax is no newcomer to the studios either; his score for "Malta G.C." has received a number of public performances apart from greatly enhancing the film tribute to the George Cross Island. Other eminent composers have also turned up the film for new possibilities, among them William Alwyn (Desert Victory, Squadron Leader X, They Flew Alone, Escape to Danger, etc). Benjamin Britten, Greenwood, Lambert, Leigh and numerous others whose film music will, I believe, be one day drawn from its obscurity in the celluloid vaults and performed as representative works of our time.

It is not surprising that such a strongly film conscious nation as Russia has made big advances in film music. Successful experiments in film opera and ballet (as well as original composition) have been made and the film "Russian Salad" gained considerable success over here. Most Russian composers of the day have tried their hand at studio work in recent years. Shostakovich has made an excellent short film of one of his compositions as well as writing a number of scores. Even his famous "Leningrad Symphony" is heard as the background music in the film "Russian Guerrillas" recently shown in London. This particular work is also being considered as the subject of a separate full length film. Alexandrov and Prokofiev are both experienced studio men, and examples of their music were performed at the Promenade concerts this year in London, including Prokofiev's "Alexander Nevsky" music, so effective in the famous Eisenstein film. A commercial recording is available in the Columbia catalog.

But it is in the field of original composition that the main interest lies today. I know now that one day this almost unknown work of Addinsell, Walton, Steiner, Vaughan Williams and Bax will take its place among the major musical developments of the twentieth century. Richard Addinsell once wrote me a letter in which he said, "I enjoy working for films very much but occasionally after a specially hard job, one can't help wondering if anyone listens or notices certain passages in a score that have been the cause of particular trouble or excitement in the making, for unlike the theater where you can watch and gauge an audience reaction, the cinema, as far as the music is concerned, remains forever an unknown quantity."

REVIEWS OF CURRENT MOTION PICTURES FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF MUSIC INTEREST

BUFFALO BILL, 20th-Fox. (The Greatest "Hero" Rides Again!). Dir: William A.Wellman
Music by David Buttolph

A fine picture, superbly staged, and one which will appeal not only to the youngsters of today, but even more to those who knew Buffalo Bill, not only as a name, but as one of the most beloved characters of Western pioneer days and the "superman" of his time. That generation which saw in Barnum's Circus the Deadwood Coach, the attack by the Indians (all real ones), and then the entrance of the Cavalry led by Buffalo Bill, turning the tide and vanquishing the enemy, will experience a thrill seldom experienced at pictures by those past middle age. Anyone, however, who feels a spark of interest in our history will follow the development of the story with unfailing absorption. Joel McCrea gives a fine performance, easy and sincere. His simple words, (when defending the Indians) "They were my friends," are spoken with poignant conviction, and the later speech in Washington is a model for schoolboys to follow. And his last appearance in his gleaming white outfit riding his white horse, just as all of us last saw him, making his farewell speech with his hat in his outstretched hand, will long remain in memory. Many of the technicolor shots are of great beauty, particularly those showing the soft greens, grays and blues of the mesas, and the death struggle in the river is cleverly contrived in contrast to the usual bar-room fight. David Buttolph's music forms an excellent and worthwhile background adding interest and excitement to the entire picture. Family.

DAYS OF GLORY, RKO-Radio. (The Spirit of Russia). Director: Jacques Tourneur
Music: Daniele Amfitheatrof. Music Dir: C. Bakaleinikoff

The best by far of any of the Russian films, outside of the documentaries, produced in this country to date, this is a picture both compelling and sincere, in which a cast heretofore unknown to Hollywood does exceptionally fine work under the expert and subtle guidance of Jacques Tourneur. The drama is rather a study of characters than one of action, though it takes place in and is a part of the tragedy of war, and includes the heroic death of all the main actors. Contrasts are particularly well drawn (especially in the photography which for once makes the surroundings actually seem Russian and not Californian), with the forest hideaway where most of the story is unfolded. Gregory Peck, somewhat reminiscent of Gary Cooper, is excellent throughout - natural, yet superbly restrained. And Tamara Toumanova, delicate and sensitive, will be best remembered for the beautiful scene in which she recalls her ballet career in the great Russian theaters. Here her grace and a certain spiritual quality were at their best - she seemed almost like a lovely flower, which was later to develop into a glorious blooming. Outstanding, also, the performance of Dena Penn, as the child Olga - like a bright sunbeam she lightens the somber darkness of the script. A highlight of the picture for those who love Russia is the reading of the letter from Pushkin's celebrated poem "Eugene Oneguin" most tellingly done. Music, beautifully blended, is made a part of the natural background of wood, wind, guns, and even dialogue, so that it is at all times an inherent part of the picture. The folk songs, with their accordion accompaniment, are plaintive or stirring as necessary. Furthermore, the master craftsmen responsible for the scoring are Russian so that something of the inner Russian soul has gone into this particular picture and makes it live. Mature-Family.

FOLLOW THE BOYS, Universal. (Camp Show Kaleidoscope). Dir: Eddie Sutherland
Musical Director: Leigh Harline

Another star-studded, streamlined variety show in a wide range to suit all tastes, forms, as one might say, "champagne to corn," superimposed upon a thin story, but affording of good entertainment nevertheless. The production tempo is good and the treatment of interludes and reactions well put together and swifter in pace and scope than anything we've had before in pictures of this type. Good, also, are the photography and settings, and the music (almost an overabundance) is excellent of its kind as are some of the acts. Zorina, however, is wasted in such a tame part,

(FOLLOW THE BOYS, cont'd)

and to some the picture will seem too long and the parade of stars less effective than if fewer had been used and quality, rather than quantity, employed. However, applause is due the participants and actors in any department, for their willingness to serve under all conditions in order to help entertain our men. Family.

FOUR JILLS IN A JEEP, 20th-Fox. (Front Line Entertainment). Dir: Wm. A. Seiter
Musical Dirs: Charles Henderson and Emil Newman
Music and Lyrics by Jimmy McHugh and Harold Adamson

Based on the actual experiences of the four stars who head the cast, a rather thin story has been put together to form agreeable, if not outstanding, entertainment, with Jimmy Dorsey and his popular band, Dick Haymes, and added stellar material from the top ranks of 20th-Century Fox, affording the needed balance. Songs throughout are pleasing and musical direction excellent. Hats off to the four ladies, not so much perhaps for what they do in the picture as for what they actually did in real life for our men at the front! Mature-Family.

THE HOUR BEFORE THE DAWN, Paramount. (The Nazi in our Midst). Dir: Frank Tuttle
Music Score by Miklos Rozsa

Somerset Maugham's thought-provoking and timely story has been well transformed to the screen by an excellent cast acting under direction which is both mature and sympathetic. The English backgrounds are realistic and the actors English speech, while sufficiently emphasized, is nevertheless understandable to American audiences which is not always the case in English made pictures. Veronica Lake does an especially nice piece of work as the German governess and Franchot Tone is honest and convincing in a difficult role. Photography is outstanding and the score supplied by Miklos Rozsa, is, as always, one of beauty and distinction. Mature-Family.

MEET THE PEOPLE, MGM. ("Minor Musical in Major Setting-"). Dir: Charles Riesner
Musical Direction: Lennie Hayton

This fast moving and entertaining revue of contrasting types has a good central idea but the picture, overfull of "plot," would be improved by tightening and cutting. The first song hardly justifies the elaborate build-up, but the device of the record instead of an orchestra at Inspiration Point is good procedure as is also the method of bringing in the cues. The Broadway production number is quite in the current Hollywood style - smooth and too, too elaborate! Bert Lahr and Virginia O'Brien, in their particular brands of humor, are definitely amusing, and Mata and Hari also with their burlesque on Indian dancing, Spike Jones and the rest, but Bert Lahr, in the Admiral's song, presents in concrete form the present vogue of burlesquing the music as well as the presentation. In contrast the Gilbert and Sullivan type must seem prehistoric to present day youth, but the music in their operas was always superbly done and added a subtle spice to the humor - the difference, perhaps, between slapstick and comedy! Family.

THE NEGRO SOLDIER, U. S. War Department. (Excellent and Timely).
Music by Dimitri Tiomkin

This tactful and exceedingly well handled presentation of a subject of much importance in these times, furnishes not only valuable war documentation, but much food for thought. No one, no matter how prejudiced, can fail to be impressed by the facts as given us so faithfully by Colonel Capra. True, the suffering of the Negro is left out, but otherwise his sacrifice, his heroism and his final advance and achievement are recorded to fine advantage. The narrative treatment is especially well done: the preacher in relation to his flock; the choir and soloist. Flashbacks and descriptive commentary give us what we might call the Preacher's Vision, communicated in turn to his congregation and to us. The music, while properly subordinated, is very fine, used with imaginative distance effects - not close-ups -- "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho" becoming the principal theme. Army songs and other tunes give a spirited atmosphere and the hymns, as sung by the colored choir, are outstanding. Family.

NINE GIRLS, Columbia. (A Slight Case of Murder). Director: Leigh Jason
Musical Director: M. W. Stoloff

A rather implausible but sufficiently pleasing little murder mystery in which sympathy for the killer at the end strikes a psychologically wrong note, but which is nevertheless well acted by a nice group of youngsters, with Ann Harding, beautiful as ever, as their chaperon. The settings for the mountain cabin seem over-elaborate and the fact that a supposedly competent house mother would send her charges to bed and go herself leaving a huge fire burning brightly with no attempt made to screen or cover it might indicate considerable mental disturbance. Perhaps it is intended to. However, the motivation of the story is well thought out. There are some good comedy scenes, the dialogue is clever and the score a good one, with an easy, suave introduction (signature) indicating youthfulness and irresponsibility - no "fateful premonition." There is very little music until the entanglement is well under way, when a long crescendo on one note starts preliminary shivers! This sequence is followed by clashing dissonances, mysterious background music, and Beethoven on the radio giving the needed contrast - all expertly done and appropriate. Mature-Family.

SHINE ON HARVEST MOON, WB. (The Golden Days of Vaudeville). Dir: David Butler
Musical Dir: Leo Forbstein. Music adapted by H. Roemheld
Orchestral Arrangements by Frank Perkins

A thoroughly enjoyable picture which, despite some anachronisms and faults in costuming, reaches the peak for restoration of a period of the American vaudeville stage, and is mercifully free from much of the false sprightliness and distortion of pace found in much of the present evaluation of those days. It is pleasant to hear the better popular songs of thirty-five years ago richly embellished with the more modern ideas of orchestration, yet retaining their good melodic line. Mr. Forbstein and his associates are to be congratulated on the fine arrangement, the tempo and sentimental quality of the old tunes. The film will bring back memories to older theater goers and will keep alive and make real to the generation of today some of the stars of yesteryear. The general build-up to the final climax in technicolor makes a brilliant and appropriate ending, and the cast is excellent, with Ann Sheridan giving a fine dignity and an easy poise to the part of Nora Bayes that was characteristic. Family.

TUNISIAN VICTORY, MGM release. (Lesson in Cooperation).
American Music: Dimitri Tiomkin. British Music: William Alwyn

This is a vitally important and graphic account of the Tunisian campaign which cannot fail to be of the highest interest to anyone concerned in knowing the strategy of this war and the part of our men in it. It is superbly and thrillingly photographed, narration is clear and concise, and the film will do much to fortify the morale of the home front where we often wonder why things move slowly and why day-to-day news reports seem to spell chaos. We are here shown that plans are well and carefully laid and executed and the value and necessity for complete cooperation is forcefully portrayed. The way the various flashes and scenes are woven and welded into a continuous flow of action is most skilfully done. No Hollywood actors these, but the real flesh and blood officers and men who are carrying on our fight for Victory. The plea for world thinking and carrying on after the war is convincingly expressed by the voices at the end, and one great thing that this picture will do for those who see it (and every American should) is that it brings home the fact that there IS an all over plan guiding our forces. The musical score is outstanding, being not only necessary to the continuity but a fitting accompaniment which, combined with the sound effects, makes us live the campaign ourselves. Tense and exciting themes from the Cesar Frank Variations are thrilling to recognize and the soldier songs, Christmas and martial music are all equally important in anticipating and setting the mood. Mature-Family.

UNCERTAIN GLORY, WB. (Lukas in France). Director: Raoul Walsh
Music by Adolph Deutsch

Magnificent photography marks the opening of this film with night shadows worthy of a Rembrandt and wonderful composition giving the effect of vast height, space and cosmic forces. The parallel between the prelude and that of "The Impostor" is also of especial interest but here the resemblance ends, for this is another instance of a picture about people of another nation - acted, directed and produced by those not of it and consequently it lacks the spark which might have made it a great picture, and this, despite the acting of Paul Lukas, who is always superb. Father Le Clerc, as played by Dennis Hoey, has strength and sincerity, and though Errol Flynn is always Errol Flynn he gives a good performance. It is regrettable, however, that the one French woman in the cast should be so unnecessarily hard and brittle and others were equally miscast. Besides, we have had a good deal of this French convict angle lately - let us not overdo it. The score is an envelope for the hideous and gruesome details of the opening chapter: it is completely synchronized throughout and integrated with the story so that it is a vital part of it. The French village, the interior of the church, have authentic and picturesque beauty - the trip to the bridge, the picnic, give us familiar glimpses of the French countryside. Trees, vineyards, hills - all this loveliness so close to the terrible events transpiring - are wonderfully expressed in the music, smoothly and sanely orchestrated in this sequence with its suggestion of happiness. The story is mature and well motivated, but though it is exciting and not impossible it seems at times a mere vehicle for Flynn at this stage of his career. The tag line applied to him, "He is a Frenchman," is definitely amusing! Mature-Family.

THE WHITE CLIFFS, MGM. ("Those Splendid Heights-"). Director: Clarence Brown
Musical Score by Herbert Stothart

A superbly written study of emotions, so beautifully enacted that in spite of its heartbreaking and poignant content one is left with a feeling of having been really uplifted and, one might say, cleansed. The direction of Clarence Brown, as always, is outstanding, every scene showing the imprint of his sure and sensitive guidance. Irene Dunne has put into this characterization something which has never been in it before: a certain spiritual quality which lifts it above the ordinary, and this, with photography, lighting, scenery, even the costumes of the earlier war period, and in fact every production value the finest of its kind contributes equally toward making it a perfect whole. Music is fitted expertly and with telling effect into the background. It is never obvious but Mr. Stothart is a master at creating moods, especially the nostalgic, and his arrangements of world war melodies (as once before in "Waterloo Bridge") are hauntingly lovely. Military and patriotic airs have their place also in the score and these are executed with skill and brilliance. A warm, rich and human document, the picture provides not only laughter and tears, but ample food for thought. Mature-Family

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NOTES ON VICTOR YOUNG

Victor Young was born in Chicago, Illinois, on August 8, 1900. His father, William Young, was a tenor with the Joseph Sheehan Opera Company. When Victor was seven, his mother died and his father, then on concert tour, found it difficult to care for him and his young sister. Upon arrival of their grandfather from Warsaw, arrangements were made for them to accompany him to Poland where the boy, who had indicated unusual musical interest, was entered in a conservatory for training. The winning of a scholarship led to graduation from the Warsaw Conservatory where he studied violin under the professorship of Stanislav Barcewicz. He was coached in theory and composition by Roman Statkowski, a pupil of Tschaikowsky, and presented with a Guenarius violin by a wealthy Polish banker for his outstanding student accomplishments.

As a very young man he joined the Pullman String Quartet, was a member of the Warsaw Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonic Opera Company.

When World War I broke out, and the American consul left Poland he urged Mr. Young and his sister to leave with him but the young musician had other plans. He was eager to complete his music education and so remained in Poland. After the Armistice, he returned to the United States and a little later accepted the job of concert master for the first big Balaban-Katz theater in Chicago. Later, he became assistant general manager and director of their chain of theaters.

Acquaintance with Mr. Jack Kapp of Brunswick Records led to a position as staff violinist at the recording studios of Brunswick. During this period Mr. Young played with the orchestras of Abe Lyman, Ben Bernie, Irving Aaronson, the Oriole Orchestra and Isham Jones. Incidentally, the first record of STAR DUST was played as a violin solo by him.

Next, he joined the Studebaker Champion program as conductor and arranger over NBC, and wrote the theme for the show, still used on their programs. Later, at the suggestion of Mr. Kapp he moved to New York to become musical director for Brunswick Records there. Besides handling the Brunswick work, he appeared in broadcast programs, including those of Goodrich, Then came the long awaited opportunity to write and compose original music for the screen which came about through arrangements to go to Hollywood as musical director of the Al Jolson radio show originating on the west coast.

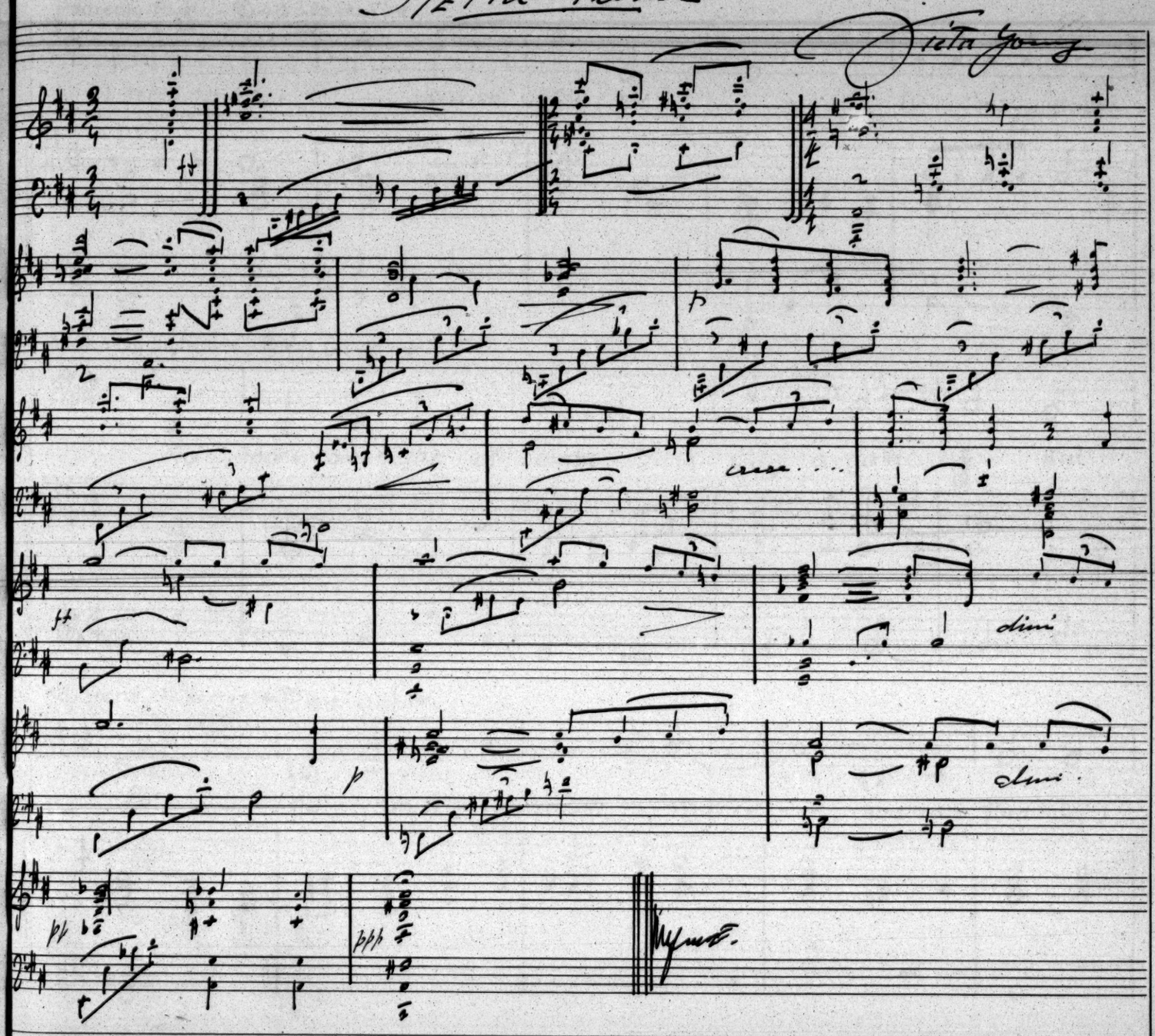
Affiliated with Paramount Pictures Inc., for many years as composer and musical director, he has to his credit scores for such pictures as WELLS FARGO, MAID OF SALEM, TAKE A LETTER DARLING, SKYLARK, ROAD TO MOROCCO, ROAD TO ZANZIBAR and ROAD TO SINGAPORE (the last three featuring Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour), FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS (requiring intensive research into Spanish music), THE UNINVITED, THE STORY OF DR. WASSELL, and FRENCHMAN'S CREEK (not yet released). At present he is scoring AND NOW TOMORROW (co-starring Loretta Young and Alan Ladd in the Rachel Field story).

One wonders how Mr. Young finds time for his strenuous program of work. For, in addition to his important assignments at Paramount, he is occupied with the making of Decca recordings and with the Sunday Westinghouse Program with John Charles Thomas at NBC. Perhaps it is explained by his great zest for life, his deep love of music, and a certain swift, sure touch that is the marvel of all who work with him.

The Uninvited

Stella Theme

Victor Young



Film Music Notes Portfolio — No. 7 —

Musical Adaptation by
Nathaniel Shilkret &
Max Terr

HEAVENLY MUSIC.

SAM COSLOW

Heavenly Music - ©1943 Leo Feist Inc.,

I seem to hear . . . . Heav-en-ly Mu-sic . . . . . Ev'-ry time you're near . . . .

Theme Song Signature - ©1943 Loew's Inc.,

To-mor-row night at eight I'll sing a-gain . . . But

Help Yourself to Romance - © 1943 Loew's Inc.,

Just help your-self to sweet ro-mance . . . . You can find it

Postlude - ©1943 Loew's Inc.,

Dear au-di-ence re-luc-tant-ly our home-ward way we wend, we'd