FILM MUSIC NOTES

OF MEN AND MUSIC
Dimitri Mitropoulos, Conductor

ANUARY - FEBRUARY 1951 VOLUME X NUMBER 3

FILM MUSIC NOTES

Official Publication of the National Film Music Council
31 UNION SQUARE WEST
New York 3, N. Y.
AL 5-6655

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1951 VOLUME X NUMBER 3

CONTENTS:

Contributors:

Lawrence Morton, Composer, Author.
Milton M. Kraus, Pianist, Arranger.
Quaintance Eaton, Associate Editor, Musical America.
John Huntley, English Author, Music Critic.
John Cage, Composer, Author.
Anthony Thomas, CJSH-FM, Canada.
Roger Bowman, Television Director.
Mary L. Alexander, Librarian, Ferguson Library
Sigmund Spaeth, Author, Lecturer.

Published by the National Film Music Council, 31 Union Square West, N. Y. Five issues yearly with occasional special bulletins.
Two Dollars a year. Back issues three dollars, or twenty-five cents a copy.

LITHOGRAPHED BY
T. O'TOOLE & SONS, INC. STAMFORD, CONN.

BALLET FILMS

Ballet continues to interest producers and it will be the subject of a number of important pictures in the forthcoming season. The Power and Pressburger TALES OF HOFFMAN with Moira Shearer and Leonide Massine was recently completed for Sir Alexander Korda. THE SLEEPING BEAUTY, another Korda film, is to star Margot Fonteyn. Samuel Goldwyn's picture on Hans Christian Anderson will use ballet to illustrate some of the author's fairy tales. Moira Shearer will appear as a Danish ballerina, with other members of the Sadler's Wells company in the supporting cast. Danny Kaye will play Anderson. Howard Hughes announces that he will make a picture in this field, with the Ballet de Paris and its stars, Roland Petit and Renee Jeanmaire. In London, Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin with the corps de ballet of the Festival have started work on GISELLE. Sir Malcolm Sargent is conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra for the production. This is the first of a series, and will be followed by THE SNOWFLAKES from the Nutcracker Suite. A distinguished group is involved in the making of the series, which will have thirteen ballets and is intended for television as well as theatrical showings. Finally, Alexander Paal is laying the groundwork for a screen biography of Nijinsky, to be set in London and Paris.

* * * * *

BIENNIAL DIVISION CONVENTIONS

The Biennial Division Conventions of the Music Educators National Conference, held on the alternate year of the National Conference will be held as follows: March 7-10, Southwestern at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; March 18-21, California- Western at San Diego, California ; March 28-31, Northwest at Missoula, Montana ; April 7-11, North Central at Fort Wayne, Indiana; April 18-21, Southern at Richmond, Virginia; April 27-May 1, Eastern at Atlantic City, New Jersey. Stanlie McConnell Pugh, chairman of the California- Western Conference reports an interesting Audio-Visual Center which will provide a place where members may see a showing of all films selected by the Audio-Visual Committees as well as hear recordings recommended for the Elementary Music program.

* * * * *

CINCINNATI COLLEGE OF MUSIC

A four-year college course in television was established in September in the College of Music in Cincinnati. The course leads to the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts in radio education. A new RCA television station equipment was purchased, comparable in scope to that of many commercial stations.

* * * * *

OPERA FILMS

The Coronet Theatre in Detroit has experimented with a series of opera films in which CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA , PAGLIACCI, RIGOLETTO, IL TROVATORE and MAD ABOUT OPERA have been shown. Student prices were offered to schools. The Fox West Coast Theatres in Los Angeles arranged a Grand Opera Film Festival last fall which was given in the Fine Arts Theatre. Operas shown were REGINA de la SCALA, LA TOSCA(with Ferrucio Tagliavini), LA TRAVIATA and CARMEN.

FILM MUSIC PROFILE Andre Previn

Lawrence Morton

The biographical facts about Andre Previn are the sort that make for interesting publicity stories. He was born in Berlin in 1929 and came to America in 1938. He is the youngest musical director in the film industry, being only twenty-one years old. He was "discovered" by Jose Iturbi at a concert of the California Junior Symphony Orchestra. He is a triple-threat musician, working with distinction as pianist, composer and conductor, and in one or more of these roles he has had a hand in some twenty films at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios. His first album of recorded piano solos sold 52,000 copies. He has played at the White House. He has also played at Benny Goodman's, having been invited there recently to spend a friendly musical evening with the clarinetist and Gene Krupa. The trio is said to have steamed up the house with hot licks until the small hours. Previn's favorite authors are Somerset Maugham, Thomas Mann, Aldous Huxley, and Oscar Wilde. He will earn more than fifty thousand dollars this year. He was recently drafted and is now stationed at Camp Cook. For KIM, an MGM picture just released, he has written the first song that Errol Flynn has ever sung on the screen.

Publicity stories, which deal with such material as the above, do not tell much of the"real story" about Previn although they do contain it. His expert pianism, for instance, provides good copy. But more important, it lies at the very center of his musicianship. It is central not only because it has been the main communication line between him and his audience of listeners,fans, and employers, or because it has earned him a sizeable income, but especially because it is the generative force behind his composing. It is as though his fingers do his thinking for him. Looking at his film scores, one sees repeatedly how certain chords have grown out of the pianist's hand - chords built upon fourths, for instance, with a minor third conveniently set at the top for the fourth and fifth fingers. Arpeggios, and sonorous bass lines with the fifth of the chord lying within the octave or tenth, arise out of left-hand techniques, although they often translate very well into the orchestra. Typical also of piano-thinking is a certain carelessness about the direction of the bass in respect to a melodic line, as well as the substitution of a large sonority (sustained by the pedal) for any kind of eloquence in inner voices, and a prevailing homophonic texture.

His piano playing is technically sure, facile, and brilliant, and his sight reading is altogether phenomenal. The music of Debussy he plays with extraordinary subtlety and sensitivity. In jazz his range is great, but he is at his best in the sophisticated night-club style and "bop". In the former he is suave,elegant, and personally detached; his harmonies are somewhat lush, embellishments are rather extravagant, and the rhythm is easy. His "bop" is as frenetic as it ought to be and frequently seems to have atonal implications. He is said to have been introduced to American jazz through the Art Tatum recording of "Sweet Lorraine" but not much of the Tatum manner survives in his present playing. Like all good jazz it is improvisatory and its most characteristic features defy notation.

As for his film scores, it cannot be denied that they are eclectic. They echo Stravinsky, Ravel, Copland, Hindemith and the other composers who have created the musical climate of our time. But one must distinguish between the eclecticism of the mature composer, which is a hopeless rut, and that of the young, which is an inevitable stage of development. Previn is like a sponge os almost infinite capacity. Receptive and sensitive, he is still absorbing the characteristic mannerisms of every kind of music, with an apparently insatiable thirst. Naturally he has not yet had time to classify and evaluate everything he has absorbed, and his own music mirrors a host of heterogeneous influences. Only the classical style appears to have escaped him so far. Any judgment of his music must take his youth into account. In some respects this is a great advantage to him, for youth excuses much and explains almost everything. On the other hand it is a great disadvantage, for one's elders (including this writer) automatically assume the right to criticize, correct, and chastise. Previn has already learned that age and position, rather than knowledge or musical sensitivity, often rule on the intelligibility of a harmonic progression or the propriety of a dissonance. In such circumstances he must take comfort in the assurance that youth is an infirmity that time will heal.

It must be remembered that when Previn won his diploma at Beverly Hills High School and matriculated at MGM he entered a profession where the rules of musical conduct had already congealed into a tradition, and where adherance to established procedures, not self-expression, is expected of a composer. The film industry is no place for musical radicalism, and only the true-blue conservative can afford to be the least bit revolutionary. Previn, with a conservatism characteristic of youth, fitted very well into the industrial picture, and one finds in his scores no startling new approach to the screen. The traditional functions of music are faithfully observed. Main-titles are epic, love themes sentimental; pastoral scenes call for woodwind colors, and violence begets dissonance.

Previn's first scores, THE SUN COMES UP and CHALLENGE TO LASSIE, are rather timid and conventional, as were the films they were written for. There is much concern with the simultaneous sound of tonic and sub-dominant chords, with the flatted leading-tone and its triad, with folk-like pastoral tunes, with sensuous Ravelian harmonies. At suitable occasions the um-pahs of Copland's cowboy music are invoked. But in BORDER INCIDENT, a far tougher film than the first two, Previn began to show the constructivist side of his nature. Thematic material here was brief, breathless, and muscular; a few motifs sufficed, by means of development, to generate whole sequences. There was even a touch of polyphony in a canonic treatment of a brass figure, brief but interesting and not at all smacking of the textbook. Some shock-like chords in uneven rhythms made a first appearance here, and in subsequent scores they have become a favorite device. Another is the harmony built upon fourths to a depth of several octaves. The shapes of his phrases and sections tend toward squareness. There is a too carefully balanced symmetry in the way a two-bar phrase gets an immediate counter-statement or an echo at the octave.

The newer scores, for THE OUTRIDERS, TENSION, and DIAL 1119 show no great changes in respect to the invention of material, nor do they yet reveal any very distinct musical personality. But they do show much improvement in craft. Analysis could demonstrate this in detail; but one's ears, if they are attentive in the theater, prove it no less effectively. Previn's scores sound good, and they have the authoritative quality of the proven screen composer. Whole-heartedly accepted by the industry, he should soon be in a position to step out on new paths. Unquestionably he has the talent to be a strong new creative force in film music. Whether that talent will grow or be stifled by routine remains to be seen. Right now he is a white hope.

KIM

Milton M. Kraus

Andre Previn must be congratulated for his masterful handling of the musical problems involved in this picture. Since KIM maintains an authentic atmosphere throughout, with scenes shot on location, and apparently no Hollywood "stock" shots inserted, it would have been entirely out of keeping to have had a "Hollywood" sound track accompanying the action. It is therefore a credit to Mr. Previn to have followed through along with the authenticity of the picture and to have used native music as background. Incidentally, no attempt is made to in any way "dramatize" this music. Rather, the restraint in this direction achieves this "dramatic" effect by contrast.

A native flute theme is used to set the atmosphere of the picture after the "Hollywood " main title. At first, this theme is unaccompanied, but later, native drums and other light percussion instruments are added. This flute theme is used as a leitmotif and is heard many times during the picture. Despite the possible danger of monotony, this theme wears well, since it is a very interesting and ingratiating one. Occasionally, a native oboe is heard in some of the other sequences.

In general, the music is keyed "low" and is heard faintly in the distance, mingled with street cries, but then comes up in the foreground in other spots, so that a good balance is achieved. No other music is heard in the picture except the regimental bugle calls and the military band sequence, - all done very well.

The two "Hollywood" composed sequences by Mr. Previn are excellent in their intelligent incorporation of native music for thematic development. The orchestration is very effective also in its use of Oriental timbres and instrumental colorings.

KIM - Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Errol Flynn, Dean Stockwell, Paul Lukas. Director, Victor Saville. Music by Andre Previn. Technicolor.

OF MEN AND MUSIC

Quaintance Eaton

OF MEN AND MUSIC is the title of the Twentieth-Century-Fox film which aims at making the world of serious music and its inhabitants understandable to the large "lay" audience. It consists of four short films, part of a group of many similar ones, we understand, and chosen presumably for the sake of contrast. The musical figures selected are Artur Rubinstein,pianist; Nadine Conner and Jan Peerce, singers; Jascha Heifetz, violinist; and Dimitri Mitropoulos, conductor, with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony. Deems Taylor supplies commentary.

The initial difficulty in a film like this is to keep the eye engaged pleasurably while the ear is being wooed by music. Producers are gradually beginning to realize that it is not enough simply to train the camera on the performer during performance, no matter what trick "angles", subtle lighting, and variation in short and long shots are resorted to. Some effort has been made in this quartet of films to feed the eye, always more perceptive than the ear - at least in the layman's case. Where this effort succeeds, the films come alive. Where it fails, the interest lags.

The inequality in excellence among the four sections is undoubtedly due to a mixture of styles in writing, direction and camera work. However, there are some interesting moments along the way, and one or two of the ideas show genuine promise for musical films.

As the first installment opens, we see Rubinstein making a recording. His meticulous care for detail, and his insistence on perfection register with the impact of sincerity, and we begin to believe that at last the producers have got a good idea for bringing music to the screen . What they have got is Rubinstein - a good actor in his own right. His performances are as absorbing to watch as to listen to. Even when the " story line ", strongly begun with the recording episode, becomes enfeebled, the pianist is enough of a magnet to hold the attention. He plays four small works superbly - the "Spinning Song" of Mendelssohn, Liszt's "Liebestraum", the "C Sharp Minor Waltz" (which incidentally, he calls the "Waltz in C Sharp"), and the same composer's "Polonaise in A" - as an impromptu concert for a movie official who comes to his home to beg him to make a film. The visitor is shown a mural portraying all the places the pianist has lived, and is treated to a glimpse of the charming Rubinstein children, as they come to say goodnight. At the close of the episode, the famous pianist plays "Pop Goes the Weasel" for the children, and the film ends on a gay, intimate note.

The weakest section of the four follows, involving the two opera singers in a mawkish little playlet. A sentimental night watchman plays records all night long instead of watching the opera house. The singers come in unexpectedly to fetch some forgotten music before going on tour and find the old fellow dreaming over a record. They risk missing their train to give him a concert, which, by the grace of film imagination, turns into complete opera scenes, with scenery, costumes, and a symphony orchestra. Mr. Peerce sings "O Paradiso" from Meyerbeer's "L'Africaine", and Leoncavallo's "Mattinata"; Miss Conner obliges with "Qual guardo il cavaliere" from Donizetti's Don Pasquale, and the two join in the first-act duet from the same composer's "Lucia di Lammermoor."

It would be too bad if the public were led to believe any of the host of improbabilities set forth here. Do singers leave music in an opera house which they intend to take on concert tour? Would they appear in full evening dress and walk into a locked opera house presumably watched by the night watchman? Would this night watchman be allowed to neglect his job so flagrantly? There may be sentimental henchmen around an opera house, but there are unions to see that they perform their jobs -or else. It seems unlikely that Mr. Peerce and Miss Conner would be going on a joint concert tour, anyway. They are not under the same management, and both are top-flight artists, with no need to share the limelight. These are details, to be sure, and perhaps we are too captious about them but they reveal flaws in the conception of musical life which need to be corrected before films can win the respect of the profession, and overcome a natural and inevitable skepticism on the part of the public, which instinctively - and rightly - shies away from false pretensions.

If imagination was used too capriciously in the case of the singers, it was not used at all in the story surrounding Jascha Heifetz. Perhaps the violinist himself did not wish to indulge in any flights of fancy, but the picture became dry, and too literal. It seems a pity that more advantage was not taken to present him as a warm, likable human being. He is shown in scenes with his wife and child but he speaks only twice, never seems to smile, and his wife speaks not even once. The impression of austerity, formerly attached to this formidable personality, will only be deepened by this representation. On the other hand, the sheer musical values of his performance are often lost by the arbitrary interruption of the music in order to insert some attempt at eye-appeal. Apparently we can't have it both ways until more sensitive and knowing direction is obtained. The film becomes a violin recital in the end, and loses what intimacy and warmth it began with. Nevertheless, violin students should find it absorbing, for they are treated to practice habits, close-ups of

the fabulous hands, and dazzling displays of technique. Mr. Heifetz rehearses or performs the Prelude from Bach's "Partita in E ", Debussy's "The Girl With the Flaxen Hair" , Wieniawski's "Scherzo Tarantelle" and Paganini's "24th Caprice". Emanuel Bay is his accompanist.

The public will, in all probability, like the fourth film best, for here the workings of a complex mechanism, the symphony orchestra, have been laid bare, to a limited extent - there could well have been more amplification and detail and the personality of a great leader pervades throughout. Dimitri Mitropoulos reveals many of the persuasive qualities which make him a master, in the rehearsal and performance of Liszt's "A Faust Symphony". However, his injunction to the players to "be more devilish," instead of giving them chapter and verse in technical instruction, he probably has perpetuated the myth that conductors get the best result from their players by conjuring up emotion, but evidently the technical reminders have already been seen to, for the playing sounds much the same before the little lecture as after - magnificent playing, by whatever results achieved. One aspect of the film seemed odd to a Carnegie Hall habituee - the steep tiers on which the orchestra is ranged. Anyone who goes to a Philharmonic - Symphony concert for the first time after seeing this film will be disappointed at not being able to spot the individual players in their much less steeply inclined platforms.

Rudolph Polk and Bernard Luber produced the film, and Irving Reis directed. Edmund Reek produced the orchestra sequence, and Alex Hammid directed. Victor Young and an orchestra accompanied the singers. The plays were written by Liam O'Brien (Rubinstein); Harry Kurnitz (Conner -Peerce); John Paxton (Heifetz); and David Epstein (orchestra).

THE MUSIC IN THE MUDLARK

John Huntley

The score by William Alwyn for this delightful picture, THE MUDLARK, follows a careful plan of musical characterization and delicate point, while avoiding any temptation to over-indulge. Many moments where music could perhaps have been used are left to be played against natural sound or silence.

The result is that the occasions when music occurs are all the more significant. The titles contain a wistful theme for the mudlark himself, while at the same time reflecting the pageantry of the Victorian era. A sequence in which the mudlark fights with some other boys in the mud of the river Thames is embellished with a suitable agitato.

The music first comes into its own, however, in the scenes in which the boy Wheeler breaks into Windsor Castle. Although he sees the Castle early in the morning through a Thames-side fog, the under current of the pageantry of the King's Guard within is suggested by the martial music. A skilful example of musical pointing occurs when one of the Guardsmen gives the Cockney classic remark "Op it!".

The long sequence when Wheeler first explores the interior of the Castle is almost carried by the music, which suddenly becomes subjective and expresses the mood and character of the people rather than the grandeur of the building. Woodwind delicately pick out the thoughts of the boy; they concentrate the attention on him. When the two lovers are seen plotting an elopement, the music becomes tender and reflects their mood. There is a quick change to a delightful Scottish motif for Mr. Brown's kilted approach, while Mr. Naseby, head of the kitchen staff, receives a pompous theme in keeping with his character.

There is a return to pageantry in the scenes of the entry of Queen Victoria and her court into the Dining Hall, echoing the initial theme when we first meet the Queen in a lovely tracking shot as the light of some candles fall across her face.

Wheeler's nocturnal tour of the Castle gives an opportunity for further neat touches in the score, especially in the great Throne Room when Wheeler mounts the throne and imagines himself King.

A carol, sung during the scenes in the Tower, add pathos to the scene when Wheeler is denied by his friends.

In the final sequence when the Queen repents of her seclusion and finally meets the young boy has some exquisite moments for the strings, while pageantry re-asserts itself in the triumphant closing shots,

Alwyn's score for this 20th Century-Fox Production, made at Shepperton Studios, London, with Irene Dunne giving a truly remarkable portrayal of Queen Victoria, is discreet, delicately orchestrated and holds back its more powerful effects for the few scenes of majesty that demand it. The musical characterization is consistent and clear-cut.

The Mudlark .. Twentieth Century Fox. Irene Dunne, Alex Guinness. Director, Jean Negulesco. Music by William Alwyn.

A FEW IDEAS ABOUT MUSIC AND FILMS

John Cage

It is always a simple matter for someone who does not do it, to know something about it and that is my situation with regard to music for films. Of course, I have done a little of it (the Duchamp sequence in DREAMS THAT MONEY CAN BUY, a miserable film in my opinion with the exception of this particular sequence- in which by a series of events the relation between music and pictures was botched up ; and the Herbert Matter film, WORKS OF CALDER) but each time when I was working I knew that I knew nothing about it.. The same was true when ,back in '42, I did THE CITY WEARS A SLOUCH HAT for Columbia Workshop (not a film but a radio play).

Not working, I know that music loses virtue when it accompanies. Nothing in life or art needs accompaniment, because each has its own center (which is no center). To bring about the state of no-accompaniment, there must underlie everything (whether words, pictures or what have you) a rhythmic structure. In my case, this is micro-macro cosmic. If a film or play or dance is X minutes long I take a pulse and then know how many measures of 2/2 there are in the work to be done. I let the major structural points in the film give me a particular structural articulation which in small is phraseology and in large is section-delimiting. (The numbers of measures must be capable of having a square root.) e.g if there are 1600 measures in the film these will be divided into 40 x 40 measures,. and each 40 measures will be phrased in the same proportions that divide the 40 parts into large sections (e.g. 6,7,10,5,3,9). This is a structural idea not distant in concept from Hindu tala (except that tala has no beginning or ending, and is based on pulsation rather than phraseology) the work of Anton Webern, Erik Satie, and hot jazz.

Given this structure both film and music may proceed free of one another and everything works out beautifully. It is even possible to have several composers working independently of one another on the same music (the same part of the same music), what they do, when put together, becomes a polyphony anonymous by nature, but live the way nature is. To understand this, one is obliged to give up harmony, melody, counterpoint,etc. (everything one has learned including genius and the three B's and accept music for what it is : a way of life devoted to sound and silence, the only common denominator of which two is rhythm (not as pattern, but as quantity, free to have or not have accents, for example); this accepted one may have back, paradoxically, that much of harmony, melody, etc (including genius and the B's and all else) one wishes to permit oneself.

It may seem artificial and forced (life often does) to clamp a rhythmic structure on to something that don't have it. It is of course artificial (so are the houses we live in; they don't, however, keep us from falling in love.)

Another idea I have is that if there is a story or pictures, the sounds should be the noises and sounds characteristic or revelant to what one is following or seeing. This is what I was thinking of in the Calder film and THE SLOUCH HAT (Kenneth Patchen) radio play. Not as sound effects but as organized sound (to quote Edgard Varese). So that in the workshop part of the Calder film what we hear are noises of mobiles and noises of the making of mobiles and the loudest noise comes when it is least needed, when the little boy smiles (a case of no-accompaniment) and no hammering when Calder is seen hammering, etc. (Opposed to the redundant, - otherwise non-partisan.)

" WORKS OF CALDER filmed in color and directed by Herbert Matter, and produced and narrated by Burgess Meredith, has been acquired for exclusive 16mm non-commercial distribution by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, New York. The music was written by John Cage; narration by John Latouche. Rhythmically composed sequences suggest a parallel between familiar forms and movements in nature and the movements of Calder's mobiles. Between these two sequences Calder is seen at work in his studio surrounded by his magical world of moving objects."

I don't know what else there is to say, except that I love the idea of writing for films but when I am doing it, it is not so good, because either the techniques one is always reading about are not available, or someone connected with it goes blank when it comes to the imagination or something else. In the radio play, for instance, I scored a good deal of escaping compressed air only to be told that each escape was worth $5.00 and what with rehearsals etc.- "please don't use it",

and in the Richter film, the film was changed after the music was written and I was never informed (although, since I am in the phone book it is the simplest thing in the world to reach me). And then in the Matter film, I had high-faluting ideas about superimposing inaccurate performances of a single prepared piano line with each time microtonal shifts of pitch and slight timbre changes (to be achieved by re-positioning of screws and other mutes), all of this arising from the lovely accidents that mobiles by their nature of moving present to the eyes. However, the machines necessary to do this were not available.

One more idea and then I am through. Music should not be recorded and film music should not be a recording of music. It should be a music which could not exist except as a recording, a music which comes into being by virtue (and only by virtue of) the available contemporary (mechanical,electronic, film,etc) means. (This is not the 18th century.)

More and more in my ears and those of younger composers (Boulez, Feldman, Wolff) are the sounds which radio and film means make available, and our imaginations run swiftly towards the necessarily 'synthetic'. We are in a real life situation (not an academy)(acoustically speaking) and it is impossible to say which is cause and which is effect (our ears or our sounds) which technique and which vision. Technique is Vision and vice-versa, the Sudden School.

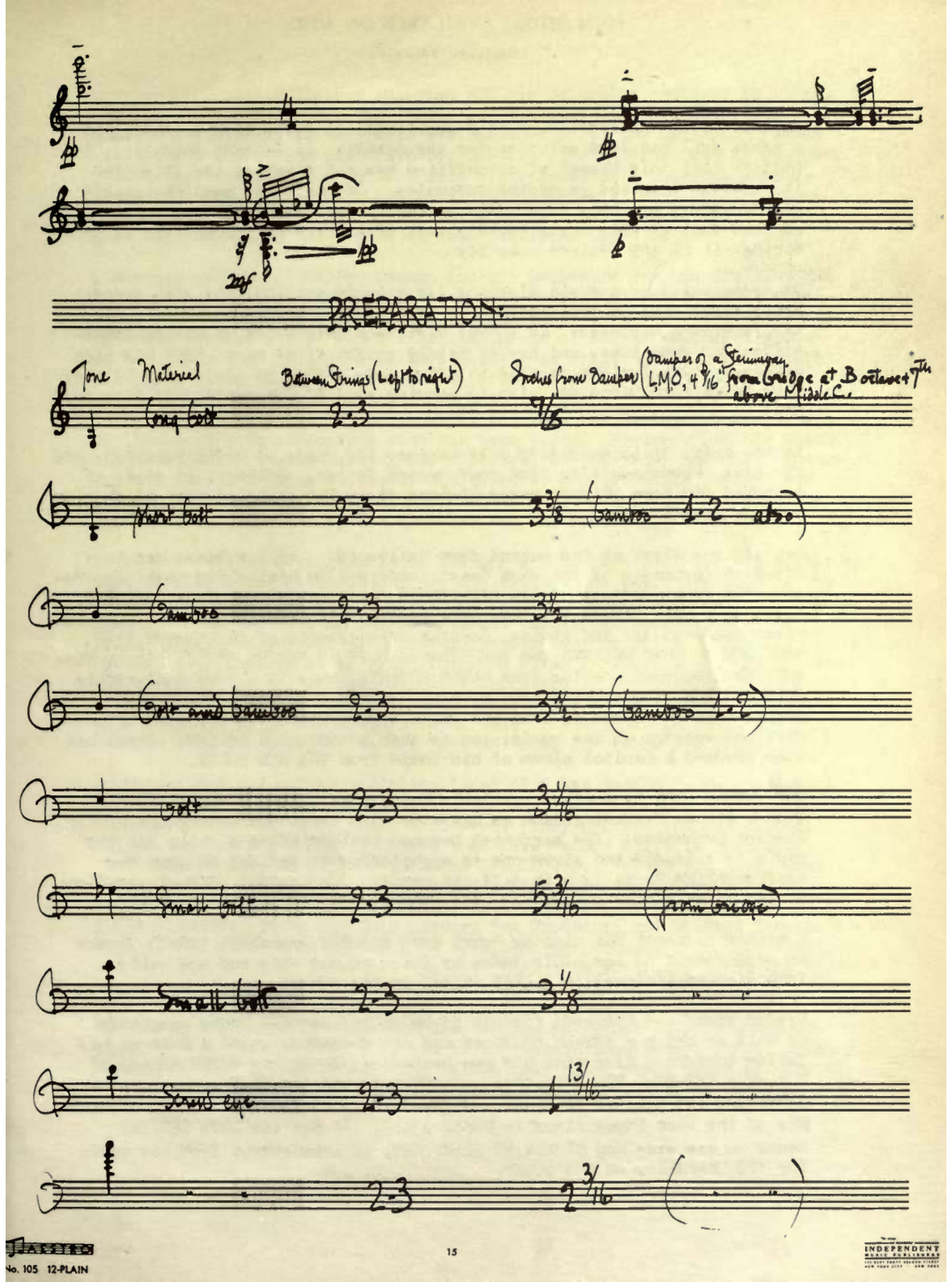
What we desperately need in America is a laboratory for useless musical activity, devoted to failure rather than to success (research, -AI in other fields,- ignored in this one of art), and I record (shout) at this time that first Varese tried to interest companies both in Hollywood and in New Jersey in such activity and then I myself spent a year (1940) trying to realize the same dream.

The dream is a simple one : a place for collaboration between composers and sound engineers replete with equipment - in Hollywood terms a simple get-together of the Music and the Sound Departments (in Canadian terms, an actuality : Norman McLaren and the National Film Board in Ottawa).

Perhaps this has been accomplished in our United States and I am behind the times. However, if it has and there is such a place, lead us to it. We have work to do!

For the "WORKS OF CALDER".

The piano is prepared with mutes between the strings, thus effecting a transformation of all 4 of the characteristics of sound. (The notation is no longer a picture of what one hears, but only an aid in producing it.) Each 60. The numbers are visual changes in the film. The specific screws and bolts are in the possession of the composer.



FILM MUSIC AVAILABLE ON DISC

Anthony Thomas

As most people interested in film music will no doubt have learned, not a great deal has been recorded for the market. It is even reasonable to believe that this branch of composition has not elicited the attention it deserves from the recording companies. On the other hand the record manufacturers are interested only in that which will 'sell', and they contend that if film music 'sold', they would have no compunction in producing it in any desired ouantity

In my capacity as a music director for a radio station, and with several years experience in broadcasting, I have become fairly conversant with the recording business. As I have also been interested in screen composition for some time, and having avidly sought after that which has been waxed, I think I might be able to offer some advice to those who, if they have not already done so, wish to acquire some of the recordings discussed below.

In the main, it is necessary only to name the piece of music recorded, and the make, when inquiring from your record dealer. However, in cases of imported and more obscure makes, I have given the serial number of the record in parenthesis.

Let us look first at the output from Hollywood. Miklos Rozsa has been the most fortunate of the West Coast composers in having his music recorded. The great success of his SPELLBOUND music was responsible, in part, for some public interest in his other works. Al Goodman and his Orchestra have recorded for RCA Victor, Goodman arrangements of the themes from SPELLBOUND, LOST WEEKEND and THE STRANGE LOVE OF MARTHA IVERS. Rozsa himself has recorded a suite from MADAM BOVARY; this is a four side affair with the MGM Studio Orchestra, marketed as MGM Album 43. The jacket claims that the music is from the sound track, but it is obviously a concertized version of the music, and as such sounds much better. Rozsa has also pressed a Capitol album of his music from THE RED HOUSE.

THE JUNGLE BOOK is another available Rozsa work. It's a six sided RCA Victor Album, featuring Sabu as narrator with Rozsa conducting the Victor Concert Orchestra. The narration becomes tedious after a while but the music is splendid and gives one an opportunity to reflect on just how craftsmanlike Rozsa is with 'affect' music. The musical characterizations of the animals bear comparison with Prokofieff's PETER AND THE WOLF.

A rather pleasant RCA disc by Henri Rene and his Orchestra (46-0003) has an arrangement of the LYDIA THEME by Rozsa on one side and the waltz from Richard Addinsell's BLITHE SPIRIT on the other.

Victor Young has the good fortune to be an influential Decca executive as well as being a screen composer and can therefore steal a lead on his fellow workers. Directing his own orchestra, Young has waxed albums of FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS (A-360) GOLDEN EARRINGS (DA-644) and most recently SAMSON AND DELILAH (8 sides and immediately available). In my opinion, one of the best Young discs is Decca 23468. It has the LOVE LETTERS theme on one side and STELLA BY STARLIGHT, an arrangement from the music for THE UNAFRAID, on the other.

Another prominent Hollywood musician who has recording contacts is Alfred Newman. Recently, Newman has formed his own recording orchestra and has pressed a number of albums (also available as LP's) for Mercury. Newman has waxed a suite from his music for CAPTAIN FROM CASTILE, and it's a work I find very satisfying. So much film music loses it's interest when detached from the sound track but Newman has been skillful in this concert adaptation. The suite concludes with a March which must be one of the most stirring since the demise of John Philip Sousa.

A Mercury single (1150M) by Newman and his Orchestra has his STREET SCENE Rhapsody on one side and on the reverse, a delightful arrangement of the theme from HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY . The former is perhaps too familiar by now, but the latter is an excellent piece of screen writing. While on the subject of Newman, I believe that it is still possible to acquire his Decca Album (DA-365) of the music from THE SONG OF BERNADETTE.

It is a constant point of annoyance to the many Max Steiner admirers that so little of this composer's work has been waxed. However, Steiner has signed a contract with Capitol and his first LP (KCF 250) has just appeared. It contains three suites of the three scores for which Steiner won Academy Awards, THE INFORMER, NOW VOYAGER and SINCE YOU WENT AWAY. The Orchester is conducted by the composer and the recording is excellent.

There are several arrangements of Steiner's GONE WITH THE WIND score, the most popular being Al Goodman's for RCA Victor. On the other side of this disc is Fantasia Mexicana, a shortened version of Aaron Copland's EL SALON MEXICO, which was used in the MGM musical FIESTA, although Copland did not write it for the screen. The famous Steiner tour de force SYMPHONIE MODERNE , a tonal piece he wrote for FOUR WIVES is available in an RCA Victor recording by the Janssen Symphony Orchestra of Los Angeles. It's a fine reading of the work. Another Victor disc by the Janssen Orchestra is a coupling of David Raksin's LAURA (the truest rendition) and the Scherzo from the score Alexander Tansman wrote for FLESH AND FANTASY.

An unheralded and rather undistinguished disc has just made an appearance on the record counters. It's RAINBOW LP -70 made by a group who call themselves The Hollywood Theme Orchestra. They perform six selections, all of them arrangements of themes that have become a little hackneyed. Their repertoire, of course, includes SPELLBOUND. Unless you have other recordings of LAURA, GWTW, etc., you may find the disc interesting. Two RCA Albums that have done fairly well commercially are Raksin's FOREVER AMBER, cut by the 20th Century Fox Orchestra and Dimitri Tiomkin's DUEL IN THE SUN. This latter is a brilliant performance by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops; it evokes the wish that this admirable orchestra would show just a little more interest in the movie world.

RCA have also marketed a 10-inch disc by the Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra of A Message for Liza, one of the themes from Robert Emmett Dolan's music for LADY IN THE DARK. This is the only Dolan movie music on wax, but he has also scored a number of record dramas producted by Capitol.

Virgil Thomson has written some of the finest movie scores, all of them documentaries, and the record companies have been kinder toward this composer than others. Suites from THE PLOW THAT BROKE THE PLAINS, THE RIVER and LOUISIANA STORY have been recorded by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Oemandy for Columbia.

In mentioning these recordings as the only discs made of the various composer's works, we are overlooking the fact that quite often popular recordings appear of some movie themes. These discs are made by the 'pop" artists and their renditions are such that they tend to be of little to serious music lovers. Of all the fine music that Erich Korngold wrote for Warner Brothers, only one piece was put on wax. This was the song, Love for Love from ESCAPE ME NEVER. Vaughn Monroe's recording seems to have attained the most distinction.

Two songs that Korngold wrote for the Paramount picture GIVE US THIS NIGHT on 1936, were cut by the star of the picture, Jan Kiepura for Decca. These are Sweet Melody of Night and I Meant to Say I Love You, both on the same disc. They are, as all Korngold fans agree, beautiful songs but one cannot help but wish that Decca or some other company might have thought enough of the Cello Concerto from DECEPTION to record that.

The British record manufacturers seem to have shown considerable interest in the music written for the better British films, and quite a few discs have been marketed. Perhaps this is because so many British film scores are commissioned by major composers who already have some esteem and following.

An excellent London Album is available by the London Symphony Orchestra under Muir Mathieson. It contains, among other things, The Epilogue from THE INVADERS by Ralph Vaughn Williams, THE OVERLANDERS by John Ireland and the Calypso Music from THE NOTORIOUS GENTLEMEN by William Alwyn. This music is first rate and a fine corroboration of the value of the screen as a medium of serious musical expression.

RCA Victor Albums have been marketed of Sir Laurence Olivier's HENRY V and HAMLET. In both cases, the sets include fair portions of the scores, both of which were written by William Walton. Listening to these albums is indeed a pleasure, and a clear indication of the superiority of Walton's work. Another recommended Walton recording is the SPITFIRE PRELUDE and Fugue, waxed by HMV.

English Columbia seems to have produced more film music records than any other company. Something like a dozen discs have become available; as a discussion of these would be quite lengthy, I will suffice at listing them with their catalogue number. Most of the major record stores carry these English importations, and if they do not, it is possible to order them.

<u>DX 1264</u> Theme from SPELLBOUND Concerto .. Rozsa.
Voice in the Night from WANTED FOR MURDER. Mischa Spoliansky.

<u>DX 1320</u> Theme from THIS MAN IS MINE.
Prelude to A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH (STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN)
both by Allan Gray.

DX 1458 Dedication, Illusion and Themes from IDOL OF PARIS. Spoliansky; with composer at the piano.

DX 1362 Themes from NICHOLAS NICKLEBY . Lord Berners.

DX 1377 Themes from THE LOVES OF JOANNA GODDEN. Ralph Vaughn Williams.

DX 1516-17 Suite from OLIVER TWIST. Arnold Bax.

DX 1551 PASSIONATE FRIENDS. Richard Addinsell.

The first three discs in the foregoing list were cut by the Queen's Hall Light Orchestra, the others by the Philharmonia Orchestra. On the same label, the Two Cities Symphony Orchestra has cut two discs of two works by Nicholas Brodsky, the Intermezzo from CARNIVAL, and the theme from THE WAY TO THE STARS. It seems that Brodsky has now migrated to Hollywood, his most recent work being the composition of a half dozen songs for THE TOAST OF NEW ORLEANS.

Columbia's Engliah branch has also turned out discs of music from THE ASTONISHED HEART by Noel Coward, THE NIGHT HAS EYES by Charles Williams and music from GREAT EXPECTATIONS by Walter Goehr. George Melachrino (England's Kostelanetz) has made a large number of discs for HMV, including his music for the movies DARK SECRET and NO ORCHIDS FOR MISS BLANDISH.

This is by no means a complete listing of all available movie music on record - it merely represents my own findings. Perhaps readers who know of other recordings will write to the editors with their information, and thus facilitate a further listing.

* * * * *

NOTES ON MUSIC FOR TELEVISION

Roger Bowman

Negotiations are to begin very shortly between the American Federation of Musicians and the television networks for a new contract- the current one expiring January 31, 1951. The features of the current contract were dealt with in an article published in FILM MUSIC NOTES, December, 1949.

The increases that will be asked for by the AFM may be as high as 100% - at least that will be a beginning point for negotiations. The networks may oppose these suggestions because of the inequality between AM and TV in the number of stations, markets covered, receiving sets, and possible number of listeners.

The most serious area of disagreement is the Federation ban on the use of music for TV films. Contracts signed by the union with the eight major film producers prohibits television use of the sound track of any motion picture made since 1946, unless a 5 % royalty based on the individual station's rate card is paid into a trustee fund. The trustee fund is used to provide free music and is administered by an impartial authority Samuel R. Rosenbaum, a Philadelphia lawyer, formerly associated with radio station WFIL.

There has been no definite pattern set for filmed commercials, as far as royalty payment is concerned. The ban is operative in so far as it restricts the use of music on filmed commercials to library music (a regular library service of electrical transcriptions of music recorded prior to 1946).

Thus far the Federation proposal has found few takers among film producers and distributors. The main point in the AFM's argument for a royalty payment is the same as the one it made when asking for similar concessions from the record companies: musicians are being deprived of employment when the sound track of a film is used on television. Producers and distributors are adamant. They believe that television cannot absorb the additional cost, nor can the budgets of advertisers permit the cost to be passed on to them. They argue that there is no fair comparison between existing payments made by record companies because a record is all music while the score of a film is usually an incidental contributing factor to entertainment. Records are sold outright to millions of people, while the individual television station or advertiser would be the only ones to bear the royalty payment. Also,a motion picture should be usable in every medium without any additional charge, and that in the case of a picture made expressly for television, the cost is so great and the profit margin so low, that a royalty payment is out of the question.

There is opposition too to the principle of royalty payment. Mel Gold, advertising manager of National Screen Service Corporation said, "The stand taken against Mr. Petrillo's royalty is not taken against Mr.Petrillo per se. It is against the royalty theory which would prove disastrous to the television film industry if embraced by the Screen Actors Guild, the scenic designers union, the carpenters union, etc."

There is a feeling that there is a settlement in the offing. At the moment most producers and distributors feel that they can afford to stand pat and rely on library and foreign music to fill their needs.

The AFM's regulation regarding kinescoping is simple and to the point. A film recording may be played only once over a station and that this station must have been affiliated with the network at the time of the original telecast. Network officials do not oppose this ruling. Their objection was to an ASCAP ruling which imposed a time limit of thirty days for kinescoping a program on another station. ASCAP recently extended this limitation to sixty days. This limitation is in effect only where the individual writer or publisher has given ASCAP permission to impose it. Where this is not so, individual arrangements have been made with the writer or publisher.

The situation in the field of music for television films is definitely in a state of flux with changes imminent. Once these changes have been made making possible freer use of royalty exempt films, there will be a great upsurge of creative music written for films especially made for television. This development is definitely on the horizon.

FILMS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Mary L. Alexander

With the beginning of a new year most people stop and evaluate and set new goals in their various fields of activity. It would be interesting to measure progress in the various phases of film work but this is still so new a service in libraries that comparable statistics are lacking. A body of factual material to guide newcomers in this work is badly needed.

Some information may be gleaned from the questionnaire sent out twice a year by the American Library Association which reflects film work for two typical months of each year, March and November. This survey was begun in 1947 and figures have just come out covering public library film work for the month of November, 1950. Within a three year period the number of libraries offering films has grown from 16 to just over 100. Forty-six of these libraries belong to one of the six Film Circuits which have been set up to supply films to smaller libraries.

In 1947 public libraries owned 3,381 films; this has now grown to almost 13,000. In the month of November 1947 the films were borrowed 10,030 times; in November 1950 the figure was slightly above 36,000. In 1947 the films borrowed were seen by 547,459 people; in November 1950 the audience figures were approximately 1,675,000.

In spite of the dire warnings that the growth of television would mean that no one would ever want to use 16mm films (or even read a book) the interest in film work is growing within the library profession. The use of films is firmly established as a vital part of the program work of community groups of all sorts in cities in which films are available and properly serviced. Certainly the use in schools is growing as more cities decide that they can afford films and as more teachers understand them and the school systems integrate them into the teaching pattern. Surprisingly enough the home use of films still continues, in direct competition with television because many families feel that large screen projection of material of their choosing at a time convenient to them is preferable to the average television fare.

Within the 16mm film libraries, music films still rank high in popularity. But few good new productions are coming onto the market. Recital films like the Menuhin series, the Vienna Philharmonic Symphony and films featuring Iturbi, Sandor, and other pianists are in demand even though they leave much to be desired. I believe that most libraries will find as we have that the musical sophisticate is less interested in the "concert" film. They are apt to be worried by the artificial staging and background material. But music films offer a real opportunity to those less privileged to attend live concerts. Music is especially in demand by our foreign groups, noticeably the Italians.

It has interested us to note in the year-end tabulation of statistics at the Ferguson Library that the most popular single film in our collection was TALES OF THE VIENNA WOODS issued by Teaching Custodians. In the three years we have owned this it has been borrowed 315 times and heard by 15,595 people. Its good music plus the cartoon story type of present-

ation makes an appeal to both young and old so that the film is suitable for wide group use. It was good to note that the UNFINISHED SYMPHONY is also popular, and Toscanini's HYMN OF THE NATIONS and many more.

Many travel and documentary films have fine scores, such as THE RIVER (music score by Virgil Thomson). The experimental films like FIDDLE de DEE, HEN HOP and others are amusing and make unique use of music and design. One factor that influenced this library in its recent purchase of the GRANDMA MOSES film was the fine score by Hugh Martin, (orchestration by Alex Wilder). The comments on the music have been most enthusiastic.

One important musical organization in Stamford, the Schubert Club, has recently organized a music listening section which meets at the library one morning each month to hear and discuss music films.

Music films have a broad appeal, not influenced by world events or seasonal trends. People who work in the music fields, and public libraries, would do well to foster the interest and make sure that more and better musical films are made available.

* * * * *

LIBRARY SERVICE

A recent booklet received from the Akron, Ohio, Public Library, described a series of three informal programs open to the general public given this winter in the Main Library Auditorium. The first program on THE BALLET, was given in December illustrated with films. The second program , MODERN ART, was demonstrated with a full color film entitled WHAT IS MODERN ART photographed in the Museum of Modern Art. R. Russell Munn, head of the Library served as moderator and conducted the discussion. Vladimir Sokoloff (recently featured in the stage success THE MAD WOMAN OF CHAILLOT) plays the part of a modern painter and explains the artist's point of view. Famous paintings on exhibit at the Museum are used as illustrations.

The third and last program given this month was on THE SYMPHONY. "The film INSTRUMENTS OF THE ORCHESTRA, identifies the voices of a symphony in an interesting, unusual way. VARIATIONS AND FUGUE on a theme by Purcell, composed for the film by Benjamin Britten, presents the London Symphony in its sections, its individual instruments, and finally in a rendition of the Fugue by full orchestra. The contrapuntal nature of the music displays each instrument's range and tonal characteristics. Conducting and comments are by Dr. Malcolm Sargent." Arthur Reginald, an Akron pianist spoke informally on how to listen to a symphony.

The second film on the program was HYMN OF THE NATIONS, Arturo Toscanini conducting a symphonic arrangement of Verdi's music scored by the maestro himself. Camera close-ups examine the conducting techniques of Toscanini: other scenes show the NBC Symphony Orchestra, the Westminster Choir, and the soloist, tenor Jan Peerce. An informal discussion period followed. Books about the Fine Arts and Recordings of all the major symphony orchestras may be borrowed from the Adult Service Division. The films are from the Group Service Department of the Public Library.

AFTERTHOUGHTS

Sigmund Spaeth

The full length film, OF MEN AND MUSIC, recently made by 20th Century-Fox, deserves the enthusiastic support of every music-lover. It is a distinguished presentation of great musical performances on the screen, enlisting the services of such artists as Jascha Heifetz, Artur Rubinstein Nadine Conner. Jan Peerce and Dimitri Mitropoulos, conducting the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra. The average movie fan may find some of the music over his head but should recognize the significance of the picture as a whole. OF MEN AND MUSIC may prove a milestone in Hollywood's progress.

* * * * *

Dimitri Tiomkin has turned out his customary perfection of workmanship in the background music to Stanley Kramer's CYRANO de BERGERAC, starring Jose Ferrer. But MR. UNIVERSE is a picture entirely unworthy of such creative gifts, or, for that matter, of the talents of the other artists concerned. Mr. Tiomkin has settled for a popular type of musical accompaniment, mostly noisy, like the picture itself.

* * * * *

The stage revue, CALL ME MISTER, should have produced an equally amusing picture, especially with such interpreters as Betty Grable, Dan Dailey and Danny Thomas in action. Unfortunately only a small portion of the original has been retained, and even this is garbled and comparatively ineffective. The net result is an entirely new show, representing Hollywood's idea of army life, working up to one of those incredible million-dollar productions supposedly pulled out of an old hat, regardless of stage equipment. At least the fans will get a kick out of Betty and the two Dans.

* * * * *

Jean Cocteau's modernization of the ORPHEUS story will puzzle many a devotee of conventional motion pictures, but it is a fascinating experiment nevertheless. There are only a few faint echoes of the Gluck opera on the same subject, which seems a pity, as music is always a connecting link between the real and the abstract. Jean Marais carries the burden of interpreting Cocteau's highly imaginative and sometimes enigmatic ideas.

* * * * *

In the bitter controversy over possible blasphemies and indecencies in THE MIRACLE, one of a prize-winning set of French and Italian pictures called WAYS OF LOVE, the fact has been overlooked that all three of these unusual films have excellent musical backgrounds. It should also be admitted that the comedy is generally more effective than the tragedy.

* * * * *

David Buttolph has supplied one of his finest scores for THE ENFORCER, in which Humphrey Bogart plays the part of the detective who broke up the ring known as Murder, Inc. Nevertheless, there is too much emphasis on violence in this picture, with a complete course of lessons in the fine art of taking human life. Similarly THE ASPHALT JUNGLE taught the details of high class burglary in unmistakable terms. Physical violence still seems to be an obsession of the silver screen.