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# News and Events

August 2000

## On the Web

A year ago we had launched the MRS website and its electronic bulletin (seven issues to date). In September 1999 webmaster Matthew Gear established the **Rózsa Forum** as a key feature. It was a red-letter day. Many of us remember growing up unable to share our enthusiasms and discoveries. Now people from around the world talk Rózsa almost every day. Matthew has earned our gratitude for this liberating achievement. The MRS site also includes a short biography by Christopher Palmer, a filmography, and catalogs of scores and PMS back issues. Discographies are in the works.

For the “on-line” half of our membership as well as countless other Rózsaophiles around the world, the Forum is the first alert of concerts or recordings. But half of our membership depends on the printed journal for news of Rózsa happenings. The present section is primarily for them.

## Performances

Robert McDuffie continued touring with the Violin Concerto in Raleigh, North Carolina, and Louisville, Kentucky. The soloist has spoken of wanting to play this great piece “as long as my arms can lift a violin.” We will do our best to keep readers posted in advance.

Jerry Goldsmith gave one of his more adventurous concerts on 22 May at the Barbican Centre, London. Franz Waxman (THE SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS); Alfred Newman (ALL ABOUT EVE); Alex North (VIVA ZAPATA); and Miklós Rózsa (Love Theme and Parade of the Charioteers from BEN-HUR) were the other featured composers.

Introducing BEN-HUR, Goldsmith mentioned the high cultural influences existing in Hollywood in the 1940s and the various Euro-

pean émigrés whose presence collectively improved the artistic culture. These émigrés included Rózsa, and he then went on to repeat the oft-quoted tale about seeing SPELLBOUND and not only wanting to marry Ingrid Bergman but also liking the score so much that he knew he wanted to become a film composer. Noting that he later studied with Rózsa at the University of Southern California, Goldsmith went on to say that he found Rózsa to be a most gentle and cultured man. Finally, he recounted how, when they met in Rome in 1962 (he scoring FREUD, RÓZSA SODOM AND GOMORRAH), he suggested that now that Rózsa had finished doing yet another film full of battles and marches, maybe he should have a long vacation. “Oh, no,” came the rejoinder, “now I have to start on a fresh commission [the *Notturno ungherese*] for Mr. Ormandy to play!”

A theremin concert at New York’s Lincoln Center Summer Festival (19 July) featured the Russian theremin virtuoso Lydia Kavina (Lev Theremin’s grand-niece and his last pupil). Included was a chamber version of the SPELLBOUND Concerto. This music, discovered in the Caramoor archives, is for theremin, oboe, piano, and string quartet. Mode Records, which cosponsored the event, plans a recording of the program, which also included the premiere of a suite from Howard Shore’s ED WOOD.

Daniel Robbins gave a recital of Rózsa’s piano music in October in Perry, New York.

The Viola Concerto will be heard in Philadelphia on 12, 13, and 16 January 2001 (Friday, Saturday, and Tuesday). Roberto Díaz, principal violist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, will perform under Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos. Works by Falla and Respighi fill out the program. We’ll be there—probably on Saturday the 13th.

*(continued on page 30)*

# ***Miklós Rózsa's Thief of Bagdad***

## *A Study in Sources*

Lothar Heinle

In 1923 Douglas Fairbanks commissioned Mortimer Wilson to write the music for his spectacular silent picture *THE THIEF OF BAGDAD*. A contemporary news clipping put it this way:

For 'The Thief of Bagdad' [Wilson] has evolved a theme characteristic of each of the principal characters—and separate motifs in keeping with the main situations. These he has woven into a colorful fabric of harmony to serve as background for players and action. . . . Music lovers pronounce this work a symphonic masterpiece.<sup>1</sup>

The very same thing could have been said seventeen years later about Miklós Rózsa's outstanding score for Alexander Korda's Technicolor remake. *THE THIEF OF BAGDAD* was not only the first score to win Rózsa international recognition, it still remains the best score ever composed for an Arabian Nights fantasy. Only Bernard Herrmann's *THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD* (1958) is comparable to Rózsa's effort, although the musical approach is of course different.

Gifted through his Hungarian heritage with a remarkable sense for genuinely colorful tunes and themes, Rózsa proved to be the right composer for this kind of score. But there is another distinct influence that becomes apparent with careful listening to the *THIEF* score: the specific employment of techniques developed by nineteenth-century composers to evoke quasi-oriental and exotic flair. While these techniques have become the basic "roots" for almost any Arabian Nights fantasy score, several musical moments in *THIEF* can be traced back to particular distinctive sources which must have been meticulously studied by Rózsa.

### ***Oriental Heritage***

Orient-Occident relations in music had existed for centuries, but often due to merely chance contacts or unproved, rather superficial impressions of the imaginative kind. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the European translations of the *Thousand and One Nights* not only inspired sequels and imitations but triggered an overall romantic longing for the magic dream world of the Orient. Soon poets and art-

ists were followed by composers, who also traveled to the faraway countries of North Africa and the Middle East, all the while exploring the nature and character of indigenous “oriental” music. Paris became the center of Oriental interests. The 1830s and 1840s in general saw increasing production and reception of compositions with an exotic background. Berlioz and Liszt had already popularized the concept of program music, which was gathering more and more influence. At the same time, the Middle East became a real political issue. In 1830 France wrested Algeria from Turkish control; colonizing activities took place in Tunisia and Morocco during the following years. As Victor Hugo observed as early as 1829 in the preface to his poetry collection *Les orientales*: the Orient had become, for both the intellect and the imagination, a sort of widespread preoccupation.<sup>2</sup>

In 1833 the young French composer Félicien David (1810–1876) undertook an extensive journey through Turkey, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. The musical fruit of his journey was the symphonic ode *Le désert*, a large-scale piece in three parts for narrator, soloists, chorus, and orchestra which was premiered with tremendous success on December 8, 1844, at the Salle Ventadour in Paris. Praised by eminent contemporaries like Berlioz, *Le désert* was the first attempt to incorporate genuine oriental melodies (such as a faithfully transcribed *muezzin* chant David had heard in Egypt) into a full-fledged exotic orchestral piece.<sup>3</sup> Later, Algeria and Egypt became favorite resorts for Camille Saint-Saens (1835–1921), giving him the exotic source and inspiration of the *Suite algérienne* (1880) and *Africa* (1891). His Fifth Piano Concerto in F major (nicknamed the *Egyptian*) was written in 1896 during a winter holiday in Egypt. It features an extended interlude before the final movement that is based on a gentle Nubian love song.

Printed collections of transcribed Arabian folk melodies soon found their way in other countries. While composing his Symphony No.2, *Antar*, in 1867–1868, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov made use of a collection of Algerian Arab melodies once collected by the pioneering ethnomusicologist Salvador Daniel. A copy of this collection was also in Alexander Borodin’s possession. A principal Arab subject is introduced by the cor anglais in the fourth movement, when Prince Antar is about to taste the death-bringing joy of love in the arms of the Palmyran queen Gül-Nazar. The tune was provided by Rimsky’s fellow composer Alexander Dargomizhsky from another collection.

Using genuine Oriental material became rather the exception than the rule. In its infancy Oriental music had been mostly poor imitation of alien cultural practice; later it developed into a more general mode of representing and suggesting rather than imitating. Western composers soon dropped the tendency toward ethnomusical correctness. Romantic longing was the prevalent mood, and “exoticism” had therefore to be articulated in a musical language comprehensible to Western audiences. Most authentic African or Asian music would have been regarded as monotonous because of the absence of chordal structures and the odd melodic proportions. So any composer who intended to evoke exotic oriental flair of any kind had to settle for materials and “tools” akin to

the European tradition. Moreover, by 1900 composers began to feel that a real-life alternative to Western fare could no longer be found in the Middle East. In the rush of imperial conquest and aggressive cultural colonialism, ancient cities like Cairo and Algiers had been partly reshaped in European style. Artistically the Orient as reality made way for the Orient as an abstract idea.<sup>2</sup>

Quasi-oriental melodic material was often derived from the so-called gypsy minor, a scale with many augmented seconds introduced by Franz Liszt. The pentatonic scale, already employed by Saint-Saens in his early march *Orient et occident*, became a favorite item for impressionistic colors. Simple modal harmonies of fourths and fifths suggested a special eeriness; this quality was often enhanced by the employment of a wordless chorus. When the Danish composer Carl Nielsen (1865–1931) wrote his incidental music for Adam Gottlob Oehlschläger’s drama *Aladdin* in 1919, he not only had “ghostly” male voices piped through megaphone-like tubes but used female voices without text in the “Blackamoors Dance.”<sup>4</sup> Other famous examples of female wordless choruses can be found in Claude Debussy’s *Nocturnes* (1899), Maurice Ravel’s ballet *Daphnis et Chloe* (1911), and Gustav Holst’s *The Planets* (1916). Instrumental solos were often given to the woodwinds, especially to the flute and the cor anglais, which most closely approximated oriental sound models.

Around 1918 the typical nineteenth-century view of the Middle East and exotics was percolating gradually from “high” into popular culture. The best musical example is *In A Persian Market* (1920), a piece for band or small orchestra by the English composer Albert Ketèlby (1875–1959) complete with a pentatonic plea for alms sung by the orchestra members. The silent cinema offered a new means of expression in popularizing the Orient, thus spurring a number of “ambitious” composers: Eduard Künneke (1885–1953) wrote the original score for *Das Weib des Pharao* (*Pharaoh’s Wife*, 1920) directed by Ernst Lubitsch. Ernö Rapée’s more generally oriented *Motion Picture Moods* anthology (1924) contained pieces like *In the Sight of the Oasis*.<sup>2</sup>

### *Production Problems, Ludwig Berger, Oscar Straus*

June 1939 saw preparations for the filming of *THE THIEF OF BAGDAD*. Those were difficult times for starting such a huge venture, and not only because of the threat of war in Europe. Although Alexander Korda’s latest film *THE FOUR FEATHERS* had been quite a success, his company was experiencing severe financial difficulties at this time. In the end Korda lost control over both London Films and the big studio facility at Denham, which was now run by the Prudential Life Assurance Company. Of course Prudential Life would also provide financial backing for the production of *THIEF*, and they insisted that Korda had to enlist an independent director.

Problems began when Korda tested several directors. According to Miklós Rózsa, directors came and went, and Korda decided in the end to take on the German

Ludwig Berger.<sup>5</sup> Berger was born as Ludwig Gottfried Heinrich Bamberger on 6 January 1892, in Mainz. His father, a wealthy banker, was also a gifted amateur violinist, and his mother had once been a piano pupil of Clara Schumann. Berger received musical tuition and cello lessons at an early age, but after the gymnasium he studied art history and German literature in Munich and Heidelberg. In 1914 he graduated with a doctoral dissertation on the German painter Johann Conrad Seekatz (1719–1768) and then volunteered for military service in World War I. After a few months he was found medically unfit and released. He then worked briefly as assistant clerk at the Arts and Crafts Museum of Stuttgart. The discovery of an obscure Mozart opera score led him towards staging and directing, first at the Mainz Municipal Theatre, then at theatres in Darmstadt, Hamburg, and Berlin. Berger's first visit to Babelsberg Film Studios at Potsdam in 1919 resulted in a contract with Erich Pommer, and in October 1920 Berger's film debut, *Der Richter von Zalamea*, had a glamorous premiere. In 1922 he directed *Aschenputtel: Der verlorene Schuh* (*Cinderella: The Lost Shoe*), a well-crafted fairy-tale adaptation that was praised abroad.

By 1939 Berger already had a considerable number of films to his credit in Germany, the U.S., and France. Nevertheless, when Korda took him on as principal director, he did so without having seen anything of Berger's previous work. This proved to be a great mistake, since Berger's expressionistic style emphasized meticulous concentration on the actors, which did not suit Korda's conception of the THIEF as a larger-than-life spectacle. Berger worked carefully and slowly with the actors in order to get good performances from the start, while Korda wanted the actors to be literally dominated by huge colorful sets: he often would turn to his brother Vincent in a rage, saying things like "build this and that four times higher and paint it all red!"<sup>6</sup> Great Britain's war preparations and the prospect of petrol rationing put enormous time pressure on the whole production. (Rózsa recalled being forced to move from his London flat to a little cottage ten minutes' walk from the studio.) Finally the pressures and conflicts resulted in terrible rows between Berger and Korda. They would both appear on the set, Berger would instruct actors and crew, only to be pushed aside by Korda who started redirecting everything that Berger had done before. Chaos was complete when Korda brought in Michael Powell and Tim Whelan to shoot all the action scenes. Script changes became the daily routine, and according to actor John Justin (Ahmad), there sometimes wasn't a script at all. Although Berger got major screen credit together with Powell and Whelan, hardly anything of his footage survived the final cut.

Another problem concerned the score. All the symphonic underscoring was assigned to Rózsa from the outset. But several on-screen cues like the "Silvermaid's Dance" were required before shooting, and these were to be written by the Viennese composer Oscar Straus (1870–1954). Straus, born in Vienna, had studied harmony and counterpoint with Hermann Graedener before becoming a private pupil of Max Bruch in Berlin. Waltz-king Johann Strauss encouraged him to gain practical knowledge as a

kapellmeister, and from 1893 to 1899 Oscar Straus conducted at theatres in Brünn, Pressburg, Mainz, and Hamburg. Around 1900 he moved to Berlin and worked as pianist and composer for Ernst von Wolzogen's famous cabaret *Überbrettel*. His operettas *Die lustigen Nibelungen* (*The Merry Nibelungen*, 1904), a witty Bayreuth parody, and *Ein Walzertraum* (*Waltz Dream*, 1907) made him famous overnight. Oscar Straus remained a full-blown, highly gifted operetta composer all his life, but he never tackled large concert forms.

Ludwig Berger had previously worked with Straus on the film *Trois valse* (1938) in Paris, he was loyal to him and saw nothing wrong with his music from a stylistic point of view. But it was clear from the outset that Straus's puppet-like operetta style (labeled "Viennese candy-floss" by MR) would neither match the basic concept of a colorful larger-than-life film nor fit the symphonic-impressionistic approach of MR's underscoring.

The story of how Korda and Rózsa "convinced" Berger to get Straus off the contract is well known.<sup>7</sup> Because of his upbringing Berger had considerable musical taste and understanding; he finally had to admit the quality of MR's on-screen cues. Misunderstandings on both sides made Berger's London stint an unhappy one, and in his autobiography, *Wir sind vom gleichen Stoff, aus dem die Träume sind* (*We are such stuff as dreams are made of*—a quotation from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*), the THIEF is mentioned only very briefly.<sup>8</sup>

### *The Score*

Miklós Rózsa encountered indigenous Arabic music for the first time in the British Museum Reading Room while researching THE FOUR FEATHERS. Since the plot unfolded against the historical background of British colonial struggles in the Sudan, he tried to create convincing musical atmosphere by weaving his own pseudo-Sudanese melodies through the score. The best example can be heard in the scene when boatmen on either side of the Nile pull barges and call to each other in a sort of African antiphony.

No special research was necessary for THE THIEF OF BAGDAD, a pure fairy-tale fantasy not being set in a specific historical period or dealing with historical characters. Here Rózsa created his very own quasi-oriental material, drawing largely on the "gypsy minor" scale. One can hear this especially in the street scene with Ahmad as blind beggar, in Jaffar's harem, in the Basra marketplace, and in the Silvermaid's Dance. Deeper inspection of some of the motives and themes reveals that Rózsa must have done at least some research of his own.

Ex.1: Rózsa; "Love Theme"



Ex.2: Rimsky-Korsakov; "The Young Prince And The Young Princess"



Ex.3: Rózsa; "Abu gets the Magic Eye" (Chorus)



Ex.4: Ravel; "Daphnis & Chloe" / 3me Partie (Sopranos I)



Ex.5: Debussy; "Sirènes" / 2nd Theme (Sopranos)



Ex.6: Rózsa; "Love Theme"



For political reasons French music was anathema during Rózsa's Leipzig years. But it is obvious that he studied the scores of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel later on, probably during his stay in Paris. Their use of pentatonic scales and wordless chorus became a prime tool for Rózsa while composing the THIEF. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* (1888) too served as model for melodic construction.

Rózsa's "Love Theme" for the Princess (Ex.1) is based on distinct correspond-

ing three-note-motives b-flat – c – b-flat / g – e-flat – g. The transposed opening bars of the third movement “The Young Prince and the Young Princess” in *Scheherazade* reveal the same stepwise rising and falling motive (Ex.2, here transposed from the original key of G).

When Abu at last obtains the All-Seeing Eye, a wordless chorus keeps repeating an upward motive c-sharp – e (Ex.3), set against rushing 16th-notes. The third part, “Lever du jour,” of Ravel’s *Daphnis et Chloe* contains a similar structure, with the sopranos repeating a downward whole-tone step a – g in a wavelike up-and-down motion (Ex.4), accompanied by rushing 32nd-notes. The voice-leading and the ample employment of a wordless chorus both reflect a general *idea* of exoticism, since Ravel’s ballet has no Arabic or Middle Eastern background, but deals with mythical ancient Greece.

Ex.5 shows the second theme sung by wordless sopranos in Claude Debussy’s *Sirènes* (m. 58 in the second movement of his *Nocturnes*). Significant here is a triplet of quarter notes: g – a-flat – g. The last measures of the love theme for Ahmad and the Princess (Ex.6, likewise to be found in the song “Oh, Throbbing Heart of Mine” sung in the Princess’s Garden) contains the very same triplet group (g – a-flat – g), although this time the triplet is formed out of eighth notes. Note how both Debussy and Rózsa settle for some kind of prolonged resting point at the end on e and e-flat respectively, which is denoted by a whole note.

In sum Miklós Rózsa ingeniously melded his own musical inventiveness with the atmospheric tools provided by the French and Russian School. These few examples of carefully assimilated masterpieces show how another master achieved in *The THIEF OF BAGDAD* a score that itself became a role model for exotic musical enhancement in other films.

## Notes

1. Gary Marmorstein, *Hollywood Rhapsody: Movie Music and Its Makers, 1900 to 1975* (New York, 1997), p. 23.
2. Ralph P. Locke, “Cutthroats and Cashbah Dancers, Muezzins and Timeless Sands: Musical Images of the Middle East,” in *Nineteenth-Century Music* 22:1 (Summer 1998), 29.
3. Peter Gradenwitz, “Félicien David (1810–1876) and French Romantic Orientalism,” in *Musical Quarterly* 62:4 (1976), 471–506.
4. Manuel Gervink, *Exotismus oder Populismus? Carl Nielsens Aladdin-Suite*. In *Lux Oriente: Begegnungen der Kulturen in der Musikforschung. Festschrift Robert Günther zum 65. Geburtstag* (Kassel, 1995).
5. Miklós Rózsa, *Double Life* (Kent 1982).
6. *KinoKonTexte* 3 (1982), 62–64.
7. Steven Dwight Wescott, “Miklós Rózsa: A Portrait of the Composer as Seen Through an Analysis of His Early Works for Feature Films and the Concert Stage” (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1990), p.232.
8. Ludwig Berger, *Wir sind vom gleichen Stoff, aus dem die Träume sind* (Tübingen 1953).

# The Thief of Bagdad: *The Musical?*

*A Look at the Syracuse Manuscripts*

Richard H. Bush

AMONG the papers and recordings in the Miklós Rózsa collection at the George Arents Research Library of Syracuse University is music manuscript from THE THIEF OF BAGDAD. This music is fascinating and provides a glimpse—albeit a murky one—of an unseen side of the classic Korda film.

The material seems to consist largely of unused songs and alternative or discarded cues. It is ironic that Rózsa's original sketches for the final film score do not seem to survive, yet the incomplete and discarded Syracuse material does. Perhaps the Korda organization took the final materials back to England, where they were lost during World War II (possibly during the bombing of the studio). The discards evidently remained in the composer's possession until he donated the material to Syracuse in 1964. At the time there was a tax advantage to encourage such donations, and many universities acquired film music materials. Rózsa and Franz Waxman were among those who made deposits at Syracuse. We don't know why Rózsa had this particular grab bag of material from THE THIEF OF BAGDAD in his possession, but since the onion skin masters for the concert suite are among the collection, it is possible that he acquired the sketches when preparing the suite for recording in the mid-1950s.

Because of the large number of songs that Rózsa composed, one must assume that the original concept of the film was very different from the final picture that is now considered one of the finest classic fantasy films of all time. Elsewhere in this issue, Lothar Heinle details some of the background of how Rózsa came to compose THIEF only after Oscar Straus bowed out. Here I will attempt to describe the differences between selections from the Syracuse collection and the completed film.

Most of the penciled manuscript is full score, in Rózsa's own hand (see facing page). The orchestrations are on 22-stave manuscript score. There are also some sketches. Some of the material is timed, and some cues include reel number identification, implying that the music was composed to accompany scenes that were actually filmed. Other material is devoid of such markings, perhaps because it was composed for prerecordings or other preliminary purposes.

## *Market*

This cue is described in Rózsa's autobiography (pp. 98–99 in the 1989 edition). It was composed for the chase scene in the marketplace of Bagdad, where Abu first



<b>Score Parts in the Rózsa Collection of the George Arents Research Library, Syracuse University</b>				
<b>Thief Score Cues at Syracuse University</b>				
<b>Cue</b>	<b>Reel</b>	<b>Pages</b>	<b>Orch. Score / Sketch</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Abu's Sailor Song		2	O	"I Want to Be a Sailor"
Abu's Thief Song		3	O	
Awakening	06m1	6	O	Used sans chorus
Bagdad Harbour	01m3	8	O	
Bagdad Night	02m5	12	O	Extra 2 measures unknown
Ballad		4	S + O	
Caravan		2	S	
Deserted Garden	12m2	2	O	
Djinn's Song		2	S	
Flying Djinn	10m5	9	O	Alt. version
Flying Horse		6	O	Used in film
Flying Horse – 2nd	04M	9	O	Alt. scoring
Love Scene	04m4	20	O	First meeting in garden
Love Song		3	O	"Oh, Throbbing Heart of Mine"
Market		51	O	
Princess's Escape	06m3–6m4	2	O	
Rape of the Princess	06m2	8	O	
River Scene	03m1–3m2	8	O	Pages before song missing
Ruby Montage	11m2	11	O	
Seaman's Song		6	O	
Storm		9	O	Used in film
Sultan's Toys Pt. 1		4	O	Music box measures missing
Sultan's Toys Pt. 2	04m8	5	O	Assembly and flight
Temple	09m1	6	O	
Waltz Song	11m	3	O	

makes his appearance at the start of the flashback. Rózsa relates that he was asked to prescore the scene in the manner of a musical, and it was the director's intention to strictly synchronize the actions of the actors to the music during playback on the set. Rózsa wrote that this approach did not work: the actors looked like puppets, and after a futile week producer Alexander Korda saw the results and put a stop to the quasi-musical treatment. He then asked Rózsa to rescore the scene dramatically.

The cue, which is forty-seven pages long and contains no reel numbers or timings, offers an intriguing glimpse of what the film might have become had cooler heads than Berger not prevailed. It is scored for full orchestra with extensive percussion (including gong, cowbells, glockenspiel, xylophone, jingle bells, harp, celesta, piano) and both mixed and children's chorus as well as solo singers. There is no real melodic focus, for the cue is essentially a rhythmic piece, with the vocal parts providing a stabilizing centrum, and with lyrics such as "sweet fruit," and "melons" sung in syllabic fashion. Unsung words (possibly dialogue cueing) are noted: "Oh you nasty little wretches, Oh you dirty pack of thieves." To this the children's chorus responds with musical laughter. The mixed chorus then sings a recurring refrain, "Stop him. Catch him!" While Rózsa implies that "Sabu's song" was woven into this piece, it's not the familiar "I Want to Be a Sailor" that is quoted, but rather the unused "Abu's Thief Song."

The overall effect of the piece is not really that of an ensemble number in a musical, where there is usually a strong statement of the song melody with refrain by the chorus, but rather a group recitative in an opera. The closest film musical number that comes to mind is the market scene in the Samuel Goldwyn film HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN (1952), where vendors hawk their produce by speak-singing their lines.

### *Abu's Thief Song*

An engaging little tune in a quasi-march rhythm, with only the beginning lyrics indicated on the manuscript: "I'm told that ..." (example 1). This tune is not nearly as catchy as "I Want to Be a Sailor," and one must suppose that one theme song for Sabu was deemed sufficient. The manuscript bears no timings or reel numbers, so it must be assumed that the music was composed for prerecording. The song is quoted not only in the unused "Market" episode (see above), but also briefly in the scene where Abu and Ahmad escape from Bagdad in a skiff. When Abu abases himself before Ahmad, the music breaks out into a jaunty scherzo paraphrasing the "Thief Song."

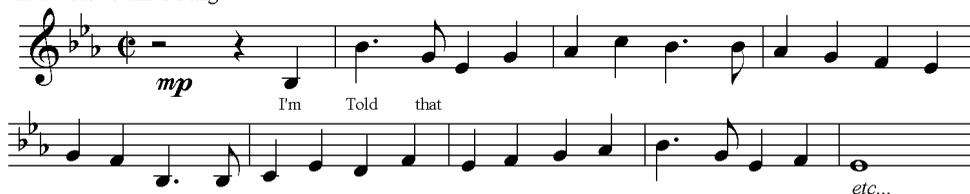
### *Sultan's Toys; Introduction of the Flying Horse; Sultan's Toys Part 2; Flying Horse (second version)*

Jaffar arrives in Basra, and is shown the Sultan's collection of mechanical toys. Jaffar presents his own toy: a wondrous wind-up flying horse. The Sultan rides the horse above the city. While the music preceding the ride is virtually identical to that in the film, the big surprise is that Rózsa also composed a completely different version of the "Flying Horse" cue. The version in the film (and in the concert suite), is a light confection, musically reflective of the childlike delight the Sultan takes in his new toy. The alternative version, by contrast, carries its melody in the brass, and ends with a powerful statement of its theme (example 2).

## *The Awakening*

This cue accompanies the scene when the blind Ahmad is led to the Princess and awakens her from her spell-cast sleep. Rózsa's original arrangement called for a wordless mixed chorus, which is not heard in the final cue as recorded. Musically this scoring is exquisite, but perhaps the chorus, singing in ornamental counterpoint, was considered too "busy" for the intimate scene it accompanied. The music begins with the love theme (example 3), and then switches to the Ahmad theme (example 4), its basic structure prefiguring the love scene when Ahmad and the Princess first meet.

ex. 1: Abu's Thief Song



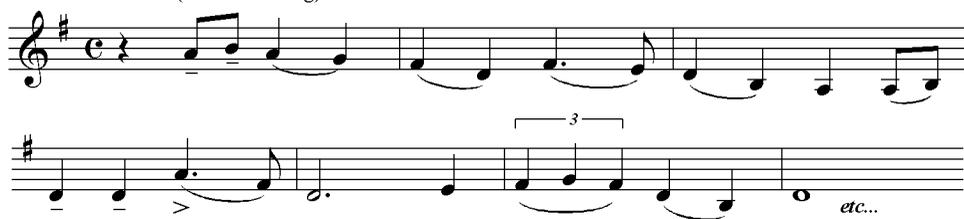
Musical notation for ex. 1: Abu's Thief Song. The score is in 2/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody begins with a rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a dotted quarter note A4, and an eighth note B4. The lyrics "I'm Told that" are written below the notes. The piece concludes with a whole note G4 and the text "etc..."

ex. 2: Flying Horse (second version)



Musical notation for ex. 2: Flying Horse (second version). The score is in 2/4 time, key of D major. The tempo marking is *Allegro agitato*. The melody consists of eighth notes with accents, starting on D4 and moving up to A4. The piece concludes with a half note D4 and the text "etc..."

ex 3: Love Theme (The Awakening)



Musical notation for ex 3: Love Theme (The Awakening). The score is in 2/4 time, key of D major. The melody begins with a rest, followed by a quarter note D4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note F4. The piece concludes with a whole note D4 and the text "etc..."

## *Temple*

It is anyone's guess what this 1:28 cue is. The reel number indication is 9M1, placing it chronologically somewhere before "Flying Djinn." It begins with the tempo of *moderato*, and quickly switches to *allegro e agitato*. The scoring is primarily for woodwinds,

percussion, and a string tremolo. The only text notation, about one minute into the piece, says “Ahmad’s Picture.”

ex. 4: Ahmad Theme (The Awakening)



### *Ballad and Deserted Garden*

These are apparently two alternative scorings—both unused—for the same scene, set in the garden where the Princess first met Ahmad. The pool is now choked with weeds, and the Princess tearfully tells her father, the Sultan, that she does not want to marry Jaffar. Both cues are orchestrated with great simplicity for harp, two first violins, two second violins, two violas, and two cellos. The strings are muted. In addition, “Ballad” includes a part for solo voice with lyrics by Sir Robert Vansittart (below), as well as added coloring for flute and clarinet, celesta, and contrabass (which doubles some of the cello line).

*The Deserted Garden*  
(*Second Garden Song / Princess Song*)  
Lyrics by Sir Robert Vansittart

Two hearts were lost this spring,  
Among the flowers;  
And only one was found.  
That heart was ours.

And now that you are lost,  
That heart’s a Stone.  
But which? For who can find  
Two hearts alone!

Manuscript for “Ballad” includes sketches, full score (missing one page), and additional lyrics. The orchestrations do not identify a reel number and contain no timings, implying that the music was composed for prerecording. “Deserted Garden” (example 5) is a reworking of the previous cue sans voice, with the instrumental differences noted above. The collection includes the full score, with a reel number of 12M2.

Both pieces, essentially similar, are different from the songs that remained in the film. “Seaman’s Song,” “I Want to Be a Sailor,” and “Love Song” all have the rich, inventive melody that characterizes Rózsa’s film work. “Ballad” is closer to German lied in concept; one feels that Rózsa was constrained in composing to Vansittart’s poetry.

How do the two original compositions differ from the one ultimately used in





Sailor” as the dog is tossed overboard.

ex. 9: Caravan

The musical score for 'Caravan' is presented in three systems. The first system features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef, showing chords and a rhythmic bass line. The lyrics 'Dong Dong Lur - ching a - long' are written above the staff. The second system continues the piano accompaniment and includes vocal lines with lyrics: 'Out of the dusk in - to the night', 'noise - less and lus - ty drear - y and dus - ty'. The third system shows the piano accompaniment with lyrics: 'Looms the long car - a - van - line in - to sight' and ends with 'etc...'. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is common time (C).

### *Flying Djinn*

The Djinn takes Abu on a magical flight to the Temple of Dawn, “where earth meets sky.” This is one of the most grandiose and uplifting cues in the film (example 11). Interestingly, the Syracuse alternative scoring is even more celestial, for a wordless mixed chorus dominates the cue. In the version used in the film, the brass carries the flying djinn theme, and the chorus is largely supportive, not entering until the cue is well underway.

ex. 10: Rape of the Princess

The musical score for 'Rape of the Princess' is shown in a single system with a bass clef. It is divided into two sections: 'Jaffar's Theme' and 'Opening Theme'. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is common time (C).

ex. 11: Flying Djinn

The musical score for 'Flying Djinn' is shown in a single system with a bass clef. It features a melodic line with several accents (>) and a fermata over the final note. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is common time (C).

We will never know how most of these cues came to be, why Rózsa had them in his possession, and what decisions ultimately led to many of them not being used in the finished film. They do offer a tantalizing glimpse of the early period of a master composer and the types of expressive choices he made on one project.

## A Members' Poll

YOU won't be seeing a Best of the Nineties poll here in PMS. Our famous critics' surveys of the best of the 1970s (PMS 30) and 1980s (PMS 48) were inspirational in their day—the first of their kind. But nowadays everybody's doing it. And admirable websites like *Film Score Monthly's* make massive polling and instantaneous feedback a part of the current film music scene. As usual, our own surveys were a little different, perhaps touched with a bit of elitism. They were billed as “critics' polls,” and every one of the participants had at least some modest claim to being more than a common listener. No more! Today's polling universe belongs to the mass circulation journals. Older folks, including myself, are less and less attuned to the current film music scene. We are more than content to sit on the sidelines now and wait for the recommendations of those who still wax enthusiastic about what's going on today.

Instead, we decided to take a survey of our own members. Even this modest effort is now on the verge of obsolescence. Our next poll will surely be managed on line. But here, for whatever they may be worth, are the responses of a sampling of loyal Rózsaophiles circa 1998–1999. Obviously the responses predate such outstanding albums as Rhino's *Miklós Rózsa at MGM* and Telarc's great concerto coupling.

The poll appeared in PMS 56 and was later offered via the early numbers of the electronic *MRS Bulletin*). Responses were few in number (only about thirty, counting some informal oral contributions), but interesting in content. Here are some of the highlights. Table 1 indicates members' favorite Rózsa scores. In addition to those listed here, single mentions were made of THE FOUR FEATHERS, THE KILLERS, SECRET BEYOND THE DOOR, SAHARA, PLYMOUTH ADVENTURE, THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, LAST EMBRACE, FIVE GRAVES TO CAIRO, SUNDOWN, BRUTE FORCE, LADY HAMILTON, and DIANE.

There are few surprises here. BEN-HUR was named by 29 of the 30 respondents. (Joseph Velo was the exception; see PMS 56.) As somebody commented earlier: “It will be interesting to see what comes in second.” The answer, by a solid margin, is EL CID. Miklós Rózsa may have considered his score to have been badly treated. To this day, significant portions have never been heard. But the music that did make it into the film has impressed almost as many of us as the mighty HUR.

Third choice is a three-way tie between the two Christian spectacles at either end of Rózsa's MGM career and the Arabian Nights fantasy from an earlier decade. We did not tabulate the answers to our original question about favorite “periods” of MR's movie career. The answer is readily apparent in table 1: the historical scores dominate. You have to go all the way down to the tenth position to find a black-and-white film from the 1940s, and no true noir drew more than two votes. DOUBLE INDEMNITY was

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**Table 1: Favorite Rózsa Scores**

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<b><u>Film</u></b>	<b><u>Votes</u></b>
Ben-Hur	29
El Cid	22
The Thief of Bagdad	12
Quo Vadis	12
King of Kings	12
Ivanhoe	9
Madame Bovary	6
Young Bess	6
Sodom and Gomorrah	6
The Lost Weekend	5
Spellbound	4
Julius Caesar	4
Lust for Life	4
The Jungle Book	3
The Red House	3
Double Indemnity	2
The Naked City	2
Knights of the Round Table	2
Moonfleet	2
Time after Time	2

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crucial in Rózsa's career and has been much admired by Royal S. Brown in print. But this heartless picture has never been the music closest to the average Rózsaophile's soul.

As for "soundtrack" albums, whether original or revised, there was little deviation from the choice of films. The Rhino BEN-HUR was the virtually everyone's first choice. Ron Martin is almost the sole dissenting voice here: he prefers the Savina version on MGM 1E1. Anthologies elicited more divided opinions (table 2). Both of the

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**Table 2: Favorite Anthology Album**

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<b><u>Anthology</u></b>	<b><u>Votes</u></b>
<i>Miklós Rózsa Conducts His Great Film Music</i> (Polydor)	10
<i>Spellbound: The Classic Film Scores of Miklós Rózsa</i> (Gerhardt / RCA)	4
<i>Hollywood Legend</i> (Bernstein / Varèse)	2

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top choices appeared in the annus mirabilis of 1974. Charles Gerhardt's *Spellbound: The Classic Film Scores of Miklós Rózsa* arrived first, had greater production values, and offered an astonishingly rich texture of orchestral sound. It was a great entry in a great series. Rózsa's own Polydor anthology series made its debut only a few months later. The textures were leaner, the rhythms were more taut, and despite thinner orchestral sound, the authentic voice of the maestro was impossible to deny. Some readers mentioned the first album, while others cited the entire series. Almost everyone agreed that the Polydor was the finest collection of all. There were two votes for Elmer Bernstein's Nuremberg collection called *Hollywood Legend* (Colosseum/Varèse). The runner-ups included the Bernstein Utah collection (SPELLBOUND and *New England Symphonette*) on Varèse, the very first Rózsa film anthology (MADAME BOVARY, IVANHOE, PLYMOUTH ADVENTURE) on MGM (later coupled with some QUO VADIS on TT3001), the fine Silva Screen collection of "epic" scores, and amazingly the low-budget Richard Müller-Lampertz album that was originally called *Music from Wide-Screen Spectaculars* on Somerset and that has survived to the present day in the form of a Varèse CD.

What's needed today? Table 3 reveals a snapshot of member preferences. (Keep in mind that these votes were cast before the two Rhino MGM albums appeared and also before a rash of bootlegs in 1999.) Aside from the listed scores, single votes went to PLYMOUTH ADVENTURE; SPELLBOUND; THE LIGHT TOUCH; CRISS CROSS; A WOMAN'S VENGEANCE; SO PROUDLY WE HAIL; GREEN FIRE; THE ASPHALT JUNGLE; THE MAN IN HALF MOON STREET; THE STRANGE LOVE OF MARTHA IVERS; and EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE.

Our original question was poorly framed. Some readers considered only scores that have never been recorded in any form. There are still a handful of Rózsa scores in that category. A couple of low-grade desert melodramas top this list: VALLEY OF THE KINGS, in which Robert Taylor fended off smugglers while searching for mummies, and DESERT FURY, that weirdly oxymoronic Technicolor noir of 1947, seem to be the most eagerly awaited. Since both Nick Rozsa and William Stromberg have expressed interest in the latter score, the day may not be too far off. Really obscure pictures like SUNDOWN and JACARÉ are another ball of wax. Neither scores nor recordings are known to survive for these early exotica. Reconstructing either of them would be a colossal labor of love.

But other readers took a different tack: Where can we improve on what we've got? DIANE was the clear winner here, achieving something like the dominance of BEN-HUR in earlier categories. All we have are the finale on Polydor (so heavily revised as to constitute a new work) and the exquisitely entwined treatment of the two love themes, "Beauty and Grace," on MGM. The latter is one of the loveliest things Rózsa ever wrote. But it is long out of print and certainly deserves re-recording. DIANE is an extraordinarily rich score and demands the full treatment. Extended tapes do survive. But if there was ever any hope of a Rhino issue, the bootleg seems to have killed it.

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**Table 3: Scores in Need of Recording**

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<u>Title</u>	<u>Votes</u>
Diane	14
Valley of the Kings*	8
The Green Berets	7
Desert Fury*	6
The Four Feathers	5
Lady Hamilton	5
The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes	5
Sundown*	4
The Macomber Affair*	4
Secret beyond the Door*	4
A Double Life	3
Quo Vadis	3
The King's Thief	3
Moonfleet	3
El Cid	3
The Thief of Bagdad	2
The Jungle Book	2
Jacaré*	2
Sahara	2
Five Graves to Cairo	2
The Woman of the Town*	2
The Red House	2
Lust for Life	2
Something of Value*	2
King of Kings	2

*\*Never recorded on disc.*

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My own guess is that if our question had been more clearly phrased, two favorites would have emerged. THE THIEF OF BAGDAD and QUO VADIS. More than two thirds of these scores are on disc. But THIEF deserves completeness and a better-sounding recording. QUO VADIS has an archival representation on MGM and a spectacular recreation on Decca/London. But both versions forsake the lyric purity of the original in favor of a heavier symphonic approach. There is room for a modern recording that stays closer to the pure spirit of antiquity.

How about favorite moments from the film scores? There was far more diversity here (table 4). No one scene received more than eight mentions. If you can't guess the film titles, you're reading the wrong journal!

<b>Scene</b>	<b>Votes</b>
The Burning Desert	8
Legend and Epilogue	7
Miracle and Finale	5
The Waltz	5
Triumphal March	4
The Naval Battle	4
Bess as Queen: Epilogue	3
Ring for Freedom	3
The Mouse and the Bat	3
The Walk on Third Avenue	3
Brutus's Soliloquy and Death	3
Resurrection and Epilogue	2

Every one of these episodes is known from records and CDs. So, too, are most of the less common citations. Perhaps more interesting than to list the favorites that are not yet on disc. (Attention Messers Morgan and Stromberg!) These include: Rodrigo's entrance from *El CID*; John the Baptist in prison from *KING OF KINGS*; starting to write and the alcoholic ward from *THE LOST WEEKEND*; the fire from *THE JUNGLE BOOK*; the closing scenes from *MOONFLEET*; preparations for war from *THE FOUR FEATHERS*; opening the door from *SECRET BEYOND THE DOOR*; the Habari from *SUNDOWN*; on the march and jail cell from *BRUTE FORCE*; young Emma's entrance from *LADY HAMILTON*; the fiesta from *THE BRIBE*; the cat-'o-nine-tails from *KISS THE BLOOD OFF MY HANDS*; Kali's dance from *THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD*; the robbery from *CRISS CROSS*; the fade to silence from *A DOUBLE LIFE*; the family reunion from *PROVIDENCE*; the chase from *DESERT FURY*; and the honeymoon from *SO PROUDLY WE HAIL*. There's plenty of good material left to discover!

We asked about the concert music (table 5). Everybody expressing a preference chose the film scores. A few readers took equal pleasure in the two media. It quickly became apparent that many people had limited exposure to the concert music. The majority had never heard a single Rózsa score in concert. Alan Hamer has had the singular good fortune to hear twenty such performances; I've heard fifteen. But most folks have never had the chance. Even on records, the concert music has had limited exposure. This is a pity, for almost everything has been recorded, and for the out-of-print items the Society has made tapes available at modest cost. In any event, the old standbys are the unsurprising favorites.

How did people discover Rózsa? Again, it's overwhelming. *BEN-HUR* was the entrée for thirteen of us. Nothing else even comes close. And age of exposure seems to

<u>Work</u>	<u>Votes</u>
Violin Concerto, Op. 24	17
Theme, Variations and Finale, Op. 13	15
Notturmo Ungherese, Op. 28	10
Viola Concerto, Op. 37	5
Concerto for Strings, Op. 17	4
Piano Concerto, Op. 31	4
To Everything There Is a Season, Op. 18	3
Piano Sonata, Op. 20	3
Violin Sonata, Op. 40	2
Kaleidoscope, Op. 19	3
Duo for Violin and Piano, Op. 7	2
Three Hungarian Sketches, Op. 14	2
Hungarian Serenade, Op. 25	2
Concert Overture, Op. 26	2
Cello Concerto, Op. 32	2
Tripartita, Op. 33	2

<u>Article (Issue number)</u>	<u>Votes</u>
Frank DeWald's analyses, esp. EL CID (50–51)	7
Mary Peatman on PROVIDENCE (20) and IVAN THE TERRIBLE (16)	3
Score analyses in general	3
The Herrmann (9–10) and Rózsa (12–13) talks from the British Film Institute and Derek Elley's Rózsa interview from <i>Films and Filming</i> (27)	2
Derek Elley's (unfinished) KING OF KINGS analysis (44–45–46)	2
Viola Concerto premiere reports (42)	2
Memorial Issue (53)	2
Letters, checklists, polls, MR the man	2
Mark Koldys's analysis of THE POWER (8)	1
Jack Gallagher's study of the Violin Concerto (22–23)	1

be important. When did you discover the music of Rózsa? Almost certainly during adolescence. Joan-Carles Suau-Rigual discovered Rózsa at 29, K. Selvaraja at 19. For *everybody* else it was between 7 and 18, with the heaviest concentration at 13–14.

Finally there is the Society itself, and *Pro Musica Sana*. Favorite articles were a varied lot (table 6). My favorite reply here came from the person who said, “Too many to name.” That good feeling and the many personal impressions that accompanied the poll have somehow escaped the present statistical compilation. We shall try to capture them in the future.

## Concert Recordings

### Frank K. DeWald

IN PMS 56, John Fitzpatrick reported enthusiastically on the recording sessions for **Koch International 3-7435-2H1**, featuring Sara Davis Buechner in Rózsa’s complete piano works. This is the first time all five works have appeared on a single disc; Eric Parkin’s earlier collection (Unicorn LP UN1-72029 and Cambria CD-1081) omitted the *Kaleidoscope*, Op. 19. Royal S. Brown gave the Buechner disc an enthusiastic review in *Fanfare* 23:1, calling it “Want List” material. John Bell Young was equally effusive in the *American Record Guide*, calling Buechner a “compelling advocate of taste and authority” and “a pianist’s pianist, an imaginative programmer, and one of our best and brightest.”

For this listener, at least, the final product does not live up to the expectations generated by John’s article. Buechner’s performances display formidable technique but inconsistent musicianship.

After beginning with a kind of encore—the “Twilight Waltz” from PROVIDENCE—her main program gets off to a shaky start with the Op. 9 Variations. Buechner applies rubato (a sense of give and take in the underlying pulse or beat) too liberally, making the simple tune sound affected and overblown. As the piece progresses one comes to admire her facility, but there are many places where she does not use enough variety of touch and dynamics for this often lightweight music. Some variations (e.g., the 2nd and 6th) are played (or at least begin) too loudly; the 7th, marked *leggiero* (lightly) is anything but, and the 9th is played far too slowly. The dynamic contrasts throughout are underplayed. The rhythmic energy is good, however, especially in the swaggering 11th variation.

Lack of dynamic contrasts continued to bother me as I listened to the Op. 12 Bagatelles. No. 1 gets underway with nice rhythmic momentum but is louder than the indicated “piano.” Many shifts between loud and soft in the third movement are virtually ignored, yet Buechner shows in a beautiful, sensitively played fifth movement that she has good command of the softer end of the piano’s tonal spectrum. My reverie as I enjoy that lovely final cadence is spoiled, however, when Buechner comes blasting in

with the final movement, which should begin softly and playfully but instead is played too loud.

*Kaleidoscope*, Op. 19, fares well, but where are the shifts between forte and pianissimo in the third movement? Buechner does especially well with the cimbalom effect in the second movement, playing with great gypsy-like passion.

*The Vintner's Daughter Variations*, Op. 23, get off to a shaky start when what should sound like echoes in the theme come off as mere repetitions, but the performance overall is quite successful. The later variations (from no. 6 on) are particularly fine, with excellent changes of mood and a nice warmth (the composer calls for *calore*) in the penultimate one. Only an even more hushed final cadence could have brought the performance to a better conclusion.

By the time one gets to the Sonata, Op. 20, one is prepared for some disappointment, and the rubato which intrudes somewhat in the opening theme supports this expectation, but before long Buechner's superior technique and sensitive musicianship win the day. The beginning of the development section is appropriately dreamy, and the drama and forward momentum of the whole first movement are well captured. In the middle movement, the second theme is nicely eerie, and although the climax at 3:11 is perhaps a bit underplayed Buechner manages a nice change of mood shortly after at 3:27. The finale is the highlight of the disc. It is rhythmically vigorous, and the voicing is very clear in this finely textured piece. Buechner paces the music very well, building to an amazing end of virtuoso fireworks and dazzling dexterity.

Although the size of Miklós Rózsa's output for piano is modest, the range of moods and colors demanded may well preclude any single pianist's having the temperament to successfully realize all of the solo works. Sara Davis Buechner's disc mixes moments of brilliant and passionate music making with occasional lapses of matter-of-factness and frustrating wrong-headedness.

A fine performance of the Piano Concerto, Op. 30, is the chief interest on the French **Audivis V4841**, which also features the SPELLBOUND Concerto and the published suite from BEN-HUR. The pianist is Danielle Laval; she is partnered by the North Hungarian Symphony Orchestra Miskolc, conducted by László Kovács. Laval's view tends to be expansive; her third movement in particular is slower than the metronome marking of 150 (Laval is closer to 120), missing some of the edge-of-your-seat excitement generated by Leonard Pennario in his live performances. There is also a possibility of more dynamic shading in the second theme of the first movement, and the opening of the central Adagio could be more mysterious, but Laval doesn't lack for passion or rhythmic energy. Be warned, however, that she observes the same cuts as Pennario's studio recording (on Pantheon), leaving Evelyn Chen's Koch version the only uncut recording thus far available. The orchestral contribution is highlighted by some exceptionally lovely wind solos, and the acoustic, while generous, does not cloud the details.

Although Rózsa's concert works have been well represented on discs ever since the advent of the LP, the major international labels have shown little interest in them. Apart from RCA, his "serious" music has never appeared on labels with worldwide distribution and world-class reputations such as Sony (formerly Columbia), EMI, DG, Philips, Decca/London, Chandos or others. Smaller labels such as Koch, Vox, Orion, M-G-M, Cambria, and Citadel have instead carried the banner. On that basis alone, there is reason to rejoice at the release of **Telarc CD-80518**, featuring the Violin and Cello concerti plus the Tema con variazione derived from the *Sinfonia Concertante*. Telarc discs are sold, reviewed, and enjoyed all over the world, and the company is known for the high quality of its product. But there is more—much more—to celebrate here.

The Cello Concerto, Op. 32, is the least approachable of Rózsa's concerti, with its dark colors, its high degree of dissonance, and its lack of memorable "tunes." Yet it is finely wrought and greatly repays concentrated listening and study. Ironically, it has to date received more recordings (4) than the piano (3), violin (3), viola (2), or double (1) concerti. This latest, with internationally known soloist Lynn Harrell partnered by the Atlanta Symphony under Yoel Levi, easily leads the field. Right from the solo opening of the first movement we know we are in for an exciting performance. There is a marvelous sense of struggle and build that leads to the first theme, which is then propelled forward with a purposeful but not impatient tempo. The eerie, Bartokian colors of the second theme are hauntingly realized, and the development section takes off with an exciting momentum. The first movement cadenza, perhaps the longest in all of Rózsa's concerti, is played with incredible passion; Harrell renders its contrasting moods with uncanny aplomb. The return of the second theme is very atmospheric, and orchestra and soloist join in a wild frenetic dance to the end. The second movement is truly played "with grand expression," Harrell making every note soulful and meaningful, and the final movement is an edge-of-your-seat roller coaster ride which leaves you exhausted but thrilled at the end.

Throughout the performance, Levi and his orchestra are stellar accompanists. The advantage of preceding this recording with a series of live performances is evident in the way the musicians toss motives back and forth, both within the orchestra and especially between orchestra and soloist. They clearly are listening to each other and have had time to observe and delight in the composer's ever-inventive counterpoint. They are aided in this by Telarc's legendary engineering, which allows more orchestral detail to emerge than ever before. This well-balanced production is especially welcome in the Cello Concerto, as it is one of Rózsa's most subtly orchestrated works, where tone color is as much an element of the composition as melody, harmony, and rhythm. The haunting sounds of celeste, muted trumpet, string harmonics, harp, vibraphone, and many other effects are warmly captured by the engineers. It would be hard to imagine anyone making a better case for this somewhat underappreciated work.

Robert McDuffie's performance of the Violin Concerto on the same disc is, if

anything, even more exciting. His playing has such power, rhythmic verve, incredibly sweet tone (especially above the staff), impeccable phrasing and sure-footed pacing as to leave a critical listener (this one, at least) speechless. In a phone interview, McDuffie said that the entire project originated with Telarc cofounder and producer Bob Woods, who suggested the Rózsa concerto to him when he first began to record for the label. Although he knew the work from the Heifetz recording (which he called “inspiring” but not “intimidating”), McDuffie had not performed it previous to the Long Beach and Atlanta concerts. The suggestion for the *Tema con variazioni* came from Jay Hoffman, publicity agent for Lynn Harrell (and also for the Rózsa Trust). The violinist’s enthusiasm for this work (along with contemporary works by John Adams and Philip Glass) is personal, passionate, and unstinting. Since his Atlanta debut with the piece he has also performed it in Louisville and Raleigh (to standing ovations). He is critical of Heifetz for premiering and recording the piece and then never playing it again. By contrast, McDuffie plans many additional performances, hoping to “insist” that it be included in his 2000–2001 concert season schedule, possibly in Aspen or Dallas. The latter would be a coming-home for the concerto to the city of its premiere nearly half a century ago.

Not being a string player, I asked McDuffie how the piece rates technically. I wondered if it is as difficult to play as it sounds. His answer came quickly: it is one of the most challenging pieces he has ever played, “a real endurance test.” The fact that the soloist rarely gets to rest is certainly part of that challenge. McDuffie’s recording, incidentally, is the first to incorporate the alternative ending, which is somewhat more flamboyant than that recorded by Heifetz. Although this was conductor Levi’s suggestion, McDuffie agrees that it makes a stronger conclusion for the work. A convincing case could probably be made that the concerto is the composer’s finest; in this incarnation there is no doubt about it.

The performance of *Tema con variazioni* that fills out the disc is characterized by the same musical strengths as the concerti. The interplay between soloists is very good; again, this is probably the result of having performed the work before recording it. As one tiny example, note the precise matching of articulation in the three eighth-note pick-ups to the first variation (1:20). My only criticism concerns the performing version itself, a strange hybrid that uses the chamber orchestra scoring so skillfully prepared by the composer for Heifetz and Piatigorsky for their recitals while employing the full Atlanta string section. The loss of chamber-music intimacy makes the additional color which is part of the full-orchestra version (especially harp and flute) seem particularly lacking. In his interview, McDuffie said he hopes to perform the entire *Sinfonia*, possibly with Harrell, in Aspen, Colorado sometime in the near future.

Mention should also be made here of two important reissues. The only commercial recording of the *Tripartita*, made by David Amos and the London Symphony

Orchestra for Harmonia Mundi in 1990, has been reissued by **Kleos Classics (KL 5103)**, a division of Helicon Records. The new edition comes with the same couplings (works by Gould, Menotti, and Lavry) as the original release. Also, Citadel Records (Tony Thomas's old label, now subsumed by Varèse-Sarabande) has reissued the contents of the once-very-rare M-G-M LP featuring the Frankenland State (Nuremberg) Symphony Orchestra conducted by Erich Kloss (**Citadel CTD-88139**). Kloss's performances of the Hungarian Serenade, North Hungarian Peasant Songs and Dances, and *The Vintner's Daughter* are occasionally flawed, especially in matters of intonation, but thoroughly idiomatic. (This *Vintner's Daughter* mercifully omits the intrusive Tony Thomas narration that marred the Citadel LP release.) The sound here, enhanced by stunningly good 24-bit digital transfers, is amazing. There is virtually no hiss, and the 1958 tapes now reveal a superb clarity and immediacy that enhance these treasured old performances. Also on the disc are two chamber music selections (Opus 4 and 5) performed by violinist Endre Granat and pianist Erwin Herbst. Unfortunately, no number of digital bits can improve the terribly boxy quality of the Orion originals, but the music making is impassioned and composer-approved.

The "hit" of this batch of discs is obviously McDuffie's performance of the Violin Concerto. It is so good as to disarm any potential criticism. In fact, one quickly forgets one is listening to a performance, or indeed, even a recording. What one experiences is the music, pure and direct. And what music! Both *Fanfare* and *Gramophone* have posted rave reviews of this disc, and Terry Teachout highlighted it in *Time* (April 3, 2000) with this affirmation: "Forget the dumb critics' bum rap—this is *great* music." If you haven't got it, don't waste another second.

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**Book Note:** Clifford McCarty's *Film Composers in America* has long been a prime authority in the listing of composers and their works. The second edition (\$75 from Oxford University Press) is vastly expanded in both length (534 pages) and scope. McCarty's interviews and archival research have gone behind the misleading mirror of screen credits to account for actual documented cue-by-cue contributions or orchestrators as well as composers for features, shorts, and even trailers.

## Recordings

Classical releases are summarized by Frank DeWald elsewhere in this issue.

New from Gasparo (GSCD-265) is the fifth recording of Rózsa's late Sonata for Violin Solo, Op. 40 (1986). Also featured are sonatas by Richard Strauss (1887) and Vincent Persichetti (1940). The soloist is William Steck, concertmaster of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C. Contact Gasparo at [www.gasparo.com](http://www.gasparo.com) or (800) 934-8821.

*The Ethnic Cello* (Crystal C831) features Roger Malitz in the Duo for Cello and Piano, Op. 8, together with works by Gaspar Cassado and Ernest Bloch. Crystal's catalog also includes Larry Combs's recording of the Sonata for Clarinet, Op. 27, with music by Rochberg and Schuller (C731). Crystal may be reached at 28818 N.E. Hancock Road, Camas, WA 98607. Phone: (360) 834-7022; fax: (360) 834-9680; e-mail: [info@crystalrecords.com](mailto:info@crystalrecords.com)

The film music recording of the year was Rhino's *Miklós Rózsa* at MGM (R2 75723), a two-disc survey of eleven scores from MADAME BOVARY through KING OF KINGS. The latter film is represented by a suite of the film's closing scenes that presents these noble moments in sound far superior to that on the earlier Sony CD. Late reports indicate that Rhino will issue a complete KING OF KINGS in early 2001, with the possibility of JULIUS CAESAR and TRIBUTE TO A BADMAN thereafter.

According to David Wishart, Silva Screen's *Epic Film Music of Miklós Rózsa* has now been deleted, but all the Rózsa recorded by Silva is now being gathered together and remastered as part of a mid-price double album. So SODOM AND GOMORRAH, KING OF KINGS, EL CID ("played with the all-important triplets so conspicuously missing from the Koch recording") QUO VADIS, ALL THE BROTHERS WERE VALLANT, etc., will be joined by PROVIDENCE, the SPELLBOUND Concerto (the rare early orchestral version), THE THIEF OF BAGDAD, and JULIUS CAESAR. Hopefully, the compendium will make a useful introduction to Rózsa for up and coming film music enthusiasts.

A second John Williams–Itzhak Perlman collaboration, *Cinema Serenade*, includes Williams's arrangement of the love theme from THE LOST WEEKEND (Sony Classical 310581).

## Video

Two rare films are now available. SUNDOWN is newly issued on DVD. JACARÉ may be had on VHS tape from Sinister Cinema, P.O. Box 4369, Medford, OR 97501-0168. Tel.: (541) 773-6860; fax: (541) 779-8650. Or, on the web: <http://www.sinistercinema.com/jungle.html>

## Commentary's Masterpieces of the Century

In three recent issues of *Commentary*, critic Terry Teachout attempts a chronological list of our century's fifty greatest musical works. Here in the June 1999 issue, sandwiched between Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 8, is Teachout's number 48: Miklós Rózsa, Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 24.

Like Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Miklós Rózsa is remembered for the grandiloquent scores he composed for Hollywood, among them such epics as BEN-HUR and KING OF KINGS. But as he hints in the witty title of his 1989 [sic] memoirs, *A Double Life* (also the title of one of the many films he scored), he cultivated paths outside Hollywood, using his film-music fees to support less popular projects. Snobbish critics and performers reflexively dismissed his classical compositions without listening to them, but recent recordings of his music leave little doubt that he was, after Bartók, the foremost Hungarian composer of the 20th century. Jascha Heifetz, one famous instrumentalist who did recognize Rózsa's genius, commissioned, premiered, and recorded his Violin Concerto, a taut, harmonically astringent work that is as memorable as the better-known concertos of Berg, Bartók, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Walton, and deserves an equally prominent place in the standard repertoire.

The Rózsa Violin Concerto has yet to receive a modern recording by a world-class soloist (Gil Shaham or Maria Bachmann would be ideal), but Heifetz's 1956 recording with Walter Hendl and the Dallas Symphony, made two

months after the premiere, is marvelously incisive, and is coupled on CD with another underrated modern work premiered by Heifetz, Korngold's D-Major Violin Concerto, Op. 35 (RCA 09026-61752-2).

Teachout's selection, restricted to works by deceased composers, is mainly limited to the first half of the century. And its conservative bias is obvious: there are only two entries for Berg and one for Schoenberg. (At the opposite extreme are four for Stravinsky and three apiece for Bartók, Debussy, Prokofiev, and Shostakovich.) We think MR would have been pleased to be in their company. *Commentary* is published by the American Jewish Committee. The Teachout series appears in the April-May-June (1999) issues and is also accessible at [www.commentarymagazine.com](http://www.commentarymagazine.com) and at [www.Britannica.com](http://www.Britannica.com). Thanks to Art Haupt for spotting this.

## Back Issue Blowout!

For years, back issues of *Pro Musica Sana* have been “warehoused” by Thomas Moore in Michigan. Now that we have a garage in Connecticut, we decided to get everything back under one roof. Were we ever surprised by the four large boxes that arrived in the driveway last month! Our inventory turned out to be much larger than expected. To share the wealth, we're offering a large selection of issues from 1978 to 1991 for only **\$1.50 apiece** (\$2.50 overseas). Even the normal back issue price (\$5) is ridiculously low. (Nobody ever accused us of running the MRS for profit!) The discount price is an honest-to-goodness blowout. Don't miss this chance. For more detailed contents see the MRS website.

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Other issues (from PMS 19 onward) are available for \$5 \$6 overseas). Bulk discounts available.

Next Time: THE SONG OF SCHEHERAZADE; Concert Music Discography

In the Works: BEN-HUR

Help Needed: Layout and desktop publishing! The Film music discography!

A few words about the discographies. We have the concert music well in hand. Frank DeWald's CD-era updating should appear in PMS 59 and will then become a regular feature on the website. The vastly larger and more complex film music discography is a problem. Ron Bohn's magnificent effort in PMS 45-46-48 is of course largely confined to the LP era. Doug Raynes's comparably splendid (and very different) approach in *Soundtrack!* (June 1994) is also out of date. The universe of Rózsa on CD has expanded gloriously, but we haven't been able to keep pace. Volunteers with database or discographic skills are urgently needed. (*Soundtrack!* is available from Luc Van de Ven, Astridlaan 171, 2800 Mechelen, Belgium.)

## A Fanfare for Our Patrons

Many people have helped to keep the Society going over the past twenty-eight years. Our masthead gives credit (scarcely adequate!) to such workers as Mark Koldys, Frank DeWald, Alan Hamer, and Matthew Gear. Gene Kohlenberg, Ron Bohn, Ken Doeckel, Mary Peatman, Thomas Moore, and Ron Burbella have also labored significantly. But the host of others who have offered financial support has never been properly acknowledged. Some of these people have made contributions in return for our tape recordings. Other donations have been entirely spontaneous. All deserve to be acknowledged. The following list is certainly not complete, as the pre-1995 records are spotty. We will be happy to correct omissions in future issues. Heartfelt thanks to all. You have helped to keep PMS in print with a modest dues level, and you have supported a number of MRS audio preservation initiatives.

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