

PRO MUSICA SANA
A PUBLICATION OF
The Miklós Rózsa Society

—Since 1972—

SERIES 2: Vol. 4, No. 1

Summer 2001

PMS 59

- NEWS KING OF KINGS** due in November... Chamber recordings flourish . . . A neglected Christmas gem . . . Three New York performances in one week . . . **BEN-HUR** on DVD . . . *Fidelidad a los origines*, a major Spanish publication. 2
- SCHEHERAZADE'S SONG SUBLIME** An appreciation of Walter Reisch's colorful Rimsky-Korsakov romance from 1947, **SONG OF SCHEHERAZADE**. *John J. Wayne* 3
- SEARCHING FOR THE RÓZSA-IN-RIMSKY** A look at the arrangers touch. *Frank K. DeWald* 17
- THE CORE COLLECTION.** Five key Rózsa recordings that every Rozsaphile should know. 19
- TESTIMONIALS** How has Miklós Rózsa influenced our lives? More responses to the Society poll. 23
- DIRECTORY** 28

John Fitzpatrick
Editor

Frank K. DeWald
Associate Editor

© 2001 The Miklós Rózsa Society
ISSN 0361-9559

News and Events

August 2001

Recordings

ASV CD DCA 1105 is a new chamber collection: String Quartets No.1, Op.22 (1950), and No. 2. Op.38 (1981). plus the Sonata for Two Violins, Op. 15a (1938, rev. 1973). The Flesch Quartet is featured: Philippa Ibbotson and Mark Denman, violins; Robert Gibbs, viola; David Newby, cello. This is a third recording for the great First Quartet and for the Sonata. The Second String Quartet has been recorded only once before. ASV's advertising makes a claim new to us: that the opening cello theme of the First Quarters Andante may have inspired the song "When I Fall in Love" by Rozsa's Paramount associate Victor Young!

CAM CSE 085 is another reissue of PROVIDENCE, previously on DRG.

Carlton Classics 30366003372: St. Paul's Cathedral Choir: Christmas Concert No longer new but not previously reported in these pages is this 1992 collection. It features the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in a wide variety of Christmas music from Bach, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky to Howells, Grainger, and Rózsa. The highlights include two elaborate fantasies on Christmas carols by Malcolm Arnold and Gustav Hoist. The Rózsa is the longest piece on the album at 9:33. A *Christmas Sequence* derives from BEN-HUR and KING OF KINGS by way of the *Twelve Choruses* that Rozsa prepared for concert performance. Most of us know the choruses from a not entirely satisfactory recording on Tony Thomas's Medallion label. The St. Paul's disc is on an entirely different level. Christopher Palmer has arranged a symphonic accompaniment for four of the

tunes. Thus, "The Virgin Mary" and the "Nativity" from KING OF KINGS bracket "Star of Bethlehem" and "Adoration of the Magi" from BEN-HUR. The resulting suite, conducted by St. Paul's music director John Scott, is about as beautiful a treatment of this music as you are likely to hear.

Chapter III. This California label has released CDs of EL CID (37502) and THE VIPS (37501), replicating the old MGM albums (and the Sony CD of EL CID). Sound is comparable to previous issues; the extra CID track from the old Polydor LP version is again missing here. Some accounts indicate that the Chapter III label is in shaky financial condition, and so these releases may not be on the market for long.

Eroica JDT 3032 features the Sonata for Two Violins (Op. 15a) as part of recital disc of the Jiang Violin Duo (Quan Jiang and Lun Jiang of the Gotham String Quartet from Rice University). The disc also features music by Ysayë, Paganini, and David Noon. Eroica's website is <http://www.eroica.com/nevvcds.html>. From David K. Nelson's review in the March/April *Fanfare*: "The real find here is the Sonata by Miklos Rozsa; if this is a first recording of this earthy, gutsy and, in the slow movement, soulful work of 1930 or so [actually 1938. *ed.J*, a piece combining sophistication with rural Hungarian flavor, one can only attribute that to the general neglect of this musician's concert music, a neglect only gradually being rectified on CD. This piece has been in the catalog for years, and it is much to the Jiang Duo's credit that they thought to actually hunt it up, play it through, realize its innate qualities, and master

(continued on page 21)

Scheherazade's Song Sublime

Film as Fantasy-Operetta

John J. Wayne

SONG OF SCHEHERAZADE, the 1947 film, is a wondrous romp: a fantasy on three or four days in the life and music of the peerless Nicholas Andreyevitch Rimsky-Korsakov when the youthful composer served as a cadet in the Russian Navy on a voyage around the world (which really took place: 1862—1865). In this virtual operetta film version, for the sake of all the best in Rimsky's music—the opulence and misery of tsarist Russia, the mercuric passions of Spain, the wonder and fantasy of the Arabian Nights—the Russian sailing ship lands—in Morocco! All the ecstatic elements meet and mingle. Could Scheherazade have sung it any better?

Background to a Fantasy

The original genius behind all this is the Viennese writer and director Walter Reisch, and so the form is operetta, comic-operetta. The Graustark and Ruritania settings of Franz Lehár and Sigmund Romberg are here depicted in the never-named Moroccan port of call. (Is it Tangier, Gibraltar, Rio de Oro?)

Reisch's operetta wings came with *The Lost Waltz* (*Two Hearts in Three-Quarter Time*) back in Europe. Then came films like BECAUSE I LOVED YOU (1930), A BLONDE DREAM (1932), and ESCAPADE (1935). His writing efforts would include GATEWAY and THE GREAT WALTZ (both 1938), MY LOVE CAME BACK and COMRADE X (both 1940), THAT HAMILTON WOMAN (1941), and the play *Portrait of an Officer* (1944). He worked with such luminaries as Alexander and Zoltan Korda, composer Friedrich Hollaender, Carl Froelich, and Willi Forst (whose German-language film *LEISE FLEHENMEINE LIEDER*, a biographical romance on the life of Franz Schubert, would undoubtedly generate the Korda version, NEW WINE (1941), where writer Reisch's and composer Miklós Rózsa's efforts go uncredited. NEW WINE, with elfin Alan Curtis as Schubert, Albert Berryman as Beethoven, and a singing Ilona Massey as the love interest, would elicit only the remark in the *New York Times* that "to make a film on the life of a genius is a dangerous thing.") With the Korda connection also came MEN ARE NOT GODS in 1936 and another co-credit with Rózsa for the KNIGHT WITHOUT ARMOUR screenplay the next year. Rózsa and Reisch would remain lifelong friends, the composer even personally sponsoring Reisch's membership in the Rózsa Society, and SONG OF SCHEHERAZADE a sentimental favorite between them. Reisch was also friendly with Billy Wilder and the "eccentric dancer" Tilly Losch, both of whom had their own roles to play in the saga of SCHEHERAZADE.

"The studios were not worried about authenticity," the current *AMC Classic Movie Collection* notes, while the ad for the videotape celebrates, "this *true* story of the passionate love-affair between the famous Russian composer and the woman who inspired his masterpiece." Of course neither description is accurate. Therein is the fascination. Truth is in the germ of possibility that Rimsky's voyage aboard the clipper *Almaz* might have landed him in Morocco, inspiring all his musical fantasy in one fell swoop. All through the movie, we, the hooked, wonder if it all may be true. We wish it happened just so. The composer did indeed marry a sloe-eyed beauty, but she would be the socialite Nadezhda Purgold—not, alas, the dancer Cara de Talavera. But, a lovely truth this still seems, so we come to discover possible "spiritual" truth, and to love the music of Rimsky-Korsakov forevermore.

SONG OF SCHEHERAZADE would be Universal's prestige composer film for the postwar affluent age. Along with heightened interest in the music of Rimsky, there would be—they hoped—the sleek silk-and-brocade glamour of Scheherazade herself, so redolent of the wartime Maria Montez fantasy world the studio had successfully promoted. "The One Picture That's Worth 1000 Words," began the ad hype. "What should we call it?" began the refrain. The title of the upcoming production would be variously announced, as *Heat Wave* (too contemporary), *Fandango* (too complex), then simplified as *Sharazad*, *Shahrazad*, *Sharhzad*.

There was still prestige in the *Song of...* biopic series. Perhaps *Song of Norway* began it all with Grieg, on Broadway. Now there was A SONG TO REMEMBER, for Chopin and George Sand (1945, with Miklós Rózsa arranging the score); SONG OF MY HEART (1947), for Tchaikovsky; and SONG OF LOVE, for Brahms and the Schumanns (1947). All spawned reams of sheet music for the new, refined, affluent public. Rimsky-Korsakov certainly deserved his place at the table. So, SONG OF SCHEHERAZADE it would be, and rightly so. (Just for the record, The SONG OF BERNADETTE [1943], celebrated the saint, SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD [1944], the character Jane Powell portrayed, and Disney's SONG OF THE SOUTH [1946], the "Uncle Remus" stories of Joel Chandler Harris.) All would generate updated songs, lyrics, songbooks: "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows" and "Tonight We Love" spring immediately to mind.

Curiously, SCHEHERAZADE'S songbook, with music arranged by Rózsa and new words by Jack Brooks, hardly survived. Its primary purpose was to serve as the film's souvenir program book. Other *Scheherazade* settings proliferated instead, based on the Young Prince and the Young Princess theme, particularly one with lyrics beginning, "For a thousand and one nights like this" and another, "Darling, tell me you love me again." Nevertheless, SONG OF SCHEHERAZADE, a comedy with irascible sea captain and shipboard shenanigans, would be a favorite for servicemen of the era, with endless popular showings on shipboard and in military auditoriums.

Through all their incarnations, as Scheherazade, Salome, and other belles of the East in harem-pants, veils, and castanets, Maria Montez and Yvonne De Carlo would

become the fixed, ideal, celestial images of the ideal feminine for Levantines, Arabs, Persians, and Latins alike. For these men, the very *Alf Laylah wah Laylah* (Thousand nights and a night) featured Montez and De Carlo just exactly—the best of the modern imposed on the past. If this was an improvement, well, so be it!

Maria Montez would have been Universal's first choice for this Scheherazade, once upon a time, that is. For the too-beautiful Montez, her Hollywood reign as Queen of Technicolor for wartime exotic fantasy was long past; besides, Maria lacked the talent for acting and dancing this role required. Who better then, than the number-one contender for the Montez tiara—she who had already replaced Montez once before, in *FRONTIER GAL* then starred as *SALOME, WHERE SHE DANCED* (1945)—their vaunted "Most Beautiful Girl in the World": Yvonne De Carlo!

Yvonne De Carlo's squire at the time was no less than Billy Wilder, director Walter Reisch's Viennese buddy and his co-author, for *NINOTCHKA*. "The Most Beautiful Girl in the World" had been a publicity ploy for De Carlo's *SALOME, WHERE SHE DANCED* the year before (and it was probably true, anyway). At twenty-four, De Carlo was already a veteran of the veil, with countless appearances as nightclub dancer and studio walk-on and bit player, from *THE ROAD TO MOROCCO* (1942) to *FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS* (1943) to *KISMET* (1944). Now, a new road opened: *Scheherazade-as-operetta*, Viennese style. She was the ideal star, with the wished-for "glamour of a Hedy Lamarr, acting talent of an Ingrid Bergman, and dancing ability like unto Zorina!" Could she play Cara/Scheherazade, the "girl of 1001 dreams" with the beauty and intelligence, spirit and talent enough to inspire Rimsky-Korsakov to compose his most formidable and lovely of warhorses? The music had already inspired countless composers, painters and poets, to say nothing of a resoundingly famous ballet. This was the 1910 version of the Diaghilev Ballets Russes, with choreography by Michel Fokine and with Vaslav Nijinsky and Ida Rubinstein in the principal roles.

This heroine would have to be, by turns, a Moorish dancer, a Spanish aristocrat with a flair for flamenco, an en travesti Russian sailor, and finally, a prima ballerina as legendary empress beguiling a monarch while providing her very own background music. In such a contest, Maria Montez was out, but, remarkably, Montez's own real-life war-hero matinee-idol husband was in—as Rimsky-Korsakov! With Montez in tow, how would Jean-Pierre Aumont survive the La Montez versus De Carlo affray surely to come? Publicists and press all bated their breath as ... the three became good friends, with Maria advising Yvonne on the niceties of dealing with suitors like Howard Hughes. (Among the also-rans for the Rimsky-Korsakov lead was the youthful Leonard Bernstein!)

This biography-by-operetta was proclaimed as "inspired by the *music* (not the life) of Rimsky-Korsakov," but sources can be found in the composer's memoir (*My Musical Life*), written thirty years after his adventures as a naval cadet. Here are the military browbeaters: Admiral of the Fleet Lyesovsky and the *Almaz's* own Captain P. A.

Zelyony "given to coarse and indecent language," and fellow cadet, Prince A. D. Mischetsky, even the "harmoniflute" (undoubtedly a harmonica, small and portable, the perfect shipboard substitute for the piano).

We sense Reisch's reliance on his partners in this production, music driving plot, plot imposing music, music provoking dance, so that the dancing and the dancer become Romance, Destiny, Immortality all in one package. We detect Rózsa's musical wit and the dancing-novelty sense of Tilly Losch in their film-resumes. The composer for *THE THIEF OF BAGDAD* in Alexander Korda's 1940 version with its Orientalist style would find this *SCHEHERAZADE* a charming, worthy challenge. The choreographer and dancer in *THE GARDEN OF ALLAH* (1936) would feature dervish-style dancing once again; even the costume recalls the earlier Ernst Dryden design. The finale-ballet sequence focuses attention on the dancing, while the Sassanian empire is reduced to a lovely minimalist series of tents and ramparts, all represented by gilded fishnets, and the vast, vast space of the largest of Hollywood's soundstages.

Losch must have been busy in 1946, appearing as the Amerindian dancer in *DUEL IN THE SUN* and in court for her divorce from the Earl of Carnarvon, scion of the English lord who bankrolled the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb, only to fall victim—the first!—to the pharaoh's "curse."

What a pleasure for all of them to concoct a scenario so aptly based on Rimsky-Korsakov's own sources of inspiration—the folksong, the Orient, the sea—with the best artists to bring it all to cinematic light! UniversaPs own resident "whiz-kid" lyricist Jack Brooks would provide the poetic text for the four songs featured, which add to the film's flavor and effect.

The four songs were slightly revised for performance, first in the film, then in the sound recording released at Christmastime 1947. Some of Brooks's more famous lyrics would later include "Ole' Buttermilk Sky," "You Wonderful You," "That's Amore," and "Green Fire" (to Rózsa's music). Brooks died in 1971 at age fifty-nine. The late Yvonne Wood (the other Yvonne in this production) wins a firm place in the Hollywood pantheon of costume designers: she invented the classic "tutti-frutti" headgear for Carmen Miranda, as first shown in *THE GANG'S ALL HERE*, on Christmas Eve 1943. The headpiece became synonymous with the Brazilian Bombshell for aE time. For *SCHEHERAZADE*, Yvonne Wood conferred closely with the writer, die choreographer, and the music director for the score, so as to arrive at the perfect raiment-equivalent to all the sumptuous goings-on. All glory to her, then! The costumes for the dance sequences are perhaps the most gorgeous in cinema. From the Tilly Losch—flavored ouled-nail cafe dancer, to the astonishing velvet-and lame flamenco, to the Isadora tunic and the Gustave Moreau brocaded, bejeweled, heavy-crowned empress in dizzying Turkish clogs, Yvonne Wood was the last-gasp designer *SCHEHERAZADE* demanded: an absolute wonder! At the film's wrap-party, Yvonne Wood joined Maestro Rózsa for some pianoforte four hands rejoicing.

Laurels likewise to the art directors, French designer Eugene Lourie, with Jack Otterson, and set decorators Russell A. Gausman and E. R. Robinson, for some of the most stimulating, evocative environments to grace this "mystic port of Morocco": the deck and captain's quarters of the *Almaz* the parlor and terrace of the Villa Talavera, the Cafe Orientale and its private dining room, and the nautical-mythical Sassanian empire as a series of gilded fishnets. These are masterpieces of design, inspiration equivalent to the Crimea for the real-life Rimsky. The symbolism of Nicky's first notes for his *Scheherazade*, on the back of a painting of a gazelle (the Arab equivalent of feminine appeal) devoured by two wolves, a lion and a raven is a touch of genius right out of *Antar*. Nicky tears the painting from the wall in order to inscribe on it the first notes of his masterpiece.

Handsome Technicolor cinematography by Hal Mohr and William V. Skall displays the master's stamp in every sequence. Makeup by Jack Pierce and hair styling by Carmen Dirigo provide high glamour. De Carlo and Arden were never lovelier.

For "Nicky," Jean Pierre Aumont is just a bit older than stated, but eternal youth was always his, and matinee-idol good looks, a winning style, and even talent as a writer and dramatist. In film and theatre in France since 1931, Aumont was deemed a peer (almost a twin) to Jean Marais—by no less an authority than Jean Cocteau. Aumont had appeared as Oedipus in Cocteau's *LA MACHINE INFERNALE* in 1934, having already appeared in a kind of Johnny Weissmuller role in *LAC AUX DAMES* for Marc Allegret the year before. There would be a dozen roles onstage for Aumont, and two dozen onscreen, even before his Hollywood debut in 1941. Roles in Hollywood would alternate with distinguished military service with the Free French Forces in World War II, where he would encounter the likes of Charles de Gaulle, Andre Malraux, and Marlene Dietrich!

In Hollywood, Aumont had already starred in Jules Dassin's *ASSIGNMENT IN BRITTANY*, was briefly engaged to be married to Hedy Lamarr, and then would marry screen siren Maria Montez, to whom he would return at war's end. Here would begin his career as playwright, which would serve the "most beautiful couple in Hollywood" so well as Maria's career began disappearing coincident with war's end. Aumont and Montez would relocate to France for roles in theatre and films until Maria's untimely death in 1951. He continued a truly legendary career as gentleman-actor in at least a hundred roles in film and theatre. He would also (twice!) wed actress Marisa Pavan (*DIANE*), the twin sister of Pier Angeli (*THE STORY OF THREE LOVES*; *SODOM AND GOMORRAH*). He died early in 2001.

Brian Donlevy, as the blowhard sea captain "Vladimir Gregorivich" would have been familiar enough with the type: his own trademarked tough-guy-with-soft-center. Military and nautical roles were second nature: he was the evil sergeant in *BEAU GESTE* (1939), and *TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST* had been only two years earlier. Military veterans would obviously enjoy Donlevy's broad take on military authority: all swagger

and lack of cultivation! Here was the perfect foil for Mamma de Talavera.

Eve Arden, as that Mamma, here reprises her COVER GIRL role: attractive, as astringent wisecracker, such as we would come to adore in *Our Miss Brooks* on radio and television. Here, she is also a kind of chattery Mrs. Malaprop, just a bit dishonest, deceiving nobody, always Titian-tressed and lovable. Miss Arden, however, was not fond of this role, and made no bones about it around the set. With only some twelve years difference in their ages, she resented playing Yvonne De Carlo's mother, and complained of every defect she could discover in production, cast and crew. Certain co-stars would complain of her on-camera lack of rapport, a solo even in dialogue, but she made a success of this role. Maybe her frustration was rooted in her pursuit of the quicksilver Danny Kaye. Nevertheless, just like Conchita de Talavera, Eve Arden is ultimately charming.

Philip Reed would be the haughty playboy-cadet Prince Mischetsky, a breeze for this actor of considerable film experience, and lots more to come on screen and television. His only complaint about this role would come with the loss of a bit of his ear in the bullwhip fight-scene.

John Qualen and Elena Verdugo lend a considerable comic touch as Lorenzo and Fioretta, the Villa Talavera servants, while Robert Kendall, age eighteen at the time and cast in his first feature, would replace the plucky Sabu, as Hassan the houseboy. The very next year, Kendall would appear with De Carlo in *CASBAH*; this would lead to his decision to quit Hollywood for seminary studies. Fortunately he would abandon these, returning to Hollywood for film and television roles. Later pursuits would earn him fame, as teacher, author, memoirist, and raconteur. Kendall is today an author and publicity-agent in Florida.

Terry Kilburn, about twenty at the time, had already spent half his life in film. He was perhaps most familiar in his roles as the multiple fathers and sons Colley in *GOODBYE, MR. CHIPS*, 1939, and as Tiny Tim in *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* the year before. His boyish persona as cadet Lorin adds necessary- zest to the plot, with perhaps later and cosmic reverberations. In 1949, when *SCHEHERAZADE* reached postwar Italy, in Pozzuoli, near Naples, teenaged Sofia Scicoloni, an avowed De Carlo fan, perhaps discovered some of her own magic in Lorin's surname, she declares instead that she was inspired by the name of Marta Toren (De Carlo's co-star in *CASBAH*), it would seem perhaps that Lorin + Toren = Loren ! As Sophia Loren, her own meteoric career began almost immediately!

Charles Kullman, tenor for the Metropolitan Opera, would be the ship's singing doctor, the affable, avuncular, seriocomic cohort to cadet Rimsky-Korsakov. Kullman's style reflects passion and intensity, warm and Mediterranean for a singer with roots in Vienna and Berlin. In 1956, he would join the faculty of Indiana University while continuing to sing at the Met.

For the Cafe Orientale, there would be an authentic Gypsy basso, Milio Sheron,

performing Jack Brooks's "Gypsy Song" lyrics (from the hero's theme in *Antar*). Sheron's solo was missing from the "soundtrack" album released for Christmastime, four sides, ten-inch, 78rpm, all by Kullman, with Kullmanized text modifications differing from the actual track.

The famous American tenor Jan Peerce auditioned for a Russian-singing role, to no avail, and the cast list features a "soprano" nowhere in evidence: Theodora Lynch, a beauty being groomed as a Hollywood starlet. She had sung previously onscreen in *THE LOST WEEKEND*, and later in a leading role in *FORGOTTEN WOMEN* (1949), and provides the singing voice for Dorothy Patrick in *NEW ORLEANS* (1947): voila!—she must be the "wordless voice" for *SCHEHERAZADE'S* opening credits. It is also most amazing to note that Theodora "Teddy" Lynch was, offscreen, the fifth and final Mrs. J. Paul Getty and the mother of the billionaire's son Timothy, born shortly after *SCHEHERAZADE* "wrapped."

Strongman Rex Ravelle provides the glamour, majesty, and muscle of the silent Sultan (Schariar) in the final ballet sequence, where he lifts heavenward the standing De Carlo, jewelry, brocade, crown and all, (some 187 pounds, according to Ravelle), for an indelible filmic image. Ravelle, a former Mr. America, grew up in Cincinnati. Rediscovered, rechristened, and groomed for stardom by producer-director Mitchell Leisen, he would appear as an "egotistical Mr. America" opposite Claudette Colbert and Fred MacMurray in *NO TIME FOR LOVE* (1943). He had served in World War II as a naval officer in the Aleutians, and his wide-ranging career as stuntman and stand-in for the likes of Weissmuller, Flynn, Mature, and even Cary Grant would come to include stints as singer, dancer, actor, TV host, author, and screenwriter. His pals would include the likes of Jay Silverheels, Mickey Hargitay, and Jane Mansfield. Rex "won and lost—millions!" and is still feisty and ambitious at eighty-four, in roaring physical condition, looking for new opportunities to demonstrate the benefits of "health, fitness, strength."

The Film

Opening credits to *SONG OF SCHEHERAZADE*, "the one picture that's worth 1000 words," are presented in script and musical notation on ivory parchment, underlined by wordless voices intoning the Schariar theme from the first movement of the tone-poem, followed by the familiar Young Prince and Young Princess movement. The scene cuts to: Shipboard on *the Almaz*, "in the Mediterranean, 1865." The bugle call to morning assembly is the crowing of *Le coq d'or*, immediately followed by the march from *Tsar Sultan*, a very nautical opera. The white-clad sailors, black boots clattering on the deck, and the ship itself are obviously Russian. Off the coast of Morocco, the cadets assemble in a single line. It is "116 degrees, and that before breakfast!"

The ship's captain, bare chested and oiled, a lit cigarette in a holder clenched between his teeth, proceeds with his inspection and harassment of the ranks (to the King Dodon theme from *Coq d'or*, very cock of the walk). The captain is cold, ironic, a re-

minder that the Russian type also includes the blond Viking. Our Captain Vladimir Gregorivich is that Viking, incarnate.

The eighteen cadets await their critique nervously. Among them is the cadet Rimsky-Korsakov, our hero Nicky, more interested in music than regulation haircuts, "One ruble off your pay!" Longhaired musicians not welcome. Nicky lives only for music, and the ship's doctor, Klin, a singer of great master}', agrees to store Nicky's manuscripts in his doctor's grip. The two music lovers will turn this shore-leave windfall to a search for an onshore piano, to give fair first hearing to Nicky's musical sketches.

The town is an inspiring jumble of eye-pleasing details—Arab, Moorish, Spanish. In the lazy heat, two dozen Russian sailors are invading (to themes from *Antar*). The taxi-driver in khaki shorts and turban stares amazed from his carriage at the doctor and the cadet rushing, skipping, peering into windows. What will befall now? They spy through a wrought iron grille and pale stained glass of the stone-and-stucco Villa Talavera the very treasure they seek—a piano! Instantly, they barge through the door, bewildering the major-domo, Lorenzo, the maid Fioretta, the houseboy Hassan.



Cara and Nicky in the Villa Talavera. AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

The villa's parlor is another lovely jumble. Besides its grand piano, there are a black-moor statue in bronze and onyx, paintings, carved armchairs, drapes, tassels, sheer curtains, French doors. Lorenzo is outfitted in chefs toque, Fioretta in dark maid's uniform and Hassan in keyhole-neck shirt, pantaloons, and sash. Now it is the turn of the Russians to woo and charm, allaying all alarm, with talk of music and culture. Madame de Talavera, mistress of the house, counters with her own brand of charm. She introduces herself, "Conchita Manuela Mercedes de Talavera," a noblewoman of some accomplishment in her own right, revealing instead as someone addled, airy, amiable, charming, a little pretentious, even a little devious—or so she thinks. The Waltz from *Faust*, as she chimes it, turns out to be the Mendelssohn Wedding March, and she even alleges a little fling with Paganini! This red-haired Madame is a wit, a little sly, lovably scatterbrained.

The doctor stops Madame's chatter with a thermometer to the lips, as he musically intones the sinuous, evocative, Orientalist melismas of the *Song of India*, to Nicky's piano accompaniment, a moment of antidote and ecstasy in a Spanish parlor in Morocco:

*I heard a wondrous tale from lands uncharted,
No one can say just where or how it started.
But this I know, 'twas long ago.*

*—So this is how the tale was once imparted.
They say there is no end, it only started.
It's told by those, by those in love.*

That evening, the two seafaring musicians return to the ship. The captain questions their cutting short on shore leave. Nicky is quick to reply, I want to finish my opera, Sir!

The Captain snarls, I am ashamed of you, mooning over operas. Nicky counters, What finer thing in life is there, than music? The captain is exasperated: Pretty girls! It's always time for girls! Then: You go along and join the others. Have yourself an adventure. Do some drinking. Get romantic. Get into a fight! Do something for your reputation!

I want to write music, do something for posterity!

Now for Nicky, the adventure of a lifetime is about to begin, at the Cafe Orientale, a waterfront dive full of "types": Arabs, matadors, explorers in pith helmets, planters, French legionnaires, predatory bar girls, local wenches. A hush, a sense of expectancy.

To the headwaiter, Nicky orders only, a bottle of ink(!) for the music he is busy writing at the table. Then, a stirring on the stage. A Gypsy singer appears, hauling a cart with two children aboard, two Gypsy women accompanying him. He begins to sing, in basso, what is Antar's own melody, in praise of wandering.

*I live a gypsy life and call my life my own.
I live by sun, I love by stars.
Alone, I wander on, wherever sun may glow.
I roam by birth, my home's the earth.*

A beribboned tambourine drops from the cart as the Gypsies leave the stage. Even Nicky looks up from his manuscript. A mysterious veiled woman with a fez, a jug on her shoulder, glides onstage, fascinated by the tambourine, its timbre and its shrilling. She begins a dance the instrument inspires (that of Schemacha's Queen, in *Coq d'or*). The legs shift and lift, the body wiggles, to tambourine's pound and clatter. She bends, thrusts the instrument, shakes it, shakes her torso, turns, lifts each leg, then places the streamered instrument back on the floor. Now, like the very dervish her red fez implies, she begins whirling, to the delight of the onlookers, revealing, beneath her shimmering harlequin skirt, pink and metallic silver, some very shapely legs indeed. The tempo and the dancer fairly fly to crescendo, a finale! The audience cheers. The veiled dancer regains the tambourine, thrusting it forward for—baksheesh! She moves expertly between the tables, toward Nicky.

This mystic girl, this dancing idol, is real! As she approaches, Nicky spies his shipmates arriving, each in the company of a local belle. Quickly he grasps the dancer's wrist, whispering, Do me a favor!—urging her into the seat beside him. She permits this, she says nothing. Torin is dumbfounded: Look! I don't believe it—Nicky, with a girl! Nicky rises, along with his companion: Do have my table. I'm going to dinner, upstairs. Come, my flower of the desert!

The cafe's private dining room, all lattices and silver-beaded doors, hanging carpets, brass mirror and lantern, striped banquettes and painted miniatures, also contains—Prince Mischetsky! Nicky has lagged behind to order a royal dinner! The Prince is fascinated by the lovely dancer. That veil! he snarls, Off with it! and the dancer speaks, finally, not at all like a street-girl. She is haughty also, and quite cold, countering: You're not an officer! And, even if you were, I wouldn't have to take orders from you!"

Now it is the dancer's turn. She chooses: Nicky! (The music here is powerful, yearning, insistent—desert love themes from *Antar*.) The effect is truly thrilling: this girl with a veil is indeed a being of inspiration, wonder, undeniable appeal.

Dinner arrives, Nicky stops writing to dine with the dancer, who has replaced the veil over her dimpled nose. They talk of— music: Nicky mentions the piano he discovered that very morning, in a villa, in the residential district, you know, in the nice part of town!

How has she managed to distance herself from the cafe's usual clientele? She recounts the visitor's usual line: How did a nice girl like you come to be in a place like this? You remind me of that girl in the story—Scheherazade! She smiles, That's what

they call me here too—Scheherazade! (to the Young Prince and the Young Princess theme). Beautiful name, Scheherazade. How did that story go, now?

On the deck of the *Almaz*^ the next morning, the Captain announces proudly: Rimsky-Korsakov has not reported back aboard! (Definitely a virtue.) I would regard Rimsky-Korsakov as a regular fellow, even if he had not stayed out all night. Rimsky-Korsakov works for—posterity! One day, Rimsky-Korsakov will be a greater Russian with his music, than—others I could mention, with their high-sounding titles! But the Captain is only hoping Nicky has turned to more normal pursuits: girls! By now, though, we know Nicky: A very special girl there has been, but the encounter has only heightened musical inspiration. He has probably been composing *Scheherazade* all night long, back at the upstairs room of the cafe

To the brass of *Coq d'or*, the captain deals with the other seventeen cadets. To the lieutenant, he barks, Get them wet! Morning exercises! You will swim twelve ship lengths! No time out! No loafing! Strip! The cadets now do strip down to their navy-blue trunks (to the march from *Tsar Sultan*), jumping feet first in rows of six, five, and six, into the briny blue. The very air, in Dylan Thomas's words, is blue with sailors!

The bare-chested captain now relaxes with his cigarette holder. The Asturian Fandango heralds the arrival of a small wicker surrey, with Madame de Talavera aboard and Hassan driving. Conchita Manuela is about to meet her match, make her fatal mistake, as she shouts to the smoking mariner as if he were a common deckhand, My man! Yes! I mean you! Tell your Captain I want to speak to him. It's Madame de Talavera! And take that cigarette out of your mouth! Then, she demands he furnish a cigarette to her. Astonished, he throws her the pack—which is not returned. Women of fashion smoke nowadays, she observes.

Now begins the second of these fateful "Moroccan nights of revelry": the party, the soiree chez Talavera. The Russian navy has descended on the mansion, all in dress whites, despite the heat, to a very- cool effect. Each officer waltzes gracefully with a Spanish belle (to the stately notes of die Variations from *Capriccio espagnol*, here transformed). Cara is a luminous pearl in white-and-ivory ball-gown, waltzing gracefully in Nicky's arms. She confesses to him that this evening will not be troubled by the presence of Prince Mischetsky: as "Scheherazade" the dancer, she has forwarded the prince a message to meet her at the Cafe Orientale. Mischetsky, anxious to retrieve his infallible playboy status, has hastened dockside to pay court to the haughty mystery-dancer. Thus it follows that Madame Conchita, her eye peeled for the wealthy prince, mistakes boyish cadet Lorin for Mischetsky (to the "sleeping music" from *Coq d'or*). Back at the cafe, Mischetsky searches vainly for last evening's Moorish dancer. Only a juggler is featured onstage (music themes from *Scheherazade*). Lorin, at the Talavera soiree, is flattered by Madame's attentions and becomes enamoured.

Now the evening's entertainments redouble. With Nicky in charge of the music, *Capriccio espagnol* is the main event, its slow Variations waltz now transformed again into

a tenor solo, Fandango, in a lavish Latin begin-the-beguine mode, is delivered with joy by gallant Dr. Klin, who moves expertly among the terrace's dancers and lovers, borrowing a violin from the orchestra under the colonnades, presenting the instrument to Nicky for the musical and dancing frenzies to follow:

Dance of love, dance of lovers: Fandango!
May it play on forever and ever.

Nicky directs the orchestra, violin in hand, through the simmering fanfares of the Scene and Gypsy Song, echoing the music in the violin solo. Now Cara emerges, descending the stairway, to stunning, otherworldly effect, hair lacquered and arms upraised with castanets in hand, clad in a flaring gold-lame gown with gilt-and-flamingo petticoats, bolero jacket in green velvet, gilt epaulettes matching the spangles in her hair. A mystic moment, beginning the mercurial passion and magic of these Spanish gypsy airs, immortalized by a Russian! Male dancers are arrayed in black, and females—except for Cara—in pastels overlaid with black netting, the sinuous and rapid Gypsy Song segueing expertly to the Asturian Fandango! Here even Madame de Talavera, like some magic porcelain puppet joins her daughter in a flurry of Titian tresses and cerise to contrast Cara's gold and green: joyous, rhapsodic—a Goya! a Sargent!

Prince Mischetsky arrives, boasting to Nicky about his supposed conquest of the cafe dancer. Nicky smiles politely at the deception. As Madame prepares to swindle her royal guest in a game of cards, Nicky bids a romantic farewell to Cara. About to kiss her, he is distracted again—by his own music!

The Dance of the Tumblers is being performed, by the cadets, twirling chairs, ducking and kicking, Russian-style. This arctic Russian theme becomes Lorin's own. Madame and the Prince now close in, each en garde, for their bid at gaming. Just about to leave the cafe in a filmy nose veil as the dancer, Cara encounters—Mischetsky! She now no longer cares to be particularly mysterious: she flings the IOU at him, begging her mother's pardon. Upstairs at the cafe, Nicky and Dr. Klin have overheard this exchange with amusement. Nicky pleads for Mischetsky's sponsorship of the hapless Cara anyway. The Prince refuses, referring to the dancer as "that pick-up of yours." Apologize to her! Nicky barks, but Mischetsky refuses.

Bullwhips lash in frenzied fury, to the "*Russian faster Overture* at rolling full-tilt, as both cadets duel, destroying the cafe furniture and slashing the painted oasis backdrop before which Cara had danced only two nights before. Nicky finally prevails in the fray, and in Mischetsky's metier. The two fall into each other's arms, Russian-style. The baton is mightier than the whip! Such is the power of loy^re, the doctor observes. (On with the operetta!)

Warm lips—the girl of 1001 dreams. (More *Coq d'or* themes.) Love. Passion. Inspiration. Muse and Creator. Stars crossing. Fates sealed. Operetta! Now, audience, it

is your turn: You want it to be true; if it isn't, you want to rewrite history. Did Rimsky actually meet such a paragon in Morocco? Did they marry? Will they? They *must!* But—what did you want me to do? Sit close to you? like this? Hold your hand?

That would have been—lovely.

And whisper? And sigh?

That would have been—even lovelier.

And stroke that beautiful hair of yours, I suppose?

It *is* beautiful, you admit!

Lay my cheek against your cheek?

... Just as you're doing now.

And gaze into your eyes?

Yes! she replies. . . . Of course, you'll have to turn me around, first.

And kiss you?

Now it is the third day of shore-leave for the Russians. Aboard the *Almaz*, in the amber glory of the dawn, the sailors scramble to line up, and Dr. Klin delivers the "Hymn to the Sun," with all of its splendid oriental fioratura:

*O sun on high, that lights the sky at dawning
and warms the heart of all the earth below:
I watch yon paint the world each morning
into a blading golden glow.*

*Then, by the light of heaven we'll go sailing,
We'll be once more on some new'distant shore.
At break of day—, we'll sail away!
Sail—away!*

Some one has jumped ship. It is not Nicky but Lorin. And there is Cara in a midshipman's uniform to cover the deception! There is farce as the men are ordered to strip for their morning swim. The dance is really over now; the Russian sailors' jig is up. I see! An opera, by Nicholas Rimsky-Korsakov, a comic opera! A woman in man's clothes. Curtain rises. Big love. Young hero. Beautiful heroine. I wonder, though, who's the clown? Get the Doctor and his bag. (The Doctor's bag, of course, contains all of Nicky's music; everybody knows that.) Are these your manuscripts, Nicky? No other copies?

The Captain threatens to burn them: *The Song of India, The Flight of the Bumblebee, Scheherazade!* But Nicky assures the Captain that he will simply rewrite them, and even better! So the Captain imposes an even harsher punishment, your word of honor that as long as you are in the navy, you'll never write another note, another bar!

It is time for the miracle which will restore all losses. Now it is no longer a sad autumn Morocco, the setting has changed. Black sky and swirling snowflakes proclaim St. Petersburg, the steps of the Opera House! A topcoated Nicky emerges from the snowy distance to confront a giant, liveried usher who is standing before a billboard proclaiming: *Scheherazade*, by N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov! What has happened?

Cara narrates:

It was a cold winter's night in Russia, when they played *Scheherazade* for the first time, by Nicholas Rimsky-Korsakov... [*Interior*] They were "all present and accounted-for": ... Vinogradoff, and Petroff One, and Petroff Two, and little Lorin, and the Lieutenant, and Dr. Klin, and His Highness Prince Mischetsky, and, well... you know Mamma! One chair was vacant.

Full house, Sir! Sold out, not a seat left! the usher announces as Nicky approaches.

Another voice interrupts—the Captain, Vladimir Gregorivich! To the usher: You don't know the composer? The composer of tonight's gala performance? So it was you! I might have known who'd send me a message to come here!

I've come all the way from Kronstadt, Nicky almost gloats. The Captain examines the billboard. *Scheherazade*? With La Talavera? Obviously, Mischetsky has made good his offer, to "speak to the Tsar" (echoes of *Bozhe Tsariye Khranie*—Hail to the Tsar, the only shred of music, besides Mendelssohn's Wedding March, not written by Rimsky-Korsakov).

Nicky now assures the Captain that the absolution from his vow (which the Captain offers) is no longer necessary. He is no longer in the navy; he has resigned his commission. Music will be the order of the day!

In the place in the opera box reserved for Nicky, the Captain now seats himself, between and behind Prince Mischetsky and the regal Madame de Talavera, still unaware, unknowing—and unrepentant! The long awaited ballet begins:

Now, how did that story go again? Once upon a time, there was a mighty Sultan, who had many, many wives ...

The many, many wives of the harem, prone on elbows, now raise right arm and leg aloft, turn, then raise left arm and leg. In the opera box the Captain now sneaks one of his endless smokes. With her patented double take, Madame de Talavera senses the smoke and looks behind her to discover the Captain with cigarette hidden inside his mouth and smoke billowing, even from his ears—a flaming demon! The ballet continues.

And one day, the Sultan found out that no woman could be trusted too far. So, he married a new wife every day—and had her killed the next morning. Then, along came ... Scheherazade! And she had a little sister!

A wild-haired, vagabond Scheherazade, in a wind! And a tiny Dunyazade, both of them in scarlet shepherds' tunics. The woman is captured by the Sultan's guard and

brought struggling, upside-down, before the potentate. Then she is trapped among the Sultan's wives, all in identical "Assyrian" garb. She is flung, back and forth, turning, whirling. The Sultan's wives and slaves envelop her.

Nicky has meanwhile replaced the orchestra's conductor in the pit. Now a dazzling, seraphic smile flashes toward Nicky from Cara-as-Scheherazade. All is fulfilled!

The Finale now, to themes from *The Young Prince and the Young Princess*, as the gilt-garbed Sultan raises Scheherazade heavenward, the vagrant maid now brocaded, bejeweled, transcendent once-and-future-Queen triumphant. Coda. Apotheosis.

The two francs the Captain has owed Madame are now returned to her gloved hand. There is now only a trace of her double take; perhaps she had expected that this was to be a more intimate gesture. There is a resounding clink as the second coin joins the first down her décolletage.

Scheherazade smiles in triumph at Eternity, Cara smiles at Nicky, prima ballerina stands radiant before conductor, and Muse at her Creator—all in one! Time is unending, inspiration will fire masterpieces. All of Love and Romance are embodied in Scheherazade, as her Song resounds.

Ironic endpiece: the Captain grins, a lit cigarette emerging from his mouth, a flaming Beardsley imp. Finale. The music flutters and fades.

Alj laylah wa laylah. Slava! Slava! Slava!

Searching for the Rózsa-in-Rimsky

Frank K. DeWald

Regarding *A SONG TO REMEMBER*, Rózsa writes in *Double Life* of needing "to wade through all the sonatas, nocturnes, and waltzes just to find an eight-bar phrase to fit a specific situation." He continues, "Later I did the same with Rimsky-Korsakov's music for ... *SONG OF SCHEHERAZADE*." I should think that his task on the latter film was somewhat easier for two reasons. First, although he wrote a considerable number of piano pieces and songs, Rimsky-Korsakov's reputation, at least in 1948 and in the United States, was built entirely on his orchestral music, and a small portion of it at that. It is unlikely that Rózsa had access to, interest in, or the need to explore Rimsky's oeuvre beyond the small cache of works that actually made it into the film.

John J. Wayne has done a thorough job of spotting all the Russian composer's works that were used by Rózsa, and it comes down to a remarkably short list:

1. *Scheherazade* (tone poem in four movements, Op. 35)
2. *Le coq d'or* (The golden cockerel) (opera)
3. *The Tale of Tsar Sultan* (opera) (source of "Flight of the Bumblebee")
4. *Antar* (Symphonic Suite, Op. 9, also known as Symphony No. 2)
5. *Capriccio espagnol* (orchestral fantasy, Op. 34)
7. *The Snow Maiden* (opera)
8. *Sadko* (opera) (source of "Song of India")
9. *Russian Easter Overture* (Op. 36)

In the case of the operas, Rózsa was probably familiar only with their orchestral suites, since the stage works were almost never performed outside of Russia.

Much of the music in SONG OF SCHEHERAZADE consists of set pieces (songs, marches, dances) and thus Rózsa's fairly simple (and evidently enjoyable) task consisted of editing and orchestrating Rimsky's originals without changing melodies, counterpoints, or harmonies. The cuts were necessitated by the film's timings, of course, and the orchestration changes included occasional bits of local color called for by the story line (guitars, harmonica) and a few moments of out-and-out Hollywood glamour (every time the chorus comes in!). One wonders if, in his student days in Leipzig, Rózsa studied Rimsky-Korsakov's treatise on orchestration. It was a standard text then and is still highly regarded today. If so, he must have felt some trepidation in tampering with such a master!

It is only in the relatively few moments of bona-fide underscore that Rózsa had the opportunity to put anything of his own musical personality into the score. It is ironic that this master of subtle underscoring, capable of changing the mood of a scene with a single chord, was content (forced?) in this case to apply measure after measure of musical wallpaper to a film that overflows with local color but lacks a single moment of sophisticated drama.

I noticed only two moments where Rózsa seemed to wander circumspectly away from the originals and allow himself to develop his own dramatically apt scoring (albeit always with Rimsky's melodies as the basis). One is the scene where Nicky and Cara admit their love; the second occurs when Cara's mother goes to the ship to complain about the Prince and the money he owes her. If one were playing "name the composer" with this film, only those two brief moments might give away the answer.

After watching the film, and almost allowing myself to be dragged into its silly, ultra-romantic aura, I was motivated to pull a few old CDs off the shelf, including Beecham's legendary *Scheherazade*, Ansermet's *Tsar Sultan* and *Snow Maiden* suites, Dorati's *Capriccio espagnol*, *Russian Easter Overture* and *Coq d'or* suite, and even Gergiev's complete *Sadko*. It was a joy to become reacquainted with these colorful and intoxicating scores as Rimsky-Korsakov wrote them. I think if Rózsa knew that anyone, hearing his SCHEHERAZADE, would be motivated to explore the Russian originals, he would have been pleased and felt that his job had been well and truly done.

The Core Collection

John Fitzpatrick

Every now and then I encounter a longtime Rózsa fan who has never heard a particular work or album. Of course nobody could master the entire Rózsa discography, but there are a number of key works that nobody can afford to ignore. What are these core items? Here are my recommendations of the essential five recordings no Rózsa fan ought to be without. They're not the "five best" of anything. They're not my own personal favorites. But each item here through some combination of historical importance, intrinsic merit, and broad popularity has earned its place in the core collection of all Rozsaphiles.

1942: THE JUNGLE BOOK. Suite for Narrator and Orchestra. Sabu, narr.; MR cond.; Victor Symphony Orchestra. RCA Victor DM 905. Reissued on LP (Sound Stage 2309 and Entr'acte ERM 6002) and on CD (Flapper PASTCD-7093).

We tend to forget what a landmark this recording was: Not only was it Miklós Rózsa's first recording as either composer or conductor. (The only exceptions are the "Nic Tomay" pieces he wrote in Paris and a few short prewar film arrangements.) THE JUNGLE BOOK was the first American commercial record album of *any* film score. Think about it. There was never an album for KING KONG or ALEXANDER NEYSKY or GONE WITH THE WIND or any of the great Korngold classics (although transcription discs were made to broadcast music from THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD in 1938). And all of a sudden in the dark year of 1942 we get a lavish three-disc set of a colorful work by an immigrant composer for a foreign film company in temporary Hollywood residence. It's not a mere soundtrack, but a specially commissioned recording made in New York City with Toscanini's orchestra. (Walter Primrose played first viola.) If this doesn't qualify as a landmark, I don't know where to look. There have been better recordings and better narrators and better contraltos—though never, I think, a better orchestral performance. MR's recording career started on a high note indeed.

1956: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 24. Walter Hendl, cond.; Jascha Heifetz, vln.; Dallas Symphony Orchestra. RCA LM-2027. Reissued on LP (RCA LSC 2767) and on CD (BMG 09026-61752-2).

When I began these notes a couple of years back, this was a no-brainer. The world

premiere of Violin Concerto in 1955 was the greatest triumph of Rózsa's career. The recording followed almost immediately, and it has been a staple of the catalog ever since. Thin, dry sonics and a glaring "spotlight" on the brilliant soloist cannot tarnish the star quality here. Today, of course, you can make a strong case for the superiority of Robert McDuffie's Telarc recording with the Atlanta Symphony. Better orchestra, better sound, better overall experience. Maybe even more thoughtful, insightful fiddling. Certainly it's a warmer, more human approach to this great classic. Still, the Heifetz is a monument against all other performances continue to be measured. It's definitely a part of the core collection.

1974: *Spellbound: The Classic Film Scores of Miklós Rózsa*. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Gerhardt, cond. RCA ARL 1-0911. Reissued on CD (RCA 0911-2-RG).

This is an arguable choice. Rózsa's own Polydor series would eventually offer more incisive performances of a much wider repertory. But Gerhardt got there first. The Classic Film Scores series itself was a landmark. It began in 1972 with *THE SEA HAWK*, arguably the most important recording in the history of film music. (It began the great Korngold revival that continues to this day, and it helped to inspire the film music renaissance of the 1970s.) No one who was alive at the time can forget the excitement of seeing this music get first-rank classical treatment. The engineer was K. E. Wilkerson, who supervised the Decca *Ring* cycle. The producer was the experienced George Korngold. The acoustic was the fabulous Kingsway Hall. This may be the best-sounding Rozsa recording ever. And here were thrilling realizations of music that few of us had even dreamed of hearing on vinyl: the blazing sunstroke episode from *THE FOUR FEATHERS*; the romance of the male chorus giving new voice to the Song of the Jungle; the expressionistic horror of a key episode from *THE LOST WEEKEND*; and a reworking of *THE RED HOUSE* that elevated that old potboiler to the level of some titanic struggle. This one will always be special.

1996: *BEN-HUR*. Original Soundtrack Recording. MR cond. MGM Studio orchestra.
Rhino R2 72197

MR's film music masterpiece had been poorly served on records until Marilee Bradford produced this triumphant realization for Rhino some forty-seven years after the original sessions. But there isn't a whiff of the "archaeological" about this fine-sounding historic release. It is a *BEN-HUR* for all seasons.

1997: Sinfonia Concertante for Violin, Cello, and Orchestra, Op. 29, Igor Gruppman, vln., Richard Boch, cello. Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, Op. 37, Paul Silverthorne, vla. James Sedares, cond. New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Koch 3-7304-2H1.

Here is the first recording of Rózsa's biggest, brawniest concerto—a recording for which we had to wait thirty years. And the best recording to date of the somber and mysterious Viola Concerto that was MR's last major utterance for orchestra. It's the most valuable entry in Koch's important series. The Symphony premiere recording may have more historical value, but this one has more brilliant music.

All right. How could I leave out the first QUO VADIS, an EL CID album (take your pick), the Symphony, the glowing Phase Four versions of BEN-HUR and QUO VADIS? And what about Intrada's revelatory JULIUS CAESAR? It was *very* hard to leave out RCA LSC 2802 (*Rózsa Conducts Rózsa*), which introduced a generation to four major works. I think I would have named that one if it were still available. At the moment, it is not. James Sedares has duplicated the content for Koch, and the earlier U.S. Decca DL 9966 contained longer versions of several of these scores. Nevertheless, the RCA is the best of this lot and ought to be a prime candidate for CD issue. The truth is that there are many landmarks in the Rózsa discography. Let's hear some other viewpoints.

NEWS (continued from page 2)

it for this recording. . . . Imaginative and well played."

The Rhino "Handmade" music series (mail order only) opened with a terrific release of Andre Previn's FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE (RHM2 7764), one of the few film scores that MR openly praised. KING OF KINGS, formerly rumored for this series, is now expected in November as a two-disc regular retail issue. IVANHOE may follow.

Silva Screen 1117: *Ben-Hur The Essential Miklos Rozsa* is a two-disc, bargain-priced compilation of all that label's Rózsa recordings. It includes the complete contents of their excellent *Epic Film Music of Miklós Rózsa* (Silva 1056, now out of print) plus music from THE THIEF OF BAGDAD (previously on their *Warriors of the Silver Screen*), PROVIDENCE (previously on *Art House Cafe*), and JULIUS CAESAR (first issue—also included in the label's recent *Shakespeare at the Movies*).

BEN-HUR on DVD. We've never explicitly tracked video releases—who's up for the assignment?—but the DVD issue of BEN-HUR deserves special mention. It's controversial, with a number of viewers finding it inferior to the laserdisc edition. There have been some claims (earnestly argued in the Rózsa Forum) of lost high frequencies in the remastering and faulty choral synchronization in the Nativity sequence.

PERFORMANCES

In November we had two Rózsa performances in a single week. A rare live performance of MR's first published work, the String Trio, Op. 1, took place on 5 November 2000, when the (Canadian) Adaskin Trio performed it at the Kosciuszko Foundation in New York City. The program also featured music by Beethoven and Lutoslawski. Then on 7 November the Piano Sonata, Op. 20, was played by Tan-Yun Shen, a student of Sara Buechner, at the Manhattan School of Music.

In April, New York heard *three* Rózsa

performances in eight days: On the 14th, musicians from the American Composers Orchestra (ACO) gave a chamber concert that featured the First String Quartet, Op. 22, along with music by Herrmann, Raksin, and Corigliano. On the 22nd, at Carnegie Hall, the full ACO offered the *Spellbound Concerto* (Scott Dunn, soloist) along with film music by Herrmann, Raksin, Stravinsky, Tiomkin, and Chihara. On the same day, over at Lincoln Center, Sara Davis Buechner played *The Vintner's Daughter* along with music by Mozart and Brahms. Buechner will be playing Rozsa again at Rockefeller University (in Manhattan) on September 12, 2001. The Variations, Op. 9, will be featured on a program that also includes Mozart, Lipatti, Friml, and Gershwin.

The Violin Concerto, Op. 24, returned to Texas, the state of its 1955 world premiere, when Robert McDuffie played it on 2 June with the Houston Symphony under Andre Rafel Smith. It shared the program with the *Tragic Overture* of Brahms and the Dvorak Eighth Symphony.

The Viola Concerto, Op. 38, was heard three times in January (12th, 13th, and 16th) with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Rafael Fruhbeck de Burgos. The soloist was the orchestra's principal, Roberto Diaz. This concert was broadcast in the region and was attended by a Society delegation including Rea and Pat Culpepper, John Durso, John Fitzpatrick, Mike Reamy, and Steve Vertlieb.

The *Sinfonia Concertante* will be given in Washington, D.C., on 8 February 2002 along with music by Toch, Korngold, Waxman, and Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Frederick Zlotkin and Jamie Laredo are the soloists under Leonard Slatkin, who has previously programmed this work during his tenure with the St. Louis Symphony.

The *Kaleidoscope*, Op. 19a, was given at a film music concert in Richmond, Virginia on 27 and 29 April, Mark Russell Smith, conducting.

The "Parade of the Charioteers" and other music from BEN-HUR sounded out at the

Proms concert on 14 August at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

A fifteen-minute suite from KING OF KINGS was given by the Boston Pops orchestra on 23 and 24 June. Conductor Charles Floyd is credited with the arrangement, which included the following sequence of episodes: Prelude-Roman Legions-Road to Bethlehem-Nativity-Temptation-Miracles-Sepulchre-Resurrection and Epilogue. From the podium Floyd said that he had become enthralled by this music when he was five years old. Floyd also conducted a suite from BEN-HUR three years earlier.

Publications

Miklós Rózsa: *La fidelidad a los origenes* is a major publication (274 illustrated, large-format pages) from the Associacio Catalana per la Difusio de la Musica de Cinema. It has been prepared by Joan Bosch Hugas and Joan Carles Suau. The bulk of the text consists of brief commentaries on the film scores (every single one!), almost all of them illustrated by stills or posters. Some of the latter are fascinating in their unfamiliarity. There are also brief articles on recurring themes (I didn't know that a tune from WOMAN OF THE TOWN reappeared in THE POWER) and on the concert music; an extensive selection of interviews (translated into Spanish): and an exceptionally thorough international discography. There is, finally, a seven-teen-page "Album de caratulas" that showcases cover reproductions of just about every Rózsa LP and CD. Reproduction and paper quality are quite modest; this "dossier" is intended primarily for internal organizational use. For further information contact Joan Carles Suau Rigual / Roquetes 8 3º, 1 / El Vendrell. Tarragona / Spain (joan-carles_suau@agilent.com).

In Search of Ben-Hur Soundtrack Records is a comparatively modest project, but an extraordinary one. K. Selvaraja is a longtime Rozsa fan and Society member in Kuala Lumpur. He has made a lifetime project of trying to docu-

ment every Ben-Hur recording in the world—every edition, every country, every derivative version. For good measure he includes music from the silent film version and even a reproduction of a 1913 Edison Diamond disc featuring a Edgar S. Kelley's "Ben-Hur Chariot March" as performed by E. T. Paull and his Brass Orchestra. Selvaraja describes the cumulative results of his quest in a 44-page illustrated typescript document that he reissues from time to time. (We received the 1999 version.) If you want to know about, say, a Philips storybook album featuring Rózsa's music along

with the speaking voices of Jean Servais and Jean Rochefort (all conducted by one "Norman Maine"!), then Selva is your man. Selva's achievement is all the more remarkable because he lives in Malaysia. Not only is he remote from most recording centers, but he also has to contend with an Islamic government restrictions on Jewish or Christian themed works of literature or film. Selva appreciates contacts and information from Ben-Hur fans anywhere in the world: K. Selvaraja / A3, Jalan Cenderuh 5 / Taman Bamboo / Batu 4¼. Jalan Ipoh / 51200 Kuala Lumpur / Malaysia.

Testimonials

Back in 1998 the Society took a poll of members' preferences among Rózsa's works and the music of other composers. Tabulated results were reported in PMS 58. The final question called for a more personal and thoughtful response: How has Miklós Rózsa influenced your life? Here is a selection of the responses.

How has Miklós Rózsa influenced my life? For the better, obviously, in ways that can't be measured, as is the case in all quality art. Yes, his music has inspired my belief and provided a helpful conduit. His music has inspired my education, in that his work was certainly a springboard from which I investigated the established music masters. His music has inspired my career in that I always strive for truth and excellence, following the example that Rózsa and others that I admire set for me. Excelsior!

Kyle J. Adamczak, Gainesville, N. Y.

Rozsa's music fills me with hope and a zest for life.

Ken Doeckel, Concord, Calif.

Rozsa taught me that a film composer could be well schooled, withstand studio pressure and treat the cinema with the same reverence as the concert hall.

Robert Feigenblatt, Pembroke Pines, Via.

KING OF KINGS was my awakening. Not before or since have I been so touched by music. Whenever the "Christ Theme" emanated from the screen, I found myself choked up with tears. Had I been of another faith, Rózsa's score would have made me a believer in die mis-

sion of Christ on earth. So overwhelmed was I with the music I heard that afternoon that upon retiring for the evening, in lieu of my nightly prayers, I softly hummed the "Christ Theme" from KING OF KINGS.

Ronald Martin, Flushing, N. Y.

There is no doubt that Rózsa's music, influenced me to become a classics major in university. I like to think I appreciate subtlety now, but those days it was the Roman marches that moved me, all those supremely self-confident brass blaring in triumph. Concurrent with this, due to a childhood reading of E. Nesbit's *The Magic City*, I built an ancient-style city of my own on a large platform in my room. But it was always Rózsa's music playing when I worked on it or showed it to anyone.

In later years I've been more influenced by the spiritual interludes from scores of that period finding depths of feeling in his music that I cannot express in words. It's been the spirituality that has grown and nurtured me through adversity. Now, when I hear the marches, I still smile, remembering the boy I was, and still feel some of that awesome excitement of imagined sunny days in ancient Rome, with all the flags and standards streaming through the cheering crowd.

John Archibald, San Diego, Calif.

Rózsa was one of my film music discoveries when I encountered symphonic music in spectacles such as BEN-HUR and KING OF KINGS. I could not get over the quality of the music in these movies, which led me to an appreciation of music of all kinds. I am now thirty-six years old. After devouring the soundtracks of the great film composers, I started to search out their concert works. My life has been immeasurably improved by listening to Rózsa's music, both for the cinema and concert hall.

Kevin Deany, Westmont, Ill.

I think Dr. Rózsa helped increase my happiness in life. It has always been a joy to discover he had produced a new work (film or concert). I only regret it did not make me take up playing a musical instrument. I think this is a thing the maestro would have been most concerned with. He liked all the "fans" to enjoy his music, but I think he would say, "if you like music so much, why not study it and learn to play a musical instrument?"

William Gray, Ermington, New South Wales, Australia

Miklós Rózsa's music changed my life upon early investigation and frantic discovery. I felt the need to promote it and make it the subject of prolonged study and discussion. The film music set the standard for me against which all other scores are measured and evaluated. All his music was uplifting to a degree never before imagined or since known. His style of writing epitomises the truly "life-enhancing" qualities so frequently apparent and often necessary in any great artist.

Alan Hamer, New Southgate, Tendon, England

When I was in my teens, Miklós Rózsa's film music used to be a strong part of my very own romantic reflections. For a while I became very interested in Latin and everything connected with Roman history. I even took part in some small archaeological ventures—all due to pictures like *Quo YADIS* and *BEN-HUR!* In Latin class we were once given some pages from Julius Caesar's *De bello gallico* for translation. Of course I formed my translation into a script and read it to the class over a taped "temp track" with selections from *BEN-HUR* in the background;

Eohtar Heinle, Tubingen, Germany

Rózsa's music is the "rock" upon which my appreciation and understanding of music has grown. It is a spiritual foundation, for by his own admission Rózsa's music is inspired by his faith, his faith in his God-given talent and in the fundamental goodness of human nature. It is not the only music I listen to—I sometimes leave it for weeks or months on end—but it is the music to which I relate other composers' works. Like a tonal center, it is the music to which I ultimately return for spiritual nourishment, for psychological healing, for familiarity and comfort, for the opportunity to discover something new in works that I have heard many times over. It is both "home" and "home base."

Obviously I am most fond of Rózsa's scores for religious and historical epics. They have motivated me to seek critically their historicity and meaning in such scholarly books as Richard Fletcher's *The Quest for El Cid* and Raymond E. Brown's *The Death of the Messiah*. I have been privileged during my life to have met both my favorite composer, the late Miklós Rózsa, and my favorite biblical scholar, the late Raymond E. Brown, and to have been able to discuss their works with them. Those who appreciate the life work of either gentleman are few in number in this world. To be able to meet both scholars was a rare treasure. Those of us who have discovered the music of Rózsa and recognized its "pearl" value are both cursed and blessed. Cursed because it is little appreciated by most people and blessed because, like the Magi, we have the means to seek out his life's work and the works of those who, like Rózsa, believe in the dignity and meaning of human life.

George Komar, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

Miklós Rózsa has been a monumental influence in my life. In a nutshell this music has at times given the hope where I thought none existed.

Ken Taws, Tondon, England

Miklós Rózsa put a soundtrack to my life. I seem to view life with the same intensity and drama Rózsa expresses in his music. As a child of about twelve, I felt he was talking to me through music. I felt his kinship as if he knew what I was feeling. A lot of it was dark and terrifying, but it also could take me to the pinnacle of musical ecstasy. Such beautiful melodies as the love theme from *THE LOST WEEKEND*, the main theme from *SPELLBOUND*, the pastoral opening theme from *THE RED HOUSE*. His music could also inspire feelings of

hope and resurrection like the Epilogue from THE NAKED CITY and bring you to magical and mysterious worlds like the lullaby Mowgli's mother sings to him in THE JUNGLE BOOK and the Silvermaid's Dance in THE THIEF OF BAGDAD.

I once wrote him a lengthy letter expressing some ideas I had, and relating how his music influenced my life. You can imagine how surprised and elated I was when I received a reply from him, giving me words of encouragement. This gives you some idea what a great and gracious man he was.

I am now sixty-one years old, and I can honestly say that the music of Miklós Rózsa has been the biggest influence in my life and continues to inspire me to this day-

Jerry LaRocca, Sherwood, Ore.

I think Miklós Rózsa's music suggests unusual human dimensions, distinguished by strong will and heroic struggle for life. *La muska di M. Ro\sa mi ha impartato ad appre^are la storia antka; storia antka che novi me arena mai interessante prima.*

Antonino Medina, Rome, Italy

When I listen to BEN-HUR and KING OF KINGS, I feel a deep stirring in my soul as the music in these films is a celebration of salvation and eternal life. MR's music has definitely influenced my life, and inspired my beliefs. His music had deepened my faith and belief in God and Christ and his music changed my taste in music forever and for that I am deeply grateful. Also his music touches the heart and soul like no other composer has or ever will.

Ron Mosteller, Vale, N.C.

Miklos Rozsa hasn't so much inspired me as confirmed my belief that there's a basic dignity to life, and indeed a seriousness, that most people prefer to ignore or denigrate. When people say, "Hey, you can't be serious all the time," they usually mean they prefer not to be serious at all. MR reaffirmed me in my teenage years, through the most impressive and emotional medium of all, music, that life isn't just one long party, that we're here on a mission, the quest for knowledge and understanding of ourselves and our fellow man. Listen to almost anything by MR and it's hard not to be reminded of that fact, even if not always overtly. I hear it in every note he wrote.

Paul Packer, Gorokan, New South Wales, Australia

I could not live without music. For me, music is as important as the air I breathe, and it is a food for the soul. Either I could not live without Miklos Rozsa's music or Vaughan Williams's. These two composers represent the credo of my life. Their depth, emotional impact, and compassion for humanity are unique.

Rozsa's music helped to build the man I am: morally as well as professionally. From KING OF KINGS and BEN-HUR I discovered spirituality and greater faith in God and I learnt to appreciate religious music. From IVANHOE and KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE I learnt the values of a given word, protection for the disabled, courage and care for others.

From MOONFLEET I learnt the value of parenthood, and from COMMAND DECISION responsibility. From LUST FOR LIFE I came to appreciate painting. From EL CID I understood the importance of love.

I will always be grateful to Miklós Rózsa's music for having warmed me when I was cold, for having given me faith while I was losing it, and for having given me strength when I was weakening in difficult circumstances in my life. Finally I cannot conceive that the heavens would stand without Rózsa's music.

Christian Roy, Sainte-Foy, Quebec, Canada

Rózsa's music inspires me, but it would probably be more accurate to say that I respond to it precisely because it reflects my values. I am captivated by themes of struggle and redemption, hope, and salvation, an optimistic triumphing over obstacles. I think Rózsa's music embodies these themes, and that is why I have always responded so strongly and emotionally to it.

Chris Matthew Sciabarra, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Our colonisers did not teach us music. We knew next to nuts about music, soundtracks, and scores. I was only nineteen when I first came across this BEN-HUR soundtrack record in one of the desolate towns in Malaysia. Until that time I never knew that there were such things as soundtrack records! Well, that was our cultural level in the mid-1960s. But it turned my life upside down. BEN-HUR made me a soundtrack addict in a country that does not have soundtrack specialty shops or cinema bookshops.

I have devoted almost thirtx-five years of my life to listening to Rózsa's scores. To be such a collector is a real challenge when you live in a Muslim country like Malaysia, where most Christian epics are banned. So Rózsa not only made me a soundtrack addict but he also *plunged* me into this rather difficult and expensive hobby that has become part and parcel of my life.

K. Selvaraja, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Miklós Rózsa's music, or what I consider the best of it, is one of those touchstones that imparts a sense of the epic. So I go back to it for this quality the same way I go back to the more traditional eternal works which impart this sense: for example, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the Five Books of Moses, the Gospels, or in our own century the postwar Great American Novels, such as the prewar "big novels of Hemingway et al. Of course the romantic music of Rózsa is also so beautiful that it is often described as ravishingly beautiful music; and that helps, but it's really the epic or historical romance contexts that make this music work wonders. We need such touchstones, and we should be eternally grateful that we had this one originate in film music. Surely no other film composer comes close to Rozsa in this accomplishment.

Ken Sutak, Brooklyn, N. Y.

The music of Miklós Rózsa has enriched my life profoundly and touched it with beauty and

joy. Listening to it as a child was one of my first conscious experiences of beauty and artistry, and I recapture this experience each time I listen to a piece of his music. I think it helped foster in me an appreciation for art and music in general. I will also always remember his kindness and graciousness on the several occasions when I had the great good fortune to attend a live performance of his music and, incredibly, to meet him. That, I think, will always remain among the happiest memories of my life. Finally, through membership in the Rózsa society, I have made several friendships which remain active and important to me.

Kim Szczypinski, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Miklós Rózsa's music has influenced my life in at least in two complementary simultaneous ways. It has served as a repository for my emotions when I am agitated, especially frustrated or anxious, by allowing me to pour my emotions into it. At the same time, it motivates me of its own by instilling an energetic reaction in me. It makes me feel part of it. There could be more to this, but I cannot come out with it.

Joseph Velo, Marshall, Tex.

Miklos Rozsa taught me the value of single-minded dedication and devotion to any worthy task in life. His music provides me, a C.P. person, with tons of motivation to go beyond seemingly insurmountable limitations. It instills courage and hope.

David Whisenant, Trussvilk, Ala.

Coming in future issues:
Concert and film music discographies
Major BEN-HUR analysis

Pro Musica Sana appears at long intervals. For current news visit the Rozsa Forum on our website.

RECORDED
LEGACY

Mark Koldys
7545 Manor
Dearborn, MI 48126

mkoldys@mac.com

- SUBSCRIPTIONS,
EDITORIAL MATTER

John Fitzpatrick
The Miklos Rozsa Society
P. O. Box 666
Norwalk, CT 06852

rozsaphile@aol.com

" EUROPEAN.....
REPRESENTATIVE

Alan J. Hamer
86 Bow Lane
Finchley
London N12 QJP
England

hsa37@aol.com

www.miklosrozsa.cjb.net

Webmaster: M. Gear