



FILM MUSIC

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THE ROBE

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1953

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Many of our readers have found that a subscription to **FILM MUSIC** and a collection of its back issues make welcome holiday gifts. For this purpose we are offering subscriptions at the special price of \$2.00 a year, and 30 copies of our back issues for \$5.00 plus postage. Because of the many inquiries that we have had regarding **THE ROBE** we are devoting most of this issue to its score. We will send 10 copies for \$2.50 plus postage to students and teachers. Prices for larger quantities may be had on application to this office.

THE ROBE
Harold Brown

Providing the first film in CinemaScope with a score impressive enough to realize the full breadth of this new medium and carry it to success, a task of no small responsibility, presented Mr. Newman with several knotty problems: to use material which should not be incongruous with the historical background of ancient Rome and Palestine; to fulfill the religious motivation; to give the texture a modern feeling in keeping with the modern medium of the film; to fulfill the dramatic scope of the production, and finally, to integrate all these elements into a unified idiom. Mr. Newman's solution of these problems is a score well worth detailed analysis.

There is no genuinely authentic music which comes to us from the Romans or Hebrews; of Roman music we know nothing, but there is a tradition of Hebrew music which has been preserved in the orthodox synagogue, though how close this is to the Hebrew music of antiquity is a matter for conjecture. No matter, though - the effect of background music is largely one of association, the important thing being to evoke the proper mood and spirit, whatever the means. Newman achieves this through the use of material suggestive of Hebrew chant as we know it, and by basing all of his melodic material on the scales of the Near East. Six short motifs are all he needs for the entire score, and in addition there is an eight measure phrase used recurringly in chaconne style. By evolving the entire score from these simple though striking sources, ancient and modern elements are fused into an idiom of remarkable inity.

The title music wasted no time on fanfares, but plunges at once into the chaconne theme - a series of juxtaposed major and minor triads derived from the tones of the chromatic scale, and radiating from a central C minor triad as tonal center. Declamatory in nature, it not only sets the stage for the dramatic and tragic events to follow, but establishes the harmonic character of the entire work, and prepares the mind for the modal melody and harmony to follow - three of the motifs are naturally born of it.

" THE ROBE "

PROD. A 695 — " THE ROBE "

REEL 1 - 1577 FT.

CONDUCTOR

COMP. - ALFRED NEWMAN
ORCH. - EDWARD POWELL

POCO MAESTOSO
VOICES A.H. (SEMPRE) E.V.B. MAIN TITLE AND CREDITS
TWENTIETH CENTURY MUSIC CORP.

(1) (2) T.M.P. (3)

CHIMES
TAM-TAM

GLOCK 8
HP.
CCL.

PIATTI

The origin of the melodic motifs suggests an interesting question, which, to be sure, Newman himself can readily answer. For the song which Miriam sings to the text of the Resurrection (taken from St. Luke) is created almost entirely from four of these motifs, and the melody evolves so naturally out of patterns so clearly Hebraic that one wonders if Newman did not write the song first and then extract the motifs for use in the rest of the music. I am rather inclined to think so, and since to me this is the high point of the score, we reproduce it here in full, not only for its musical value, but as the best way to introduce the reader to the motivic material, which I have lettered and bracketed.

PROD. A.695 ~ "THE ROBE"

" THE RESURRECTION "

TEXT ADAPTED ~ PHILIP DUNNE

MUSIC - ALFRED NEWMAN

E.V.V.
MIRIAM SINGS TO THE
CHRISTIANS IN CANA

TWENTIETH CENTURY MUSIC CORP.

VOICE A motif B C

NOW UP-ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK VER-Y

HARP (A) (1) (2)

EAR-LY IN THE MORN-ING WE CAME UN-TO THE SEP-UL-CHRE AND

(3) (4) (5) (6)

FOUND THE STONE ROLLED A-WAY, ROLLED A-WAY, THE GREAT - STONE WAS

(7) (8) (9)

A.695
 { REEL 8 PART 3
 { REEL 9 PART A

2

D motif

ROLLED A-WAY — AND WE EN-TERED IN — TO THE SEP-UL-CHRE, AND

REEL 5 - 1546 FT.
 (:48) HUSHED BUT SLIGHTLY FASTER //

FOUND NOT THE BO-DY OF JE-SUS, AND LO, A VOICE SPAKE TO US SAY-ING, "WHY

WITH DELICATE EMPHASIS

SEEK YE THE LIV-ING A-MONG THE DEAD A-MONG THE DEAD, OH,

SEEK NOT THE LIV-ING A — MONG THE DEAD — FOR HE

AGAS
 8-3
 4-A

SAID UN-TO YOU_ IN_ GAL-I-LEE_ THE SON OF MAN MUST BE DE

21 22 23

LIV-ERED IN_ TO THE HANDS OF SIN-FUL MEN AND BE

24 25 26

CRU-CI-FIED AND RISE A-GAIN RISE A-GAIN THE SON OF MAN MUST

27 28 29

RISE A-GAIN!"_ AND LO, JE-SUS AP-PEARED TO US, AND SHOWED US HIS

30 31 32

A-695
 58-3
 79-4

WOUNDS AND HE SAID UN-TO US THERE , _____

33 34 35

"GO YE, THERE-FOR, THE BLESS-ED, AND TEACH ALL THE NA-TIONS AND

36 37 38 39

E motif ———

I AM WITH YOU AL-WAYS, I AM WITH YOU, I AM WITH YOU

40 41 42 43

TO R.B. 0:48
 FROM R.B. 2:07
 THIS NO. 2:55

(WITH REVERENCE AND CONVICTION)

EV-EN TO THE END OF THE WORLD." _____

44 45 46 47

To anyone familiar with liturgical Hebrew music, the striking resemblance must be immediately apparent; in fact, one suspects that some of the devout might receive a shock upon hearing the words of the Resurrection set to a music so intimately associated with their most solemn rituals. We trust they will be forbearing, for its authenticity cannot be denied; the earliest Christians were a Jewish sect, and if such a text were sung, it must have been to the only music they knew. There is, moreover, an authenticity in the way the entire melody is derived from a few simple motifs - the first phrase is built by joining three of them consecutively. The little we know of Hebrew music tells us that this is exactly the way their liturgical melodies were improvised, except that the text, rather than musical considerations, determined the manner in which the motifs were joined.

Motif (A) suggests several such modes as Dorian or Myxolydian, but the occasional appearance of C natural instead of C# gives the Phrygian, or as is suggested by measure 13, an Asiatic mode of the scale B, C, D#, E, F#, G, A#. Motif C seems at first merely an extension of A, and is indeed usually found in conjunction with it, but its different rhythm and the fact that in this music slight differences assume significance compel me to regard it as separate.

Harmonizing this melody posed another problem. We know that the Hebrews accompanied their singing with such instruments as the primitive harp, but just what they played is a great question. Newman circumvents this problem by employing only open fifths and occasional fourths, which do not impair the melody's ancient character, and characteristically imbue it with added purity and beauty.

By employing not one but several of the old modes, and subtly shifting from one to the other, Newman is able to encompass the entire chromatic scale (save F natural) and thereby achieve a wider range of expression. There is even a change at measure 21 from the tonic center of B to that of E, and at measure 30, to the words "rise again", a beautiful rising modulation of infinite subtlety, bringing us back to tonic B. At measure 41-43 the idea of the changing modes gives rise to a melodic change from A minor to A major, which has enough character to recur as a motif, and the piece wisely closes on the tonic A rather than the expected B, producing a new freshness in keeping with the text.

Asiatic music is entirely improvisatory, no two phrases being quite alike, and this is exactly the method by which Newman's melodic line evolves. The one exception is the theme of Diana, a full-fledged theme in the European manner, and since this is the only one of such nature, it can bear considerable repetition.

DIANA

The musical score for 'DIANA' is presented in three systems. The top system is for Violins (VNS.) in treble clef, marked *mp*. The middle system is for Strings and Harp (STRGS. & HP.) in treble clef. The bottom system is for Cello and Double Bass (CELLO & DB.) in bass clef. The music consists of three measures, with circled numbers 61, 62, and 63 indicating specific measures. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.



A.695
 2 2
 3 1



I am cautious about finding motivic material where none really exists; still, it seems permissible to see the melody as born out of motif C inverted, followed by motif B inverted. The third phrase is almost a literal inversion of the first, and there is a rising finish on the same 4-note pattern. The basis harmony is pure XVI century, a modern texture being given by the parallel 5ths and 4ths, and dissonant "non-harmonic" tones, while the clearly demarcated phrases, the repeated rhythmic pattern, and the rising climax at the very end are distinctly nineteenth century. Thus in one short theme Newman has assimilated various phases of musical development to furnish the elements needed—ancient setting, modern viewpoint, and a romanticism naturally expected in the theme of the heroine. Yet it embodies no eclecticism, which I should define as combination of disparate elements, rather than purposeful integration of assimilable ones.

The repetitions of this theme are varied only in harmonic and orchestral treatment; there is no development in the conventional classical sense, for in a work of this nature it would have been disastrous.

Another problem is presented by the Palm Sunday procession which the Greek slave Demetrius witnesses upon his arrival in Palestine. Normally the stock-in-trade for all religious processions is a monk-like chanting, but here it would have detracted heavily from ensuing sequences of the Crucifixion and Marcellus's redemption. The conventional religious aspect is therefore bypassed in favor of one of exultation. Adroitness in integrating seemingly contradictory elements is again apparent, for while the chorus sings in a style almost literally that of sixteenth century dance, complete with the Picardy third, though with a wider harmonic range, an Asiatic touch is produced by a lively rhythm of sleigh-bells, tambourine and cymbals. My reaction, especially in view of what was on the screen, was one of pleasant surprise.

PALM SUNDAY

HP. 1^o
 WLD. CON 8^{va}
 VOICES
 AH
 HP. 2^o
 HNS. & BS. HRS.
 TAMBO.
 (1) (2) (3) (4)
 FINGER COMBS
 SMALL PLATTI
 SWEIGH BELLS.

TRPT.
 (HP. CONTINUES SIMILE)
 CON 8^{va} SEMPRE
 VOICES CONTINUE
 (HP. 2^o CONTINUES SIMILE)
 (5) (6) (7) (8)

Later a variation in the voices becomes motif E

VOICES A-LE-LU-IA A-LE-LU-IA
 A-LE-LU-IA A-LE-LU-IA AH
 TROMB.
 CON 8^{va}
 (21) (22) (23) (24)

A. 695
 3-2A 2-2P (M. W.)

This was first introduced in the suggestion of march music in the opening scene at the slave market.

F motif, C inverted, C

A variation of the rhythmic character later produces a true march for brasses.

POCO A POCO DIM.

Comparing this with the Palm Sunday chorus, we see that the march of the Christians is made of the same stuff as the march of Roman soldiers.

It remains now to present two instances of the use of the chaconne theme. The tragic procession of the carriage of the Cross is carried by this theme in the brass, given an ominous character by the deep percussion, over which the strings weave a sinuous melodic line, stressing neighboring tones and working its way through the interstices of the triads. The effect is appropriately dissonant, but the underlying consonant triads give it harmonic substance and make it readily assimilable to the average ear. Motivic material is easily recognized.

The image displays three systems of handwritten musical notation. Each system begins with a staff labeled '8VA' (Eight Violins A) at the top, which contains a melodic line with various ornaments and phrasing. Below this is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) for the strings. The first system includes a section for 'BRASS' and 'CON 8VA.' (Contra 8VA), with measures 10, 11, and 12 circled. The second system features 'T.I.M.' (Timpani) and 'B.D.' (Bass Drum) parts, with measures 13 and 15 circled. The third system continues the percussion and string parts, with measures 16, 17, and 18 circled. The notation is dense and includes many dynamic markings and articulations.

The scene of the Crucifixion, being the vital point of the film, must have given occasion for considerable reflection before the method to be used was finally decided. It is treated fugally in the voices, but in an entirely original manner, for the subject, continuing throughout in the Hebraic vein, is a far cry from the conventional fugue subject. It is built directly from motifs A and D, and we are not surprised to see the other motifs appearing during the course of the development. And since the scale using a flatted dominant plays an occasional part throughout the score, it is perfectly logical that the answering subject here start on the diminished rather than perfect fifth.

At measure 10 the ~~chacour~~ theme creeps in, repeating cumulatively to the end, while fugal handling of the voices continues. It is a pity that we cannot quote this section in its entirety, that one may observe more fully how the melodic lines of the voices, revolving about the modes in the improvisatory Asiatic manner, combine with a recurring 8 measure phrase of modern harmonic nature, a purely European device.

(VOICES)

Musical score for measures 10, 11, and 12. The score is written for voices and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). Measure 10 is marked with a circled '10' and includes the instruction 'Cymb. (SEP. TAKE) pp'. Measure 11 is marked with a circled '11' and includes the instruction 'STRG. mp'. Measure 12 is marked with a circled '12'. The piano accompaniment features chords and arpeggiated figures. The vocal line includes a triplet in measure 11 and a slur in measure 12.

Musical score for measures 13, 14, and 15. The score is written for voices and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). Measure 13 is marked with a circled '13' and includes the instruction 'CON SU.'. Measure 14 is marked with a circled '14'. Measure 15 is marked with a circled '15'. The piano accompaniment features chords and arpeggiated figures. The vocal line includes a slur in measure 13 and a triplet in measure 15.

Musical score for measures 16, 17, and 18. The score is written for voices and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). Measure 16 is marked with a circled '16' and includes the instruction 'CON SU.'. Measure 17 is marked with a circled '17'. Measure 18 is marked with a circled '18'. The piano accompaniment features chords and arpeggiated figures. The vocal line includes a triplet in measure 16 and a slur in measure 17.

There are five statements of the chaconne theme, producing a movement of considerable structural strength and ingenuity, and culminating in a shattering climax worth quoting as an example of Newman's clear and coherent dissonances, here resulting from a shake in the woodwinds, a repeated pattern in the Novachord (top line), and a trombone alternating between A and B flat.

7:37

A 695

SEGUE

We cannot reproduce further examples, but one should mention the lovely flute solo taking up Miriam's song, the beautiful chorus of men's voices in the scene of Peter, or the chaconne theme in an entirely new treatment of high divided strings when Marcellus finds his faith. The final Scene of Marcellus and Diana walking proudly and fearlessly to their death is introduced by the chaconne which suddenly bursts into a final Hallelujah in the Handel manner. This emergence for the first time of a strongly tonal and diatonic music has the effect of jarring one back into the world of reality, where he becomes more fully aware of the ancient spectacle just witnessed through modern eyes.

Since Mr. Newman was himself to have written this article, I have tried to present it somewhat as I thought he might, refraining from any great amount of critical appraisal. But here a word of tribute might not be amiss. For this is something new in film music; it is not only highly successful background music, but is cast in a symphonic mould, each sequence being near to a symphonic movement in itself, and the whole strongly unified not only by close adherence to the basic thematic material, but by a keen sense of integration of varying elements. It is a definite step toward the "film opera" which has been the dream of many a composer, though of course the film itself is very much a movie. In his methods, then, Newman shows the influence of Schoenberg and Berg, but here the resemblance ends. For his music draws from sources unencumbered by dogma, and is immediately attractive to the popular audience.

Hollywood composers have been the butt of many unpleasantries by non film composers, but despite the restrictions which the nature of their medium imposes, they have enjoyed one great advantage which is the lasting envy of other composers - constant contact with their audience. Given enough time and talent, it is surely producing a music of value to both layman and connoisseur. The score of THE ROBE is a landmark well worth study by any serious composer.

THE ROBE.. 20th Century-Fox. Richard Burton, Jean Simmons. Director, Henry Koster. Music Alfred Newman. Orchestrations, Edward Powell. Technicolor. CinemaScope production.

Record: Decca DL 9012. Music from THE ROBE; Alfred Newman conducting the Hollywood Symphony Orchestra. Carole Richards, alto soloist.