FILM MUSIC

PICNIC

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1956 VOLUME XV NUMBER 3

FILM MUSIC

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(score excerpts)

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FILM AND TV MUSIC NEWS

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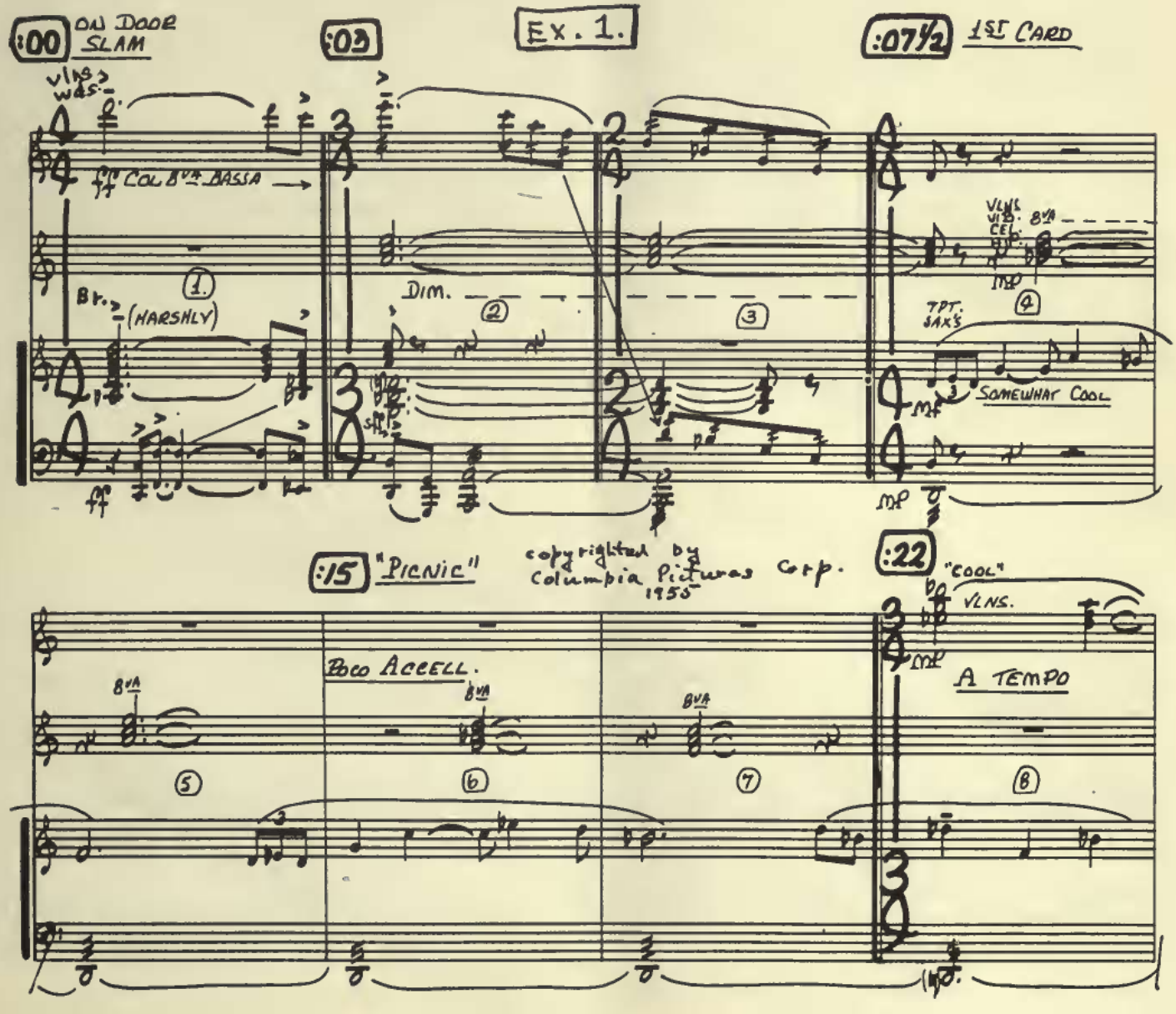
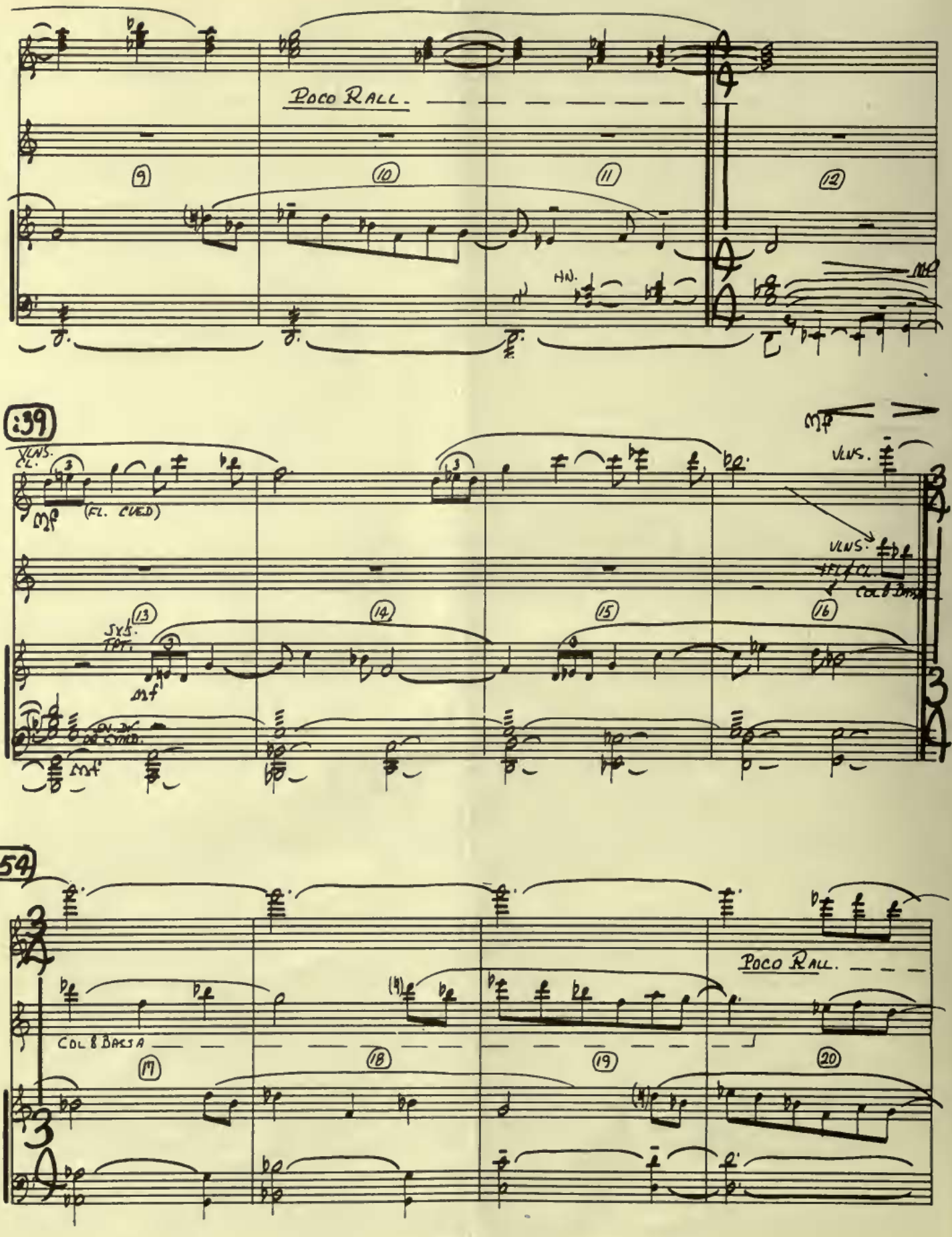
PICNIC

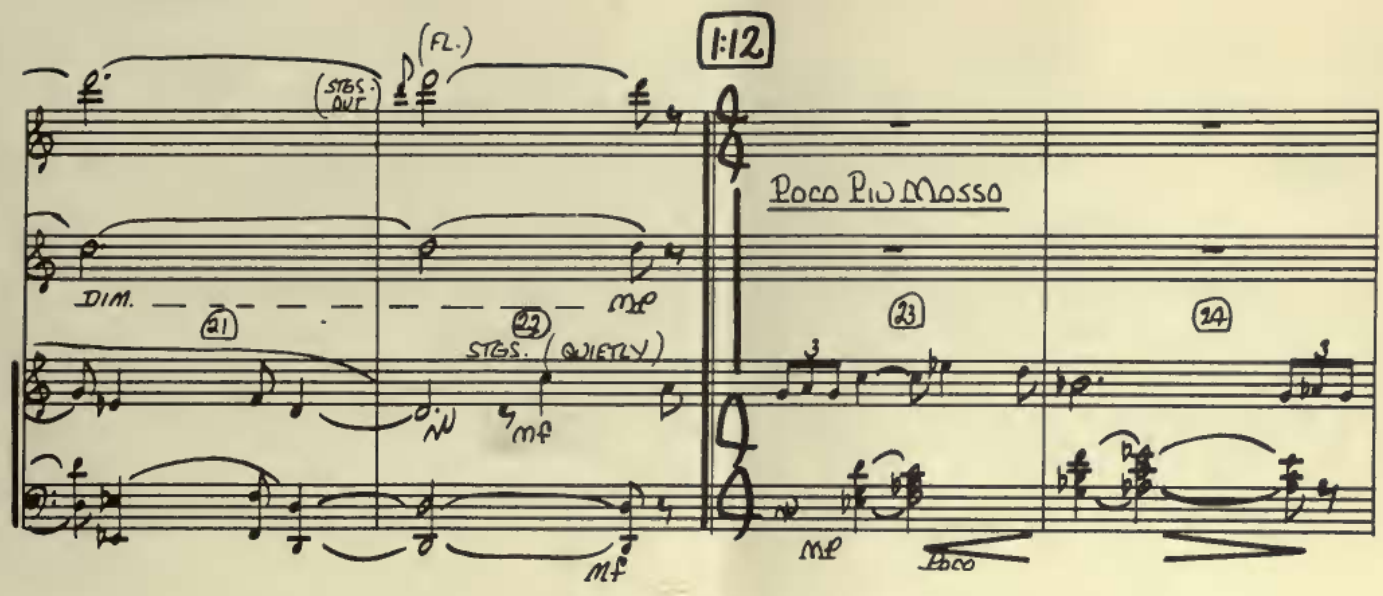
George Duning

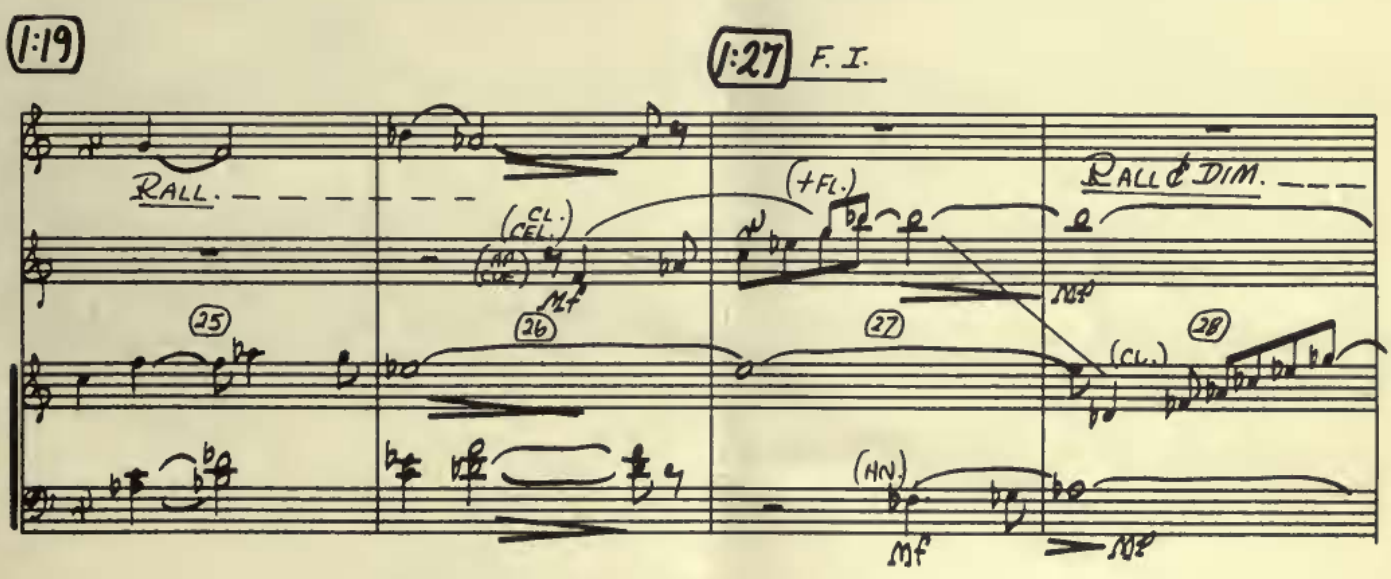
Composing the background score to PICNIC was a challenging and grateful experience. First of all, having come from the middle West, I believed the story and characters. Under the sensitive direction of Joshua Logan, the principals really come to life.

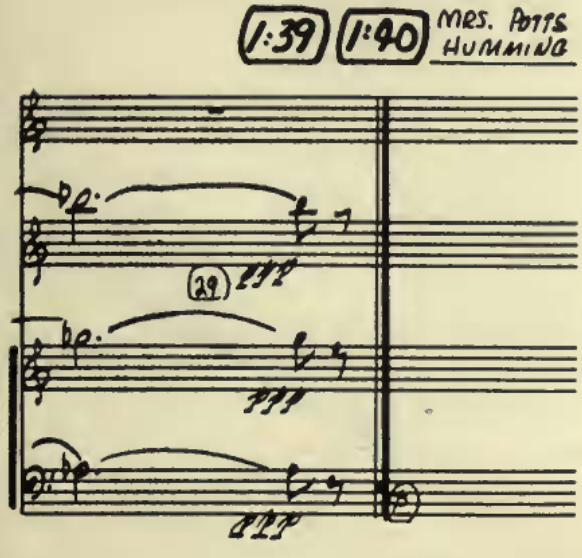
For Hal Carter, the restless and wayward ex-college football hero, I used a somewhat tense and irregular theme, with a touch of the blues (Example 1, bars 8, 9, & 10) first heard over the Main Title cards, in a unison of trumpet, alto and tenor sax. At bar 13 (Example 1), Hal's theme is repeated in the violins and woods with the trumpet and saxes imitating in common form a half bar later. Contrary to usual practice, the Main Title starts without music — just the sound effects of a diesel engine freight train arriving in the railroad yards of a small Kansas wheat town. Hal gets out of a freight car, and after a facetious remark from the train man he violently slams the freight-car door shut. At this point the opening music is heard, a harsh fragmentary motif (Example 1, bars 1 and 2). Near the end of this opening cue a motif of ascending thirds is heard (Example 1, bars 27 to the end). This motif is the basis of the love theme (Example 2, bars 3 to 5).




Poco Rall.
9
10
11
12
HN.
:39
Vlns.
Cl.
(Fl. cued)
mp
Vlns.
Vlns.
13
14
15
16
Sxs.
Tpt.
mf
mf
:54
Col B Bass A
17
18
19
20
Poco Rall.







An interesting unbalanced orchestral effect will be found in **Example** 2, bars 10 to 14. In several scenes the mother, Flo, makes bitter references to her ex-husband, and in other scenes feels the similarity between Hal and her ex-husband. The four-bar passage in **Example** 2, bars 10 to 14 is the musical reference to the ex-husband and was set in two flutes and two horns with piano and vibraphone accents. Arthur Morton, my orchestrator, and I debated re-enforcing the two flutes and tried adding two clarinets on the recording stage, but this seemed to destroy the somewhat tense and cold effect of two flutes and two horns alone.

:00 :02 "HI" :03½ "HI" :07 :10½ DIAL. :11

Ex. 2

8va

Poco Ten.

+PNO. 8va

(CL.) mf

(FL.)

mf

mp

:18½

RIT.

:24 FLO REMTS :26 :29

mp

+PNO.

FLS.

mf SUDDENLY DARK

HN.

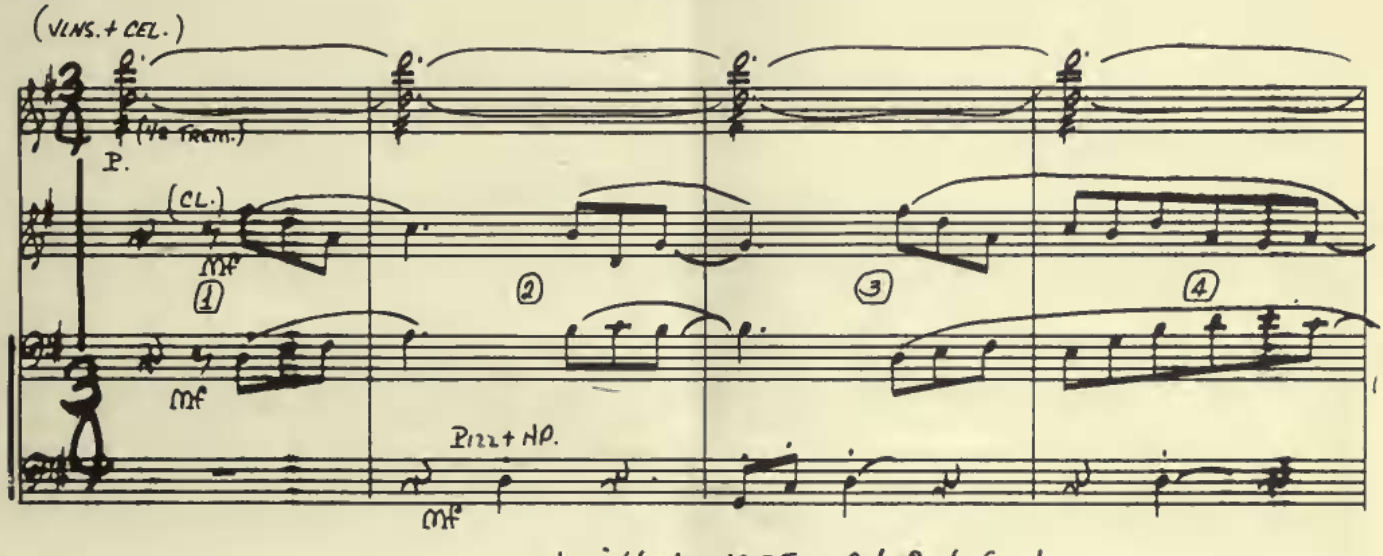
RALL.

mf mp

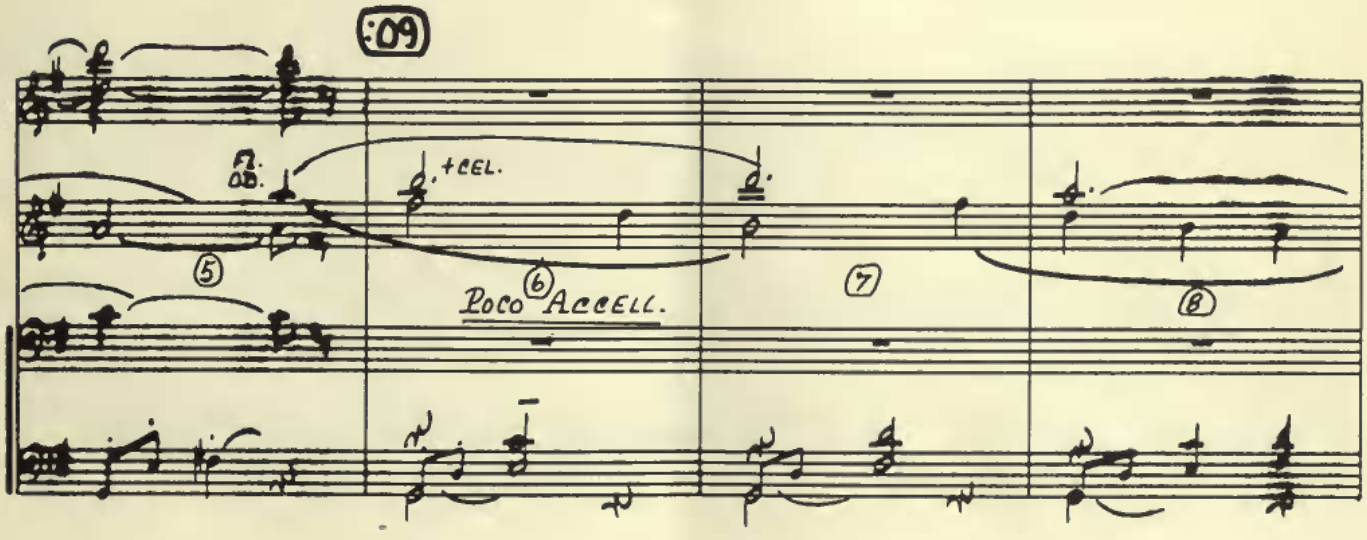
For the Owens family, consisting of the older daughter, Madge, (Kim Novak), the younger sister (Susan Strasberg) and the anxious and somewhat bitter mother, Flo, (Betty Fields), there is a sort of village theme, usually heard in woodwind colors (Example 3). The mother is chiefly concerned with having Madge "marry the right man." In some of the dialogue sequences between Madge and her mother, there is a waltz-like tune heard in the strings, with a simple harp accompaniment (Example 4, bars 7 to 15). Notice the use of the inversion of the ascending thirds from the love theme (Example 4, bars 12 to 14). Example 5, bars 50 to 58, is a distorted tense version of the mother theme.

:00 L.S. MILLIE

Ex. 3



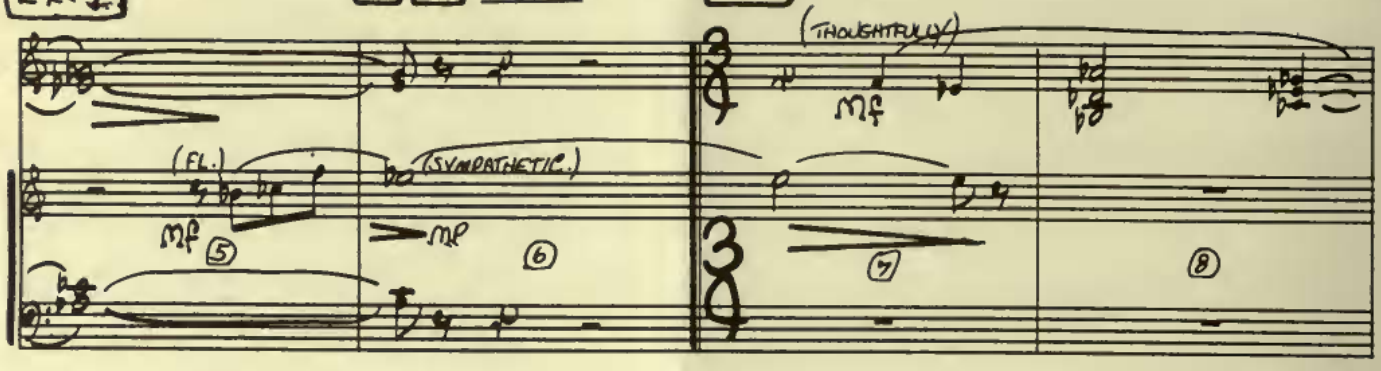
:09



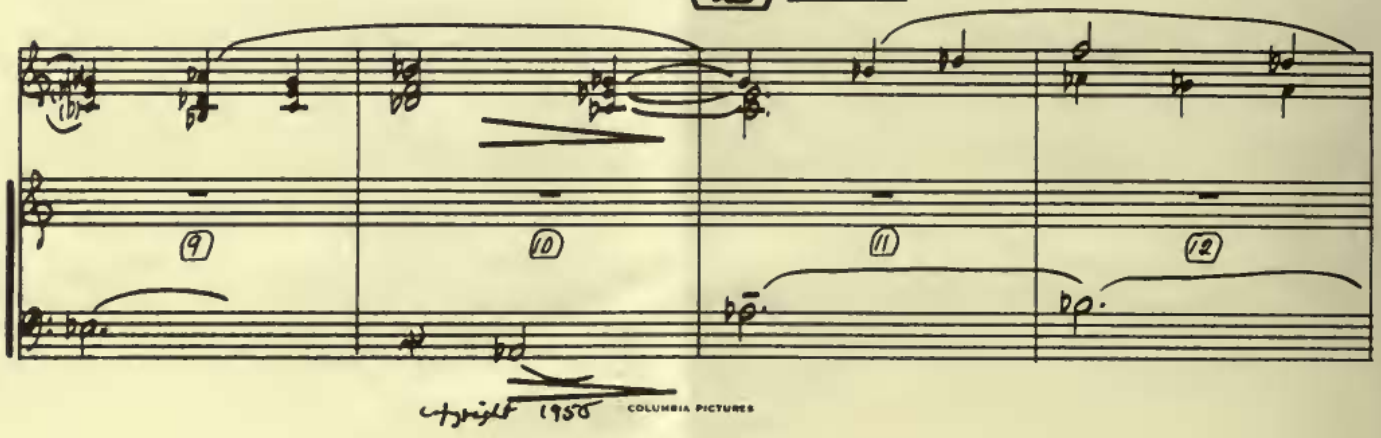
Ex. 4.

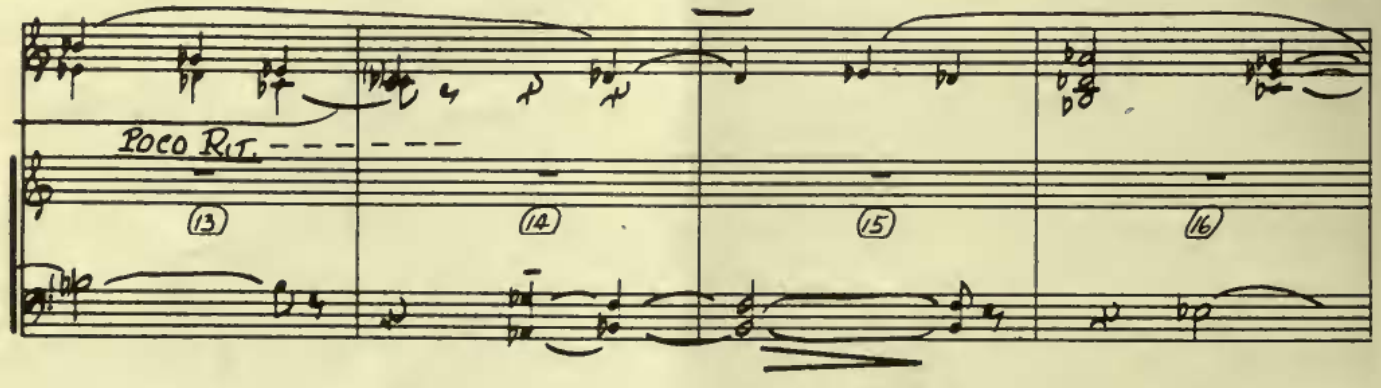
:15 :16 "A GIRL"

:18½

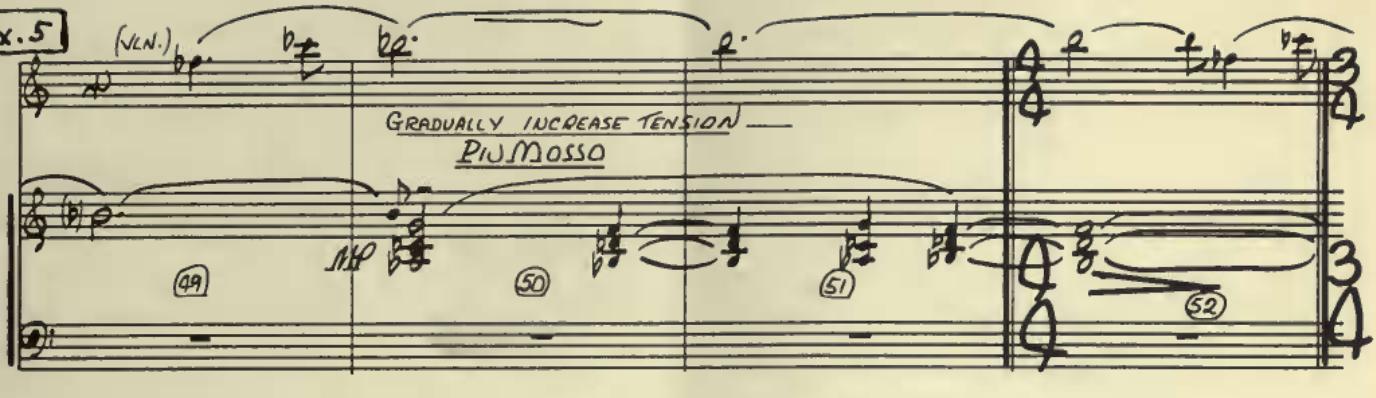


:28 "MADGE"



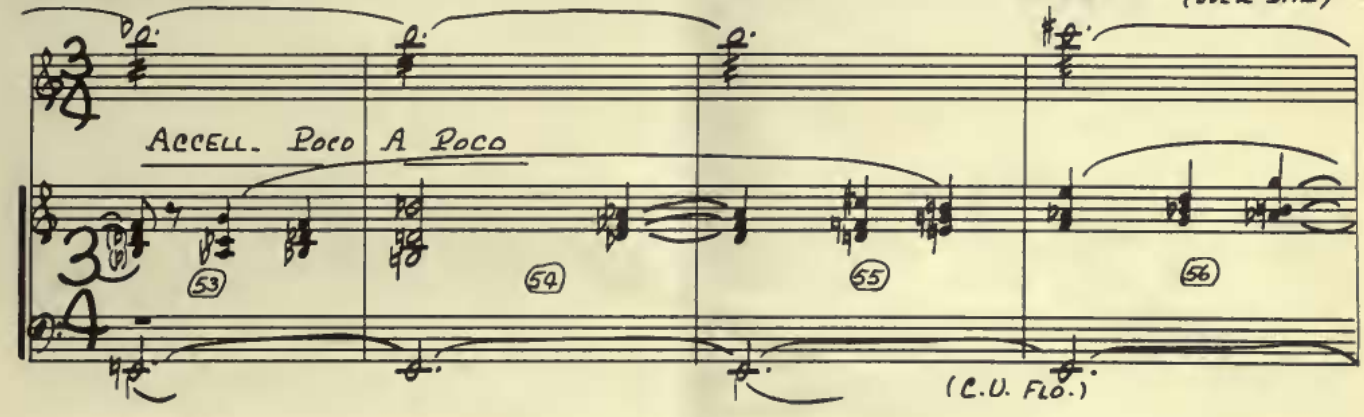


Ex. 5



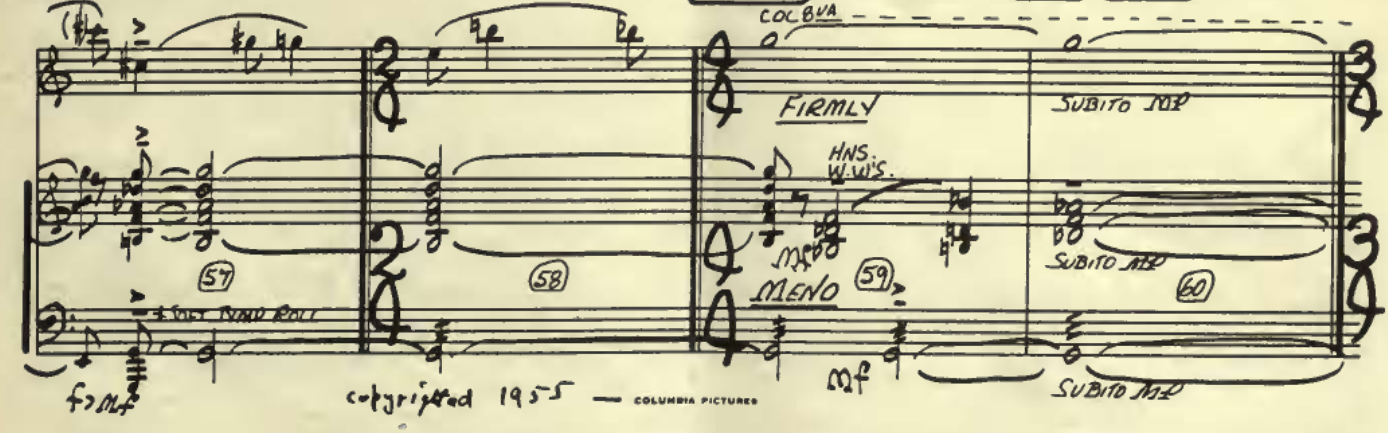
2:14½ "YOU DON'T"

2:20½ MADGE REACTS (OVER DIAL)

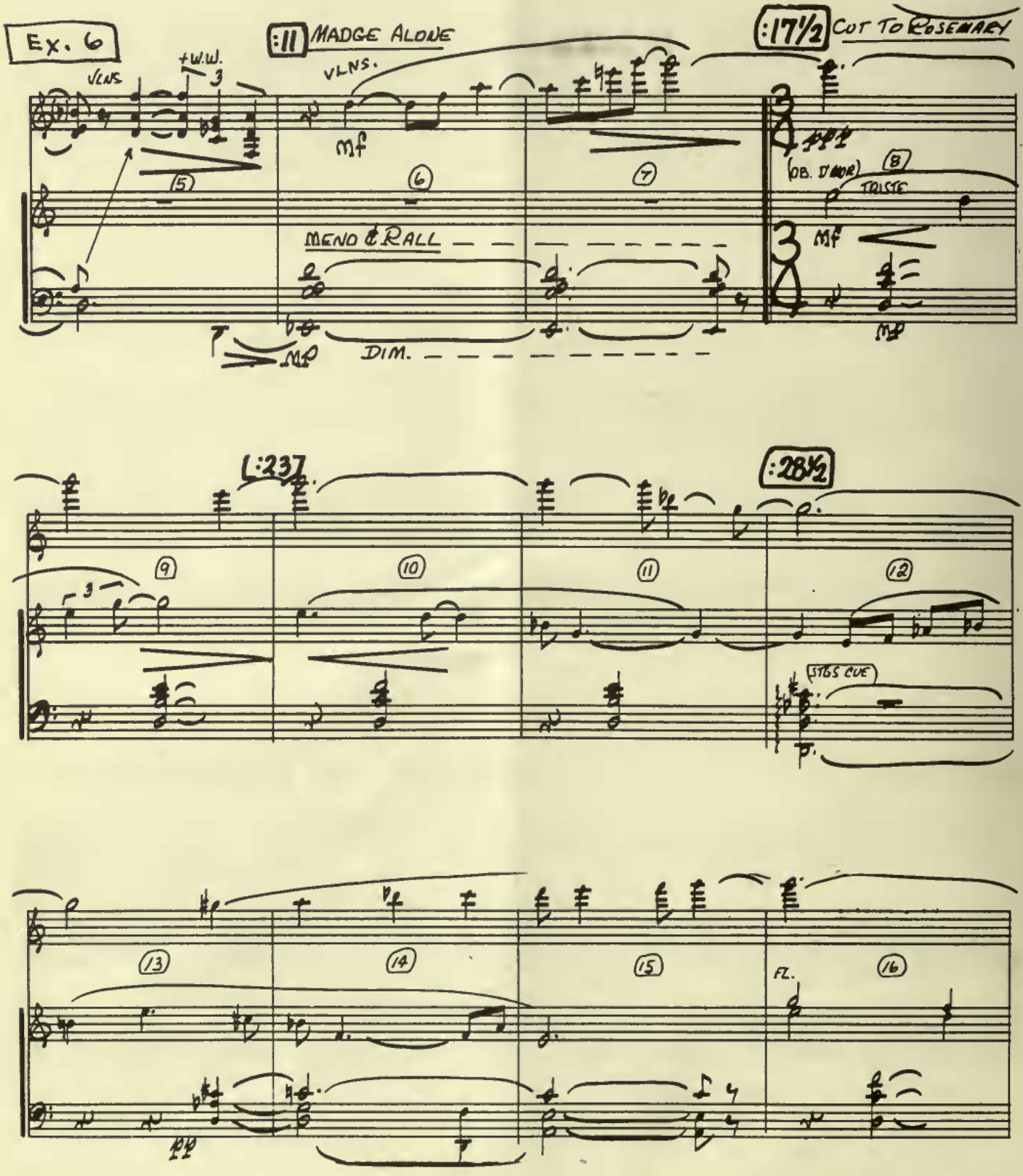


2:22½ "WHAT?"

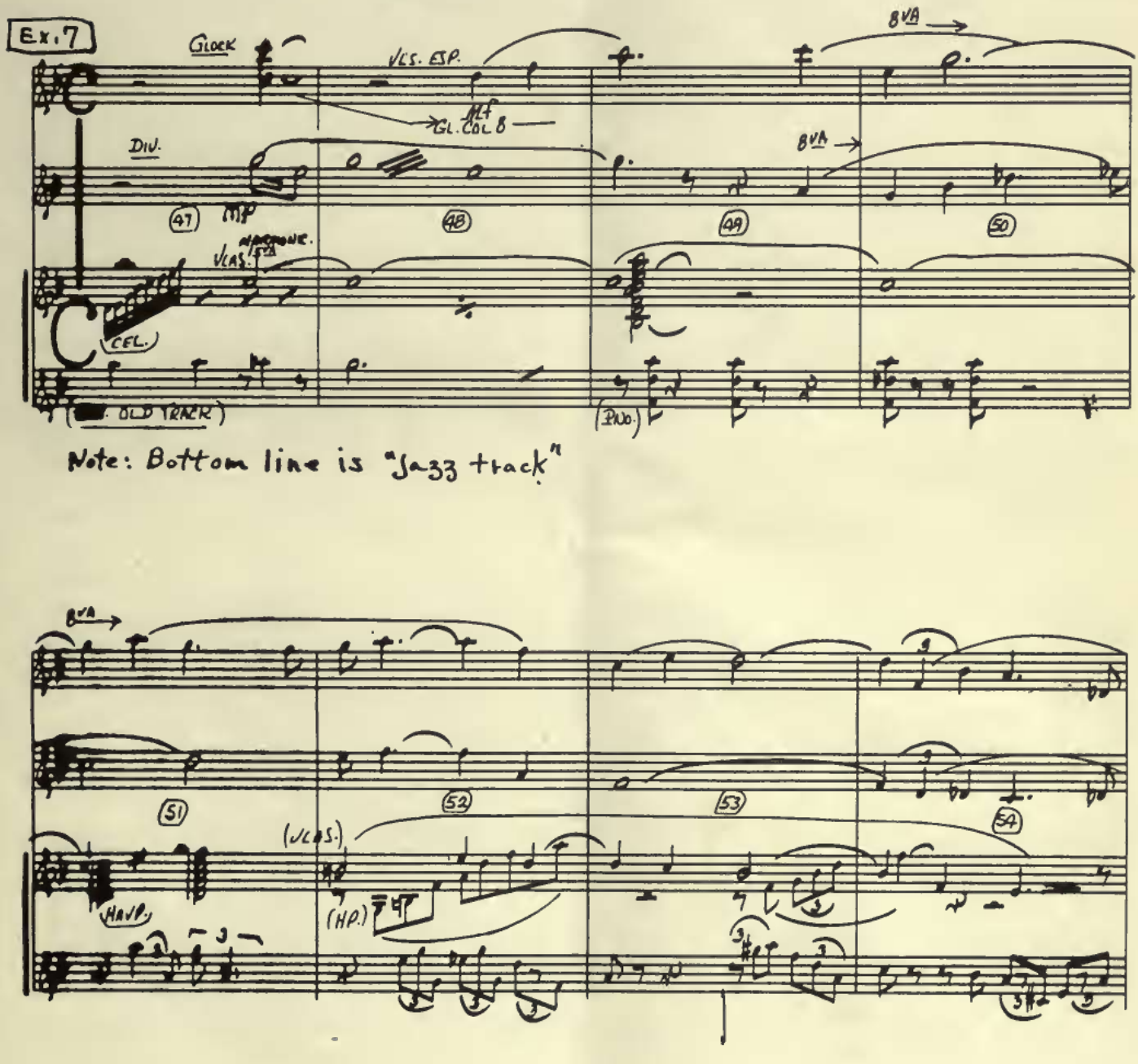
2:25½ "NOTHING" 2:28 2:28½ DIAL.

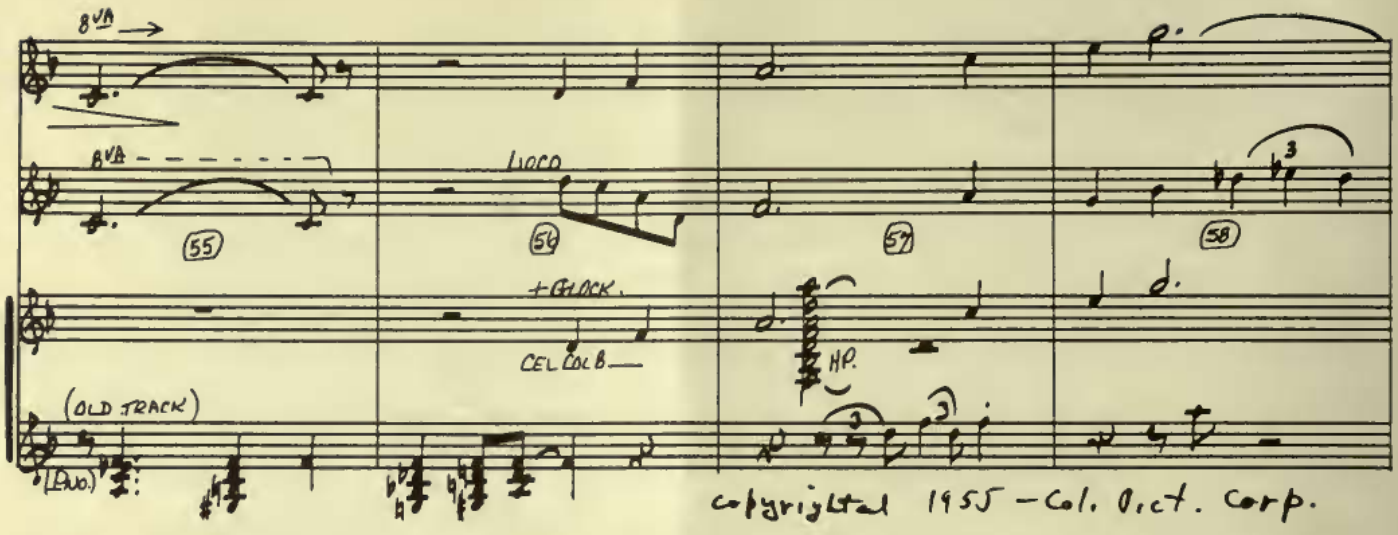


Boarding with the Owens family is a lovely frustrated school teacher, Rosemary (Rosalind Russell). In spite of her brash, devil-may-care personality, her main desire in life is to get married to a local bachelor, Howard, (Arthur O'Connell). Here the theme is lovely and plaintive, usually heard on the oboe d'amore (Example 6, bars 8 to 15). Most of the source music in the wonderful picnic sequence was picked up on location in Kansas. The brass band, quartets and soloists were all local talent.

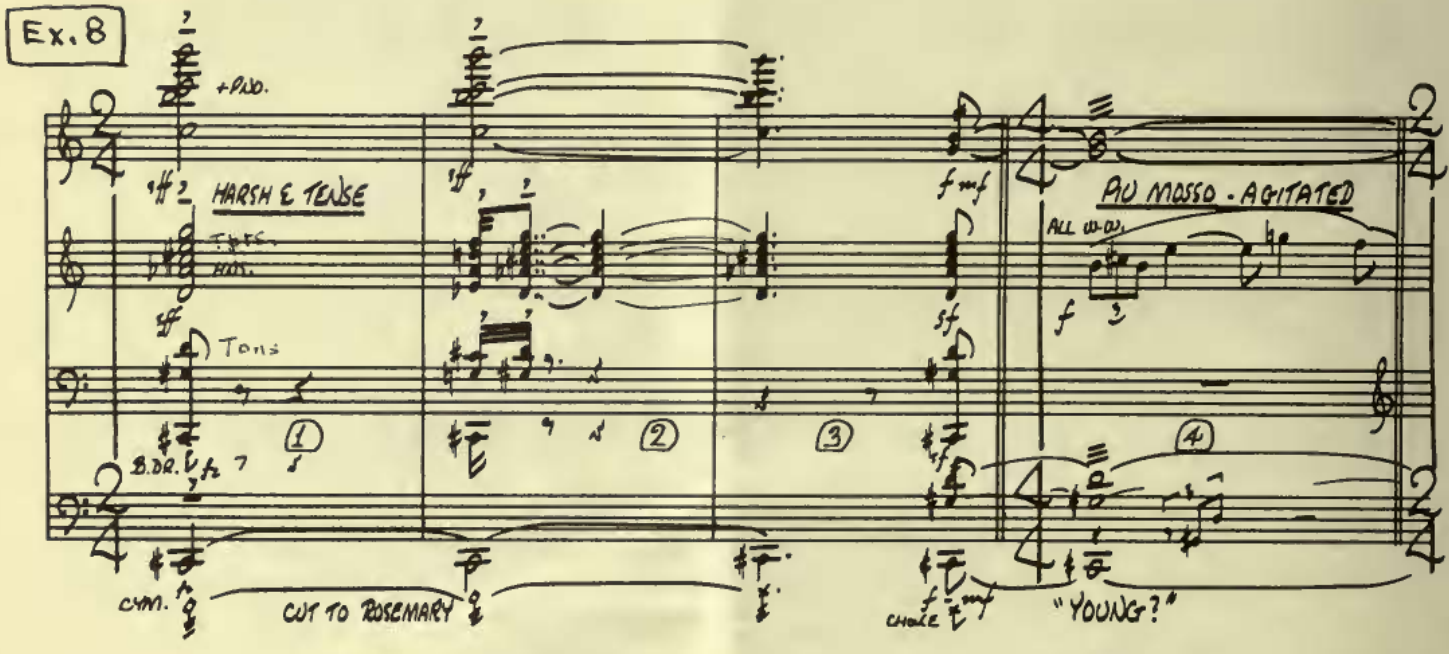


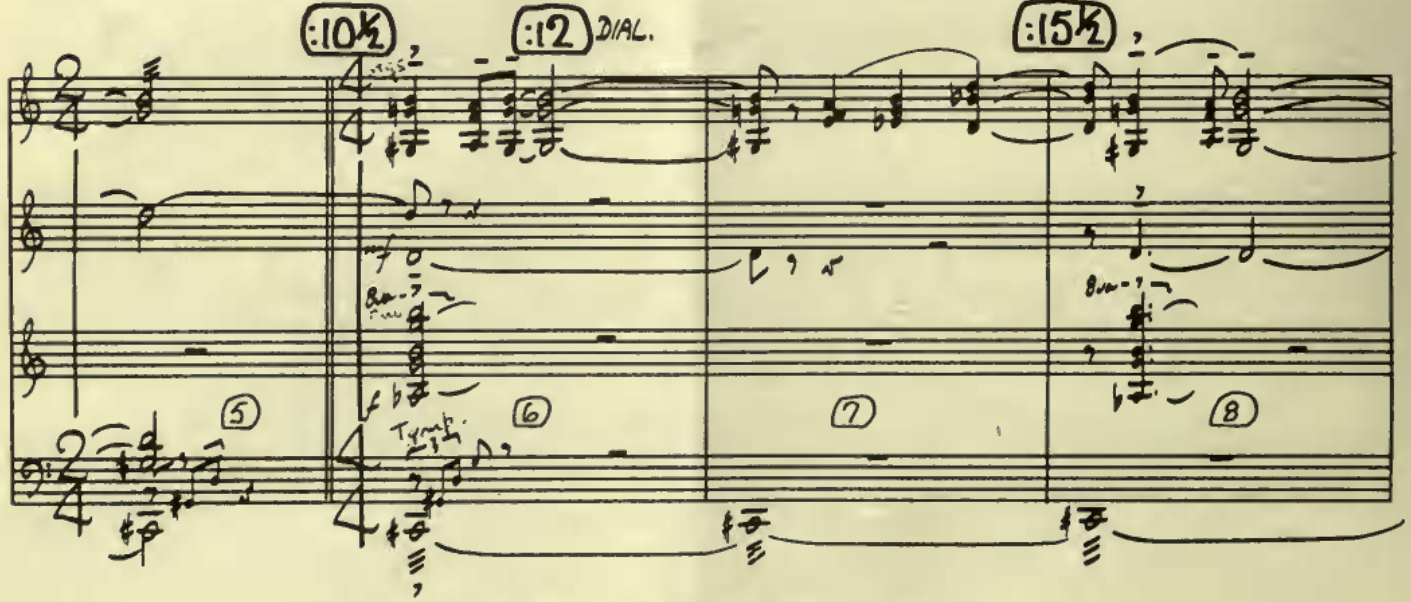
An interesting cue at the picnic is the scene where Hal and Madge are dancing to a rhythm group. They are oblivious of their surroundings and at a certain point they move closer together and we can feel the inevitable attraction between boy and girl. At this point I was able to superimpose a three-part string treatment of the love theme playing against the rhythm group (Example 7, bars 47 to 58). This scoring was recorded separately against the rhythm track and then "reverbed".



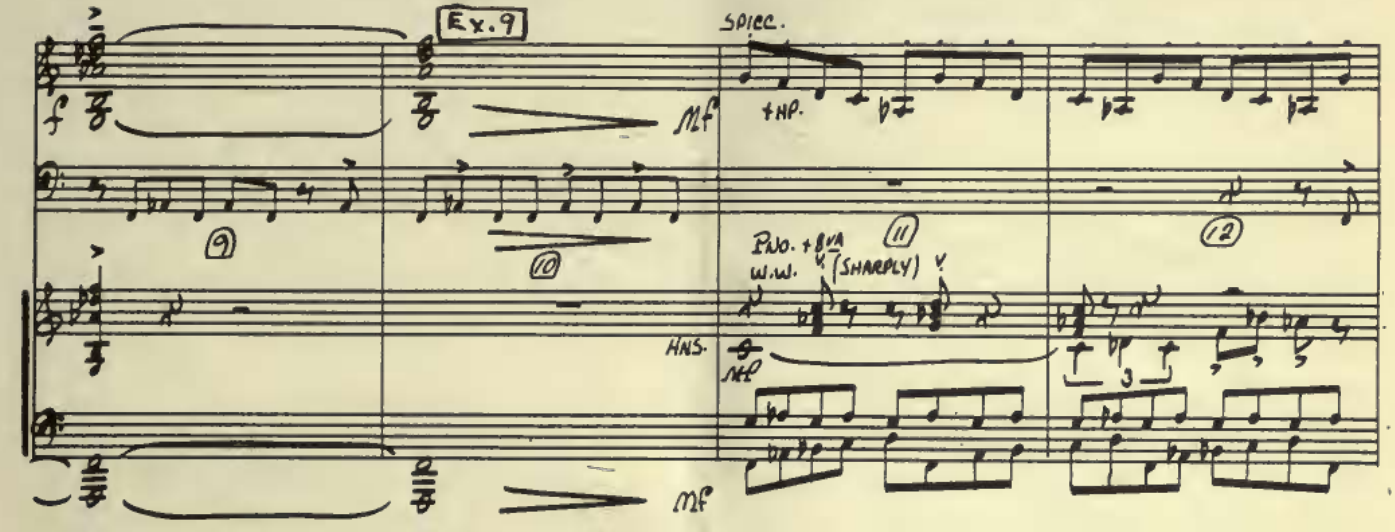


Ex. 8

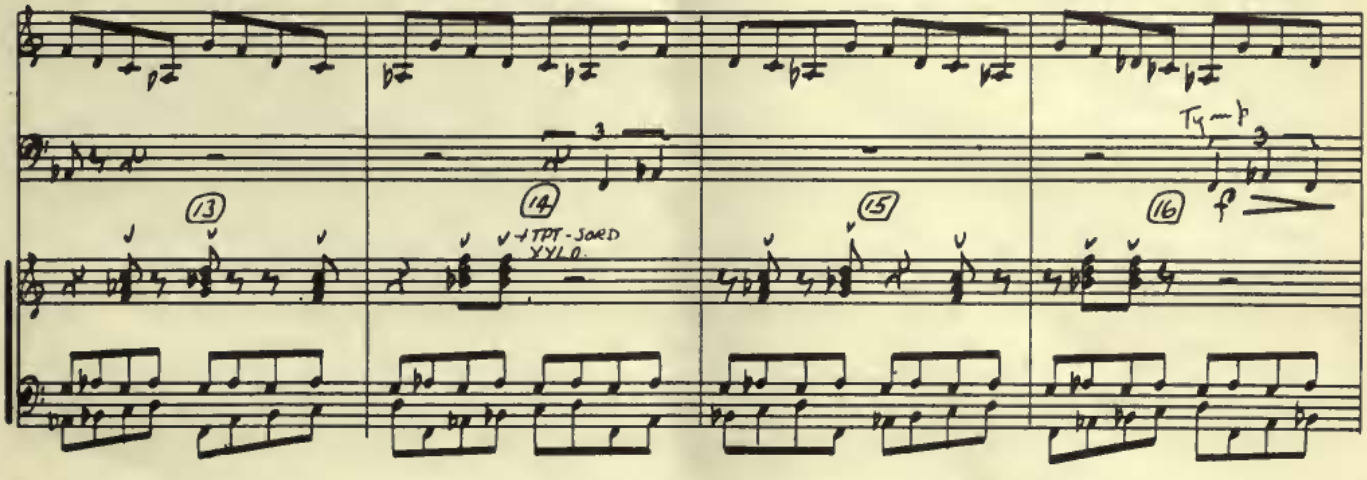




Following this scene where Rosemary (the teacher) is dancing with Hal, she suddenly rips the sleeve of his shirt, at which point the underscoring crashes in with a shocking chord, wiping out the source music (dance band). (Example 8, bars 1 to 8). The effect is one of suddenly shocking the audience out of the reality of the picnic sequence and pointing up the frustrations and inner turmoil that has grown within the principal characters.



:18

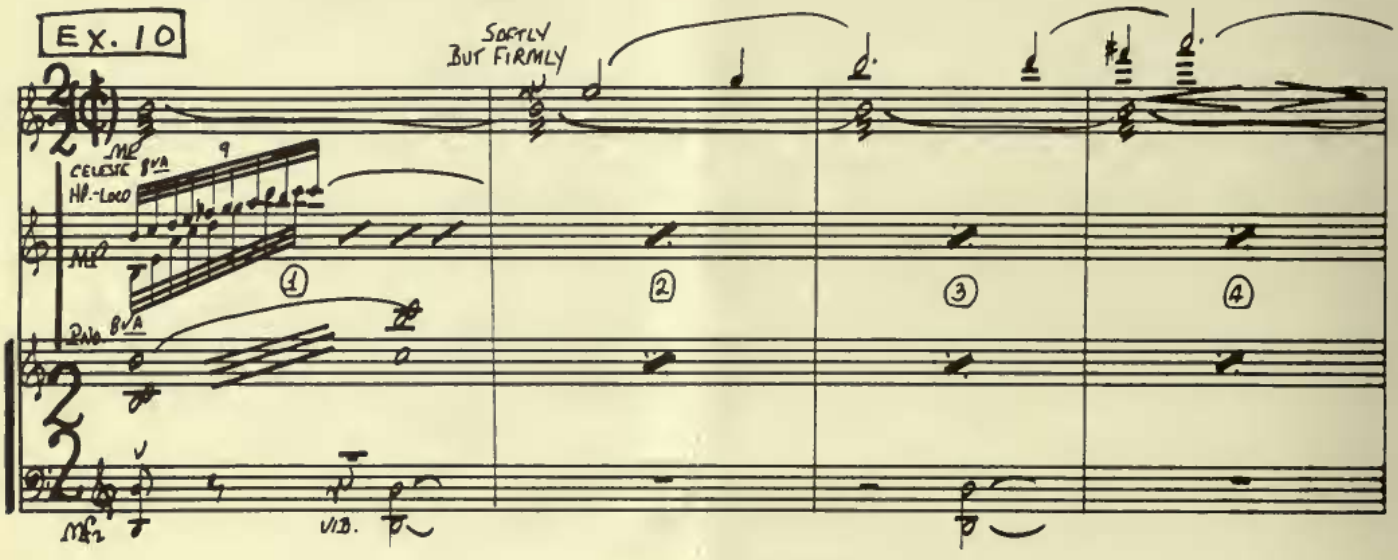


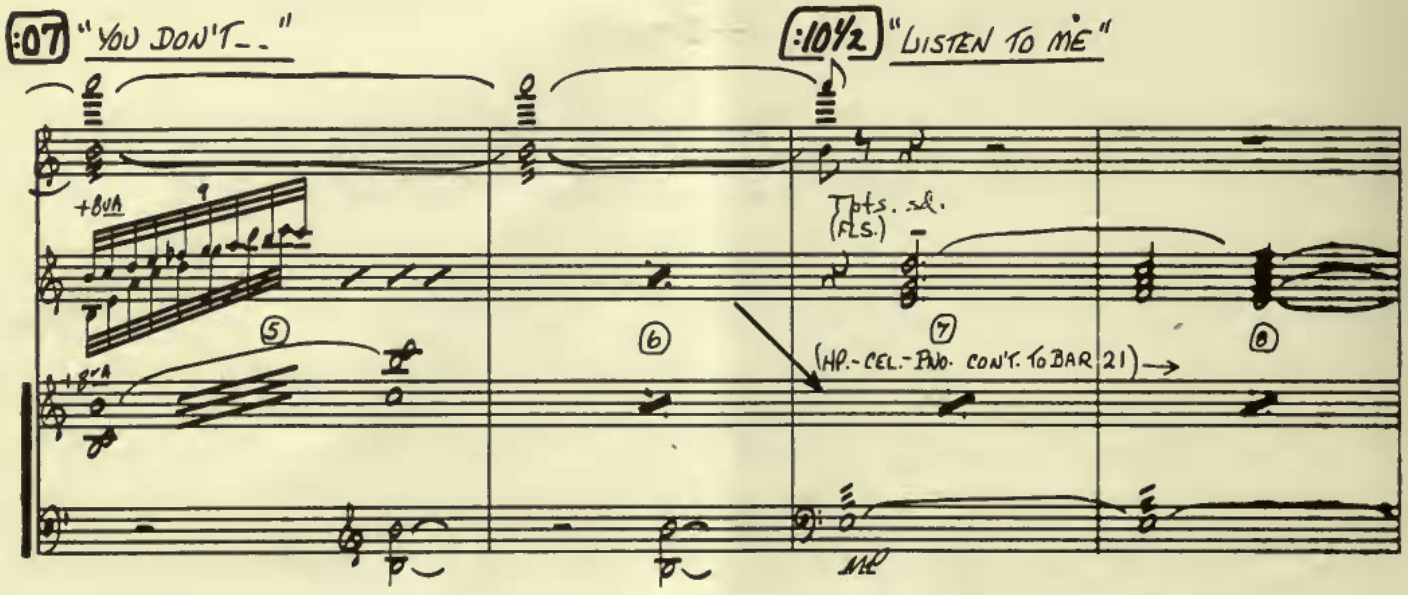
In reel 12, Hal is fleeing to the freight yards, pursued by the police. Example 9, bars 11 to 16, are from this cue. The horns state Hal's theme (Example 9, bars 11 and 12) over a jazzed accompaniment of woods, piano and trumpets and an eighth-note patter in the strings and harp which set up the basic tonality.

In the last reel, Madge has decided to follow Hal and her mother pleads with her to stay and marry the "nice, rich boy." The agitation and tension were set up in a long harp, piano and celeste mixture (Example 10, bar 1). The ascending thirds of the love theme are heard in the violins. The mother motif enters in flute and trumpet (Example 10, bar 7). At the point where Madge tears her hands loose from her mother, a sharp accent occurs, followed by complete silence (Example 11). This was what Joshua Logan called "The cutting of the umbilical cord"! ! (Example 11, bar 46).

At the end of the picture there is a high helicopter shot showing the bus carrying Madge and the freight train on which Hal has "hitched a ride." Here both Hal's theme and the boy-girl theme are heard simultaneously (Example 12, bars 82 to end).

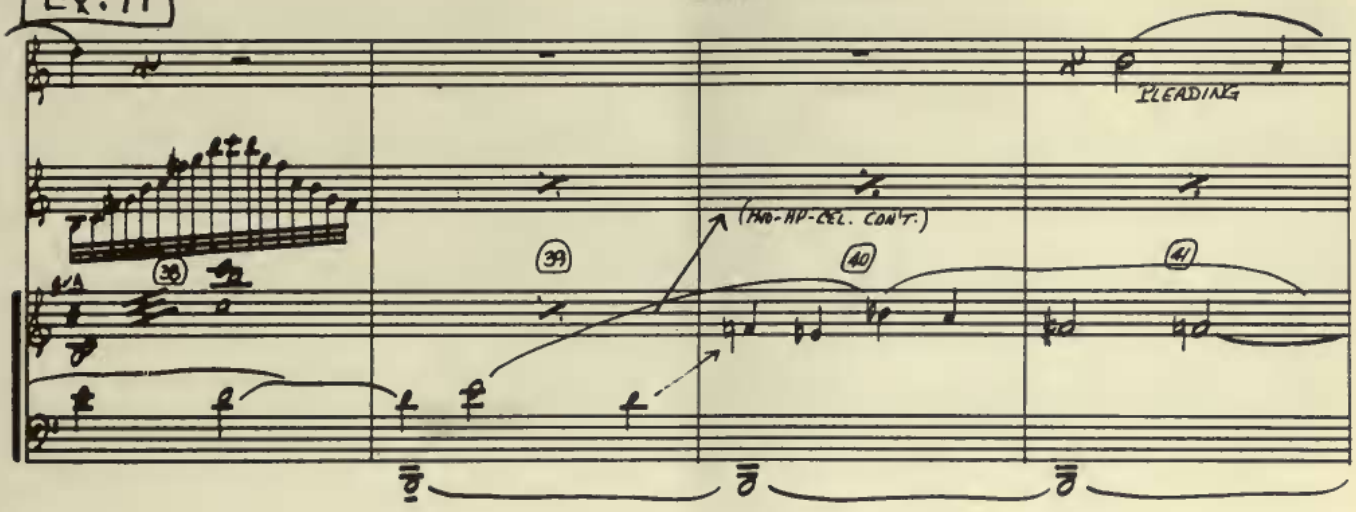
EX. 10



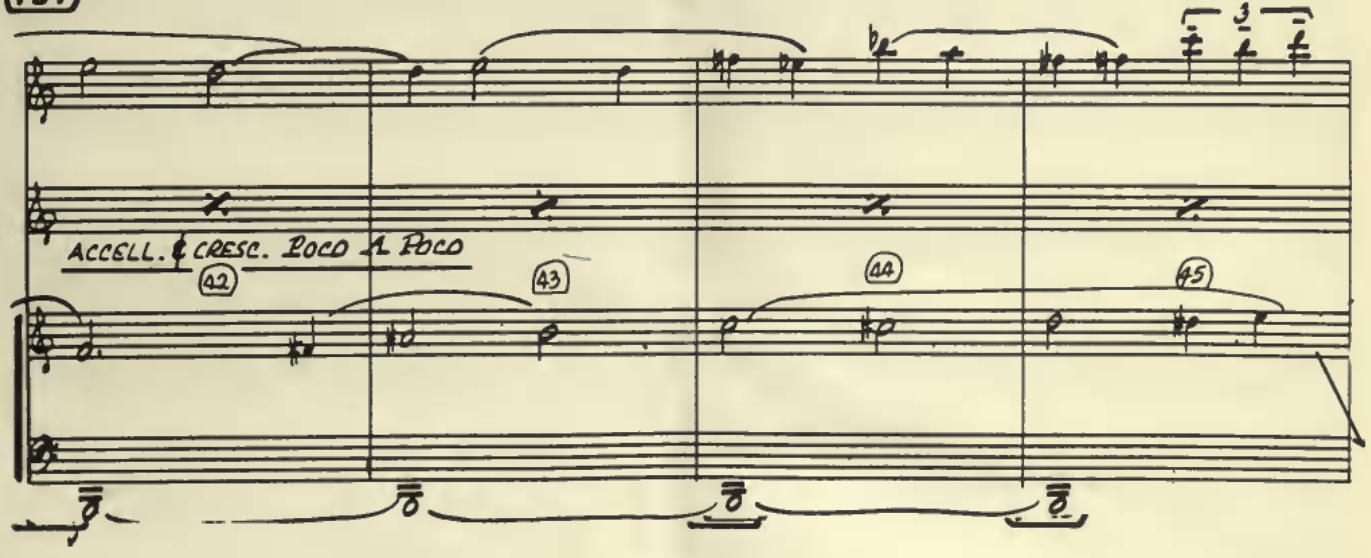


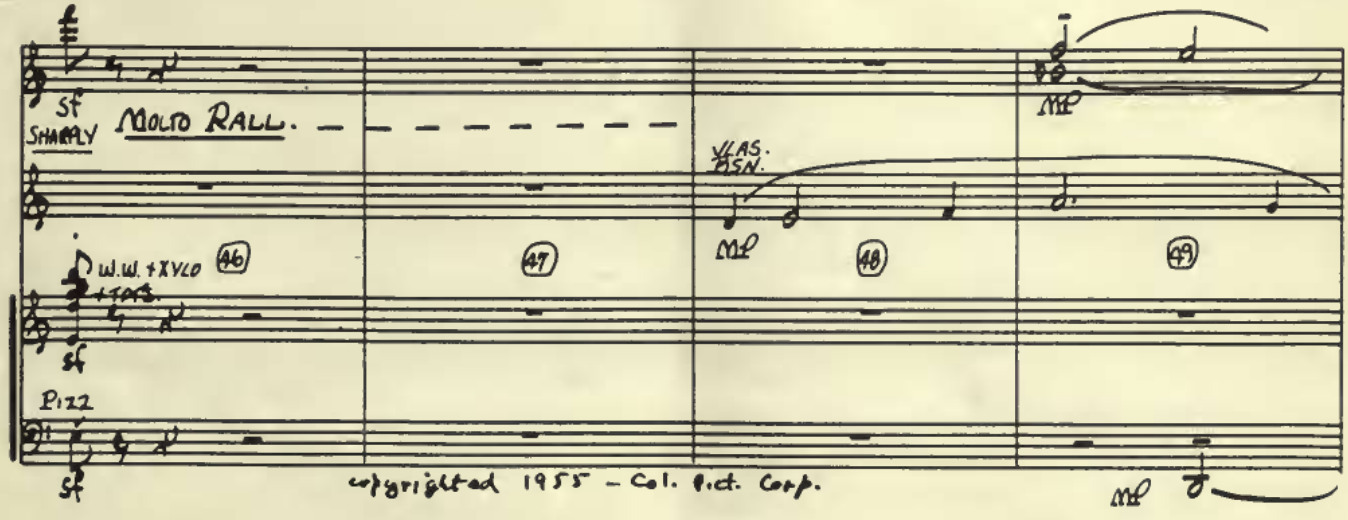
Ex. 11

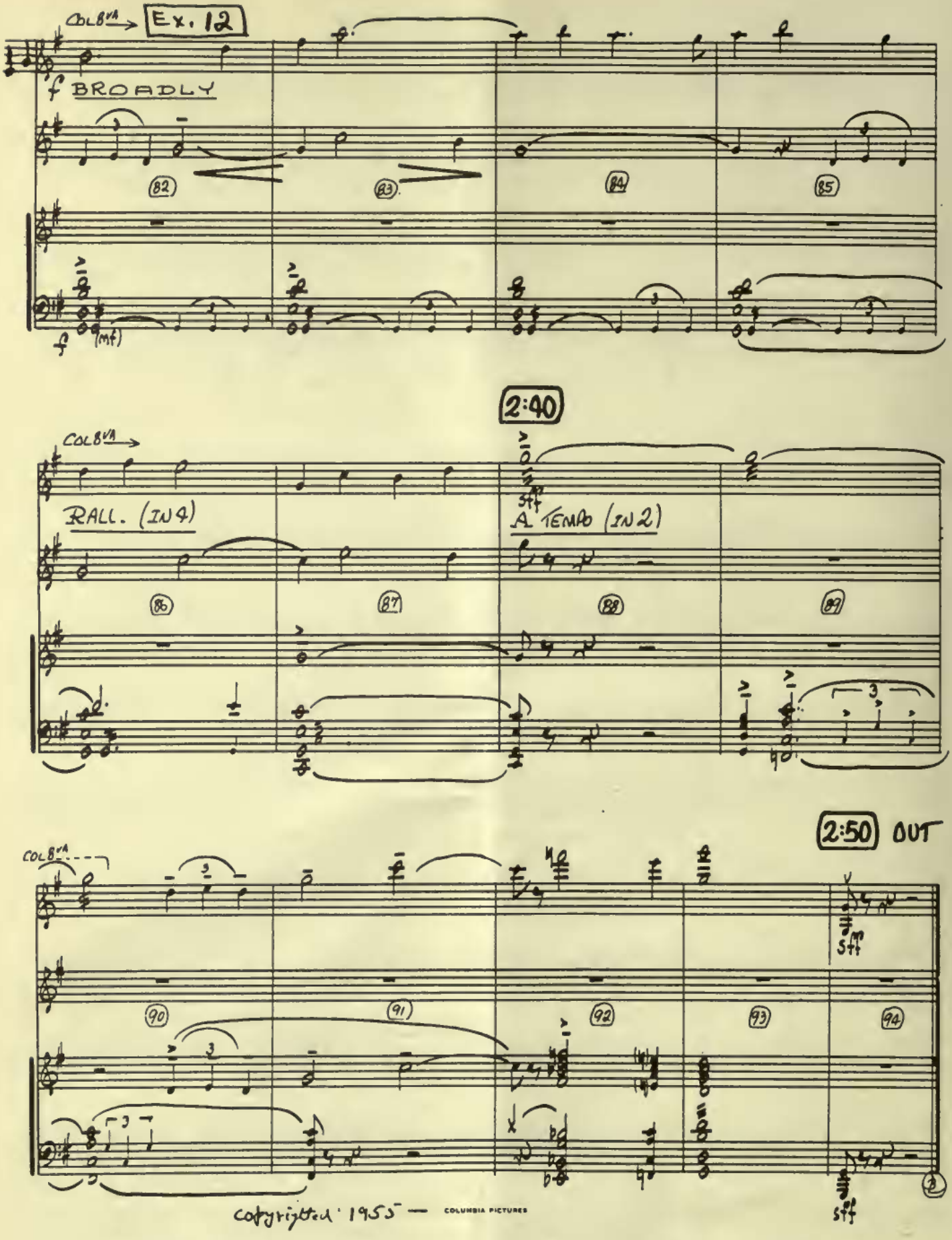
1:06 "OH MADGE"



1:09







PICNIC . . . Columbia. William Holden, Kim Novak. Director, Joshua Logan. Music, George Duning. Orchestrator, Arthur Morton. Music conducted by Morris Stoloff. Music copyrighted 1955 by Columbia Pictures Corp. Technicolor.

THE MUSIC OF WAGNER IN "MAGIC FIRE"

Erich Wolfgang Korngold

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (right) coaches Alan Badel as Richard Wagner.

When I accepted William Dieterle's invitation to supervise the musical shaping of his Richard Wagner film MAGIC FIRE, I did it with the understanding that it would be my artistic intention to use Wagner's music in its original form, without adding a single bar to satisfy the demands of the "background music" or changing the orchestration of the opera excerpts actually performed.

Furthermore, a fortunate idea came to my mind: to utilize as background music for every episode in Wagner's life only the music of that opera which he was composing at that particular time, each "scoring music" thus culminating in either a rehearsal, a visualization or a stage performance of an excerpt of the completed music drama. I tried also to give Wagner's "Leitmotives" a parallel or at least similar significance to the happenings in his life: when Wagner is banned from Germany, we hear Telramund's sinister music from "Lohengrin", the contemplated Richard Wagner Theatre in Munich gets Wotan's "Walhall" motiv and it is only appropriate that Wagner is married to the famous strains of his own Wedding March.

I did all the piano playing for Wagner, Liszt and Hans von Buelow myself and even appear in person on the screen as the renowned conductor Hans Richter conducting the world permiere of the "Ring of the Nibelungen" in Bayreuth.

Fortunately, I had at my disposal as my musical collaborators not only the magnificent orchestra and chorus, but also some wonderful soloists of the Munich Prinz-Regenten Theatre: Leonie Rizanek, Annelies Kupper, Hans Hopf and Otto Edelmann (almost all of them known in this country). Our conductor was Germany's number one film composer-conductor: the admirable Alois Melichar.

I needn't explain or apologize for the obvious: namely, that there was much music to be cut — the fifteen hours of the "Ring" are flashed on the screen in less than three minutes! —that I had to insist on livelier tempi throughout than the strict Wagnerian may be used to and that I was forced to transpose some passages into different keys in order to avoid adding "bridges" or modulations. Even today, however, after the "final cut", in which I had to sacrifice a good portion of the originally recorded music, I still have a clear conscience regarding my initial purpose of using Wagner's music in its original and undistorted form.

MAGIC FIRE . . . Republic. Alan Badel, Yvonne De Carlo, Rita Gam, Valentina Cortese. Produced and directed by William Dieterle. Music, Richard Wagner. Musical supervisor, Erich Wolfgang Korngold. Conductor, Alois Melichar. Orchestra, choir from the Bavarian State Opera. Trucolor.

DON JUAN

David S. Rattner

Billed as an "opera film in color," Mozart's "Don Giovanni" emerges, in this Austrian production, as an exciting motion picture. H. W. Kolm-Veltee, the director who also had a hand in the screen adaptation, has managed to avoid, in a most pleasantly surprising degree, the usual static posturings of grand opera. The characters move during the arias and the camera wanders in a skillful atmospheric support of the mood of the music. The settings are authentically Sevillanos, the costumes most appealingly 18th century Spanish and both are served up in Agfacolor that borrows more than a little from the charming hues of the Goya and Velazquez palettes. There is much dancing in the picture, not only in the scene of Don Giovanni's party, where dancing is traditional, but also in the opening scene during Leporello's aria and in the scenes having to do with the wedding of Zerlina and Masetto. In the choreography by Dia Luca, as performed by the Corps de Ballet of the Vienna State Opera, this dancing is rhythmically literal in its respect for Mozart's music. Yet it is so imaginative in movement, groupings and costuming that it creates a truly Spanish flavor and lends added zest and piquancy to this Mozartean masterpiece.

The story is told completely and faithfully according to the original libretto. In the interest of cinema realism, however, the statue of the Commendatore is never seen. Instead, weird lighting, the terror on Leporello's face,

the defiance of the Don and Mozart's magnificently dramatic music make its presence felt far more intensely than it is usually projected from a stage. The storming of the door of the room into which the Don leads Zerlina results in a blood and thunder chase through the wine cellars of the Don's palace and the streets of Seville worthy of any Hollywood thriller. The inventiveness of director and photographer fail only in the treatment of Donna Elvira's big aria. Here she is photographed musing on the Don's treachery. Her voice is heard simply as a projection of her inner thoughts, but she mouths no words and smiles only an enigmatic, Mona Lisa-ish smile throughout this long and taxing song. By the end of it, she looks pretty silly.

The film makes use of separate singing and acting casts, and the dubbing in of the sound is very well done. For the most part, the actors even breathe like singers and succeed in conveying a feeling of effort, drama and excitement when they "sing" a long phrase or seem to hold a long note. Leporello, as sung by Harald Progelhof and acted by Josef Meinrad, is the outstanding characterization. His "Madamina" is sardonically sung and impudently acted. The Don is not as well sung nor as convincingly acted, until the later scenes when singer Poell and actor Danova do create a defiant sinner who is willing to die for the standard by which he lived rather than grovel before the supernatural in repentance. The film, like most modern stage productions, omits the self-righteous moralizing ensemble of principals which Mozart so anti-climactically tacked on the end of this opera. It ends most effectively with the death of the Don in flames which are ignited by his hurling a lighted candelabrum at the unseen apparition. Zerlina and Donna Anna are both sung by Annie Felbermayer. The former is acted by Evelyne Cormand, the latter by Marianne Schoenauer, while Donna Elvira is sung by Hanna Loeser and acted by Lotte Tobisch. Masetto, sung by Walter Berry and acted by Hans von Borsody, is rather less the country bumpkin than is usual on the stage. And Don Ottavio, sung by Hugo Meyer-Welfing and played by Jean Vinci, occasionally rises to the stature of an avenging hero when he duels with and chases the Don.

Cesare Danova (Don Juan) and Josef Meinrad (Leporello)

It is regrettable that the interesting and moving playing of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra under Professor Bernhard Baumgartner suffers a loss of fidelity in the sound track. The voices come through very much better. The score is sung in German and adequate but unobtrusive subtitles in English are provided by Boris Goldovsky. Musical purists will object to the cuts made in the music, but the fact is that an amazing amount of the score is included in the film with an easy and natural continuity and in an astonishingly apt visual realization. DON JUAN . . . Times Films. Cesare Danova, Alfred Poell, Josef Meinrad, Harald Progelhof. Director, H. W. Kolm-Veltee. Musical supervision, Professor Birkmeyer. Conductor, Bernhard Baumgartner, with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. Agfacolor.

THE BENNY GOODMAN STORY

Ernest C. Watson

THE BENNY GOODMAN STORY is a series of good swing arrangements played by Benny Goodman and orchestras featuring a host of other "name" instrumentalists. If you're a Benny Goodman fan you'd be well-advised to stick to your record collection and Hi-Fi equipment and save yourself the embarrassment of looking too closely into the intimate life of a contemporary. Not that I believe for a minute that B. G. took his clarinet up to the roof of the apartment building in which he lived and played the Blues to the moon whenever he was stuck. If life's little difficulties did move Benny to bay, instrumentally, at the moon he was more of a square than this reviewer ever suspected. If it is Hollywood's way of showing us Benny the thinker, you will appreciate the suggestion that you take your Goodman without THE STORY OF . . . But then you wouldn't see Steve Allen, and Steve does a good job in the role of Benny.

It is difficult to conceive of two cats as sharp as Steve and Benny tolerating a story that ends in the melodramatic tradition of the old silent movies. The hero, Benny, is saved in the nick of time (Carnage at Carnegie, or, Flopping at the Philharmonic) by the arrival of the U. S. Marines (Benny's fiancee). This causes Benny to trill like a bird on his clarinet (excellent music for animated cartoons) and break into a last rendition of another tried and true gimmick — "Our Song." The arrival of the future Mrs. G. is nothing new in this picture. Whenever Benny plays a new dancehall on his barnstorming tour, the ubiquitous Alice just happens to be visiting a handy relative in town and manages to appear before the band packs up.

Steve Allen is excellent, Benny Goodman plays, as always, beautifully, and the story . . . ? ? ?

It is not Benny's fault that he has, up to now, enjoyed a more or less uneventful life. But it is the fault

of movie manufacturers when they make it even less eventful. This reviewer played saxophone and clarinet and arranged for Rubinoff on the Chase & Sanborn program when Benny was in the band and remembers more excitement and story material in one Sunday rehearsal and show than is in the whole movie version of Benny's life.

Re that same era when Benny was starving to death (at around $500 a week) in pursuit of the great idea — Swing — the picture makes much of a Saturday night NBC dance program. At this point the title should have been changed to the "Kel Murray Story," because Kel had, with the exception of Benny's clarinet, the best band of the three, i.e., Benny Goodman, Xavier Cougat, and Kel Murray.

The popular misconception of Chicago as a cradle of jazz prior to New York is fostered in the B. G. Story, but the fact remains that when Benny came to New York he was just another good clarinet player until he was seasoned in the bigger music of radio and the wider music of Harlem. There were always more good musicians in New York because it had more to offer musicians from all over the country, including Chicago and New Orleans — more money and a chance to play with the best. And don't let the *jazz experts* who can't read or play a note of music fool you.

In the picture sequence where Benny sits in with "Kid" Ory's band on the Lake boat, there is a laugh for the initiates. Benny on a 1955 soundtrack sounds much too good for Benny the boy in short pants. If he had played like that at twelve we'd have been saved all the trivia that happened in the years that make up THE BENNY GOODMAN STORY.

In fairness to Benny Goodman and the other splendid musicians who would be good in *any* picture with sound, special mention must be made of "Slipped Disc" (played in a jam session scene at the Trombone Club) and the two Goodman classics, "Stompin' At The Savoy" and "One O'clock Jump." For a change of pace, everyone should enjoy Benny's rendition of the "Mozart Concerto For Clarinet". Harry James shines in "Shine" and Ziggy Elman, approaching the trumpet valves from right field, does a good job of *his* classic, "And The Angels Sing". How many viewers will remember Ben Pollack's Band when it included Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller and the best rhythm drummer of those times — Ben (Himself) Pollack?

THE BENNY GOODMAN STORY . . . Universal-International. Steve Allen, Donna Reed. Director, Valentine Davies. Additional music, Henry Mancini. Instrumental coaches, Sol Yaged, Alan Harding, Harold Brown. Music supervision, Joseph Gershenson.

ANYTHING GOES

Eddy Manson

Here is a musical that is solid entertainment in the best lavish show business tradition. In this period of great production and barren scores the Cole Porter songs stand out like a beacon in the dark. The producers made the fullest use possible of the Porter score in Paramount's newest version of ANYTHING GOES, even using the melodies for background scoring, instead of the usual separate series of background cues.

"All Through the Night", "I Get a Kick Out of You", "Blow, Gabriel Blow", "Anything Goes" and the others prove their timelessness in production numbers tailor made to show off the best qualities of Mitzi Gaynor and Jeanmaire, Bing Crosby and Donald O'Connor. The smart rendition of "You're the Tops" has Crosby with Gaynor and O'Connor with Jeanmaire working out the number simultaneously but differently in two adjoining rehearsal rooms. Gaynor and O'Connor under the stars on the top deck of an ocean liner fall in love while singing and dancing to "It's D'Lovely" in the lushest of orchestrations. What could be cornier? Yet it comes off as a delight, thanks to the taste of everyone involved.

The integration of plot and music is excellent. At no time does one get the feeling of "Oh, oh, they're going to sing now." The musical numbers are motivated so naturally that one is often unaware that a song has snuck up. Particularly enjoyable is the ease of all the performances, with the possible exception of Miss Gaynor in "Anything Goes". Of course Bing Crosby's casual artistry had much to do with setting the key for the others.

Apparently there was nothing in the Porter catalog to fit the duets scheduled for Crosby and O'Conner, so they went to Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen. In a couple of the new songs "Ya Gotta Give the People Hoke" and "A Second Hand Turban and a Crystal Ball", the two stars give burlesques of corny routines that are among the most entertaining numbers in the show. O'Connor alone sings the third new tune "You Can Bounce Right Back", and gets in clever work with outsized bouncing balls and some adorable moppets.

Added to these plusses are the better than average orchestrations of Joseph Lilley and Van Cleave. In some places, notably Jeanmaire's dream ballet, they are brilliant. Lilley's musical direction is a real 'pro' job in the best studio tradition. The blend of music and action is nearly perfect, the timing is flawless, and the arrangement never gets in the way of the performer. Interesting effects in the arranging are many; the counterpointing of "All Through the Night" with "Blow, Gabriel, Blow", the insinuating sound of a tenor sax against strings, the droll blend of classical ballet and jazz in Jeanmaire's dream ballet.

As for the story, it is basically a show business plot, one that has to do with a confusion of selections for the feminine lead in a coming musical in which Crosby and O'Connor are to co-star. It travels from New York to London to Paris and back to New York again, and is a satisfactory enough rack on which to lay a big delectable serving of good old-fashioned entertainment.

ANYTHING GOES . . . Paramount. Bing Crosby, Donald O'Connor, Jeanmaire, Mitzi Gaynor. Director, Robert Lewis. Music and lyrics, Cole Porter. Musical numbers arranged and conducted by Joseph J. Lilley. Special orchestral arrangements, Van Cleave. New songs, Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen. Technicolor.

FANTASIA REVISITED

Frank Lewin

Walt Disney's FANTASIA is back for what appears to be a highly successful run. In this age of stereophonic wonders the sound portion of FANTASIA may seem less startling than it did 15 years ago. The entire project, however, is still a marvel of imagination and execution. In its new version the picture spans the width of a Cinemascope screen; during some of the sequences the size of the image is reduced by drawn curtains. The sound which originally issued from speakers placed around the auditorium now emanates from behind the screen. There are five magnetic tracks: four of them carry music, the fifth one carries a signal that opens and closes the width of the projection lens and at the same time operates the curtains on either side of the screen.

FANTASIA consists of pictorial representations of the following musical compositions:

1. The toccata and fugue for organ in D Minor by Bach, transcribed for symphony orchestra by Leopold Stokowsky;
2. Excerpts from the ballet "The Nutcracker" by Tchaikovsky;
3. The tone poem "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" by Dukas;
4. Stravinsky's score for the ballet "The Rites of Spring";
5. The Symphony No. 6 in F Major, "Pastorale," by Beethoven;
6. The Dance of the Hours from Ponchielli's opera "La Gioconda";
7. The tone poem "Night on Bald Mountain" by Moussorgsky;
8. An arrangement for voices and orchestra of Schubert's "Ave Maria."

Interspersed among the weightier items are scenes of the instruments of the orchestra tuning up, a jam session springing up quasi-impromptu among some of the members of the orchestra, and a short dissertation on the life and manners of an optical sound track. The Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Leopold Stokowsky, performs the music impeccably; Deems Taylor acts as efficient narrator introducing each sequence.

Chinese Dance from The Nutcracker Suite

On the whole, the wedding of picture and music seems most successful in those selections which originally told a definite story, i.e. "program music," or were composed for the ballet. One may easily quarrel with the pictorial representations of some of this music, but that is really a matter of individual taste. Physically the sound is truly magnificent — a hi-fi fan's dream, with its resonant basses, brilliant trebles and full-bodied climaxes. As a matter of fact, this larger-than-life, or rather larger-than-heard-in-the-concert-hall sound may give some listeners a kind of audio fatigue. In conjunction with the generous number and variety of sequences presented it may make the entire program seem a bit long.

The inspired sky writing accompanying Bach's "Toccata" still seems as astonishing a tour de force of animation as it did when FANTASIA was young. The sonorous climax of the fugue finds Mr. Stokowsky's giant-sized silhouette framed by what resembles rising wreaths of smoke, and that may not seem quite on an equal level of impressiveness with the beginning of the sequence. To this viewer and listener the excerpts from "The Nutcracker" form the high point of the film. Picture and sound seem matched perfectly here. In the next sequence Mickey Mouse, and the audience, have a gteat time romping through "The Sorcerer's Apprentice." At some points of his incantations the youthful magician, with smoke rising high, looks suspiciously like Mr. Stokowsky at his conductorial grandest in the abovementionad "Toccata and Fugue."

Stravinsky's "Rites of Spring" has come a far way from its clamorous first performance in 1912. No riots today when it serves as a point of departure for pictures of wild scenes during the earth's early history. Volcanic bubbles rise and burst in synchronization with the music, monstrous reptiles yawn stereophonically and devour each other — it's a grand show! Beethoven's "Pastorale" Symphony provides a quiet relief after this great upheaval; it accompanies scenes of mating and merriment in a toy-land-like mythological setting. Hippos and alligators cavort gaily to Ponchielli's "Dance of the Hours"; yet they seem slightly miscast.

The last two sections of FANTASIA depict images representing the contrast between profane and sacred love. The first as shown in a pictorialization of Moussorgsky's "Night on Bald Mountain" consists of an orgy of sight and sound; it is followed without a break by Schubert's "Ave Maria." The two sections vividly contrast complex animation, exploiting fully the resources of the Disney technicians, with the simplicity of an almost monochrome treatment — each superbly effective in its place.

In short: FANTASIA is back — and it's still a wonderful show!

FANTASIA . . . Walt Disney. Conductor, Leopold Stokowski, with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Commentator, Deems Taylor. Production supervision, Ben Sharpsteen. Musical direction, Edward H. Plumb. Musical film editor, Stephen Csillag. Recording, William E. Garity, C. O. Slyfield, J. N. A. Hawkins. Fantasound, Technicolor.

TWO NEW FILMS ON MUSIC

Abram Loft

When The Fine Arts Quartet, familiar to music-lovers through concert, broadcast, telecast, and recordings, and Encyclopaedia Britannica Films joined forces to produce the first in a new series of EBF films on music, they aimed primarily to supply much-needed audio-visual material for use in school-music instruction. They wanted to show, through the quartet repertoire, what makes serious music tick; and they wanted to show this in straightforward, clear, interesting manner. The results were two 16 mm films, LISTENING TO GOOD MUSIC and PLAYING GOOD MUSIC; and all concerned were delighted to be able to say of these movies that (to paraphrase the EBF film guide): "the films were designed for junior and senior high schools. However, they are so basic in their fundamentals and the performance of the Fine Arts Quartet is of such caliber that colleges, schools of music, and adult groups will find them a great aid in learning to appreciate and understand good music."

One might go even farther than this: the films have already been shown to all kinds of audiences, from fourth- and fifth-graders on up to general adult groups, educators, music critics and professional musicians . And all are unanimous in their acclaim of these films. Wherein does the success of these films lie? Well, the sound-track is superb, for one thing. It was recorded by, and under the direct supervision of, the Fine Arts Quartet, a foursome long experienced in the niceties of broadcast and recording techniques. The instruments played were the Quartet's own carefully matched set of fine old Italian masterpieces: Stradivarius, Balestrieri, Gaspar da Salo, Gofriller. The finest in modern recording equipment was used — Ampex tape recorders, Telefunken microphones. Every step in the processing of the sound-track was planned to preserve the live quality of the performance. The photography, by Andrew Costikyan of EBF, is artful in its closeup inspection of the techniques and skills of quartet-playing. The editing of the finished films gives minute attention to the smooth integration of patterns of sight and sound. And above all, the scripts of the two films, written jointly by the Quartet and David Ridgway, the producer of the films, are entirely professional in their outlook. They give the audience the "feel" of serious performance, of serious composition. The music used is all of sterling quality: Schubert, Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, Wolf, Tchaikovsky — these are the composers represented. However, the music is offered not as a filmed recital, but rather in an inspection of the very stuff of composition. Specific passages from various quartet movements are carefully chosen to demonstrate individual musical and technical points. And each passage is presented in a manner that will emphasize, through photography, narration, and sound-track, the precise detail under inspection at the moment.

Two examples illustrate the imaginativeness of the film treatment: a passage from the finale of Mozart's Quartet in G Major, K. 387, is played; to underscore the fugal relaying of the essential line through all four instruments of the quartet, each player in the group is spotlighted as his instrument takes the central role in the music. (To insure smoothness and synchronization, EBF's technical staff contrived special equipment that enabled the players themselves to control the spotlights while they played the passage!)

The Fine Arts Quartet

Another illustration: as the Quartet plays a passage from Hugo Wolf's Italian Serenade, the printed score of that passage moves across the screen, with the measure of the moment photographically highlighted. Any viewer, whether or not he can read a note of music, will get the sense of motion, of up-and-down, of interweaving of musical parts, as he watches this scene.

At no point is there any "talking-down" to the audience. The wording of the narration is non-technical, but always specific, always aimed at revealing a musical detail. And the music itself is constantly at hand to make absolutely clear the point indicated by the narration.

Youthful audiences appreciate this directness. They would be quick to detect any condescension or artificiality of approach and would transfer their distrust to the music under discussion. (The adult audience is hardly gullible, either, let us hasten to add.) The films are convincing because — in short — they help the viewer come to grips with the music and with the driving force that the composer built into the music. Each film ends with a brief, full-dress performance of a movement that has previously been inspected by the film. And the viewer watches the Quartet in action with a new awareness of the musicianship and physical skill required of the instrumentalist. Most important, the viewer is left with new-found confidence in his own capacity to understand and enjoy music.

Incidentally, the films are provided with film guides, brochures that describe the films, offer background information about the material and the performers, give the narration and continuity of the films in complete detail, identify the musical selections played, and provide suggestions for preparation of the audience, for post-viewing discussion, and correlated projects appropriate to the films. The film guide for PLAYING GOOD MUSIC even offers a "classified list of string quartet movements for student practice and performance."

AUDIO-VISUAL DEPARTMENT, DEARBORN PUBLIC LIBRARY

James L. Limbacher, Audio-Visual Director

Since its establishment in 1948, the Dearborn Public Library Audio-Visual Department has been moving toward the development of the use of good films and music by the schools, churches, organizations and homes of Dearborn, a community of 130,000 citizens just outside of Detroit, Michigan. The film library began with just a few motion pictures and some 78 rpm records, but now has more than 500 long-playing records and more than 300 sound films.

Taking a cue from FILM MUSIC magazine, the Audio-Visual Department is expanding the number of films and records dealing with good music and film scores. Its record library now contains music from such films as GONE WITH THE WIND, THE GOLDEN COACH, THE LOUISIANA STORY, THE PLOW THAT BROKE THE PLAINS, THE RED SHOES, THE VANISHING PRAIRIE, PACIFIC 231, and others. Several of these, such as PACIFIC 231, are correlated with the film itself.

Experiments in music are being tried. Again, taking PACIFIC 231 as an example, the recording is played first, then the music is discussed, and finally the film is shown. This gives music students a chance to see how music can be put into visual terms. Supplementing this type of experiment are many film concerts with such artists as Heifitz, Piatagorsky and Paderewski preserved on film for all to see. Visual music is represented by FIDDLE DE DEE and other experimental films.

In the new 1956 film catalog, a special category is devoted to films in the Dearborn Public Library containing exceptional musical scores. These include THE STORY OF TIME, THE RIVER, PACIFIC 231, THE AMERICAN ROAD, AND NOW MIGUEL, PEOPLE ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI, SHAPES, and many others.

For film appreciation, the library maintains a collection of special films including MARCH OF THE MOVIES, YESTERDAY LIVES AGAIN, the story of EASTMAN HOUSE, HIGHLIGHTS FROM BIRTH OF A NATION and NANOOK OF THE NORTH. Other films in this category are forthcoming.

By maintaining a general, rather than a specific, library of films and recordings, the Dearborn Public Library hopes to continue to serve to the fullest the needs of its community — in the home, in the church, in the school and everywhere that music and films can be used to enlighten and entertain.

16 MM FILMS

Music: Career or Hobby? (Coronet Films, Coronet Building, Chicago 1, Ill. Color, b and w, 10 min.) A high school student with some musical talent looks for the answer to this question. He talks with his teacher and his guidance counselor, interviews a night-club musician, a disc-jockey, an arranger, an orchestra member and a teacher, and reads up on the opportunities and requirements in the field. In the end he has a fair idea of the drawbacks and rewards in various musical careers, and to what degree they fit his tastes and aptitudes. The useful little film also stresses the musical pleasure open to the enlightened listener and the amateur performer. (Educational Collaborator, Dr. Frank S. Endicott, Director of Placement, Northwestern University.)

Marching the Colours (National Film Board of Canada, 630 Fifth Avenue, New York. 16mm, 35mm; col. 3 min.) Animated abstract and geometric designs accompany a Sousa march in an experimental film made without a camera. The broad color effects and exploding balls and stars keep steady time with the music's beat. Guy Glover was the producer.

Eneri (Film Images Inc., 1860 Broadway, New York. Color, 7½ min.) Photographer Hy Hirsch combines abstract figures and oscilloscope patterns in bold bright color with the arresting, changing rhythms of primitive African pipes and drums.

Abstract in Concrete (Film Images Inc., 1860 Broadway, New York. Color, 10 min.) The distortion of Times Square's lights on a rainy night in the reflections on its wet pavements creates revolving, swelling, dissolving color images. Frank Fields has written the faintly blues piano score, which with the spattering rain, the sounds of juke-box and barkers, the horn dissonances, make up the narration of John Arvonio's atmospheric film.

Beethoven Sonata (British Information Services, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. b and w, 18 min.) In an interesting introduction to the playing of the Beethoven Sonata in F for Horn and Pianoforte, Denis Brain explains the differences between the simple horn of Beethoven's day and the infinitely complicated instrument in use at present. He plays both briefly to compare their tonal range and quality. The little opening talk heightens the consciousness of the horn in the excellent performance of the Sonata by Mr. Brain and pianist Denis Matthews. The work was one of Beethoven's early triumphs, and the presentation here offers a rare opportunity to hear it as it should be played. Frequent close-ups permit technique-study of the two distinguished musicians.

M. H.

TV IN THE OPERA PICTURE

Peter Herman Adler

I am often asked about the special problems we face in opera on television. As a conductor who grew up in the European opera houses, I found my first new problem was to locate singers who were musical enough to perform without seeing the conductor. It soon appeared that the problem was not only to engage artists of high musical intelligence but to find a style of rehearsing which permitted them to sing and act independently — to all appearances — while exactly carrying out the exact intentions of the conductor. Fortunately, America has developed a fairly large number of young singers with good musical training who have the intelligence and resourcefulness to work under our difficult conditions. In some cases the voices we use may not be large enough to perform the same roles in a big opera house, but for us this is a purely academic matter, since we choose singers to fulfill the requirements of our own production and our own medium.

Microphones handle smaller voices better than larger ones for the simple reason that they are constructed to be placed in front of a performer's mouth. It is true that in today's radio and recording sessions all kinds of voices can be recorded successfully. The reason is that in radio and recording the singer's position is carefully arranged in front of a stationary microphone. This arrangement, however, is impossible in television because the singer and pursuing microphone boom are constantly on the move.

This brings up the question of pre-recording the sound as it is done in the movies. While pre-recording may improve the sound and eliminate a number of minor or major acoustical accidents, it also, in my opinion, diminishes the spontaneity of the performance. The impact of simultaneous acting and singing is so much more effective than the most carefully synchronized performance that I prefer to accept occasional tonal deficiencies in order to gain the vitality of a live performance.

"Opera in English" was a battle-cry as recently as ten years ago. Adherents of opera in the original language have opposed translated opera for a variety of reasons. Usually the opposition begins with the argument that the English language is not singable and finishes with the undeniable observation that translations seldom add to the flavor of the original, and more often than not take away something. We may take small consolation from the fact that these arguments are almost as old as the history of opera. Every country has had to solve its translation problem in its own fashion. In the Vienna of Mozart's time, anything but opera in Italian was viewed with contempt. The only operatic works Mozart could write in the language of his country were singspeils, operetta-like in form, with dialogue. His operas in German — "The Abduction from the Seraglio" and "The Magic Flute" — were dialogue operas, or, as the French later called the category, opera-comique.

There are at least as many arguments to be made for the unsingability of German, Russian and Swedish as there are for English. Still, operatic development all over the world has proved that only countries in which opera was given in the native language became "opera countries", while the Anglo-Saxon part of the world, Britain and America, which until recently stuck to opera in its original language, were considered "not opera-minded".

The more I am acquainted with this problem, the more I am convinced that one of the main reasons, if not the main reason, for our backwardness in opera development has been the reluctance to translate opera and to translate it well. The truth is that a lot of opera has been translated, but most of it has been done so badly that the response to it has been rather discouraging. Our experience has been that the American opera audience would rather accept opera in the original language than a badly translated one. We at NBC have spent an extraordinary amount of time proving our English versions, and we still feel that we have a long way to go. We expect that our new version of "The Magic Flute", commissioned from W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman, will mark an important step in the right direction.

Television has provided a mass test proving that America at large has accepted opera in English. It is difficult to imagine how many years might otherwise have been required to establish this. What I consider to be the supreme test of the acceptability of opera in English occurred when Arturo Toscanini discussed our production of Puccini's "Sister Angelica" (Suor Angelica) with our producer, Samuel Chotzinoff. Maestro Toscanini expressed surprise that an opera for which he had little regard on the stage came over so well on television. He had enjoyed the performance and mentioned a number of details in expressing his satisfaction. When Chotzinoff mentioned to the maestro, who had always been critical of translated Italian opera, that he had enjoyed an Italian opera in English after all, Toscanini answered "I didn't even notice it was in English."

When we produce an opera on television we have to start from scratch, regardless of whether it is a standard or a new work. It has been our experience that selecting singers, making translations, conceiving the nature of a production, constructing sets and costumes, and rehearsing the artists for a new work is often easier than the corresponding job for the standard operas, especially the ones which demand true bel canto technique. In certain respects this gives us an advantage over the large opera houses, for which the mounting of a new work is very costly.

We have found, too, that many works which have not been completely successful on the stage, like Benjamin Britten's "Billy Budd" and Puccini's one act operas "Sister Angelica" and "The Cloak" (Il Tabarro) have been highly successful in our more intimate medium. In addition the response to NBC's "Opera Theatre's" first performances of new operas has been encouraging to all parties concerned. Menotti's "Amahl and the Night Visitors", the first opera ever commissioned for television; Giannini's "The Taming of the Shrew", Martinu's "The Marriage" and Bernstein's "Trouble in Tahiti" have had considerably more than the press response and prestige which the première of a modern musical work usually can hope for. While it is understandable that a charming little masterpiece like "Amahl" should have made a hit on its first showing, the popular success of a difficult work like "Billy Budd" came as a surprise. We expect that this season's newly commissioned operas, "Griffelkin" by Lukas Foss and "La Grande Bretèche" by Stanley Hollingsworth, as well as the new Menotti work scheduled for next season, will reconfirm our confidance in the future of American opera.

(The author is musical and artistic director of the NBC "Opera Theatre" and co-founder with Samuel Chotzinoff of this organization. His article has been reprinted in part, through the courtesy of "Theatre Arts".)

FILM AND TV MUSIC NEWS

The American Film Assembly will hold its 1956 convention on April 23-27 at the Morrison Hotel in Chicago. The program of the occasion, which deals with every aspect of 16mm production, presents a Sound Slidefilm Conference, a Film Workshop, the annual convention of the American Federation of Film Societies, discussion periods at the close of screening sessions and the organizational meetings of the Film Review Center Project, Local Film Councils, Film Producers, and the membership and Board of Directors of the Film Council of America. In the Golden Reel Film Festival, highlight of the Assembly, 16mm films in 22 categories will be screened and judged for the Golden Reel awards. Almost 400 films have been entered in the competition. Further information on the Assembly may be had from the Film Council of America, 600 Davis Street, Evanston, Ill. . . . Officers of the Composers and Lyricists Guild of America for the 1955-56 term are Leith Stevens, national president; Winston Sharples, Walter Schumann, David Terry, vice-presidents; Mack David, secretary-treasurer and Ben Ludlow, assistant secretary-treasurer . . . The Robert Flaherty Foundation is inviting advanced students and film makers to the second annual seminar at the Flaherty home in Vermont. The ten day seminar (August 21 through August 30) will be given to a study of Flaherty films, and discussions of production problems by various guest speakers. Among these are Amos Vogel, Richard Griffith, Fred Zinnemann and Virgil Thomson. As the enrollment must be limited, reservations should be made now with the Robert Flaherty Foundation, Inc., RFD 1, Brattleboro, Vermont . . . Ann Ronell and her husband, film producer Lester Cowan, are to create and produce several color Spectaculars for NBC-TV. Their first show will be a musical comedy "O Susanna", based on the lives and songs of Stephen Foster and E. P. Christy. Miss Ronell has written the score and lyrics for the book by Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements. A musical play based on Ernie Pyle's "The Story of G.I. Joe" is also planned. The award-winning film based on the book was produced by Mr. Cowan, and had a memorable score by Miss Ronell and Louis Applebaum . . . The NBC Opera Theatre, now in its seventh season, is to be augmented by a touring company, the NBC Opera Company. Beginning in the fall of 1956, performances in English will be given in various cities in the United States and eastern Canada. The Company will open its season with "Madam Butterfly" and "The Marriage of Figaro". Broadway producer Chandler Cowles will act as General Manager. The NBC Opera Theatre will continue its TV presentations under Samuel Chotzinoff and Peter Herman Adler, who will be in charge of the new project as well . . . CINEMAGES, which has recently been called "not only far and away the best American film periodical, but one of the best in the world" (SIGHT AND SOUND), has announced its 1956 publication schedule. Among the five issues planned are extensive analyses of experimental cinema, the American screen (with over 100 stills) and an issue on Alexander Korda. CINEMAGES is sponsored by a small panel of distinguished screen directors, among them Rene Clair, Josef von Sternberg, Jean Benoit-Levy, Hans Richter and others. It is edited and published by Gideon Bachmann at 3951 Gouverneur Avenue, New York 63 . . . The second annual television showing of the Motion Picture Academy nominations on February 18, named five candidates in each of three musical categories. Best dramatic score: BATTLE CRY - Max Steiner; LOVE IS A MANY SPLENDORED THING - Alfred Newman; THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM - Elmer Bernstein; PICNIC - George Duning; THE ROSE TATTOO - Alex North. Best score for a musical: DADDY LONG LEGS - Johnny Mercer; GUYS AND DOLLS - Frank Loesser; LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME - George Stoll; IT'S ALWAYS FAIR WEATHER - Andre Previn; OKLAHOMA! - Richard Rodgers. Best song: I'll Never Stop Loving You (LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME) - Sammy Cahn, Nicholas Brodszky; Love Is a Many Splendored Thing (LOVE IS A MANY SPLENDORED THING) - Sammy Fain, Paul F. Webster; Love Is the Tender Trap (LOVE IS THE TENDER TRAP) - Sammy Cahn, Jimmy Van Heusen; Something's Gotta Give (DADDY LONG LEGS) - Johnny Mercer; Unchained Melody (UNCHAINED) - Hy Zaret, Alex North . . . The recent Downbeat Magazine Awards for film music were as follows: George Duning (Columbia) - best background scoring of a dramatic picture, PICNIC; Ray Heindorf (Warner Brothers) - best scoring of a musical picture, PETE KELLEY'S BLUES.