



FILM MUSIC

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QUO VADIS

FILM MUSIC

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AS A CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTION, WE ARE EXTENDING OUR SPECIAL OFFER FOR NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS. UNTIL JANUARY 1, 1952, WE ARE OFFERING A ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION FOR \$1.75. IF YOU ARE ALREADY A SUBSCRIBER YOU MAY EXTEND YOUR SUBSCRIPTION FOR TWO YEARS FROM THE PRESENT DAY OF EXPIRATION FOR \$3.50. A SUBSCRIPTION BLANK IS ENCLOSED.

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FILM MUSIC NEWS

FILM MUSIC COURSES Scholastic schedules are giving more and more space to film study. The Canadian Film Weekly reports that authorities in various branches of the motion picture will lecture during "The Film and Society" series sponsored by the University of Toronto. The course, the first of its kind to be sponsored by a Canadian University, covers the theatrical and non-theatrical field, production problems, film techniques and film appreciation. London University has a Film Music course again this year, dealing with all aspects of the subject. The University of Southern California, whose motion picture department was started in 1928, presents an important course. The Screen Producers Guild will furnish the staff for a thirteen lecture Production Symposium making highly professional information and experience available to the one hundred students qualified to take the course. Each session will be preceded by the screening of an appropriate film. Carey Wilson, Arthur Hornblow Jr., Arthur Freed and Jerry Wald are among the producers who will participate.

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ANNUAL AWARDS Jerry Wald and Norman Krasna are establishing annual awards for the best films made by students of film production at American colleges, as a means of bringing to light the "enormous reservoir of talent and ideas to be found on American campuses". Entries will be judged by a board of ten film producers who will select winners in seven categories: best writing, directing, camera work, editing, production, and best actor and actress.

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FILMS FOR THEATRE VIDEO The National Broadcasting Company is planning production of fine feature length films for theatre video, using successes from former network shows as basic material. The films will be made in New York at the Center Theater, which has been converted for television purposes. With a shooting schedule of four days each, the films are budgetted at about \$150,000 apiece.

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SOUND PICTURE ANNIVERSARY Warner Brothers has issued a sixteen page booklet in connection with the 25th Anniversary of the presentation of the first successful modern sound motion picture. The booklet brings up to date the company's book list on the motion picture issued in 1946. The present listing with its brief reviews was compiled by Bernard Karpel, Librarian of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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FILM MUSIC ON RECORDS In the latest issue of the Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television, Gerald Pratley of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has an extensive listing of film music on records. "This compilation", says Mr. Pratley, "does not include recordings of concert ballads, popular songs, or any other kind of songs which were composed for films. Neither does it include music used in film scores but not written specially for them." Copies at 50 cents each may be had from Mr. Pratley, 63 Fulton Ave., Toronto 6, Ontario, Canada.

THE MUSIC IN QUO VADIS

Miklos Rozsa

A motion picture with historical background always presents interesting problems to the composer. There have been innumerable other historical pictures produced before QUO VADIS, and they were all alike in their negligent attitude toward the stylistic accuracy of their music. It is interesting to note what painstaking research is usually made to ascertain the year of publication of, let us say, "Yes, we have no Bananas", if it is used in a picture about the twenties, but no one seems to care much if the early Christians in the first century sing "Onward Christian Soldiers" by Sir Arthur Sullivan, composed a mere eighteen hundred years later! When a period picture is made, the historical background of the script is naturally based on historical facts and the dialogue tries to avoid any anachronistic term or reference. The art director, interior decorator, costume designer, hair-stylist and makeup man start their work only after thorough research, and the greatest care is taken that every building, every piece of furniture, every costume and every hairdo is absolutely authentic according to the period of the picture. During the actual photographing a historical advisor, usually a scholar of reputation, supervises this procedure so that nothing can slip in and spoil the absolute authenticity.

Why is it then that when we come to music an exceptionally lofty attitude is felt and no one seems to care much about the genuineness of this most important factor of picture making? The countless dramatizations of antiquity in operas and oratorios naturally have not attempted to recreate the music of the period, as opera is stylized art and, therefore, the music is also a stylized adaptation of a certain historical or nationalistic style. No one expects to hear sixteenth century Minnesinger music in the "Meistersinger", antique Greek music in "Electra" or ancient Hebrew music in "Salome". The orientalism in "Aida", "Samson and Delilah" or "Queen of Sheba" is only used as color and they are fullblooded, romantic operas mirroring the style of the period of their creation with no attempt whatsoever to represent the true style of the period of their action. But motion picture art is different. It is realistic and factual. It not only tries to capture the spirit of bygone eras but also tries to make believe that it projects before the eyes of the spectator the real thing. There are no painted backdrops, fake props, cardboard shields and wooden swords as in an opera, but everything is realistic to the fullest limit and if the public doesn't believe that the Christians were actually eaten by the lions, the photoplay would have completely failed in its object.

When QUO VADIS was assigned to me I decided to be stylistically, absolutely correct. First, thorough research had to be made, Though my old studies of the music of antiquity came in handy now, I am most indebted to the librarian of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios, Mr. George Schneider, who with unflinching enthusiasm and unceasing effort produced every reference to the period that could be found in the libraries throughout the four corners of the world.

Our first duty was to prepare the blueprints for the antique instruments which had to be made. We reconstructed these from Roman statues, (in the Vatican and Naples museums) antique vases and bas-reliefs on columns and tombstones, giving exact measurements for all details. The actual instruments were then produced by Italian instrument makers, so a great array of lyras and cytharas, (the chief instruments of the Romans) double pipes, (aulos) curved horns, (buccina) straight trumpets, (salpynx or tuba), tambourines, drums, sistrums, clappers and other percussion instruments were made with amazing likeness to the real ones.

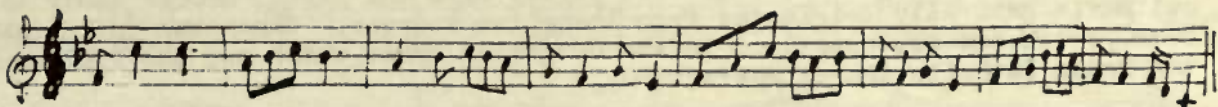
Then the music which was to be performed on scene had to be prepared. To select music for a historical picture of the middle ages, for instance, would have been an easy task, as there is a wealth of material available. But this is not the case with Roman music from the year 64 A.D. In spite of the fact that a great amount of Roman literature, painting, architecture and sculpture

has been preserved, there is absolutely no actual record of any music of the classical times of Roman history. There are a lot of references to music in literary works of the time so we know what an important part music played in the life of the Romans. Seneca complains that orchestras and choruses grew to gigantic proportions and often there were more singers and players in the theatre than spectators. There were numerous schools of music, and daughters of the rich bourgeoisie had to learn to play the lyre just as they have to learn the piano today. The slaves of the aristocrats entertained constantly and Seneca complains that "at table no one can talk for the music!" (An early fore-runner of the menace of our radios) All this proves that music was widely practised and belonged to everyday life.

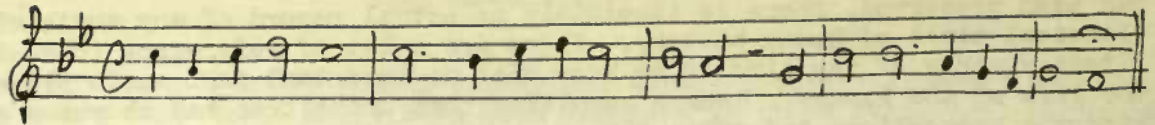


In Quo Vadis there were three distinguishable styles in which music had to be created. Firstly, the music of the Romans, such as songs of Nero and the slave girl Eunice, sacrificial hymn of the Vestals, marches and fanfares. Secondly, the hymns of the Christians; and thirdly, the music performed by slaves, which I call the Roman Empire music. As nothing remains of Roman music, this had to be recreated by deduction. We know that the culture of the Romans was entirely borrowed from the Greeks. Greek civilization and religion dominated Roman life and Nero himself preferred to speak Greek rather than latin. As Greek musicians and instruments were imported and Greek musical theory adopted, the music of the Romans cannot be separated from its Greek models and ideas. It was, therefore

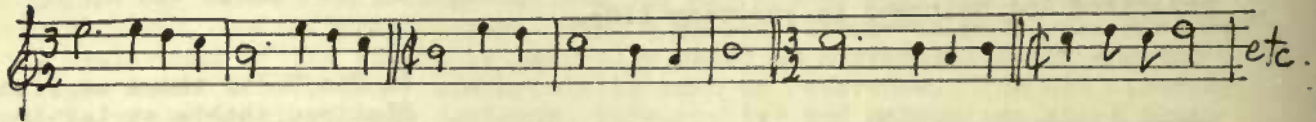
not incorrect to reconstruct this music from Greek examples. About the music of the Greeks we know considerably more. We know their thorough and involved musical systems, we can read their musical notations and we also have about twelve relics of actual music, preserved mostly on tombstones and old papyri. These were of the greatest value in this attempt at reconstruction. The Skolion of Seikilos, which is perhaps the oldest known musical relic with a definite melody in our modern sense, became the basic idea from which I developed Nero's first song, "The Burning of Troy". It is in Phrygian mode and dates from the first or second century.



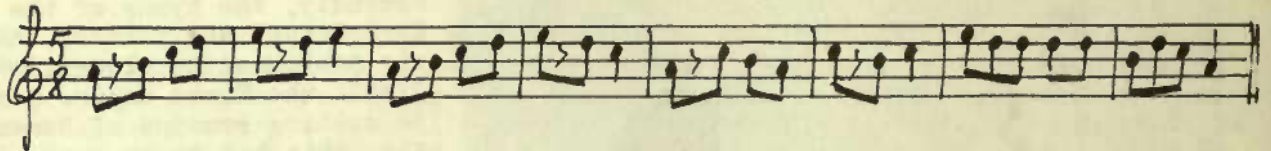
The second song of Nero "The Burning of Rome", uses a Gregorian anthem "Omnes sitientes venite ad aquas" as a point of departure. This is a reverse method of reconstruction, but if we accept the theory that much Roman music became Christian (as we shall see later,) we can select from the early Christian music where the origin cannot be proven, and presume that the original source was Roman.



For Eunice's song I have used the first Ode of Pindar, which was allegedly found in a Sicilian monastery in 1650. Its authenticity is doubtful, but it is constructed entirely on Greek principles and it is a hauntingly beautiful melody.



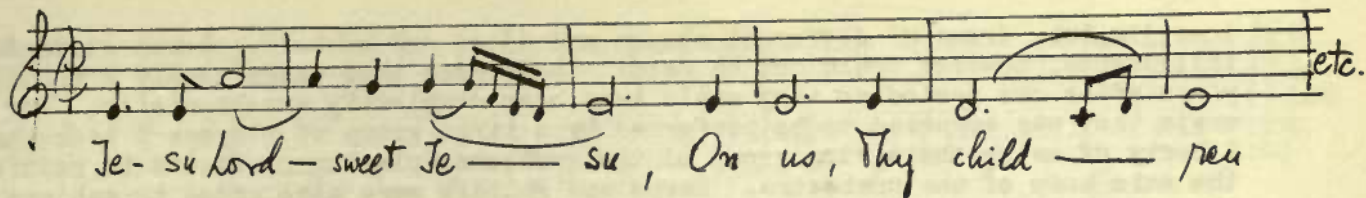
Fragments from an anonymous composer from the second century, which probably were written for a cythara school, were interesting enough to serve as a point of departure for an instrumental piece, used as a bacchanale at Nero's banquet. The 5/8 time is characteristic of Greek music.



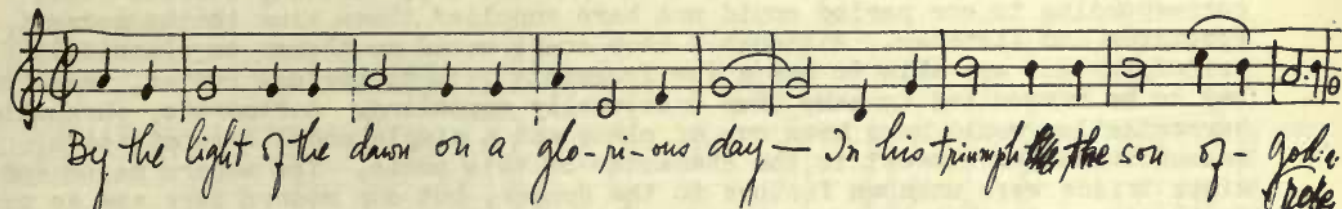
The main problem that arose with all these original melodies was how to harmonize them. Whether the Greeks or Romans knew harmonies, or was their music entirely monodic, is still a hotly debated question. Polyphony in our modern sense was, of course, unknown, except that of parallel octaves, which hardly can be called polyphony. Only six intervals, the fourth, the fifth, the octaves, and their higher octaves were known and allowed as consonances.

As the music for QUO VADIS was intended for dramatic use and as entertainment for the lay public, one had to avoid the pitfall of producing only musical oddities instead of music with a universal, emotional appeal. For the modern ear, instrumental music in unison has very little emotional or aesthetic appeal; therefore I had to find a way for an archaic sounding harmonization which gives warmth, color, and emotional values to these melodies. A parallelism with open fifths and fourths came in most handy and also a modal harmonization suggested by the different (Lydian, Phrygian, Dorian, Mixolydian, etc.) modes of the melodies in question. In the second category for which authentic music had to be supplied, were the hymns of the early Christians. These also had to be reconstructed by deduction. Saint Ambrose's collection of liturgical music for the Catholic Church appeared about four hundred years after our period and I wanted to go back to the very source from which the Ambrosian plain chant and later the Gregorian hymnology blossomed. As the early Christians were partly Jews and partly Greeks their liturgical music naturally originates from these two sources. These two influences have been proven and are prevalent in the Gregorian hymns which are the fundament of the Roman Catholic Church music.

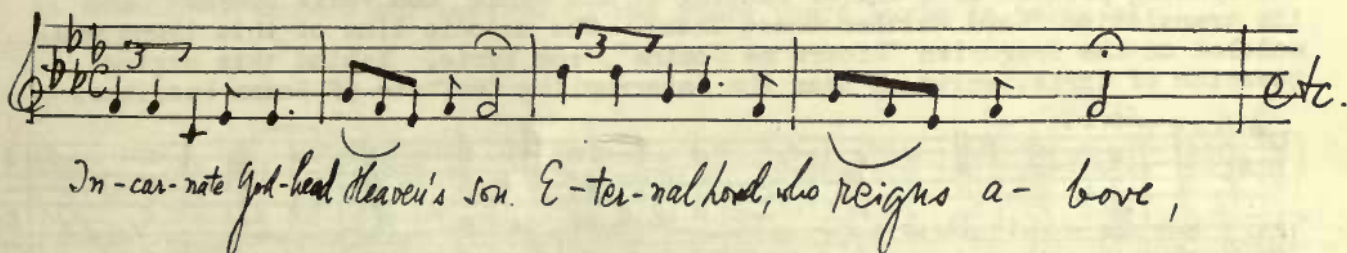
The first time we meet organized Christianity in the picture, we see Saint Paul baptizing new believers and we hear them singing a hymn. A Babylonian Jewish liturgical melody (which found its way into the Gregorian hymnody, becoming a Kyrie) served as basis for this hymn. I used it in the manner of a cantus responsorius, where the priest intones a phrase and the congregation answers it. To achieve the authentic timbre and feeling of its rendition, we engaged a Jewish cantor to sing the part of the priest.



As the second major influence on the early Christian music was Greek, I selected a melody from a Greek hymn which had the beauty and fervor needed for the Christians to sing in the arena. The Hymn to Nemesis which was discovered by Vincenzo Gallilei in the seventeenth century but dates from the second century, seemed to me perfect for this purpose.

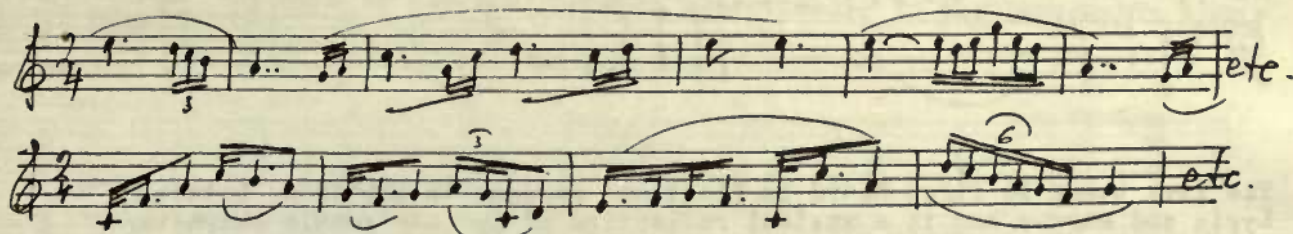


The third hymn which is sung by the Christians burning on the crosses in the arena, had to have a plaintive character which I found in the Ambrosian Aeterna Conditor.



It goes without saying that all these hymns are performed in the picture in unison (or octaves) unharmonized, as they were sung two thousand years ago. The English words were written by Hugh Gray, who also served as historical advisor on the picture and displayed great feeling for the style and character of the time of antiquity.

The third category of the music was the music of the slaves, mostly Babylonians, Syrians, Egyptians, Persians and other conquered nations of oriental origin. There were fragments of the oldest melodies found in Sicily (a Roman province) with Arabian influence, and others found in Cairo, which I could utilize.



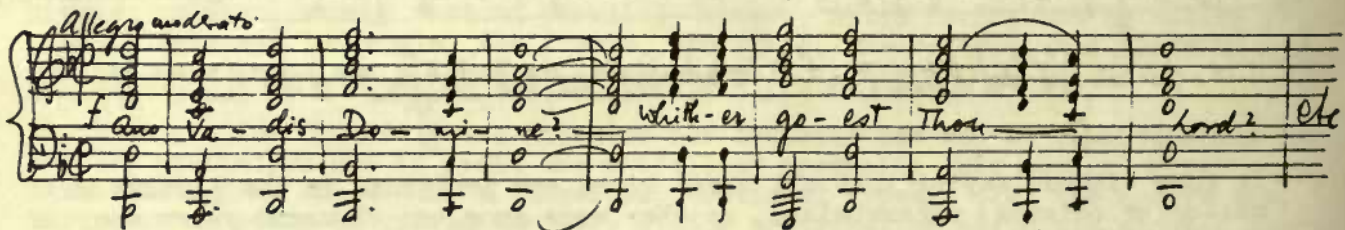
The orchestration of the music performed on scene was another problem. None of the old instruments were available and, therefore, an archaic sound had to be created with our modern instruments. I used a small Scottish harp, the clarshch, and this delicate instrument gave a remarkably true likeness to the sound of the lyre and antique harp. For military music cornets, mixed with trumpets and trombones gave the roughness of the early brass instruments. Bass flute and English horn replaced the sound of the aulos. Our modern percussion instruments come close to the antique ones and therefore it was safe to use Tambour-

ines, jingles, drums of different shapes and sizes and cymbals. Bowed stringed instruments, however could not be used! These came into usage nearly a thousand years after our period so they would have been completely anachronistic. For music that was supposed to be performed by a large group of players I took the liberty of using the string group of the orchestra playing pizzicato to reinforce the main body of the orchestra. Harps and guitars were also added to achieve the percussive quality. Melodic lines, however, were only given to the woodwind and brass instruments to perform.

"Another part of the forest" is the dramatic accompanying music which, for yet undetected reasons, Hollywood semantics call "the score". The main function of this music is to heighten the drama, create the atmosphere and underline the emotional content of certain scenes. A stylistically, strictly correct music corresponding to our period could not have supplied these aims to the modern spectator and listener. Although I have constructed my themes on classical principles and was able to use a few fragments from historical relics, these had to be harmonized to make them emotionally appealing. A romantic, chromatic harmonization would have been out of place and a simple modal harmonization seemed to me the closest to the character of this music. The modern major and minor triads were unknown factors to the Romans, but our modern ears are so used to these sounds that it would have been impossible to ignore them completely.

The main themes of the score of QUO VADIS are the following:

The opening prelude is a choral setting of the words "Quo Vadis Domine?" and its translation "Lord Whither Goest Thou?" The melodic line of this theme was modeled on the Gregorian "Liberate me Domine", and Kyrie. Behind this urging question of Christianity we hear the interrupting fanfares of Roman buccinas.



A recurring of faith first appears in the garden where Lygia draws a fish, the symbol of the early Christians.



The love theme is first heard in Plautius' gardens in the scene between Lygia and Marcus and is a musical reflection of Lygia's gentle character and deep faith.

lento

p dolce

etc.

The Triumph introduces Marcus Vinicius' contrasting theme of pagan heroism and self-confidence.

Marcia

etc.

An interesting chromatic motif from the second Delphic hymn was utilized as a motif of menace and tension in the scene where Lygia is taken as hostage.

Moderato

pp 3 Hms.

Cello, Bass. etc.

etc.

A motif from "The Hymn to the Sun" appears majestically in the brass when Rome is in flames.

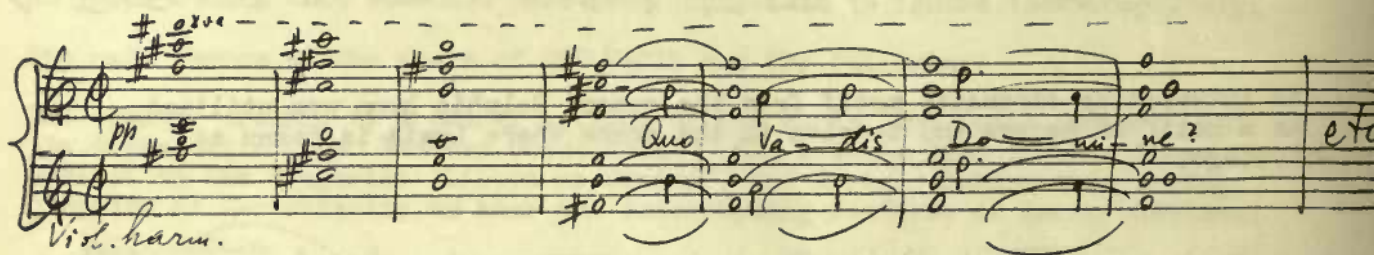
Tub.

etc.

Petronius is the noblest character in the picture and the following theme tries to describe him musically.



A motif of 4 chords introduces the Miracle scene, when the Lord talks to St Peter and then the voice of angels intone the Quo Vadis theme.



A theme of doom accompanies the suicide scene of Nero.



The dramatic music of QUO VADIS is much less polyphonic than my previous film scores, for the only reason that extended polyphony would have clashed anachronistically with monodic music performed on scene throughout the picture. At the end of the picture the voices of humanity take up the QUO VADIS theme and after the answer of Christ they join in a jubilant reprise of the hymn "By the Light of the Dawn."

For those who want to study the music of Quo Vadis more thoroughly, there is a record album from the sound tracks and a piano score, with the most important themes with pictures and historical notes, available.

ROZSA'S MUSIC FOR QUO VADIS

Lawrence Morton

Long before you will have had a chance to discover what kind of music Miklos Rozsa has written for QUO VADIS, and before you are able to make any critical estimate of it, the quality of the recording, as heard in the theater, will already have impressed you as being extraordinary in its spaciousness. In the main-title, both the chorus and the orchestra sound as though the tones they produced were unconfined by studio walls, as though their resonance and sonority would not only fill Nero's Circus but would reach from there to all of Rome's seven hilltops. It is not only that the music is as grandly loud as musicians like to hear music, but that it has magnificent dimensions. Other scores have indeed sounded louder in the theater - as

for instance, some recent MGM musicals; but I can remember no recent score from any studio in which the music has been quite so ear-filling without ever becoming ear-splitting. This spaciousness is noticeable even when the music is quiet. In the scene of Lygia's devotions, in the garden of Plautius' house, for instance, and in the prison scene where Peter performs the simple wedding ceremony for Lygia and Marcus, the music seems not so quiet as far a way. Yet it is clear and has the presence of a live performance. It is as though a very sensitive microphone picked up the sound from a great distance. Whatever the technique and equipment of the recording might have been, they are well worth study by Hollywood engineers if they hope to rival what was achieved here under British conditions.

The job of recording must have been much facilitated by the nature of the music itself. Although I have recently, in this magazine and elsewhere, commented on what has seemed to me an increasing amount of polyphony in Rozsa's music, he has, in QUO VADIS quite completely reversed me. But since he has also reversed himself, I cannot complain that this is another instance of how a sly composer will go to any lengths in order to confound a critic. The truth about QUO VADIS is that the score is remarkably simple in both its textures and its musical shapes. As for the textures; they range from the unison singing of the Christian martyrs to a homophony no more complicated than that of the chariot chase, where the tossing about of several short motifs by orchestral groups, so that the motifs sometimes overlap, gives an impression of polyphony without ever actually becoming polyphonic. The ear is kept busy, to be sure, but it is never in doubt as to where the main musical event is taking place. You have only to listen to one thing at a time - except for the sound effects which, for all their realism, can never excite the imagination as music can.

Another kind of textural complication, but one still within the general area of simplicity, is that brought about by the use of percussion instruments, of which there seem to be a great many, especially in the dance scenes. Here



the combination of variously pitched drums with instruments like antique cymbals, "jingles", and plucked strings sometimes seems to exist on a musical plane of its own, quite separate from that of the melodic instruments, as if it were an antiphonal rather than an accompanying group. In some of the march music, on the other hand, heavy percussion instruments almost obliterate accompaniments, leaving the melodic instruments to generate their own harmony, which they do quite satisfactorily. Here we get the effect of a greater simplicity than is actually present. The "source music" - that is, the dances and marches - are extraordinarily interesting from the acoustical point of view.

Equally simple in texture is the underscoring music with which the composer "interprets" the emotions of the characters on the screen. Of this kind of music there are two principal "chunks," one for Lygia and the other for Petronius. The first of these, although it serves for a few scenes between Lygia and Marcus as well as for Lygia herself, is happily free of any sentimentality (it never becomes a "luv theme") and remains lyrical even when infused with dramatic fervor. The music for Petronius, broad and in the cello idiom, is also simple and direct. I could not help feeling that here Rozsa might have abandoned the simple style: this Petronius is hardly the Petronius of the SATYRICON. Rozsa has conspired with the screen writers to make him far too consistently a noble character, not enough of the cynic he tells us he is. I cannot imagine the Petronius of history uttering, as he signs a revolutionary document, such a fatuous and sententious line as "I do this with humility." Evidently Rozsa could not only imagine this but even believed it. He might have added another dimension to the screen character with music of a complexity and sophistication commensurate with the real Petronius, just as (though in a very different way) he made Nero's song, "O lambent flame," tell us a few nasty things about the Emperor that the camera and script could not possibly tell us. In this he was most wonderfully assisted by Hugh Gray's poem and Peter Ustinov's performance.

As for the musical shapes: they are, on the whole, very symmetrical and therefore easy to follow. Phrases follow one another in sequential patterns, particularly in the dance and march music, somewhat less regularly in the Lygia and Petronius music. Most of the rhythms are square, thus contributing to the general feeling of symmetry. (Compare, by the way, the architectural symmetry of the sets, and the parallelisms between groups of characters and between events of the story.) Even in the 5/8 rhythm of the "Bacchanale" the bars group themselves into fairly conventional patterns.

As counterpoint to the simplicity of texture and shapes, there is a genuine magnificence of tone. This is partly due to the recording, which I have already mentioned. More especially it is attributable to the instrumental color. Throughout, the wind instruments dominate the score, and the sound of multiple horns, trumpets and trombones in the fanfares and marches has a truly imperial splendor that rivals the technicolored splendor on the screen. The "elemental" harmonies of fourths and open fifths, especially when fortissimo in woodwinds and brass, are so powerful and effective that I somewhat regretted their occasional resolution into more conventional triads, even though I fully understand how a composer must ask himself many times how long he dare stay with the harmonies of fourths and fifths without letting them degenerate into a mannerism.

I thought it rather curious that the composer sometimes found his way from the conceivably authentic idiom of pagan Rome to the more familiar idiom of medieval Europe. Some of Lygia's music, for instance, suggests faux bourdon and the medieval modes. I mention this not as a criticism, for I did not find it in the least objectionable, but only as a problem of musical style. Authenticity from the musicological point of view is of course impossible, at least until musicologists discover more than they presently know about Roman music. Cinematically, such authenticity would probably not even be desirable. But the pro-

blem of where a composer can go from the fragmentary bits of authentic material with which Rozsa started is an interesting question that can be argued (by amateurs no less than by musicologists) until the next film version of QUO VADIS appears in, say, 1985. And because one answer (such as Rozsa's) may be right, other answers are not necessarily wrong. Now while I thought it curious, as I said, that Rozsa found his way to an idiom suggesting the medieval, I thought it no less curious that in one scene, that of the street fight between the giant Ursus and the gladiator Croton, he found his way to an almost modern, twentieth-century idiom. To my ears there was some inconsistency in this. Although I should hesitate to make a judgment on it, I should not hesitate to argue about it, just as I have frequently argued with musicians about the stylistic inconsistencies in Honegger's KING DAVID, some of Mahler's symphonies and even Schoenberg's ODE TO NAPOLEON - as well as in such famous film scores as Auric's CAESAR AND CLEOPATRA, Thomson's LOUISIANA STORY and Walton's HAMLET. I suggest this stylistic problem as one that might be profitably discussed by students of film music.

On the whole, Rozsa's QUO VADIS is perhaps his most impressive score and certainly his most effective from a theatrical point of view. I found it completely convincing, even when I could think of alternative ways of doing things. If the picture has any qualities of greatness at all (which I leave to the film critics to decide) certainly Rozsa's music, as a thoroughly integrated part of the production, is entitled to a fair share of praise.

QUO VADIS.. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Robert Taylor, Deborah Kerr. Director, Mervyn Le Roy. Music, Miklos Rozsa. Technicolor.

RECORDS: MGM Album Series. Music recorded directly from the sound track of the picture; fourteen selections conducted by the composer. Available in all three speeds. The piano score is published by Robbins Music. Dr. Rozsa has also written a symphonic suite based on QUO VADIS themes, which will be performed this year.



AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

Richard Lewine

The music department at MGM may well take a bow for its imaginative and intelligent handling of AN AMERICAN IN PARIS. For, while the screen play emerges as little more than a vehicle that holds together some ten Gershwin tunes and two lengthy excerpts from his serious works, the music in all its aspects is superb.

Deciding upon which songs to use from the voluminous George Gershwin catalogue must have been quite a chore in itself; but the final list is indeed a good one, running a gamut that extends all the way from the top hits "I've Got Rhythm" and "Embraceable You" to the comparatively obscure "Tra-La-La", known only to Gershwin collectors and bistro pianists.



In "I've Got Rhythm", the song that helped to catapult Ethel Merman to stardom in GIRL CRAZY, Gene Kelly sings and dances with a group of French schoolchildren who should, by the way, be entered immediately in the alltime scene-stealing sweepstakes. (Kelly, it turns out, is magnificent and completely equal to the challenge). Orchestrally the sequence begins quietly, then builds to a pitch of excitement that is, in Palace parlance, all but impossible to follow. It is without question the film's highspot.

"Embraceable You", also from the GIRL CRAZY score, is charmingly done and takes maximum advantage of the camera and color possibilities of abstract staging. Conrad Salinger, who has probably sat down to orchestrate the tune more than a hundred times before, has nevertheless come up with completely fresh musical

ideas perfectly tailored to the idea of the sequence.

Also done at length is "Our Love Is Here to Stay", from the score of THE GOLDWYN FOLLIES, on which Gershwin was at work when his tragic end came. The tune is hauntingly sentimental and with a somewhat different flavor from that of his earlier theater writing. Sung by Gene Kelly, then danced by Kelly and the lovely Leslie Caron, it emerges as the love song of the piece and an ideal one at that. It may well be that this presentation will bring the song the top popularity it has always deserved but has never quite had.

The inclusion of "I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise" in the film is the only choice with which there could be some quarrel. The song undoubtedly has a nostalgic importance because of its place very early in the Gershwin career, but in his hundreds of tunes it is one of the very few that seems dated and not typical of his harmonic and rhythmic invention. ("Tra-La-La", for instance, written some 29 years ago for a forgotten Broadway item called "For Goodness Sake", is in the best Gershwin 2/4 idiom and completely fresh today.) Further, the staging of "Stairway to Paradise" is, alas, in the ancient Hollywood tradition, complete with steps and beautiful show girls. As Guetary ascends them on his way to Paradise, they light up one by one. Later he descends and goes up again and on his second trip the steps light up again

for the benefit of those who might not have been paying close attention the first time. Granting the necessity for establishing Guetary as a traditional French Music Hall star in this scene, it is unfortunate to have this kind of staging in the midst of so many fresh ideas.

Also on hand is the little known "By Strauss" written by Les Freres Gershwin for Vincente Minelli's Broadway revue THE SHOW IS ON, one of the few instances in which they contributed to a "collected" score. The tune, which is one of Gershwin's very few waltzes, has wit and gusto, and is certainly one of Ira's very best lyrics. Kelly, Levant and Guetary perform it in the cafe scene early in the picture and it is, to be sure, very "Strauss". Guetary is better in this than in his other appearances; Kelly and Levant are, of course, consistently good throughout.

Other songs that occur in varying degrees of prominence are "I Don't Think I'll Fall in Love Today", from the ill-fated TREASURE GIRL, and the better known "S'Wonderful", "Liza" and "Nice Work If You Can Get It". Throughout the film there are snatches of still other Gershwin tunes, sometimes played by the band in the nightclub sequence, sometimes by the studio orchestra as rich and warm background music. It is indeed a windfall.

The ballet itself is danced to a somewhat re-edited version of the tone poem which gives the picture its title. In this version, which runs some 17 minutes, certain themes have been lengthened and others juxtaposed to suit the choreographic requirements, but Johnny Green, Saul Chaplin and Conrad Salinger have kept constantly the flavor of the original scoring and have done wonders with the new transitions and blends required of them.

Oscar Levant, cast in his usual role of combination wit and musician, plays a movement from the Piano Concerto in F. This was the important concert work of the Gershwin career and one which he rescored completely after its premiere performance by the New York Philharmonic. It, along with his scoring of "Porgy and Bess", demonstrates his complete skill with the orchestra. Staged in the picture as a kind of dream sequence, we see Levant first as the piano soloist at a performance of the work, then his projection of himself as each of the musicians in the orchestra. It seems a frivolous way to present this, of all the Gershwin music, but it is in any event a performance by both Levant and orchestra that has the fire and excitement the work requires.

Finally, it should be carefully noted that for all the proper tribute the film pays to George Gershwin, it reminds us again of the tremendous stature of brother Ira as his lyric writer. His contribution to the Gershwin career cannot be overestimated; every title, every lyric and every phrase are so much in the spirit of George's music that it seems impossible to consider them separately.

Congratulations to the Messrs. Green, Chaplin and Salinger for what is certainly a memorable music job; if the Gershwin music can possibly achieve a more important place on the American scene, AN AMERICAN IN PARIS will help to do it.

Richard Lewine, the previewer of the film is a composer for theatrical productions; "Make Mine Manhattan", "The Girl from Wyoming", "Naughty Naught" and "The Fireman's Flame, also the composer of 54th Street Review on CBS-TV for a year. Currently a TV producer.

AN AMERICAN IN PARIS.. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Gene Kelly, Leslie Caron, Oscar Levant. Director, Vincente Minnelli. Music, George Gershwin. Musical direction, Johnny Green and Saul Chaplin. Technicolor.

RECORDS: MGM Album Series. Selections from the sound track of the film: Gershwin songs sung by Gene Kelly and George Guetary, and four sides of the AN AMERICAN IN PARIS ballet music, played by Johnny Green and the MGM Studio Orchestra. Available in all three speeds.

SHEET MUSIC AVAILABLE from THE AMERICAN IN PARIS

"Nice Work if You can Get It"	Chappell & Co. Inc.
"By Strauss"	Chappell & Co. Inc.
"Our Love is Here to Stay"	Chappell & Co. Inc.
"Embraceable You"	Harms, Inc.
"Tra-la-la"	Harms, Inc.
"I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise"	Harms, Inc.
"Liza"	Harms, Inc.
"I Got Rhythm"	New World Music Corp.
"S' Wonderful"	New World Music Corp.
"I Don't Think I'll Fall in Love Today"	New World Music Corp.



MUSIC IN THE ROUND

Louis Applebaum

Probably the least assuming of the buildings erected for the Festival of Britain's exhibition on London's South Bank, is the TELECINEMA. Though it is the only exhibit that charges an admission fee, long queues form outside its doors each afternoon and remain full until about ten at night. It's true that in London people seem to line up for everything, but in this case the excitement is a bit unusual and happily surprises the management.

The TELECINEMA is a special kind of super-modern movie theatre, built and equipped by the British Film Institute to show off England's newest thoughts in the audio-visual field. Disregarding the accepted film credo that anything untraditional is box-office poison, the planners have devised and produced a unique 3-fold program. It consists of a demonstration of Theatre-Television (new to England), a documentary film (one of three excellent films produced for the Festival), and a program of Stereoscopic films combined with "Stereophonic" sound.

Stereo films are not new. You may recall the film shorts theatres were showing some fifteen years ago; audiences screaming as baseballs were batted seemingly out of the screen at their heads. It was all very thrilling, but it developed little beyond the obvious and these items, together with the red-and-green glasses the audiences were required to wear soon disappeared from the cinema's programs.

What they are at the moment calling "stereophonic" sound, for want of a better name, is also not new. Perhaps you were lucky enough to attend FANTASIA on its initial run in a specially-equipped theatre. You may recall the music apparently moving around the room; "Ave Maria" floating from the back of the theatre to the front; Stravinsky's "Sacre du Printemps" suddenly booming a dramatic statement from all over the house at once. It was a great moment, but again, nothing developed from the effort.

In London's Telecinema they have, for the first time, combined 3-dimensional films, this time viewed through special polarized glasses, with 3-dimensional sound, and have added a few more firsts along the way.

Norman McLaren, the National Film Board of Canada's brilliant film artist, was invited by the Festival to contribute a film for the Stereoscopic program. This AROUND IS AROUND, is the first animated 3-dimensional film ever made. Since McLaren's work is usually non-representational and relies on the manipulation of abstract shapes and color dynamics, an opportunity was afforded to clearly measure the artistic validity of the medium. Here was to be no effect for effect's sake. The vicarious thrill of a train seeming to roar out of the screen into the middle of the house was not to be available as sure-fire, easily attained theatrics. Instead, a work that was in itself an integrated artistic expression, unselfconsciously using the techniques and materials of 3-dimension, was, through its own success, to win success for the medium. To McLaren's great credit, he overcame the many technical problems completely, and, as is usually the case with a McLaren effort, his film is the highlight of the program.

Actually, McLaren contributed two films. The first is a very short, completely hand-animated little thing that asks the audience to put on the polaroid glasses and serves also as an exercise to help the eyes adjust to stereoscopy. By its charm in color and movement, by the intriguing wit of its music, which was composed by him and is entirely synthetic, (the music was not played by any musical instruments, but sound waves were drawn and photographed onto the sound track under a regular animation camera) this little gem completely captivates its audience and sets them up for AROUND IS AROUND, a more ambitious effort.

I was invited to compose the music for this second film, using the Telecinema's newly-created sound system. The music was to be recorded and played into the theatre on high-fidelity magnetic film instead of the conventional photographic track; it was to occupy four sound tracks instead of one, which meant that each track could record a single component of the final music instead of the whole sound; each track could be fed into any or all of four batteries of speakers that were spotted throughout the room, replacing the single speaker usually found behind the center of the screen.



Norman MacLaren drawing sketches directly on film.
Photography courtesy National Film Board of Canada.

It was obvious that trick or shock effect could be easily achieved merely by having the sound, from time to time, come from an unexpected direction. In the case of FANTASIA many listeners felt that even the standard orchestral works that were used gained dramatic impact from the fact that the music did not come from the same sound-source all the time. With AROUND IS AROUND, however, there was an opportunity to start from scratch and to make "directionality" a decisive factor in the composing process. Here was another instance where a medium's mechanics could seriously affect musical thinking and structure.

Since AROUND IS AROUND is abstract in character, a ballet of gyrating geometrical forms, it was decided to write music that was easy to comprehend. Simple waltz tunes formed the basis of the composition. The movements of the shapes on the screen, and out of and behind the plane of the screen, dictated not only

the music's inner structure but much of its movement about the room. Even though this was a first venture, really little more than an adventurous experiment, yet many exciting devices, techniques and consequent effects soon became apparent. Without going into much detail, the following are a few.

Solo melodies could be divorced from their accompaniments and each could move about the room independent of the other. Even the simple device of having a melodic figure come from the front, and its accompaniment from the back of the hall can be thrilling, even without movement.

Direction counterpoint can be written as an equal partner to musical contrapuntal lines. Sometimes the separation in space of the contrapuntal elements enhances vividly the total musical statement.

Harmonies can be built with bricks of sound, each in its own section of the room. The entrance of a new musical phrase from a new direction becomes a valid and useful dramatic expedient.

There are dangers too. Certain musical ideas can move freely about the room at any speed, others are best stationary, or must move very carefully. Orchestral balance must be achieved not only through tonal weight but in the control of blocks of space. Our sense of dynamics (loudness, crescendo etc.) must be recast, taking into consideration the distance of the listener from the speaker, the importance of a musical element in relation to what instruments play it and from what direction it is coming. A fortissimo played by the full orchestra, coming from one speaker, is quite different from the same sound coming from several speakers. It is different again when the same sound is built up on different speakers, each speaker playing a component of the total. All this, and much more, was revealed even in this initial effort on the present limited equipment.

The program at the Telecinema includes, too, a realistic stereoscopic film in Technicolor called THE DISTANT THAMES. This is an excerpt from an incompleting film of the travelogue type about the river Thames, for which William Alwyn has composed the very appropriate score. Since it was not possible, before our departure from England, to hear this score on the stereophonic system, I cannot comment on its effectiveness "3-dimensionally".

"Stereo"-sound may prove to be a short-lived fad, a temporary gimmick; but should it catch on (if exhibitors will go to the expense of installing the necessary equipment), it will certainly merit serious attention and investigation on the part of the composer. Should he want to use it, another useful tool has been made available to him. It may not be far-fetched to consider symphonic concerts during which the sound, split into several parts, would move about the hall as freely as spotlights play about a theatre, and of our best composers creating new "stereophonic" concert works. In the realm of motion pictures, the long queues consistently outside the Telecinema speak well for the drawing power of the 3-dimensional concept.

A PLACE IN THE SUN.. Paramount. Montgomery Clift, Elizabeth Taylor. Producer-director, George Stevens. Musical score, Franz Waxman.

In an age predominantly interested in Freudian symbols and psychoanalysis, this observer has finally discovered a film score with split-personality.

Mr. Franz Waxman, a well-known and intelligent composer, has carefully observed all of the values and elements of this film and found the key to its dramatic effect. This key is realism of a type seldom found in a film concerning itself with a brutal and sordid event in the lives of a group of people living at opposite ends of the social scale.

Using this realism as a base, the composer uses the types of music and sources of music-making that these people would respond to, this drawing from their various tastes the significant features of their personalities and characters. To characterize a low, middle class factory worker, he uses a radio tuned to a local "night-owl" program, and for a rich debutante, an elegant fox-trot played by a lush orchestra at one of her elaborate parties.

However, the naturalistic approach is not always applicable to the dramatic action or scene, and here the score creates an opposition which cannot be resolved. Employing a Wagnerian idiom in orchestration, harmony and melody, when the realistic approach was impossible, but music was necessary to heighten the drama, the people remain dramatically realistic, but the music becomes incidental, arty, pretentious and on the whole detracts from the character of the drama. The Wagnerian approach to solving the problem of finding some aesthetic that would blend with the naturalism of popular music is a poor one, and mars a score that could have been one of the most successful efforts to come from the pen of a film composer.

Robert M. Abramson

Sheet music; A Place in the Sun. Paramount Music Corp. 1619 Broadway, New York.
Records: A Place in the Sun, M G M.

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EROICA ; THE BEETHOVEN STORY.. Academy Productions, Inc.

The life of a creative musical genius is often without much incident, save as his creations are incidents. Wagner was an exception; so to some extent, was Beethoven. The stormy path along which his genius led him was full of occurrences and encounters, at least until he sank deeper and deeper into deafness and solitude. As his life was full of incident, so was his character a complex one. He, alone among many musical masters, could be made the subject of a fascinating life story. That this picture has failed to do so is not for lack of material, but rather from poor choice and treatment.

Three facets of the composer's life are dwelt on: his disappointment with Napoleon's character and rescinding of the dedication to the Third Symphony; his putative love affair with either or both Therese von Brunswick and Giulietta Guicciardi; and the catastrophe of his deafness. Far too much footage is spent on the first two (possibly to justify the title in the first case and to allow repetitions of the Moonlight Sonata in the second), and the film is slow, static, and as heavy as dumplings in a mid-day dinner. When a chance for drama occurs, such as the influence of Beethoven's rascalion nephew, it is muffed by indications that the nephew wasn't mean, only thoughtless, and by no follow-up of the situation, whatsoever. Poignant moments occur when the composer realizes his growing affliction, but the years of real misery and spiritual triumph are hardly suggested, except by the

introduction of some trite and saccharine philosophizing by a priest, in which he assures the composer that his work belongs to the world and he must live for it.

The music seems as slow and turgidly performed as the direction. Portions of the Third, Sixth, Seventh and Ninth symphonies, the Moonlight Sonata, snatches from the Prisoners' Chorus of Fidelio, the Hymn to God and Nature, and the Lenore Overture No. 3, are played or sung by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and Vienna Symphonic Orchestra under Hans Knappertsbusch; the Choir of the Vienna State Opera, and the Vienna Choir Boys. Olin Downes has made creditable English titles.

The part of the composer is played by Ewald Balser, who in certain lights and at certain angles bears a strong facial resemblance to the immortal he portrays. He does as well as he can with the skimpy dramatic material provided him, and with the ponderous direction of Walter Kolm-Veltee and Karl Hartl (the former wrote the scenario as well). Wiener Kunstfilm produced the work.

Quaintance Eaton

Among Current Releases

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.. Renown-United Artists. Alastair Sim, Kathleen Harrison. Director, Brian Desmond Hurst. Score, Richard Addinsell; Musical direction, Muir Mathieson. A reverently made British filming of the Dickens story, whose noteworthy production values include a good score.

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THE BLUE VEIL .. RKO-Radio: Jane Wyman, Charles Laughton. Director, Curtis Bernhardt. Music score, Franz Waxman. Elaborate Wald-Krasna production about a woman who gives her life to the up-bringing of other people's children. "The Blue Veil Theme", composed by Mr. Waxman for a 70 man string orchestra was conducted by him at a performance in the Paris Music Festival.

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TWO TICKETS TO BROADWAY .. RKO-Radio. Tony Martin, Janet Leigh. Director, James V. Kern. Technicolor. The song-and-dance dotted struggles of a group of Broadway aspirants. Seven of the eleven musical numbers are by Jule Styne and Leo Robin, "Pelican Falls High", "The Closer You Are", "Let the Worry Bird Worry You", among them. Apart from these, Tony Martin sings a short version of the prologue to "Pagliacci" and "There's No Tomorrow" alone, as well as joining Janet Leigh in "Manhattan", and Bob Crosby has a novelty number about brother Bing.

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GOLDEN GIRL .. 20th Century-Fox. Mitzi Gaynor, Dennis Day. Director, Lloyd Bacon. Musical director, Lionel Newman. Technicolor. Lavish musical screen biography of Lotta Crabtree, idol of the Gold Rush days. Songs; "California Moon" -Joe Cooper, George Jessel, Sam Lerner; "Never", Lionel Newman, Eliot Daniel; "Sunday Mornin'", Ken Darby, Eliot Daniel. Records available.

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SLAUGHTER TRAIL.. RKO-Radio. Brian Donlevy, Gig Young. Director, Irving Allen. Musical director, Darrell Calker. Cinecolor. A Western whose story is sung largely in ballad form. Songs: "Hoofbeat Serenade", "Ballad Bandelier", "Everyone's Crazy 'Ceptin' Me", Gilkyson and Kuller; "The Girl in the Wood", Gilkyson and Stuart; "I Wish I Wuz". Records available.

DOCUMENTARY FILM MUSIC

Muir Mathieson

The absence in the documentary film of big names, of Technicolor, of large scale publicity campaigns or any of the other devices used to herald the arrival of the latest feature film, gives it no superficial appeal to the general public. For this very reason I believe that music can serve one of its most satisfying and useful purposes in the cinema in connection with the Documentary, provided that its possibilities are fully realized.

Disposing of the customary trimmings throws the film itself into a more normal perspective ; pure sight and sound are entirely dependent on one another in the ideal documentary film. At the same time, music plays a doubly important part, providing, as it must, a larger share than usual of the entertainment. Music can help to humanize the subject and widen its appeal. Music can make the film less intellectual and more emotional. It can influence the reaction of the audience to any given sequence.

Music for the documentary film must be specially written. This principle has now been almost universally adopted and a musical background re-recorded from gramophone discs is today a rarity, with the result that scoring for documentary has become a magnificent opening to the young composers of today who find greater scope for experiment and originality in this field than is available to the feature film composer. In this it is worth while recalling the large number of scores written by Benjamin Britten for the G.P.O. Film Unit between 1936 and 1939.

Music in the Documentary film falls under three general headings: (1) Pictorial Colour. (2) Emotional Colour. (3) Experiment.

The first and most obvious of these, Pictorial Colour, illustrates the place or object shown on the screen and is more or less realistic music - oriental, pastoral, or mechanical, as the case may be. In the last picture scored by Walter Leigh, the pioneer of music in Documentary (*Song of Ceylon*), we see a barrage balloon being brought out of its hanger, and it gives a lurch in midair. The music, as it tripped through the air, caused it to suggest some clumsy elephant dancing. The film was *SQUADRON 992*, a fitting monument to Leigh, who was killed shortly afterwards in the Libyan campaign. The "nuts and bolts" music so often encountered in industrial films is a similar example of Pictorial Colour in film music.

The second, Emotional Colour, amplifies the thought and feelings of the characters or mood underlying the scene. In *WESTERN APPROACHES* for example, Clifton Parker's 'SEASCAPE' music contains a musical representation of the swelling sea and howling wind, but at the same time it takes up beyond the pictorial scene into the minds of the seamen cast adrift in an open boat in mid-Atlantic. It gives us the feeling of hopelessness, of the battle for survival, of the hidden fears of more U-boats, taking us far beyond the emotional compass of what we actually see on the screen.

In Documentary however there remains a great deal that can only be described as Experiment. The sound tracks of Humphrey Jennings' *LISTEN TO BRITAIN* and *DIARY for TIMOTHY*, for example, are superbly done, while *INSTRUMENTS of the ORCHESTRA* is a very interesting attempt at music teaching by means of the film. The Crown Unit in particular have been responsible for many experiments in recording, orchestration, rhythm and general musical effects, which have naturally offered the greatest possibilities to the composer for the development of a perfect form for music in pictures.

Today, the Documentary continues the great tradition for film music set up by people like Walter Leigh, Benjamin Britten, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Sir Arnold Bax, and other distinguished composers who have made such notable contributions to this youngest and most vigorous offspring of one of the oldest Arts.

MERRY CHRISTMAS.. Sterling Films 316 W. 56 St, New York; b and w, 12 minutes. In German. While readying a Viennese mansion for Christmas festivities, the Vienna Boys' Choir sings carol after carol, some well-known and some unfamiliar to American audiences. The loveliness of the boys' voices and of the singing is accentuated by most attractive camera work. The groups of children are shown decorating the halls, toy-making, clambering around their teacher at a melodium, clowning happily here and there, making a film delightful both to watch and hear. Leopold Hainisch directed.

THE LITTLE FUGUE IN G MINOR.. Teaching Film Custodians, 25 W. 43rd St, New York. b and w, 4 minutes. Leopold Stokowski conducts his own arrangement of the Bach LITTLE FUGUE IN G MINOR, in an excerpt from THE GREAT BROADCAST OF 1937 (20th Century Fox). Sub-titles identify the various sections of the orchestra as each carries the theme. The film is provided with a teaching guide.

THE DANCING FLEECE .. British Information Service, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York. Technicolor, 20 minutes. Sponsored by the government and the woollen industry, this British film is intended primarily to display the variety and fashion values of English fabrics. The idea is put over in a handsome ballet about a wool worker and his magical transformation of fleece into gowns by Norman Hartnell. Choreography is by Harold Turner of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, and Alan Rawsthorne has written an interesting score.

TRIPTYCH.. Lux Films, 1501 Broadway, New York; Technicolor, 14 minutes. The first film of the Society of St. Paul makes a detailed camera study of three paintings - Crivelli's "Annunciation", Botticelli's "Nativity" and Mantegna's "Crucifixion", while Beniamino Gigli sings the Bach-Gounod "Ave Maria", "Adeste Fidelis" and Rossini's "Cuius Animam". Mr. Gigli is joined occasionally by a good choir. The film was directed by the late Gino Parenti, Italian painter and director.



Detail of "The Nativity" by Botticelli

PACIFIC 231.. Film Advisory Center, 112 East 36th St. New York; b and w, 10 minutes. Arthur Honegger's symphonic sketch has been illustrated by filming the trip of a locomotive from the railroad yard to its first stop. The picture, exactly edited to fit the score, makes a vivid, dynamic interpretation of the music. Mr. Honegger himself conducted the orchestra. Jean Mitry and Marc Duccouret directed and edited for Tadie Cinema.

THE STONE WONDERS OF NAUMBURG.. Museum of Modern Art Film Library, 11 West 53rd, New York; b and w, 17 minutes. The extraordinary stone sculptures of the medieval cathedral of Naumburg in Saxony are studied in this fascinating art film. As background music the organist Fritz Heitman plays Johann Sebastian Bach's "Tocatta and Fugue in C" (Peters; III #8). The commentary is in German. Produced by Deutsch Universal; directed by Rudolph Bamberger and Curt Oertel.

AFTERTHOUGHTS
Sigmund Spaeth

The artistic and commercial success of AN AMERICAN IN PARIS proves once more that there is a vast audience for good musical pictures. The combination of George Gershwin's music, Gene Kelly's dancing, Leslie Caron's novel personality, Georges Guetary's singing and Oscar Levant's wisecracks, with generally excellent direction and better-than-usual Technicolor, makes for complete satisfaction on the part of the connoisseur as well as the average movie fan. M. G. M. can safely continue to climb the screen's musical heights.

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Outside of the obvious clamaxes of megalomania, music is also the most successful feature of the literally colossal QUO VADIS. Miklos Rozsa has done an impressive job of suggesting what might have been the actual music of ancient Rome, including even the instrumental tone color. This is all the more creditable in view of the complete lack of any authentic background materials. The composer's research arrived gradually at the probable effects of melody, harmony, rhythm and timbre available at the time of Nero, correctly substituting a lyre for the traditional "fiddle" and letting the Christians sing in what might well have been a pre-Gregorian style. Such art seems almost out of place in a picture so frankly dedicated to mere size.

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It was inevitable that motion pictures should in time enlist the co-operation of television and vice-versa. In TWO TICKETS TO BROADWAY the TV mania not only provides a basis for what might be called a plot but also supplies most of the details of technique. Vaudeville's worst features are all there, including even the acrobats, exactly as on the home television screen. Typical also is the assignment of Tonic's classic Prologue to Pagliacci to the popular Tony Martin, dressed in the wrong costume (Canio's) and with up-to-date distortions in the Tin Pan Alley style. A saving grace is the Rodgers-Hart Manhattan, which enjoys an almost legitimate production.

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In that fine film, A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, which has made a Hollywood record by using practically all of the talents that contributed to its stage success, Alex North has actually had a chance to improve on the music that he wrote for the original production. It still falls far short of the clear demands of Tennessee Williams' explicit stage directions in the published play, but at least it suggests something of the jazz undercurrent of New Orleans life. Both stage and screen could have done more to point up the action musically, but the drama is so inherently powerful that one hardly notices the presence or absence of music of any kind.

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An Austrian version of Beethoven's life called EROICA, with English titles interpreting the German dialogue, must be considered the best attempt thus far to put the enigmatic character of that musical giant on the screen. It is in effect a triple tragedy, concentrating on Beethoven's disappointment in his hero, Napoleon, his frustrated love for the Countess Guicciardi (sometimes identified as his "immortal beloved") and finally his deafness. Ewald Balsler frequently succeeds in looking like Beethoven, and the music speaks for itself, even though the recording is often less than satisfactory.