

THE MACOMBER AFFAIR - United Artists - Directed by Zoltan Korda - Musical score by Miklos Rozsa. Cast, Gregory Peck, Joan Bennett.



Miklos Rozsa

Some music-minded film-goers who have followed Miklos Rozsa closely in the last few years through "Spellbound" "Lost Weekend", et al, may rather justifiably say that once you've heard him, you've always heard him. While this comment may be made of many often heard film composers, it does not seem to detract from their musical worth to a producer or his picture. Some composers are extremely versatile in subjecting their personalities in a variety of cloaks while others make extravagant use of their characteristic selves. It is obvious that Miklos Rozsa, belonging to the latter group, was chosen for "The Macomber Affair" because of his already familiar qualifications.

As this interesting picturization of human relationships unfolds itself, so does Miklos Rozsa's tonal counterpart. As the film develops from the simple presentation of individuals to their complex entanglements with each other, so follows the musical score. This consanguinity between music and picture

is clear from the moment Gregory Peck as the hired professional hunter, sits down at the request of the police commissioner to write his report on the killing of Francis Macomber. There is a short, but well-devised theme of 4 tones announced at this point and presented in a simple 4-voiced fugue. The growth of this theme throughout the picture in many imaginative symphonic patterns offers a wonderful tonal unity. This basic function of a film score, which is the least to be expected from any composer, is so often neglected as to make it a grand, new experience when we do hear it. And this unifying quality Mr. Rozsa seems to have in abundance and to know so well how to achieve.

Of course, in this picture too, there are moments when the music seems unnecessarily to outdo everything, including itself. It reminds this reviewer of the department store owner who hired a symphony orchestra to delight the store's customers at Christmas time and when he discovered the flute player resting his instrument for a prescribed 122-measure rest, the owner insisted that he play as much as the other instrumentalists or take a conforming cut in salary. So it is with some Hollywood's film orchestras that seem to blast away busily for all they are worth in cold cash. It was quite evident here in some of the jungle sequences.

Generally, Rozsa's score helps tremendously to make "The Macomber Affair" worth both seeing and hearing.

Gene Forrell

TIME OUT OF MIND - International - Universal, Phyllis Calvert, Robert Mutton.
Director, Robert Siodmak. Music, Miklos Rozsa and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco.

The music, which was composed for the picture and is credited to Miklos Rozsa and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, is both interesting for itself and effective in heightening the feeling of unrest, struggle, and ultimate recognition of the composer portrayed. The piano solo compositions are perhaps better musically than is the piano concerto which climaxes the film. The running comments of the composer during his playing are regrettably superfluous, and his conducting of the orchestra is unsympathetic. Though the idiom is that of today rather than of the late nineteenth century, there are reminiscences of MacDowell and Debussy. Music students in high school and college may be interested in making an aural analysis of harmonic and melodic content, but will hardly be led to a deeper understanding of the developmental aspects of actual composition. If the piano solo scores were to be published, they would be welcomed by teachers and students.

D.E.J.