

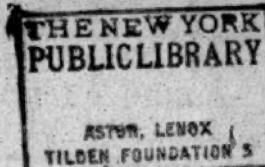
# NATIONAL FILM MUSIC COUNCIL

70 FIFTH AVENUE

New York 11, N. Y.

ALgonquin 4-8344

"To foster interest in music in the films; to encourage musicians who are developing this new art form; to awaken teachers and students to the educational, artistic and practical possibilities of this new medium of expression."



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## SPECIAL BULLETIN

### CURRENT INFORMATION of VALUE TO ALL MUSIC EDUCATORS

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## ORGANIZATION AND OBJECTIVE OF THE NATIONAL FILM MUSIC COUNCIL

The NATIONAL FILM MUSIC COUNCIL was organized in 1943 with headquarters with the National Board of Review at 70 Fifth Avenue, New York. The increased interest among the music educators throughout the country in the mimeographed monthly bulletin, FILM MUSIC NOTES first issued in 1941, gave us an incentive to enlarge our efforts and further assist in this new important development in music education. Our purposes are to create a greater appreciation for the music of the films which is one of the chief component arts in all motion picture production and to awaken students to the artistic and practical possibilities in this new medium of expression.

Since the release of "A SONG TO REMEMBER", "RHAPSODY IN BLUE" and "ANCHORS AWEIGH" and the recent Biennial Conference of the M.E.N.C. held in Cleveland, a new impetus has developed. The great value of the training films during the war has brought a new prospective to thoughtful teachers and they are asking the question, "How can we teach this new phase of music used in films?" Thus the need of supplying more detailed information, study outlines and material for use in the schools. Womens' clubs, music clubs, PTA's and other organizations are asking also for recommended lists of film music and recordings for programs.

This special bulletin issued by the Council contains pertinent articles contributed by new members of the Advisory Council which we hope will answer the many questions coming to our desk the past few months. "WHAT HAPPENED IN CLEVELAND" -will enlighten you as to what was considered in the Film Music sessions. Stanlie McConnell, chairman of the New York reviewing committee, has presented this report in a most comprehensive manner which needs no explanation. Lorin Wheelwright, supervisor of music in the Salt Lake City Schools and Pres. of the South Western Music Educators Conference, and James F. Nickerson of the University of Minnesota, who will be with the University of Kansas next fall, have given their ideas regarding the present needs. Mrs. McConnell, Mr. Wheelwright and Mr. Nickerson have joined forces on the Advisory Committee of the Council.

A reorganization of the Council is being perfected and a number of active group educators will be added and each of whom will contribute his or her opinions on the various phases of film music to be considered by the educators. Richard Griffith, the new Ex-Director of the National Board of Review, will assume the place of James Shelley Hamilton on the Council. He has been serving the Signal Corps and has much to offer. Marie L. Hamilton, chairman of the Schools' Motion Picture Committee, is working daily with the younger children of the New York schools, and the reports of their criticisms of current films will be most valuable to us. Charles Previn, formerly one of Hollywood's leading film musicians and now musical director at Radio City Music Hall, has consented to serve with us. His services will bring to our Council many interesting sidelights on film production and how music fits into the picture.

The 16MM films available and recommended by the committee as well as the current commercial films will be listed, and special material sent to all who wish to use it. We need your cooperation ...your advice and suggestions. We wish to be of service to you in every way possible. Our work will amplify the material supplied by the monthly bulletin, FILM MUSIC NOTES issued from 6162 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, 28, California. All communications to the Council must be addressed to 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City, 11.

Sincerely,

Grace Widney Mabee, Chairman  
National Film Music Council.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLEVELAND  
in the  
Field of Film Music

Ten thousand people, representing every state in the Union, whose interest is the musical education of our country's youth, met in Cleveland March 26-April 3 for the Music Educators National Conference. The organization of the meeting included 40 curriculum study groups that covered every phase of music education. As a member of the Films and Projector Equipment Committee, a section of Consultant Group XIX known as Audio-Visual Aids and Scientific Devices in the Field of Music Education, I could sense great interest throughout the conference in the Film Committee's activities and future plans. Teachers in the field of music education, as in all other fields, have been awakened to the great teaching potentialities of the film and to the important part it will play in the teaching of tomorrow.

The first meeting of the entire Audio-Visual Aids Committee was held on Wednesday afternoon with THE PRESENT SITUATION AND FUTURE POSSIBILITIES as the topic of discussion. The chairman, Hazel B. Nohance, presided. The first speaker, Belmont Farley, Public Relations Officer for the N.E.A., said that the Armed Forces had had unlimited money to spend for films for their teaching program and the public approved it. We should continue this interest and benefit from it. Returning service men, accustomed to the benefits of such a program, will soon be on boards of education and in classrooms and will sanction and demand such teaching aids for our children. For our Armed Forces proved through experiments that not only from 30 to 60 per cent of class time is saved by the use of training films but also that retention is longer when this method of teaching is used. Mr. Farley concluded by saying the Armed Forces had films made to assist their text books and that in the future our text books should be written to include audio-visual aids.

Mr. Carl Nater of the Disney Studios, speaking on the same program, suggested that the subject of educational music films be taken out of the discussion stage and put in the "doing" stage. He said the producers want to know definitely what is needed and suggested that our organization work out a proposed film program for music education - a survey that would state definitely our educational needs. Mr. Nater feels the economic problem is one that should be shared by producers and educators. The cost is so big that before the film companies start production they must be sure that they are making the kind of film that is needed and will be bought. In summing up his plan, Mr. Nater said that the subject matter must be supplied by the music educators, and the economic responsibility must be shared. The production will be taken care of by the film companies with the help of advice from experts in the field.

A meeting devoted exclusively to the problems of the FILM AND PROJECTOR EQUIPMENT was held Wednesday evening. Vincent Hiden, vice-chairman, of Glendale, Calif., presided in the absence of the chairman, Mrs. Helen C. Dill of the University of Calif.,

Los Angeles, Calif.

The meeting opened with a digest of the questionnaire, THE 16 mm FILM IN MUSIC EDUCATION. It had been prepared by Mrs. Dill and was read by Louis W. Curtis of Los Angeles. This questionnaire was sent to 160 leaders in the field, chosen from the membership of the National Conference, with a careful consideration of geographical spread throughout the country and spread in levels of teaching. Eighty forms were returned from the U. S. and one from Canada. From these reports only one 16 mm film was found to be used in all six divisions of the conference and that was the Encyclopaedia Britannica film on the SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND ITS CHOIRS, listed by 45 people. The next films, in order of their use, were NATIONAL MUSIC CAMP, with 17 listings, ITURBI, STEPHEN FOSTER, SOUND and ACOUSTICS, MUSIC OF THE MASTERS, MAGIC STRINGS, and MUSIC IN THE SKY.

The third main division of the questionnaire was a list of 11 topics thought suitable by the committee for future music films. The 7 highest ranking topics are as follows: PLAYING OF INSTRUMENTS, UNDERSTANDING OF WORLD CULTURE THROUGH NATIVE MUSIC, MASTERPIECES OF MUSIC, FAMOUS MUSICAL ORGANIZATIONS, HOW INSTRUMENTS ARE MADE, BIOGRAPHIES OF MUSICIANS, and MUSIC AND HUMAN DESTINY.

Mrs. Dill's digest concluded: "Splendid additional topics and comments were given by most of the prominent music educators who sent in the forms. A gold mine of helpful ideas is contained therein. Many of them expressed the hope that fine music films would be made by companies working along with music educators to attain results desired by both."

Next came my report, A DIGEST OF THE DATA COMPILED ON GOOD 35 MM and 16 MM FILMS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THEIR USE IN TEACHING MUSIC. A mimeographed list, prepared by our New York Previewing Committee, entitled "CURRENT and COMING ENTERTAINMENT FILMS WORTHY OF THE MUSIC EDUCATOR'S CONSIDERATION" was given out. Referring to this, I stressed that the interest that takes thirty million of our students to the movies weekly cannot be ignored by sincere and alert teachers of music, and I particularly urged that film music be included in the curriculum for the 80--90 per cent of our student bodies who are not in our Junior and Senior High School instrumental and vocal organizations.

Granted that the music teachers accept this point of view we believe they need the information and material listed in the first column of the report on "MAJOR MUSIC FILMS" and we asked that the committee pass on its organization and value. Ten such films, currently showing or in production, are analyzed and 12 are listed as "To Come." These films, coming virtually from every producer-major and independent-show that the cycle started by Columbia's "SONG TO REMEMBER" and Warner Bros. "RHAPSODY IN BLUE" is a growing one, through which entertainment and education will continue to prove mutually supporting forces.

Every sort of audience classification has given the two musical films, "A SONG TO REMEMBER" and "RHAPSODY IN BLUE" a place among the best ten of the year. Our boys and girls, 8 to 18, casting their ballots with the National Board---well in advance of the balloting of the adults so that their choice will not be influenced by adult opinion---placed "RHAPSODY IN BLUE" first and "A SONG TO REMEMBER" eighth. The report adds, "Unlike former polls, music has played an important part in the above listing. Two of the films were originally conceived just as vehicles in which to present the music of Gershwin and Chopin. The Juniors tip their hats to such attempts to build a plot around a worthwhile body of music."

For teachers of children of public school age, the audience classification is very important, for we cannot justify recommending musical values in certain films or using such pictures in our classroom procedures, unless they are the type of film that is right in every way for the children to see. The selections of the Schools' Motion Picture Committee of the National Board of Review can be relied upon. A great deal of thought and deliberation is put into the selection of each picture by a group of parents who have children of school age, with the expert guidance of the director, Marie L. Hamilton.

One of the most important ideas suggested was that teachers take their students en masse to see a deserving major music film of the right audience classification. The gain of such group enjoyment is invaluable and is available to practically all of our children everywhere, in small towns as well as in cities. The stimulant such a trip inspires is catching and is bound to extend into the home. Thus a worthwhile musical experience is enjoyed by the whole community.

In commenting on "films containing selections of standard works", I stated that I disagreed with teachers who say such pictures as "ANCHORS AWEIGH" have no musical value. I am thankful to hear several selections of good music, beautifully performed in an hour and a half of varied entertainment, for it breaks down the feeling that so many have had, - that the classics are above them. I also commended such pictures as "SARATOGA TRUNK" for authentic portrayals of our folk music and heartily recommended MGM's "TWO SISTERS FROM BOSTON."

In referring to the list of FILMS WITH GOOD MUSICAL SCORES, I mentioned our belief that, after students have learned to hear a score, a unit covering the technique and history of the art of composing for the film should be taught. I presented, for the committee's approval, a suggestion made by Mr. Richard Griffith, executive director of the National Board of Review, that a 16 mm film to teach this be compiled from the film library of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and made available through their rented library.

The final classification on our mimeographed list is "LIGHT MUSICAL FILMS." A teacher should at least know what is going

on in this field. Some of the best of our light music will soon appear on the screen.

In compiling the list of GOOD 16 MM FILMS WITH MUSIC, the committee included only the best. All films which were poorly conceived, or had poor sound or inadequate personalities were excluded. Eight were listed: two Russian, three English and three American films. There are more, of course and since we had only two weeks in which to review them we recommended that a committee be appointed to continue this task.\*

Third on the Wednesday evening session was the EVALUATION OF STANDARD 16 MM PROJECTOR EQUIPMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON FILM STRIPS, FILM SHORTS, ETC. by James F. Nickerson of the University of Minnesota. Mr. Nickerson accompanied his talk with a four-page mimeographed report giving very valuable information on (a) Types of Equipment, (b) Analyzing Your Needs in 16 mm Movie Projection, (c) Features to Consider in 16 mm Equipment. The committee and audience were very favorably impressed with the report and realized that this field of film music had discovered a new exponent, of whom we shall all hear more. He concluded by asking the committee to make the recommendation, given later on in this report.

Mr. Carl Nater of Disney Films was the fourth speaker presenting for evaluation some ideas on the proposed Disney film, ELEMENTS OF MUSIC. Mr. Nater showed slides of drawings to illustrate how the subject might be visualized. The idea was, enthusiastically received, and the hope was generally expressed that Disney would put such an idea into production.

The final presentation of the evening was a DEMONSTRATION OF CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES, using a 16 mm film, with a good music score, by Capt. Lenard Quinto. Using a portion of the documentary film, THE CITY, with music by Aaron Copland, Capt. Quinto demonstrated an interesting technique of teaching the contribution of the film music score. To prove his point that the pictorial elements of such a film should tell their story alone, Capt. Quinto ran the film first without sound, commenting on the obvious lack of the complement which the music would furnish. Next, the sound track alone was run to show that it, in itself, was not a complete entity. Finally, the complete track and picture, run simultaneously, showed the integration of all elements in this new art form.

The audience and committee were enthusiastic about this method of teaching a modern film score and could see possibilities for its wide use, now that the documentaries are available and are being shown in our high schools and colleges. Such films are important, not only because they represent a great advancement in the

\*This list and that of the entertainment films is given in its entirety in this issue.

field of film music, but also because they are available, representative works of our best contemporary composers.

Thursday, the Film and Projector Committee met to decide on recommendations proposed in the two previous meetings. The results as given below were reported by Mr. Hiden, our vice-chairman at the final combined audio-visual meeting on Friday afternoon.

MUSIC EDUCATORS NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
Consultant Group No. XIX  
AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS AND SCIENTIFIC DEVICES  
IN THE FIELD OF MUSIC EDUCATION

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RECOMMENDATIONS

I.

WE RECOMMEND that the Research Council of the Music Educators National Conference issue a special bulletin to give encouragement and sound guidance to the music educator in the use of audio-visual aids and suggest that it include:

1. The philosophy and psychology of the use of such aids.
2. Recommendations and suggestions for the use of the various types of audio-visual aids.
3. A catalog of "selected" materials including critical annotations.
4. A list of sources (including addresses and typical costs) for the purchase and rental of audio-visual materials.
5. A frank discussion of the features to be desired in the purchase of visual and audio equipment for school use, together with a list of sources (including addresses and typical costs) for such equipment.
6. Suggestions for specific design for library and classroom facilities, operators' clubs, purchase plans and other necessary details of systematic use of audio-visual aids.

II.

We further recommend that the Music Educators National Conference set up a representative film reviewing committee to prepare an official MENC Guide covering music education films, and that the continuing reports of the findings of this committee should appear in the Music Educators Journal for the benefit of the entire conference membership.

### III.

We further recommend that this be made a standing committee, which will continue to develop actively an overall comprehensive plan for proposed films in all phases of music education; and that these findings, as developed, be made available to all educational film producers. In order to move ahead toward this goal as expediently as possible, we recommend that our chairman Helen C. Dill, write the chairmen of the 1944-46 curriculum committees, asking each chairman to appoint a sub-committee of three members to make definite recommendations on content and treatment of suggested music education films in their specific subject field.

### IV.

We further recommend that the MENC Films and Equipment Committee act as a coordination agency in directing the activities to be followed by the six sectional committees in this same field.

### V.

We further recommend that the MENC President-Elect appoint the 1946-48 Films and Projector Equipment committee as soon as possible and that its personnel include several members of the present committee.

#### REPORT FROM THE FILM AND PROJECTOR EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE

1. The Film and Projector Equipment Committee has during the current Cleveland meeting studied and appraised the results of the sub-committee known as the Film Review Committee. These results have been compiled in the form of a report titled "Current and Coming Commercial Films Worthy of Music Education's Consideration."

It is the opinion of the Film and Projector Equipment Committee that the functions of this Review Committee and the reports emanating from it, in relation to which current theatrical films are worthy of more than passing interest on the part of music educators, do provide a real service to a large number of school people throughout the country.

In recommending that the Review Committee continue its work, the said Committee recognizes that the effectiveness of this Review Committee can be increased in ratio to the amount of cooperation given to it by Hollywood production companies through their New York offices. In view of the fact that reports of the Review Committee actually stimulate future audience interest in a film worthy of its recommendation and, in view of the fact that such action results in benefits to the film producers from the standpoint of increased box office reception to the film in question, it is sincerely hoped that maximum cooperation with this Committee on the part of the producers may be expected.

II. The Committee commends the suggestion made by Mr. Richard Griffith and hopes that the project can go through as outlined.

III. The Committee commends the Disney Studios for their interest in this field.

IV. We are highly honored to have three men representing the commercial companies with us and ask the secretary to write to these companies, Encyclopaedia Britannica Films Inc., and Disney Studios and Herb Lamb Productions, Inc., expressing these sentiments.

V. The Committee commends and appreciates the work of the NATIONAL FILM MUSIC COUNCIL and its publication, FILM MUSIC NOTES as being a distinct contribution to the field of music education.

The Sub-Committee on Films and Projector Equipment was made up of the following: Vincent A. Hiden, Glendale, Calif., Vice-Chairman; Alleen Watrous, Wichita, Kan., Secretary; James A. Brill, New York, N. Y.; Louis W. Curtis, Los Angeles, Calif.; Karl Ernst, Portland, Oregon; ~~Thelma~~ Thelma A. Forster, Helena, Mont.; Marguerite V. Hood, Ann Arbor, Mich.; David Hughes, Elkhart, Ind.; James F. Nickerson, Minneapolis, Minn.; Stanlie McConnell, Forest Hills, N. Y.; Capt. Lenard Quinto, New York, N. Y.

Dr. William B. Levinson, Director of WBOE, Cleveland, summarized the reports of the entire Audio-Visual Aids Committees at the conclusion of the Friday meeting. He said that since little of this looking and planning ahead in the way of the educational film can be realized for another two years, we should continue our careful survey of music films now available and use them in our present teaching. In doing this we will learn how to use a film in our classroom procedures and will learn through actual experience what is needed in the way of improvements and additional films.

You will note that this coincides with the views and recommendations of the Film Committee. We received many expressions of regret from conference members, in all the curriculum fields, that more films were not shown at the convention. These educators are eager to know what is available now, that is worthwhile for them to include in their classroom procedures. Money is being appropriated by many boards of education all over the country for equipment in the Audio-Visual Aids field, and music teachers realize it is essential that they be represented in such a budget. They know that the educational music films that will emerge will unquestionably contribute greatly to the improvement of their teaching techniques and standards. With the support of the new Executive Committee of the National Music Educators Conference, tangible progress in this field can result from the combined efforts of interested, alert members and of producers of equipment and films.

In Cleveland, the Film Committee agreed that its members should write various articles, such as this, for leading educational publications throughout the country. I wish to thank the National Film Music Council for this opportunity of presenting our findings to you.

Stanlie McConnell

## THE FUTURE OF FILMS IN MUSIC EDUCATION

I believe that the era of rapid expansion of film teaching aids, both of an instructional and an enrichment nature, lies immediately before us and that we must give our individual and collective aid in directing this expansion in the most desirable and efficient direction.

I believe that the majority of music educators are now agreed on the efficacy of films and other visual aids in music instruction and are now ready to plan and execute a "Program of Action" to get these aids in use in every class room. We tend to talk in terms of generalities and of the desirability of such aids, yet we fail to be specific and produce clearcut action, policy or plan. As individual teachers we want specific help as to sources, costs, specific uses and other guidance for the use of these aids.

There appear to be two distinct needs to be met in carrying out this "Program of Action" to get music education films into every music class room. They are:

1. To set up a long-range 'outline of' the present and future film needs of music education and to give every aid to promote the production of these films.
2. To promote and develop simultaneously the wide use of these films.

One of the most immediate challenges before music education lies in determining this outline of present and future film needs in music education. We must define what kind of film it is that we want. Do we wish general assembly films with high entertainment value? Do we wish general films showing music as one of the arts? Do we want films on music in daily living? Do we want films for every instruction problem--voice, choral technique, orchestral instruments, or marching band? Do we want opera, symphony, folklore, dance or musical comedy? Perhaps it is all of these that we wish, but in what order should they be produced? What is the most practical length of a film? For how many different purposes can or should a single film be used to advantage? These and other problems need definition and outline. It is too large and important a task to leave to opportunistic venture. Music educators must be interested in plotting the future of this important teaching aid.

I see two alternatives before music educators and film producers in this expansion:

1. Either to set up a planning group to work out such a blueprint cooperatively.
2. Or to let the development of future films follow its expensive trail and error course.

Commercial producers will hire the expert opinion of members of our profession and will attempt to estimate these needs as best they can and add the cost of experiments and failures to the cost of future film. I would rather see a cooperative planning enterprise be started between educator and producer to determine these needs, the order of production, the prospective market, and the practicality of certain media for these needs.

The market for the use of educational music film can best be developed by means of a systematic and reliable review and evaluation by a representative committee of music educators and such specialists as are needed. This review and evaluation should cover current educational films and others as released and should be widely publicized. Information regarding the specific use of films, purchase and care of equipment, source of film materials, suggestions for design of library facilities, operators clubs, purchase plans, and other necessary details of systematic use of visual aids must be made available to every music educator through many channels such as professional journals and special bulletins and pamphlets issued by music and film organizations.

We are at the threshold of the advancement of a powerful teaching aid. We must guide its development as well as ready our ranks to receive and use it to the fullest extent possible.

James F. Nickerson  
University of Minnesota

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY SCHOOL of EDUCATION  
Will Include Films  
in  
SUMMER SESSION METHODS COURSES

The remarkable results achieved by the Armed Forces in the use of films for the purpose of expediting and facilitating instruction has proven beyond question that this type of instruction can and should be incorporated in all future plans in educational institutions. It is not generally known that many fine films are now available for this purpose. Consequently, many teachers are as yet unaware of the source of supply, the potential possibilities or the experienced view-point of those who have used films as an aid to instruction. The recommendations of the New York City Reviewing Committee, concerning the available 35 and 16 mm films, should be of real service to those interested in this current trend.

After previewing numerous films--good, bad and indifferent ---the writer is of the opinion that there is a need for direction in the techniques involved in the use of films, for experience in evaluation in terms of purpose and intrinsic worth, and for actual demonstrations by persons experienced in this field. Plans are now in progress to meet these needs in a constructive way in two courses offered by the writer in the coming Summer Session at New York University. Persons experienced in the use of films, scenario writers, composers of film music and producers are expected to present their respective phases as an aid to the interested teacher.

Gordon E. Beiley  
Associate Professor of Education  
Music Education Department  
New York University

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## GOOD MUSICAL SCORING DESERVES BETTER ATTENTION

The other day while visiting a junior high school glee club, I thought it would be interesting to test their powers of observation. Upon inquiry I discovered that a good percentage of the class had seen the motion picture, "SPELLBOUND" whose musical score is one of the finest of recent years, thanks to Miklos Rozsa. I played the theme used throughout the picture to express amnesia as best I could remember it, then asked the class how many had ever heard it. Surprisingly enough not one of those who had seen the picture recalled the musical theme, yet they all expressed keen delight in the drama and commented on its intensity of emotion.

This direct contact with children's reactions to motion picture music leads me to believe that good musical scoring deserves better attention by movie goers. Just as one's pleasure is increased by appreciation of color where it is used, or by other features of beautiful photography, so can one's pleasure be increased by perception of musical values where they exist. Where strong thematic material is used such as in this picture, it might be worthwhile to have recordings available for use in schools so that children can focus their attention upon the beauty of the music itself. Obviously this approach would only be appropriate in a few cases.

Lorin F. Wheelwright, Supervisor  
Salt Lake City City Schools.

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FILM MUSIC NOTES offers FILM MUSIC NOTES PORTFOLIO, Oct. 1943 - June 1945 at three dollars. 6162 Hollywood Blvd, Hollywood 28, Calif.

Each month since October 1943 we have presented excerpts of best-known film music from current films. They are selected by the composers themselves and are in manuscript. Here you have source material of unique value. Themes, signatures, background and bridge sequences arranged for piano alone, with suggested orchestration or conductors' sheets.

These excerpts are laboratory material, stimulating and suggestive alike to composers, students and music lovers.

Among the composers represented:

Scott Bradley - Cartoon Cue Sheet  
Aaron Copland - The North Star  
Erich Wolfgang Korngold - The Constant Nymph  
Gail Kubik - The Memphis Belle  
Louis Gruenberg - Counter-Attack  
Alfred Newman - The Song of Bernadette and The Keys of the Kingdom  
Milkos Rozsa - The Lost Weekend

Preview of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's Forthcoming

"TWO SISTERS FROM BOSTON"

On the afternoon of April 17 a preview was arranged by the National Film Music Council, through the courtesy of the Motion Picture Association of America, in cooperation with MGM, for a group of New York music educators, composers, artists and authors. Mr. Arthur DeBra of the Motion Picture Association presented Miss Theresa Stone, Educational Director for MGM, Mrs. Grace W. Mabee of the Council, and Mr. Charles Previn, guest speaker of the afternoon.

Mr. Previn, the Musical Director of "TWO SISTERS FROM BOSTON", completed his part of this film last summer before leaving the coast, where he had long been associated with the Hollywood Film Studios, to become Director of Music at the Radio City Music Hall. In presenting Mr. Previn, Mr. DeBra laughingly remarked, "You would probably recognize him more readily, as he is seen in Radio City, in his characteristic conductor's attitude -- back to -- instead of facing his audience."

Mr. Previn, speaking in his usual charming and informal manner, said:

"Ladies and Gentlemen, my friends:

"I greatly appreciate the invitation of the National Film Music Council to talk with you today about the picture 'TWO SISTERS FROM BOSTON'. By reason of my close association with its production, as Music Director, I hope I am not presuming in the assumption that your interest in the music it contains matches mine.

"It would be much easier for both of us if you were first to see the picture. On the other hand, you then might miss some points of interest which, if I undertake to interpret them in advance, will acquire significance in our over-all purpose to blend opera, musical comedy and burlesque in a picture definitely dated in the era of the Gay Nineties.

"Let me try my best then to give you an idea of the story, only enough of it to explain the musical problems it posed without detracting from your enjoyment of the plot.

"Blue-blooded Beacon Hill is horrified by the rumor that pretty Abigail Chandler is kicking up her heels and warbling at a low Bowery dive in New York called the 'Golden Rooster'. (Abigail is Kathryn Grayson.)

"Her trim but attractive sister, Martha (June Allyson), her deprecatory Aunt Jennifer (Isobel Elsom) and her pompous, severe Uncle Jonathon (Harry Hayden) promptly depart for New York to find out the truth. To save herself from being dragged back to Boston and the limitations of the church choir, Abigail -- who is singing

at the Bowery cafe for money to take voice lessons in furtherance of a hoped-for operatic career -- tells her relatives that the 'Golden Rooster' is an opera, 'Le Coq d'Or'. She says that she sings different small parts in the various operas. They buy tickets to attend the performance of the opera that night. Abigail fails to get past even the doorman at the opera house.

"Hopeless now that her ruse has failed, she packs to return to Boston. But Martha gallantly decides that somehow Abigail shall have her career. Conniving with Spike (Jimmy Durante), East Side master of ceremonies of the Golden Rooster and a devoted pal of Abigail's, Martha succeeds in getting her sister into the chorus line.

"Anxious that her relatives shall see her, Abigail pushes up front-stage beside the star tenor (Lauritz Melchior) and, to his outraged horror, turns his aria into a duet. This starts another train of troubles.

"From this you will gather that the story itself is an entertaining one, -- one you are certain to enjoy. But you will also perceive, I think, that it offered many problems to a Director of Music. In the first place, the story necessitated that the music run the whole gamut. Since the picture was so definitely dated, or perhaps I should say the story was dated, both the music and its performance had to be appropriate to the time. Finally there were some sequences where the music was required to make the plot progress; in other words, to tell the story. In addition, we had the usual problems of adapting the music to the talent of our players and assuring that the background music created appropriate moods against which to project the action.

"In introducing me, Mr. DeBra said I had something to do with writing the lyrics. Let me assure you this was a very small assignment consisting of making changes in them which would make them easier to sing.

"Now may I come to some concrete description of our many problems. The story calls for a sequence in which a string ensemble plays. As you know, this takes place in the mauve decade, in Boston. It has practically always been the accepted fact that this type of ensemble play the music of Haydn -- it is not too difficult for the amateurs, and is so listenable. Since this scene occurred at the beginning of the picture, it was important to establish definitely the atmosphere of the times, without, however, reducing the musical end of it to a burlesque. In other words, taste was required to gather with a musically correct treatment of the scene. Rather than use a genuine Haydn selection, I wrote a piece of music in the Haydn manner, so that the director could work his story into the very performance of the string ensemble. As you look at the picture and listen to the music, perhaps you will suspect that the performers you see could hardly render so perfect a performance as comes to you through the screen from the sound track. If so, you would be right. What you hear was performed by the best five musicians we could find

in all Hollywood and recorded on a record. The musicians you see are musicians, all right, but were selected to characterize as nearly as possible the type of persons who might be playing chamber music in Boston in the nineties.

"In this sequence you also see June Allyson playing the piano. She really does not play it but I am hopeful that the illusion is convincing. We not only taught her the finger motions but also how to hold her body at the piano to give the impression that she is really performing.

"Later on in the picture there are many sequences in which Miss Grayson and Melchior and Mr. Durante appear to be singing very realistically when, as a matter of fact, they were only having their pictures taken. Long experience has demonstrated that the recording of voices can best be done in advance; later the artist simulates lip movements and synchronizes them with a music play-back as the picture is made. In this picture we made a very real endeavor to have the simulation complete, to have it extend beyond the lip movements to movements of the throat, body posture, etc. We think we were quite successful in the deception and I hope you will think so too.

"Now about some of the music. As you listen you will recognize that we have created a synthetic operetta. We borrowed from Liszt and Mendelssohn -- from Liszt we used LES PRELUDES, FOURTEENTH HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY and LIEBESTRAUM. The story required an opera sequence, with certain action in certain spots. Instead of trying to adapt a ready-made opera so that it would fit our purposes, I decided to adapt the above Liszt works to opera form, to link them with plot, and to develop them so as to have solo, duet and choral selections. In this way I arrived at a tailor-made opus, still giving the audience familiar classical music while reaching our objective as to story.

When you see the honky-tonk sequences, note the old-time type of songs. You may be interested to know that these were specially written, and are meant to convey the style of song popular in those days, since to use a number actually in vogue at the time might have detracted from the required effect.

#### COMMENTS OF THE PREVIEWERS

Guests at the showing of the film, "TWO SISTERS FROM BOSTON" were asked to write their comments on the picture. Here are all of those who complied and signed their names:

"A grand lot of fun seeing "THE TWO SISTERS FROM BOSTON". Enjoyed it immensely all the way from the comedy to the fine moments of music provided by Charles Previn in the company with Liszt and Mendelssohn. I believe a worthy use can be made of this film in school groups. Thanks for a happy afternoon and best wishes for the success of the film." John Finley, Dir. of Music, Rye, N.Y. Schools.

"I think this, probably, the best musical I have ever seen." Majorie Harper

"I should think the opera sequences could more easily have been made with original music. It certainly would have been less annoying. The picture, however, is delightful."

Paul Creston, Composer

"Tops! Music superb. A wonderful picture."

B. D. Thompson, National  
Assn. Composers and Con.

"It seems to me that this picture may help break down certain barriers which keep the movie-going public from opera. I would not recommend it especially to serious music lovers except for its pure entertainment value."

Doris Adams Hunn, Lecturer

"A wonderful picture...most entertaining. Every thing about it holds your attention completely. The music is excellent. There should be more pictures like this."

Albert B. McConnell,  
New York, Business man.

"Most enjoyable and most amusing. Sorry Mr. Previn didn't do the score, or use an opera sequence, but it is most effective even if deluding. It will be one of the best musical puzzles of the age. This will not advance new film music."

Ethel Peyser, Author

"I think the picture is excellent in every respect. The musical setting is most effective. The cast well chosen and directed and the comedy touches are thoroughly delightful."

Carolyn E. Jamesen  
Upper Montclair Womens Club

"Very entertaining and surely fun. The treatment of the final duet was particularly effective. I am only disturbed at the technical point of turning down (and out) a lamp without blowing, and the final synchronization of the recording. Good Luck."

Mrs. Dolf Swing, Pianist

"As entertainment, it's splendid. The photography is fine. ...the ending is super. It's an excellent picture."

Mrs. E. C. Gillespie  
Nat. Assn Composers and  
Conductors.

"OSCAR" It is really a stroke of genius, musically a real treat, and comedy great. A 5 star picture.

Geoffrey O'Hara, Composer

All subscribers to Film Music Notes are entitled to receive any special supplementary material provided by the National Film Music Council, such as study outlines for teachers, bulletin board sheets, stills, etc. These cannot be supplied on all films but such as are made available will be sent to you on request to the Council headquarters, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City, 11. There is no charge.

### "TWO SISTERS FROM BOSTON"

Answers to the Criticisms and Possible Educational Uses of the Film.

Before this film can be further intelligently discussed, our readers need to know more about the plot and how it has been rated by our national review organizations.

National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, Inc.

"TWO SISTERS FROM BOSTON" - Kathryn Grayson, June Allyson, Lauritz Melchior, Jimmy Durante - Boston's blue blood indeed runs cold when it learned that one of its own is singing in a cabaret of New York's Bowers and - this in a shocked whisper - exposing her limbs. The lady's family descends upon the Bowery to retrieve its own but the singer, aided and abetted by her equally attractive sister, clears her name by stating that The Golden Rooster saloon has been mistaken for Le Coq d'Or opera. Then, of course, the girl does have her dreams realized by getting an opera contract, after some unorthodox shenanigans. Durante provides the entertainment when the film is concerned with the Bowery, Melchior takes care of the opera-house sequences, and in their differing ways they are both wonderful. Here is sure entertainment for varied tastes. (Original screen play by Myles Connolly. Directed by Henry Koster. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 111 min.) Family: SMPC 8-14

#### Calif. Congress of Parents and Teachers:

"A delightful period musical comedy of the early 1900s with attractive settings and authentic costumes of that day. The music ranges from Metropolitan to Bowery. One sequence--a highlight of the picture--simulates the trademark of the Victor Talking Machine, 'His Master's Voice'. Adults, good; 14-18, good; 8-14, mature. MATURE FAMILY."

#### General Federation of Women's Clubs (Western Committee):

"A gay, whimsical romantic musical comedy. The music is exceptionally fine; the settings and costumes of the period lend added enjoyment. Comedy is the keynote of the picture. FAMILY."

Other reviews published in "Unbiased Opinions", such as, American Legion Auxiliary, National Film Music Council, California Council of Church Women, etc., are all equally enthusiastic. Of this list of thirteen, seven rate it for family audience, four, mature family, and two mature.

Considering this, what do we have? A picture rating tops in entertainment, containing excellent music performed by one of the world's greatest artists, and recommended by a large majority of reviewers, as being suitable for our children to see. Since this assures that millions of our children will see this movie, including those whose parents are interested in guiding their child's movie-fare, should we as teachers ignore it? Or should we utilize this film by sharing its enjoyment with our students and leading them to a greater appreciation of the composers represented?

Among the comments printed on the preceding page, three are challenging. These criticisms are quite justifiable and exactly what we should expect from three such intelligent and successful musicians. From the standpoint of a music educator, who is trying to increase the musical appreciation of a group of miscellaneous students or laymen this is the way we would answer them. Mrs. Mabee and I would like to know what you, our readers, think. Won't you write and tell us?

Doris Adams Hunn says, "The picture may help to break down certain barriers which keep the movie going public from the opera..." She would not recommend it to serious musicians, "except for the pure entertainment value." Of course, a real opera lover will go to the opera to hear Mr. Melchior or enjoy his art on the records, but they still might enjoy seeing what kind a movie actor he makes, and might get a laugh out of the absurd way Miss Grayson breaks into his aria. We agree that such pictures are indeed valuable in breaking down the feeling many have that classical music is above them. That is one of their fortes for educational usage. I am grateful to M.G.M. for pioneering in including moments of good music in films of varied entertainment. The public has registered their approval. "MUSIC FOR MILLIONS", "THRILL OF A ROMANCE," and "ANCHORS AWEIGH" were high successes from every angle. What a boon to the adolescent boy to hear a song from his music book sung and glamorized in a film which he considers tops! Mr. Melchior's first solo in "TWO SISTERS FROM BOSTON" is in a widely used Junior High School Music Book, "SONGS OF MANY LANDS", published by Silver Burdett, exactly as he sings it in this film.

"It will be one of the best musical puzzles of the age," writes Miss Ethel Peyser. Quite so. One had to be almost an Oscar Levant to recognize the classics used. Another person in the oral discussion felt that the adapted operatic sequences would be confusing to students. With the right teacher such confusion can turn into a valuable learning experience. "Did Mendelssohn write an opera?" "What opera does Liebestraum come from?" What an opportunity for the music teacher to suggest a trip to the library

and what an opportunity to refer them to Miss Peyser's very excellent book, "HOW MUSIC GREW!" There is nothing like the joy of personal research for the brighter students, and the less brilliant can bask in their newly "discovered" knowledge. The music teacher is provided with the ideal time to play the original of "LIEBESTRAUM" and the truly beautiful "VIOLIN CONCERTO", and to suggest further study of the works and lives of their composers.

Paul Creston thought, "The opera sequences could more easily have been made with original music." For a musician of his fine creative talents I am sure that it would have been. In the discussion someone said they felt it was a lost opportunity for original American music. Indeed it was, but is the vast American public as a whole ready to enjoy a new operatic sequence by a native composer? Have we as teachers of these millions spread the desire and appreciation of our new music to the extent that warrants its appearance on a film of varied entertainment, for all the people? Or are the efforts of our increasingly fine and numerous composers still only appreciated by a few, and would our great movie audience prefer to hear melodies already familiar to them?

Mr. Previn knew that in including well-known melodies of Liszt and Mendelssohn popular appeal was assured. This obviously fits into the pattern of the picture as a whole. The criteria of all film producers of the entertainment field is usually governed by public sentiment, as expressed at the box office. We all hope to see the day when such sequences will be original American music. When it comes, it will be because the public has asked for it, and they will ask for it when we, their teachers, have taught them to be as proud of and to love their native music as to the peoples of other lands love theirs.

Stanlie McConnell

#### MUSIC HEARD IN TWO SISTERS FROM BOSTON

1. At Boston Tea-Party:

Quartet - composed by Mr. Previn in the style of Haydn

2. 1st Operatic Sequence Adapted from Liszt:

Overture - excerpts from LES PRELUDES

Solo - Principal theme of 14th HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY

Ballet - Secondary theme of 14th RHAPSODY -- Mr. Melchior

Solo - LIEBESTRAUM -- Mr. Melchior with interpolations  
by Miss Grayson

Finale - Reprieve of Principal theme of 14th RHAPSODY  
with 2nd RHAPSODY in the orchestra

3. Recording Scene

PRIZE SONG From DIE MEISTERSINGER - Mr. Melchior

4. The Paterson's Party

TAKE A CHANCE WITH ROMANCE -- Miss Grayson

5. Final Scene - 2nd Operatic Sequence adapted from Mendelssohn

Overture - part of RUY BLAS OVERTURE  
Chorus - MARCH FROM ATHALIE  
Duet - 2nd Movement VIOLIN CONCERTO IN E MINOR  
Finale - Reprive RUY BLAS - this time sung

## GOOD SIXTEEN MM FILMS WITH MUSIC

Reviewed and recommended by M.E.N.C. New York Reviewing Committee. Stanlie McConnell, Chairman, Gordon E. Bailey, James Brill, Grace Widney Mabee, Lenard Quinto.

"FILMS FROM BRITAIN"---British Information Services, 20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20.

### 1- LISTEN TO BRITAIN---18 minutes---Documentary

An unusual film; imaginative and artistic conception of any day in Britain during the war. There is no dialogue. It is told through the sounds the people make as they work or fight and relax. Its beauty transcends its war date. All kinds of music appear as the day progresses, including the song of the meadow-lark and the playing of the Mozart E minor Concerto by Myra Hess. For older groups.

### 2- LESSONS FROM THE AIR--18 minutes--Documentary

Daily educational programs are radioed to all British Schools. Film shows the planning, executing and receiving of these programs. Plenty of music. Of interest to educators and adults.

### 3- STRICKEN PENINSULA (Topic--Social Problems)

Post-war reconstruction problems of Naples and Southern Italy. Good photography. Excellent music score by Vaughn Williams superbly played by the London Symphony Orchestra. For older groups.

"BRANDON FILMS" Inc. 1600 Broadway, New York City

#### 1.--THE CITY (Topic--Housing) 30 minutes--Documentary

The musical score by Aaron Copland is an important contribution to the art of film music.

#### 2.--THE RIVER (Topic--Social Problems) 30 minutes

History of the Mississippi River Basin. Good photography with well conceived supporting musical score by Virgil Thomson.

### RUSSIAN MUSIC FILMS

#### FOLK DANCES---9 minutes

Three folk dances of Southeastern Russia; Native instruments. Authentic and enjoyable.

#### LENINGRAD MUSIC HALL --- 35 minutes

Five episodes -- WALTZ OF THE FLOWERS, Tchaikovsky; SCOTTISH DRINK SONG, Beethoven; THE SWAN, Saint-Saens; Folk Songs of Byelorussia; Scenes from RIGOLETTO, Verdi. Excellent singing, both solo and choruses; elaborate settings. For school as well as for out-of-school use.

#### THEY MET IN MOSCOW--86 minutes

One of several Russian operetta-type of films. Good entertainment; light music well sung and played. Attractive scenic effects. Type of music film appearing in local theatres worthy of recognition of educators.

"TALL TALES" --- 11 minutes --- Literature and Music

TALL TALES is the first film of the "AMERICAN FOLK SONG SERIES". The folk-ballads "STRAWBERRY ROAN", "GRAY GOOSE" and "JOHN HENRY" are artistically sung by well-known ballad singers. The musical repetition necessitated by the narrative quality of the ballad is relieved by scenic interpolations based on stanzas of the ballad--thereby maintaining interest throughout.

"TELEPHONE HOUR"---23 minutes---advertising film available, free at office of A.T. & T. Co.

The film shows a typical Telephone Hour broadcast with Josef Hofmann as guest artist. OVERTURE to Il Guarany PRELUDE C# MINOR and the FINAL MOVEMENT of the EMPEROR CONCERTO are performed. It is an excellent study of Mr. Hofmann's piano artistry and technique and the sound is exceptionally good. Camera shots particularly for the Beethoven are cleverly worked out to correspond with the thematic statement and development. Behind the scene operations of the company's cable and radio system as well as an explanation of their television experiments are cleverly included, enlarging the film's audience appeal. Recommended for Junior, Senior High School assemblies, music appreciation and piano classes.