



# FILM MUSIC



PICNIC

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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).

**00** ON DOOR SLAM

**03** **EX. 1.** **07½** 1ST CARD

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**22** "COOL" VLNS. A TEMPO

POCO RALL.

9 10 11 12

39

VLNS. CL. (FL. CUED)

mf

3

13 14 15 16

SXS. FRT. mf

VLNS. COL. BASS

54

COL. BASSA

POCO RALL.

17 18 19 20



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

Ex. 2 8VA P Poco TEN. mf

+PNO. BVA (CL.) (FL.)

:18½

:24 FLO REATS :26 :29

MD +PNO. FLS. SUDDENLY DARK HN. MARIMBA BUZZ RALL.

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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**

(VLNS. + CEL.)  
 (1/2 Trem.)  
 P.  
 (CL.)  
 mf  
 ① ② ③ ④  
 Pizz + HP.  
 mf

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**:09**

FL. OB.  
 + CEL.  
 ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧  
 Poco Accell.

Ex. 4.

**15** **16** "A GIRL"

**18½**

Handwritten musical score for "A GIRL". The score is written on three staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature. The second staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats. The third staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. The score is divided into two sections by a double bar line. The first section consists of measures 15 and 16. The second section consists of measures 17, 18, and 18½. Performance markings include *mf*, *mp*, *mp*, and *THOUGHTFULLY*. Fingerings are indicated by circled numbers 5, 6, 7, and 8. Dynamic markings include *mp*, *mp*, and *mp*. The word "SYMPATHETIC" is written above the second staff in the first section. The word "THOUGHTFULLY" is written above the first staff in the second section.

**28** "MADGE"

Handwritten musical score for "MADGE". The score is written on three staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats. The second staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats. The third staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. The score consists of measures 9, 10, 11, and 12. Performance markings include *mp*, *mp*, and *mp*. Fingerings are indicated by circled numbers 9, 10, 11, and 12. Dynamic markings include *mp*, *mp*, and *mp*.

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Handwritten musical score for measures 13, 14, 15, and 16. The score is written on three staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats. The second staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats. The third staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. The score consists of measures 13, 14, 15, and 16. Performance markings include *POCO RIT.*. Fingerings are indicated by circled numbers 13, 14, 15, and 16. Dynamic markings include *mp*, *mp*, and *mp*.





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. 7**

Glock  
VLS. ESP.  
8VA  
Div.  
8VA  
CEL.  
HARMONIC. VLS. 1524  
OLD TRACK  
(PNO.)

47 48 49 50

Note: Bottom line is "Jazz track"

8VA  
8VA  
HARP.  
(H.P.)  
(PNO.)

51 52 53 54

8VA →

8VA - - - - -

55 56 57 58

LIACC

+ GLOCK.

CEL. COL. B.

HP.

(OLD TRACK)

(Duo)

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Ex. 8

+ P.W.

2/4

2/4

2/4

2/4

HARSH & TENSE

ALL W.D.

AGITATED

1 2 3 4

CUT TO ROSEMARY

"YOUNG?"

:10 1/2

:12 DIAL.

:15 1/2

5 6 7 8

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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.

**Ex. 9**

Handwritten musical score for Example 9, bars 9-12. The score is in 2/4 time and consists of four staves. Bar 9 shows a dynamic change from *f* to *mf*. Bar 10 has a crescendo. Bar 11 includes annotations: *spicc.*, *+HP.*, *PNO. + BVA (SHARPLY)*, *W.W.*, and *HNS. mf*. Bar 12 has a dynamic change from *mf* to *f*.

**18**

Handwritten musical score for Example 18, bars 13-16. The score is in 2/4 time and consists of four staves. Bar 13 has a dynamic change from *mf* to *f*. Bar 14 includes annotations: *+TPT - JORD* and *XYLO.* Bar 15 has a dynamic change from *f* to *mf*. Bar 16 includes annotations: *Tym* and *f*.

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**

*SOFTLY BUT FIRMLY*

CELESTE BVA  
HP-LOCO

PNO BVA

VIB.

1 2 3 4

**:07 "YOU DON'T..."**

**:10 1/2 "LISTEN TO ME"**

+BVA

Tpts. & Fl. (FLS.)

(HP-CEL-PNO. CONT. TO BAR 21)

5 6 7 8

VIB.

EX. 11

(1:06) "OH MADGE"

Musical score for Ex. 11, measures 38-41. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is a vocal line with the word "PLEADING" written above it. The second staff is a piano accompaniment with a melodic line that includes a trill-like passage in measure 38. The third and fourth staves are piano accompaniment. Measure numbers 38, 39, 40, and 41 are circled. A handwritten note "(PND-HP-DEL. CONT.)" with arrows points to measures 39 and 40. Dynamics include *f* and *mf*. Bar lines are present at the end of each measure.

(1:09)

Musical score for measures 42-45. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is a vocal line. The second staff is a piano accompaniment with a melodic line. The third and fourth staves are piano accompaniment. Measure numbers 42, 43, 44, and 45 are circled. A handwritten instruction "ACCELL. & CRESC. POCO A POCO" is written above measure 42. Dynamics include *f* and *mf*. Bar lines are present at the end of each measure.

Musical score for measures 46-49. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is a vocal line. The second staff is a piano accompaniment with a melodic line. The third and fourth staves are piano accompaniment. Measure numbers 46, 47, 48, and 49 are circled. Handwritten instructions include "SF SHARPLY MOLTO RALL." above measure 46, "V.LAS. BSN." above measure 48, and "Pizz" above measure 49. Dynamics include *sf*, *mf*, and *pp*. Bar lines are present at the end of each measure.

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COLBVA → **Ex. 12**

*f* BROADLY

82 83 84 85

COLBVA →

**2:40**

RALL. (IN 4)

A TEMPO (IN 2)

86 87 88 89

COLBVA →

**2:50** OUT

90 91 92 93 94

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