

PRO MUSICA SANA
A PUBLICATION OF
The **Miklós Rózsa** Society
—Since 1972—

Series 2: Vol. 5, No. 1

Spring 2005

PMS 61

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ISSN 0361-9559



A Tale of the Score

Ralph Erkelenz

A certain uniquely Hollywoodian aura of reverence so quickly engulfs any mention of Miklós Rózsa's score for the film classic *Ben-Hur*, it seems altogether natural to assume that every nuance of the score might by now have undergone the closest scrutiny and critical assessment. Except for the shower of superlatives (and otherwise watery adjectives) that one might expect to rain down on any Academy Award winning score, it is somewhat surprising to discover, then, that Rózsa's worthy effort has in fact received little critical attention in print.* Now, twenty-nine years after the film's release, there still exists no straightforward cue-by-cue explication of the way in which Rózsa's highly praised music actually fits the film. More importantly, we still lack a simple elucidation of the basic musical materials and methods he employed in meeting its complex challenges, both musical and dramaturgical.

* Though brief references appear throughout the Rózsa literature, only one full-length article is entirely devoted to the subject: Mark Koldys' "Miklós Rózsa and 'Ben-Hur'" in *Pro Musica Sana*, 3, No. 3 (Fall 1974), 3-20.

This is how Steven D. Wescott opens his article entitled, 'Miklós Rózsa's *Ben-Hur*: The Musical-Dramatic Function of the Hollywood *Leitmotiv*', published in *Film Music 1* (ed. Clifford McCarty, Garland Publishing, Inc., NY 1989, pp. 183-207). While he quite convincingly sets out to rectify the lack of 'a simple elucidation of the basic musical materials' in his text, he nevertheless deplores that the 'prospect [of giving a straightforward cue-by-cue explication] looms beyond the reasonable scope of this brief article' (p. 183).

Another fifteen years have passed since Wescott's remark, and forty-five years since the score was first heard in a movie theater. I believe the time has come to at least give it a try and provide this cue-by-cue explication.

Here it is.

Part One

A small 35 mm microfilm reel, 93 mm in diameter, entitled, ‘Music for Motion Pictures – Music 3449’. It contains ‘items 777 – 784’, thus numbered by the United States Library of Congress. Hidden behind this inconspicuous description are copies of hundreds of pages of printed or hand-written music for movies such as HOTEL PARADISO (L. Rosenthal), JULIET OF THE SPIRITS, THE LEOPARD and WAR AND PEACE (N. Rota), and three scores by Miklós Rózsa: ASPHALT JUNGLE, BECAUSE OF HIM, and BEN-HUR. This reel obviously offers the film music buff more material than can reasonably be perused within even a few months. The score for BEN-HUR alone consists of 517 (not 516, as the Library of Congress has it) pages of neatly written notes, meticulous references to the recording time and the script, as well as reel numbers, titles, dates, deletions, additions, and additional remarks; and even if you limit yourself to this one monumental score, the task is truly Herculean.

The Library of Congress has labeled the material as follows:

MUSIC 3449 ITEM 784 — M 1527.R7B45	
Rózsa, Miklós, 1907–	
Ben-hur ; background musical score of motion picture photoplay / [n.p., Loew's] c1959.	
1 condensed score. (516 p. [sic]) ; 33 cm.	
For orchestra.	
© Loew's Inc. EU 599428	10/26/59

This neatly copied condensed score represents the music (for archival and other purposes) as filled in by the orchestrator. This makes it a very different document from the original composer sketches such as Frank DeWald analyzed for EL CID and LUST FOR LIFE (cf. *Pro Musica Sana*, nos. 50–51 and 57.) It consists of neatly hand-written music in two to six staves containing a sort of shorthand indications as to which instruments are to play which notes.¹ However, it is still up to the orchestrator to decide which actual melody line is played by which instrument, as the condensed score often only has, say, four-note chords whose notes must be distributed among ‘first violins, 2 flutes, 2 oboes’ (as is the

¹ As explained by Miklós Rózsa in his interview with Derek Elley ‘The Film Composer’, (in *Films and Filming*, May/June 1977; reprinted in PMS 27, p. 8): ‘I give a sketch... I very much dislike the word “sketch”, because it signifies something unfinished... I give a short score laid out on anything from two to six staves which tells you exactly what all the departments of the orchestra do, all the harmonies, everything. My orchestrator just saves me the enormous and time-consuming job of laying out the music in full score [...]. I would challenge anyone to hear the difference if my short score for a particular scene was given out to five orchestrators... It must sound the same, because they cannot add anything: everything is indicated—a flute is a flute, and if I want a flute and an oboe, I write so.’ Rózsa’s faithful orchestrator on BEN-HUR was the Hungarian composer Eugene Zador.

case in the first measure of the Overture; cf. **ex. 1**). There are numerous timings that indicate what moment in the film a specific point in the score coincides with. Very often those timings are doubled by short descriptions (underlined) of what actually happens at that moment; e.g. in *Anno Domini*: ‘:50 Fortress of Antonia’ or ‘:54 Temple’. Each piece in this condensed score is given a registration number and a title; the composer’s name and the title of the movie are mentioned; then there is a date as well as that part of the reel in which the piece in question appears. Interestingly enough, there is practically no piece that has any key notation (unlike some of Mark Koldys’s examples in his 1974 article, “Miklós Rózsa and BEN-HUR,” published in *Pro Musica Sana* no. 11).

It took weeks of careful listening and reading to make an inventory of the pieces reproduced on the microfilm and to compare them to existing recordings such as the Rhino double album, the Rózsa Society cassette recordings of the Syracuse acetates, and the Aldebaran 3-CD pirated edition of the original music tracks. Furthermore, some of the “soundtrack” albums issued from 1959 proved to be very valuable sources when it came to verifying certain details. Besides, I am grateful to John Fitzpatrick and Frank DeWald for their valuable comments and suggestions.

The material on hand is so copious that several ways of structuring and presenting it to the reader would be feasible:

- ... a page-per-page description of the microfilm material, disregarding the actual sequence of the appearance in the movie;
- ... a chronological description of the material as it is heard in the movie, disregarding the many pages *not* heard (and in some cases presumably never even recorded);
- ... a chronological description of the material in order of the recording dates (or, at least, the dates of transcription);
- ... a thematic grouping of interesting subjects such as deletions (marked and not marked), transitions, alternative versions, unrecorded/unused material, instrumentation, etc.

The way that appears most sensible to me is to follow the chronology of the movie (as this is what most readers are familiar with and also how the CD tracks have been arranged) and to include additional points of interest as we go along. Therefore, this first part of my analysis will start at the beginning of the movie as well as at the beginning of the microfilm score.

Each piece starts with a short description of the microfilm pages in the following order: *no.* = [my own chronological] number of the title in question — *page* = the first page of the piece [again, my own count: the pages are not numbered in the copy] — *Title* = the original wording of the title — *Reg.no.* = the registration number allotted to each title, which usually appears in a frame in the top left corner of the first page of each cue, then in smaller ciphers and without the frame in the top left corner of each of the following pages — *Reel/part* = the reference to the original film reels — *Date* = the date that

Example 1

1724-81

OCT 26 1959

Eu. 599428

LOEW'S INCORPORATED
DATE: 7.22.59

REEL: 1
PART: A

OVERTURE

("BEN-HUR")

MIKLÓS RÓZSA

:00

LARGAMENTE

I. VNS.
12 FIS.
2 Obs.

VNS. II
3 Clar.
3 Tpts.

Vlc. 4 Hrs.

Gong

f

mf

ff

marc.

Timp.

Trc. Bsns.
3. Trb.
Ba. 2 Tubas

4

5

6

7

8

M1529
R71345

appears next to the title (this must be the day that those pages were written rather than recorded as they always predate the recording dates indicated in the Rhino booklet); **all dates are 1959** — *no.pp.* = the number of pages used for this title — *Dur.* = duration of the title **as indicated in writing** (not to be confused with the actual duration of the recording) — *Mm.* = number of measures (usually each measure has been numbered).

The references to the recordings read as follows: when talking about the CDs I will indicate the number of the CD in Roman numerals, followed by the track number (e.g. Rhino II 12 for ‘Hatred’); referring to the MRSSS tapes I doubt whether everybody has this recording in the same format, so I have just numbered the tracks from the beginning.

1 Overture

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
1	1	Overture	1724-81	1-A	07-22	18	5:20	182

; Rhino I 1 • MRSSS 1 • Aldebaran I 1

These 18 pages of the condensed score were written on Wednesday 22 July 1959 and recorded nearly two weeks later, on Tuesday 4 August (the sixth of only eleven known days of recording, if you take the recording dates indicated in the Rhino booklet).

Although no cuts seem to have made in this piece, the difference between the planned and the actual duration is much bigger than in any other recording. Whereas the score indicates a length of 5 minutes and 20 seconds, the Rhino CD has 6:32, the Aldebaran 6:27 (which might result from the rather amateurish fade-in and -out effects in that pirated edition), and my MRSSS cassette recording takes 6:12 (which could be caused by differences in tape speed on the long way from the original to my copy of a copy). Also, there are only six timings:

- 0:00 beginning (measure 1)
- 1:00 for no musical reason (measure 39)
- 1:30 beginning of the Love Theme (m. 59)
- 2:40 four measures before the beginning of The Mother’s Love (m. 99)
- 3:40 beginning of Friendship (m. 129)
- 5:20 end

All this, I believe, is easily explained: the *Overture* did not have to be synchronized with the action on screen; therefore greater liberty with the tempi could be taken. As this condensed score does not contain any metronome markings but rather relies on terms like *largamente*, *poco più mosso*, etc. there was enough space left for interpretation, and Rózsa

used it to make his *Overture* more than a minute longer than planned, although the reason behind this can only be guessed at.

‘[The] PRELUDE places the listener immediately in the atmosphere of the period of “Ben-Hur”,’ Rózsa wrote in his liner notes to the original MGM S1E1 disc recording. As the *Overture* starts with the same motif, ‘Anno Domini’, the same could be said about this piece. In fact, Mark Koldys points this out in his analysis, adding that the perfect fifth is the harmonic basis for this music. Interestingly enough, though, in *Anno Domini* (no. 2 in the score) Rózsa uses nothing but perfect fifths for the opening chords of the movie — the first chord consists of eight notes, but only two different ones: C and G, which are a fifth apart. In the *Overture*, however, the harmonization is not as straightforward and thus appears richer in texture: there are ten notes to the first chord, eight of which again only consist of A and E (= perfect fifth), but there are two additional D notes, which fill this otherwise ‘open’ chord with a fourth (A – D). This added fourth is continued in the following chords up to the beginning of the second section (m. 9, *pizzicato* strings). The same is true for the last few measures of the *Overture*, except that this time the perfect fifth consists of E-flat and B-flat, with A-flat as the added fourth.

2 Anno Domini

; Rhino I 2 • MRSSS 2 and 92 • Aldebaran I 2

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
2	19	Anno Domini	1724-1	1-1	08-11	4	1:26	47

This, of course, is the majestic opening of the motion picture proper, starting with a *fortissimo* statement of the *Anno Domini* theme consisting of nothing but perfect fifths (as already mentioned) and thereby giving maximum impact to the subject matter of this movie: the full orchestration (*tutti* strings, woodwind, trumpets, gong, trombones, low woodwinds, violoncelli, [double] basses, tubas) represents Roman power, the open fifths suggest ‘Antiquity’ (as has been said by Dr. Rózsa himself and by Christopher Palmer²), and the use of the lowered 7th scale degree which becomes apparent in the second chord that you hear establishes from the very beginning the dominant musical ‘mood’ (cf. **ex. 2**).

There are a total of 17 timings, most of which do not refer to any discernable point in the movie but rather mark the temporal progress of the music. The ‘Judea’ theme makes its entrance at 0:19 in the score, where we read ‘Map of Judea’; and ‘Fortress of Antonia’ appears at 0:50. - 0:54 says, ‘Temple’, but the familiar chant-like choral line is missing. There is only a sustained open fifth (E-flat — B-flat) whose length is not prescribed but rather left open to the demands of the film (Rózsa puts a *fermata* above the chord). This coincides with the second MRSSS tape version (92); however, the other MRSSS recording, the Rhino version and the Aldebaran edition all have the vocal part (do

Example 2

MIKLOS ROZSA

Handwritten musical score for Miklos Rozsa's 'The Music in Quo Vadis'. The score is written on three systems of staves, each with a time signature of 3/4. The first system starts at 0:00 and ends at 0:06. The second system starts at 0:06 and ends at 0:14. The third system starts at 0:14 and ends at 0:19. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics (ff, f). There are also handwritten annotations in circles and boxes, including 'TOTAL STRS w/ WOOD WINDS', 'HMS-VLE', 'CHORUS', and 'CHORUS 2nd'. The score is numbered 1 through 10 across the measures.

² Miklós Rózsa, *The Music in QUO VADIS* (*Film Music*, 11, no. 2, Nov-Dec 1951) 'As the music for QUO VADIS was intended for dramatic use and as entertainment for the lay public, one had to avoid the pitfall of producing only musicological oddities instead of music with a universal, emotional appeal. For the modern ear, instrumental music in unison has very little emotional or aesthetic appeal; therefore I had to find a way for an archaic sounding harmonization with gives warmth, color, and emotional values to these melodies. A parallelism with open fifths and fourths came in most handy and also a modal harmonization suggested by the different (Lygian, Phrygian, Dorian, Mixolydian, etc.) modes of the melodies in question.' • Christopher Palmer, *Music in the Hollywood Biblical Spectacular* (no year, p. 5) '[...] parallel chords of superimposed fourths and fifths. Now these are precisely the means whereby an atmosphere of antiquity may be conjured up for Western ears.'

they sing ‘Holy?’). The end of this cue is faded out (or rather drowned in the noise of the people on screen) in the movie, but not in the existing recordings, where we can still hear the celli and the bassoons play their statement of ‘Judea’. Contrary to the written score, however, all the recordings are a measure short at the very end, where Rózsa had originally wanted another appearance of the ‘Anno Domini’ motif as a conclusion to this melody (cf. **ex. 3**). It may have been clear at the time of the recording that the last measures would be drowned by the crowd noise anyway so they didn’t bother playing them.

Frank DeWald points out that the gong in the soundtrack recording is hit on m. 5 rather than m. 6. The ‘Lion’ LP corrects this mistake (?), whereas the gong is not audible on MGM S1E1.

Example 3

Handwritten musical score for Example 3, showing measures 43-47. The score includes staves for strings (Violins I, Violins II, Violas, Cellos/Bassoons), woodwinds (Flutes, Clarinets), and percussion (Timpani). Handwritten annotations include '1:18' and '1:26' in boxes, measure numbers 43-47 in circles, and performance markings like 'mp', 'espr.', and 'C. BASS'. A gong is marked at the end of measure 47.

3 Star of Bethlehem

; Rhino I 3 (alternate choral track: II 45) • MRSSS 3 • Aldebaran I 3

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
3	23	Star of Bethlehem	1724-96	1-2	08-11	5	1:27	53

Along with ‘Adoration of the Magi’, this piece was recorded twice; the first time two days after the score was completed (Thursday 13 August 1959), and a second time the Tuesday after that (18 August). Interestingly enough, only three recordings seem to have been made on that particular Tuesday, namely ‘Star of Bethlehem’, ‘Adoration of the

Magi’ and the choral version of ‘Star’ which appears on the Rhino CD. The latter piece does not appear at all in the written score, and the two others lack any hints at a vocal part. Nor can the vocals be traced back to any existing instrumental part; there is no simple doubling of any orchestral lines. I suppose that the first takes were the ones without voices, and that, for whatever reason, somebody (Rózsa?) changed his or her mind over the weekend and opted for the inclusion of human voices, which were recorded on 18 August. Unfortunately, none of the existing soundtrack recordings contain the choir-less versions (but there is one re-recording of ‘Adoration’ without choir on the ‘Lion’ LP), so it cannot be ascertained whether the orchestral parts were also re-recorded on that day or whether the singers were just added to the existing orchestral tracks.

Apart from the missing voices, the Rhino is the most complete recording, MRSSS only lacks the final measure because of a direct transition to ‘Adoration’, whereas the Aldebaran CD has the final edited film version with bars 32 and 33 cut out (at 0:50) and another cut between measures 46 and 50 (at 1:12) plus the fade-out on the last chord so dreadfully habitual in this recording.

4 Adoration of the Magi

; Rhino I 4 • MRSSS 4 • Aldebaran I 3

As the Aldebaran track follows the edited movie sequence, the first two and a half

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
4	28	Adoration of the Magi	1724-97	1-3	08-11	4	1:59	46

measures have been left out to produce a not-so-convincing fade-in on the fifth note of the melody. Consequently this CD has only one track for the two pieces called, ‘Star of Bethlehem / Nativity’. Again, the Rhino version has it all, and the MRS tape is an interesting combination of the Rhino and the Aldebaran recordings inasmuch as there is the crossfade from ‘Star’ to ‘Adoration’ but much more elegantly done than in the film; here the last chord of ‘Star’ coincides with the first one of ‘Adoration’ so that not even the first triangle beat is lost. In fact, this may very well be the way Rózsa wanted it to be in the final mixdown, before the music editor had to cope with the fact that the final cut was missing a few seconds and therefore could not accommodate the complete ‘Adoration’ music sequence. The 1977 Decca recording with the National Philharmonic Orchestra seems to have aimed at restoring the original composition; here, too, the transition is most satisfactory and exactly as written.

This crossfade from ‘Star’ to ‘Adoration’ is the first of many overlapping pieces in the score. Obviously some very long musical sequences were easier to record in separate

bits and were then assembled in the editing process. The written score indicates quite a number of such instances. However, in this case there is no indication of an ‘Overlap’ at the end of ‘Star’, where it only says, ‘Diss. to Manger’. It therefore is not quite clear whether an overlap was intended at the time of writing the score or not. On the other hand, the last chord of ‘Star’ and the first one of ‘Adoration’ are identical, so that a cross-fade may have been planned after all or at least provided for.

Most of us know the story of how Rózsa was asked by William Wyler to use ‘Adeste Fideles’ instead of his own composition in order ‘to make the public aware that this was the first Christmas’ and how he threatened to resign if Wyler had his way because the eighteenth-century tune would have been ‘completely at variance with the specialized pseudo-archaic style [Rózsa] was trying to evolve for the picture’³. I find it very interesting, however, that, despite all the trouble Rózsa went to, the result is one of the most (if not the most) conventional pieces of the whole score in terms of mode and harmony, and thus not really a very archaic-sounding one. Although there is no signature to indicate the key of F major at the beginning of the staves, there is no doubt that F major is exactly what this piece has been written in, and all the harmonies fit into the context of this key. Mark Koldys has the key signature. John Fitzpatrick suggests Rózsa provided a traditional carol-like sound by way of compromise.

As in the preceding piece, cuts were made for the actual recording. The written score has an ‘echo’ after every ‘lowing’ phrase (Mark Koldys mentions this ‘two-note phrase of D flat - C, to connote the sounds of the animals at the manger’⁴), four times played by the clarinet and once by the violas, followed by a second ‘lowing’ (cf. **ex. 4**). By leaving these ‘echoes’ out (as is the case in *all* the existing recordings) the regular 4/4 beat is reduced to 2/4 measures in those five places (Rhino † 0:16, 0:27, 0:39, 0:50, and 1:22; or measures 7, 12, 17, 22, and 35). Interestingly, the first MGM “soundtrack” LP adds five notes at the very beginning of the piece so that the clarinet echoes the complete oboe phrase from the first measure, rather than only the second half, as noted in the score and heard in the film. It is also noteworthy that the ‘Lion’ LP has the only choir-less version of ‘Adoration’. Otherwise it follows the written score, albeit in a bit of a rush.

There is a mistake in the score of this cue: at measure 28 (1:04 on the Rhino CD) the third beat is written *and played* as a minor chord when it should have been a major (as it is in the piano and choral versions and all other recordings). Frank DeWald, who pointed this out to me, wonders whether it was never noticed or noticed but deemed unworthy of a costly retake.

³ Miklós Rózsa, *Double Life*. Midas Books, Tunbridge Wells 1982. p.177

⁴ Koldys (1974) p. 6

Example 4

The image shows a handwritten musical score for 'Fanfare to Prelude'. It consists of three systems of staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a melodic line. The middle and bottom staves are bass clefs with chordal accompaniment. The score is annotated with circled numbers 4, 5, 6, and 7, likely indicating specific measures or sections. There are also handwritten notes such as 'Rhino' and 'Aldebaran' with arrows pointing to specific parts of the score. A circled '16' is written at the bottom left of the first system. The score ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.

5 Fanfare to Prelude

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
5	32	Fanfare to Prelude	1724-IX	2-A	08-11	1	0:12	9

; Rhino I 6 (0:00 up to 0:12) • MRSSS 5 • Aldebaran I 4 (0:13 up to 0:26) and III 1

When I first heard the MRSSS original tapes I was surprised to find that this fanfare did not actually form part of the Prelude, but turned out to be a piece of its own. This is, in fact, the first of many examples of a planned ‘overlap’, as the score says. With a lot of musical numbers it must have been too difficult to record longer sequences in one go; therefore Rózsa composed ‘seams’, which consisted of *fermata* chords held for some seconds, which allowed the music editor to attach the next piece. It goes without saying that the beginning of the latter had to fit the musical context in a way that the audience would not realize the cut.

‘Fanfare to Prelude’ ends on a B-flat major chord; and of course the ‘Prelude’ proper starts with the same chord. Interestingly enough, the Rhino recording only offers the overlapping version, whereas Aldebaran has both. Taking into consideration that the Rhino CDs elsewhere have some of these ‘overlap’ endings without the next piece directly attached, one wonders whether there were actually two different recordings: one with the ‘Fanfare’ and the ‘Prelude’ as separate pieces, and one single-take version.

The score, however, distinctly finishes this ‘Fanfare’ in bar 9 with the superimposed remark, ‘:12 Diss. to “A Tale of the Christ”’.

6 Prelude

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
8	35	Prelude	1724-1 A	2-1	08-06	10	1:53	92

; Rhino I 6 (from 0:12 onwards) • MRSSS 6 • Aldebaran I 4 (0:26 up to 2:19) and III 2

The second page of the ‘Prelude’ shows two bars (nos. 12 and 13) that have been crossed out and were not recorded. They are the exact replica of the two bars before them, i.e. the introduction of the Ben-Hur Theme, when the chimes set in, before the statement of the theme proper in bars 14ff. This is obviously an example of the many ‘stretchers’ that were composed into the score in order to allow for minor problems concerning the final length of scenes. This score sports quite a number of such ‘stretchers’, which really seem to have been composed to be left out if needs be.

However, the 1977 Decca recording again succeeds in reconstructing the original composition: the two extra bars are there; plus the ‘Fanfare’. However, the Love Theme has been extended and the ending has been changed to achieve a more satisfactory conclusion for the CD listener; this is the familiar concert version of the ‘Prelude’.

The rest of the ‘Prelude’ is familiar stuff, with the Love Theme starting at 1:10 and the reappearance of the Ben-Hur Theme at 1:39 and ‘Anno Domini’ at 1:49, whose last B-flat open fifth chord descends to a *pp* E-flat open fifth chord, where the annotation reads, ‘1:53 Diss. to picture overlap’. This time Rhino gives us the original without the crossfade to the ‘Marcia Romana’ heard in the film. Aldebaran has this ending, too, but also the continuous final movie version.

7 Marcia Romana

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
9	45	Marcia Romana	1724-94	2-2	08-10	6	1:48	91

; Rhino I 7 • MRSSS 7 • Aldebaran I 4 (from 2:19 onwards) and III 3

As the first two Aldebaran CDs present the music as it is heard in the final movie (overlaps, cuts, warts and all), track I 4 has the awkward cut between 0:59 and 1:17, when the Judea theme appears, but then it contains the final bars of the music that become inaudible in the film when the ‘dialogue starts’ (1:41 to 1:48). However, the ‘documentary’ third Aldebaran CD has the complete piece (as do the Rhino and the MRSSS recordings), minus the inevitable fade-in.

Whereas the score has the *basso ostinato* continuing until the very end of the cue, it drops out on the soundtrack recording at 1:16 (where it says, ‘Nazareth’ in measure 66), to be replaced by a simple two-note motif in the basses. It might have been a last-minute decision made on the recording stage.

8 Spirit and Sword

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
10	51	Spirit and Sword (v. 1+2)	1724-95	2-3	08-11	3	0:54	27

; MRSSS 8

An extended version of the Christ Theme (twelve bars, or thirty-nine seconds), as opposed to the final version of ‘Spirit and Sword’ (q.v.) is heard before the Roman march sets in again. The second version mentioned in the heading consists of the same piece with a cut between 0:20 and 0:39. The Rhino CD does not have this recording; on the other hand, the second version just mentioned comes very close to the final version as it has the same timing. The only difference is that in versions one and two the Christ Theme is first heard in the lower parts of the orchestra and only gradually makes its way up to the higher octaves, whereas the final version starts fairly high.

9 Spirit and Sword (final version)

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
11	54	Spirit and Sword final version)	1724-99	2-3	10-02	2	0:39	28

; Rhino I 8 • Aldebaran I 5 (up to 0:48)

This time some ‘stretching’ has been done that does *not* appear in the score: bars 21 to 24 are repeated in the recording (0:40 to 0:44 on the Rhino CD), thereby adding a few seconds to the written score. Messala must have taken a trifle longer than expected to arrive at his headquarters...

10 His Father’s Business (Version A)

11 His Father’s Business (Version B)

; (no recordings available)

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
7	34	His Father's Business (version B)	1724-36 B	2-1	05-27	1	0:38	13

Strange that this cue should appear between the 'Fanfare' and the 'Prelude' in the written score (maybe some material was taken out and never replaced in its proper place? But how about the reel count then?); yet here it is, in two different versions. Its title would suggest that this music was meant to accompany the dialogue between Joseph and his customer ('I must be about my father's business'), to be ultimately replaced by 'Spirit and Sword'. The first eight bars of the two versions are identical: they contain a *fugato* statement of the Christ Theme counter-melody, starting in the celli, taken up by the violas and finally played by the violins. Version A (at 0:19) then brings in the organ in a *pianissimo* statement of the Christ Theme complete with its countermelody, but in version B — and this is interesting because it is not the only instance of parallel versions of the Christ Theme in the score — it does not appear in the familiar form of the parallel major triads, but rather in a form only fleetingly used in the 'Finale' (Rhino II 44, 2:07 – 2:11) † cf. **ex. 5**. This is the first of several examples that are evidence to the fact that at the time of composing Rózsa still did not seem to be sure which of the two versions of the Christ Theme he was going to use in the finished movie.

12 Salute for Messala

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
124	475	Salute for Messala	1724-11	—	02-10	1	0:16	16

; Aldebaran I 5 (0:48 – 0:57)

Conspicuously missing from both the Rhino⁵ and the MRSSS editions, this short fanfare is only recorded on the Aldebaran disc, marred by the fade on the first and last notes. The score tells us that originally this piece was intended to be twice as long, with a simpler version of nearly the same tune (first in unison, then in open 5th harmonization). What we hear in the film is the second half, starting in bar 8 (0:08), which is more richly orchestrated and therefore sounds more impressive.

'Salute for Messala' is the first example of the very early compositions made in Rome in the winter of 1958/59. They appear as a set at the end of the microfilmed document rather than in chronological order (for more information, see no. 23, 'Gratus' Entry to Jerusalem').

⁵ cf. Paul Packer's comment on the missing fanfare and J.Fitzpatrick's reply in PMS 55 (pp. 11-13).

Example 5

Handwritten musical score for 'Friendship'. The score is written on three staves (Violins, Violas, and Cellos/Double Basses). It includes several annotations and rehearsal marks:

- Rehearsal mark **13** is circled at the beginning of the first system.
- Rehearsal mark **19** is circled at the end of the first system.
- Rehearsal mark **38** is circled at the end of the second system.
- Annotations include: "(VLS.)", "(VLS.)", "(V.C.)", "f", "p", "mp", "pp", "2 HNS.", "P", "D", "F", "TBS", "P.BASS", "+ORGAN & OB.", "FOLK. CL.", "PHX.", "TBS. ORGAN", "OS. + TUBA", and "T.P.".
- Time signatures are 3/4 and 2/4.
- Tempo markings include "Allegretto" and "Andante".

13 Friendship

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
13	57	Friendship	1724-18	3-4	05-18	5	3:27	65

; Rhino I 9 (up to 3:26) • MRSSS 9 • Aldebaran I 6 (up to 3:00)

If the Rhino recording is the one used in the movie, the Decca re-recording is again more faithful to the original in two places that were crossed out in the score (bars 9, first half, and 20). See if you can spot them on the Decca CD (track 3, at 0:33–0:34 and at 1:17

–1:20). Also, the Decca version makes the *ostinato* bass rhythm at the onset of the ‘Friendship’ theme shine through much more clearly than the Rhino. On the other hand Rózsa chose a distinctly slower tempo in 1977 and also decided to leave out the throwing of the second spear.

Unfortunately the score has no indication why Messala’s brooding theme appears during the first nine seconds; maybe his abrupt reaction to Sextus (‘with another idea’) was originally intended to be underscored by this music to tell the audience what kind of idea he has in mind. In my opinion the decision to cut Messala’s theme at this point was very sensible because this way the audience can still believe that Judah’s and Messala’s friendship will be able to bridge the gap between them.

Although the score does not indicate a seamless transition to the next piece, the Rhino recording smoothly goes from ‘Friendship’ into ‘Friendship (continued)’ without any audible trace of putting two pieces together (at 3:26–3:27). The MRSSS version ends at this point as written in the score. The music we hear in the movie is preserved on the Aldebaran track with Messala’s theme left out at the start, two cuts (the first one at 0:56 on the CD, i.e. 1:07 in the score, leaving out four bars or fourteen seconds; then a minor cut in the bar right before the second spear hits, leaving out the last note of that bar), and the same transition to ‘Friendship (continued)’ as in the Rhino version.

14 Friendship (continued)

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
14	62	Friendship (continued)	1724-74	3-5	07-01	2	0:46	18

; Rhino I 9 (from 3:26) • MRSSS 96 • Aldebaran I 6 (from 3:00)

Only the acetate-derived MRSSS tapes have the two distinct pieces suggested by the written score, and they are not even placed one after the other: ‘Friendship (continued)’ appears much later in that compilation; at least in the cassette recording the MRSSS once issued. Even if the smooth transition was not intended at the outset, the fact remains that ‘Friendship (continued)’ begins on exactly the same chord as the one that ends ‘Friendship’, thus making the inaudible transition possible.

15 The House of Hur

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
15	64	The House of Hur	1724-22	4-1	05-18	4	1:37	40

; Rhino I 10 • MRSSS 10 • Aldebaran I 7

This cue is missing bars 36 and 37 on the Rhino CD as well as on the MRS tape. The final movie version, however, has some more cuts, faithfully reproduced on the Aldebaran, but this time nearly inaudible. The first one occurs at 0:15, bar 5, one beat before the ‘House of Hur’ theme begins. Leaving out five bars, or roughly twenty-five seconds, the editor lets us hear the second phrase of the familiar oboe melody, but then makes another cut (at 0:23), leaving out bars 14 and 15. Due to the repetitiveness of the melody it is possible to make cuts and yet produce a more or less satisfying result, as the ‘jumps’ appear where both the deleted passage and the passage ‘jumped to’ begin on the same note or chord. These cuts explain the timing discrepancy between the Rhino and the MRSSS (1:41) and the Aldebaran (1:23).

16 Conflict

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
16	68	Conflict	1724-19	5-1	05-14	3	1:37	32

; Rhino I 11 • MRSSS 12 • Aldebaran I 8

Some more deletions occur in the written score of this piece, and the crossed-out bars consequently do not appear in any of the recordings. Again, they mainly contain repetitive material that can easily be left out (cf. **ex. 6**). But listen to the film version: this time the music editor has actually *added*, or rather copied and pasted, some material! In the Aldebaran version this happens at 1:15 (repeating two notes of the viola melody) and at 1:37 (thus giving us three instead of the intended two bass triplets at the very end of the piece). This second ‘cut’ is rather audible in my VHS version in the form of a ‘volume pumping’.

17 Esther

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
17	71	Esther	1724-20	5-2	05-15	6	2:31	66

; Rhino I 12 • MRSSS 13 • Aldebaran I 9 (up to 2:27)

Quite a few bars have been omitted in all the recordings, but only two of them are marked as ‘optional bars’ (55 and 56). Actually, bars 26 through 33 (or nineteen seconds) are missing, but I cannot hear any cut. If you listen to the Rhino track you will notice the

oboe between 0:47 and 1:09, at which point the violins take over again. Originally a slightly altered repetition of this oboe passage had been intended to sound before the return to the main theme. But even though, according to the score, nineteen seconds were deleted before the actual recording, the overall duration of the recordings (with their slight differences) more or less corresponds to the time indication of the written material (2:31). This could mean that Rózsa wanted this music to be played more slowly than originally intended and that he therefore decided not to record this passage.

Another slight cut in the movie (and, consequently, on the Aldebaran track) occurs when bar 47 is (audibly!) left out. Compare 1:44 – 1:47 on the Rhino (which is the bar left out) with 1:44 on the Aldebaran, or listen to the movie (just before Judah says, ‘Do you love this man?’).

Example 6

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Example 6, consisting of two systems of staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, dynamics (e.g., *ff*, *appas.*), and articulation marks. The score is heavily annotated with handwritten notes and circled numbers (1-7). A large 'X' is drawn across the right half of the score, indicating a section that was deleted or altered. At the bottom of the page, there are some additional handwritten notes and a circled number '19'.

It has often been remarked that Judah's last words in this scene ('... and a safe return to Antioch') have a dubbed-in sound and that you cannot actually see Charlton Heston saying this line because his face is out of frame. Obviously these words were added after shooting this take. In fact, originally this scene did not end here. The description of the next cue will explain this.

18 The Unknown Future

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
18	77	The Unknown Future	1724-21	6-1	05-18	2	0:41	20

; Rhino I 13 • MRSSS 11 • Aldebaran III 5

Never heard in the film, this little cue (with a duration of forty-one seconds only) is well preserved on the Rhino CD and also features (in much lesser, i.e., acetate quality) in the two other sources. I have placed it here because of its position on the Rhino. The so-called 'original film script' of BEN-HUR ('vault copy'), which I found at eBay and which is dated 11-11-59, does not shed any further light on this missing scene; in fact, it does not really shed *any* light on anything we didn't know yet, as it does not seem to be more than a typed copy of the final film version. Unfortunately the score itself does not have many comments as to the content of this scene, either; especially not at the onset of Messala's theme at 0:18. But eleven seconds later it says, 'Kisses her' – the moment when a slightly altered version of 'Friendship' can be heard. At 0:37 the score has, 'Simonides speaks'.

Luckily, however, the abovementioned 'vault copy' of the screenplay is not the only text source available. The more voluminous 'BEN-HUR screenplay by Karl S. Tunberg', which I chanced upon in early 2004, preserves a much earlier stage of the script. Among other things, it solves the mystery of the ending of the preceding scene: it had been intended to show Judah's toast to Esther (cf. the film still on the back cover of the Rhino booklet). This is clearly indicated on p. 36 of the Tunberg screenplay, dated 6-11-58:

TWO SHOT - ESTHER AND BEN HUR	86
<p>He regards her intently as he awaits her answer. At last it comes.</p>	
<p>ESTHER (quietly) I will learn to love him.</p>	
<p>BEN HUR You have my permission to marry.</p>	
<p>He rises.</p>	

WIDER ANGLE

87

Amrah enters carrying a tray with wine on it. Ben Hur takes a goblet and gives it to Esther. Simonides comes forward with Miriam and Tirzah. All take wine. Ben Hur raises his goblet to Esther.

BEN HUR (smiling)
To your happiness... to your love.

All drink. Ben Hur watches Esther, who meets his gaze.

CLOSE SHOT - MIRIAM

87XL

She looks from Ben Hur to Esther. She is aware of their attraction for each other.

DISSOLVE:

This version also explains 'The Unknown Future'. We find this scene, however, *after* Judah's and Esther's goodbye and after their kiss, so this cue originally belonged after the 'Love Theme'. Here is what would have happened after the kiss had taken place:

Simonides appears. He sees from the expression on Esther's face that she is disturbed.

BEN HUR (shows ring): Your daughter wears the slave ring no longer.

SIMONIDES: Thank you, Judah. Esther sees the world with the eyes of the young, but she is marrying a good man and she will learn to love him.

ESTHER (a whisper): Goodnight, master.

BEN HUR: You have no master now, remember.

ESTHER (pauses, smiles): Goodnight, Judah. (she kisses her father)
Goodnight, father. (she goes)

Simonides looks after her fondly, then turns back to Ben Hur. His face becomes grave.

SIMONIDES: Judah, I'm greatly concerned for you and your family. Messala is no longer your friend. The new governor is a tyrant and a butcher. Come with us to Antioch.

BEN HUR: I value your counsel, Simonides.

SIMONIDES: Then follow it.

BEN HUR (after a pause): I don't know what the future will bring. But this is the house of my fathers. This is where I belong.

There is silence.

SIMONIDES (presently): Then God be with you, Judah.

BEN HUR: Goodnight, old friend.

Simonides goes. Ben Hur stands there, looking over the city. Then he looks at the ring.

DISSOLVE TO Joppa Gate

(Tunberg script, page 39, 6-11-58 – retyped for reasons of layout)

Even if this version of the scene does not exactly follow the order of events marked in the score, we can at least catch a rare glimpse at what Rózsa's music had been intended to accompany. At least the title of this cue is easily recognizable in Judah's line, 'I don't know what the future will bring'. One can also imagine Messala's theme to underline Simonides' warnings. Maybe the old steward was to have said this before Esther's leave in yet another version of this scene—probably the one Rózsa knew and wrote this music for.

19 Love Theme

; (no recordings available)

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
132	512	Love Theme	1724-6	—	02-09	2	—	36

The first version of the 'Love Theme' was written as early as 9 February 1959. It is arranged only for alto flute and harp (the same way as the beginning of the new version). There are no timings or references to the action, so this might well have been Rózsa's first idea of this piece, written at a time when there was as yet no finished film material available. It appears nearly at the end of the microfilm (for more information, see no. 23 'Gratus' Entry to Jerusalem").

20 Love Theme (new)

; Rhino I 14 • MRSSS 14 • Aldebaran I 9 (from 2:27 up to 4:25)

The bootleg starts on the third note of the melody, whereas in the movie you can

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
19	79	Love Theme (new)	1724-88	6-2	07-28	4	2:07	47

hear the alto flute play the first two notes very distinctly.

Again, minor cuts were made by the music editor to fit the music to the action. The microfilm score indicates ‘Dialogue starts’ some 35 seconds into the piece, but in the finished film Judah talks a full ten seconds earlier than that. The two cuts both concern ‘echo bars’, i.e., the typical Rózsa trademark of repeating a motif contrapuntally.

The first cut leaves out bars 13 and 14 (i.e., 0:31 – 0:37) on the Rhino. If you listen very carefully to the Aldebaran recording (which *is* the movie version), you may notice that the editor cut on “4” in bar 12 and resumed on “4” in bar 14 (2:56). This is the moment when Esther says, ‘I was saying goodbye to this city’, but it is virtually inaudible in the movie.

Later on Esther says, ‘It was a house where I was always happy.’ At this point (Aldebaran # 3:18) the second cut appears, again hardly audible under the dialogue, but very distinct on the pirated disc, where the blunder of deleting bar 23 becomes obvious when you hear an unmotivated low F in the basses that moves to a G, the note one would have expected to hear (the dominant rather than the subdominant). If you cannot hear it, try to record the Rhino track and leave out 0:59 – 1:01.

The last bar is marked ‘overlap’, and that is precisely what happens in the movie (and, faithfully, on the Aldebaran) but not at the end of Rhino’s track 14. Both the Rhino and the Syracuse acetate versions are intact without any cuts or overlaps. We will find this ‘overlap’ technique very often in BEN-HUR, where long musical sequences were divided into manageable sections with these ‘overlap’ links provided by the composer, to be recorded separately and blended together in the editing process later on.

21 Ring for Freedom

; Rhino I 15 • MRSSS 15 • Aldebaran I 9 (from 4:25)

Apart from the inevitable cuts by the music editor that seem to have been made to fit the length of the filmed scene (bars 11, 53, and 54 were recorded but later cut out; cf.

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
20	83	Ring for Freedom	1724-23	6-3	05-19	4	2:37	60

Aldebaran 4:49 and 6:37), there is one instance of a bar that was composed but that does

Example 7

LOEW'S INCORPORATED
1724-23

- 3 -

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Example 7, consisting of two systems of music. The first system contains measures 29 through 32, and the second system contains measures 33 through 36. The score is written on a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals. There are several handwritten annotations in circles, including time points: 1:11, 1:16, 1:21, 1:26, 1:28 1/2, and 1:33 1/4. The measure numbers 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36 are also circled. The score includes dynamics like *mf* and *f*, and performance instructions like *acc.* and *mf*. The name "LOEW'S INCORPORATED" and the number "1724-23" are printed in the top right corner. A page number "- 3 -" is centered at the top.

not feature in any of the recordings, without any audible skip. I refer to bar 31 (at 1:17 on the Rhino CD), which is contained in the score but not in the recording (cf. **ex. 7**). It must originally have been intended to be modeled on bar 29 (which is more or less identical to 31) but must have been deleted before recording, so that bars 30 and 32 showed an identical structure to bars 34 and 35. However, the written material suggests no intentional deletion (cf. the run-on bass line in bars 30 and 31).

While during the first two minutes or so of the Rhino recording the timing exactly corresponds to the indications given in the score, there is a marked slowing down to be heard in the recording, which may account for the need to cut bars 53 and 54 (which corresponds to 2:14 – 2:20 on the Rhino CD, i.e., a full six seconds) in order to finish on time.

Interestingly, the violin soloist on the soundtrack misreads (?) the rhythm of the little turn in the melody, which in the score is written as a dotted half note followed by four sixteenths, but the MGM concertmaster plays it like a half note followed by four eighths.

And he does it not once but three times (mm. 4, 6 and 10). Again, it could have been a last-minute change, or simply not noticed, or deemed unworthy of a costly retake.

Original (score)



As played on
the soundtrack



22 Salute for Gratus

; Rhino I 16 (from 0:20) • Aldebaran I 10 (0:19 up to 0:31)

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
125	476	Salute for Gratus	1724-10	—	02-10	1	0:12	6

The impressive drum strokes you hear (and see!) in the film have not been written down, nor has the short trumpet fanfare at the end of it. The microfilm score only has the full-blast brass bit that starts at 0:20 on the Rhino. Why the latter should call this track an ‘extended version’, is a mystery to me: all the notes on paper are in the film, too, and it also lasts the twelve seconds it is supposed to. I didn’t count the drumbeats, however.

23 Gratus’ Entry to Jerusalem

; Rhino I 17 • MRSSS 16 • Aldebaran I 10 (from 0:31 through 2:25) and III 7 • Sony I 11

This is another of the very early tracks composed for BEN-HUR. In his memoirs Mi-

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
130	493	Gratus’ Entry to Jerusalem	1724-4	—	02-06	10	—	92

klós Rózsa relates how he went to Rome shortly before Christmas 1958: “I suggested that I write the marches there and record them there with a large wind band” [*Double Life*, p. 176]. Which is exactly what he did. This is confirmed in the Producer’s Notes of the Rhino booklet [pp. 26-27], where we also find a remark on the somewhat poorer recording quality of the pieces done in Rome (three tracks as opposed to seven). The music was put

to paper in its final form on 6 February 1959 and must have been recorded not long after that date, although the exact date does not seem to be available. Rózsa himself notes that “early in 1959 everyone went back to Hollywood” [*Double Life*, p. 177].

Not only can the recording date(s) of these ‘early pieces’ (which include the preceding one) not be determined, but the written music also lacks some other features that exist in all the other pieces. The score bears no indication of the reel or its part, but only the mention of a scene number (in this case, ‘scene 93’). Also, there are no timings. This might show that Rózsa wrote this music at a time when he did not yet have access to the filmed material and thus could not work with his stop-watch. Which could also account for the fact that this piece is markedly longer in the written score than in the recording, let alone the film. On the other hand, there are comments like ‘band seen’ in bar 14, ‘C.U. [close-up] band’ in 22, ‘Tirza [viz] speaks’ in 44 and ‘dialogue ends’ in 74, which seem to support the assumption that the composer must at least have had some distinct information about this scene.

The Tunberg screenplay shows that more dialogue between Ben-Hur and his sister had indeed been intended while they were watching the soldiers marching along, e.g.,

Many cuts were made before the music was recorded. Two different recorded versions exist: one (with a duration of 1:56) was preserved on the Syracuse acetates and is heard in the MRSSS version and on the third Aldebaran disc. The other version (of virtu-

TIRZAH (after a moment): There must be thousands of soldiers! It must have been difficult for Esther and Simonides to get through the streets.

BEN HUR: They left in good time – by the Damascus gate.

(Tunberg script, page 42, 6-28-58)

ally equal length) is contained on the Rhino CD and on the first Aldebaran and is the one featured in the film. Both takes do not seem to have been cut *after* recording.

The first version is much more faithful to the sheet music. After leaving out bars 2 and 3 the musicians faithfully play every note up to bar 45, skipping the next forty-one (!) bars and resuming with bar 87, playing the last measures up to bar 92. This means that about half the music was deleted, and that the scene had probably been intended to last twice as long (there are no changes of tempo throughout this piece). The deleted passage does not contain any new material; it rather consists of many repetitions and variations of the main motifs and rhythms. The final version (i.e., the one heard in the film) has many more small cuts (bars 18-19, 22-23, 27-30, 46-47, 50-69, 72-73, 81-92 were deleted) as the music (and the Roman army) marches along; it conveys a more condensed impression, musically speaking. The rhythmical repetitions of the high E in the trumpets coincide very well with the appearance of Gratus under Judah’s and his sister’s eyes. Of the ninety-two

bars, forty-six have been deleted in all, thus reducing this piece to exactly one half of its original length. Of course we know that the last few bars of the recording have been edited out in the soundtrack to make way for the noise of the confusion in the street after the tile has fallen.

The only recording that comes very close to the original composition can be found on the Sony two-disc reissue of the old MGM ‘soundtrack’ records vols. 1 and 2 (CD 1, track 11, as played by the Frankenland State Orchestra under ‘Erich Kloss’). Apart from the addition of string instruments and the deletion of the last four chords (which are in themselves nothing but a repetition of the preceding four chords that terminate the Kloss recording) this is Rózsa’s original version.

24 Arrest

; Rhino I 18 (‘The Arrest’) • MRSSS 17

Allegro strepitoso – noisy allegro – is what the beginning of this piece has been headlined. It was not used in the final cut, but there are some interesting hints in the written

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
21	87	Arrest	1724-55	7-1A	06-08	4	1:17	38

score as to where it was intended to be used. At 0:04 there is a series of four even brass strokes (*molto pesante* – very heavy) and the comment above this bar reads, ‘Pound spears’. This matches the scene of the Roman soldiers pounding their spears against Ben-Hur’s house from the outside. 0:19 says, “Judah, what is it?” and this obviously starts the dialogue between Judah, Tirzah and their mother. The music changes to a menacing low brass theme. There is another dialogue excerpt at 0:26 containing Tirzah’s words “I was just watching”. The *pesante* brass pounding (with a swift chromatic trumpet motif on top) is renewed at 0:38, when it says, ‘Servants lift bars’ (cf. **ex. 8**). The next bit of dialogue reads, “We saw it” (1:00) – said by one of the soldiers arresting Judah. Drusus’ line, “Take him” appears at 1:09, where the accented chord is heard, and the piece ends abruptly as we hear a soldier call, “Attention!” (1:17).

I have tried out playing this recording simultaneously with the DVD, and the music is more or less perfectly matched to the picture as indicated in the written score. At the beginning I find it works very well, but as soon as the dialogue between Judah and the soldiers starts you begin to understand why this piece was deleted: it’s too *strepitoso* – just a bit too noisy. And the abrupt appearance of Messala that would have been marked by an abrupt stop of the music is still very effectively underlined by the fact that all the noise stops at that precise moment.

Just for the record: four bars altogether (1–3 and 8) have been marked as deleted (with thick crossed lines, neatly drawn with a ruler) and are consequently not heard in the recording.

Example 8

:19 "JUDAH, WHAT IS IT?"

W.W. TPTS.
f VNS. div. 16
mf + s. dr. p (sempre) 17
+ 2 must. Tpts. mp 18
Vlc. Bn. Tuba
c. br. B. + 8 va bassa

:26 "I WAS JUST WATCHING" **:29**

Tpta. p 19
s.o. sempre cresc. 20
mf + Bra (Bns. off) 21

:34 **:38** "SERVANTS LIFT BARS"

VNS. 22
Tpts. 23
Tuba 24
PESANTE (col F. Dr. + Timp.)
low str. w.w.

:46

f Vnc. 2 Tpt. 2 cl. 2
Vlc. 3. cl. 25
TPT. 1 VNS 1. Cl. 1. 26
sempre col Perc.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Example 8". It is divided into three systems of music. The first system, starting at measure 16, includes parts for Violins (divisi), Flutes, Clarinets, Bassoons, Trumpets (2 must. Tpts.), Violas, Trombones, and Tuba. The second system, starting at measure 19, includes parts for Trumpets, Flutes, Bassoons, and Trombones. The third system, starting at measure 22, includes parts for Violins (2), Trumpets (2), Clarinets (2), Trombones, Tuba, and Percussion. The score contains various performance markings such as dynamics (f, mf, mp, p, cresc.), articulation (acc.), and phrasing (sempre). There are also handwritten notes and corrections throughout the score.

25 Revenge

; Rhino I 20 • MRSSS 19 • Aldebaran III 9 (up to 1:17)

One recording that certainly does not induce anyone to buy the pirated 3-CD edition: it has very poor sound. The Rhino CD has it crystal clear, as usual, whereas the MRS tape contains a high level of hiss. Interestingly, the three recordings all differ slightly in

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
22	91	Revenge	1724-24	7-2	05-20	2	1:19	23

length but not in musical content, which must be a sign of tampering with tape speeds. The microfilm score indicates a duration of 1:19.

This cue is not heard in the finished movie. It was originally intended to be heard after Judah's arrest. The script excerpts clearly refer to Messala: 0:17 has 'Starts to walk'; then 'Stops' at 0:45 and finally 'Grabs tile' at 1:00. Although the music is much shorter than its ultimate replacement, 'Reminiscences' (cf. no. 26), it is too long to fit the final cut if you synchronize it with 'Starts to walk': in that case Messala 'stops' and 'grabs tile' too early, and the music would continue well into the next scene (in the prison). The original footage must have been longer.

It is interesting to note, however, that the original Tunberg screenplay does not contain this scene with Messala on the rooftop:

In an interview Rózsa once described how during the shooting William Wyler asked him if he was able to express musically what was going on in Messala's mind, and after the composer's affirmative answer this scene was added to the script. After that episode the studio forbade Rózsa ever to visit the set again, as this might have blown the budget.

CLOSE SHOT – MESSALA

He is alone now in the courtyard. He is thoughtful for a moment.
Then he goes.

DISSOLVE

(Tunberg script, page 47, 6-30-58)

26 Reminiscences

; Rhino I 19 • MRSSS 18 • Aldebaran I 11

This is the piece that ultimately replaced its predecessor in the score, ‘Revenge’ (cf. no. 25). It was transcribed on 27 July 1959, two months after the latter. Interestingly

no.	page	Title	Reg.no.	Reel/ part	Date	no. pp.	Dur.	Mm.
23	93	Reminiscences	1724-84	7-2	07-27	2	1:44	23

enough, both pieces were recorded on the same day (5 August), if the Rhino booklet has it right. That could mean that at least on the day of the recording it was not yet decided which filmed material was to be used or not.

On the Aldebaran pressing the cuts that were made for the final release (so even this one proved to be too long) are relatively easy to detect. They shorten the music by nearly half a minute. Both the Rhino and the MRSSS tracks contain the full original recording.

* * * * *

In the following installment we will take a look at the music which Rózsa composed for the prison scenes but which were not used in the final print of the film. Again the Tunberg screenplay will help us to get a better understanding of cues entitled ‘Behind Grills’ and ‘Silent Farewell’ — music that was probably never actually recorded. There will be a detailed description of the alternative versions of the music for Judah’s meeting with Jesus (‘The Prince of Peace’), accounting for the anti-climactic ending of part one of ‘The Prince of Peace’. You will also learn why Rhino calls its track no. 33 ‘The Galley (Rowing of the Galley Slaves) *Parts 1-4*’. But I’m afraid the most mysterious piece contained in the microfilm score must wait a little longer...

Rózsa News and Notes

April 2005

Audio Recordings

Film Score Monthly has continued its series of releases from the Warner/MGM archives (now owned by Sony) with an astonishing thirteen Rózsa releases through 2004. In order of release: *Lust for Life*, *The Green Berets*, *The World, the Flesh, and the Devil*; *The Seventh Sin*; *Tribute to a Bad Man*; *Plymouth Adventure*; *Green Fire/Bhowani Junction*; *Knights of the Round Table/The King's Thief* (2 discs); *Diane* (2 discs); *Moonfleet*; *Julius Caesar*; *Valley of the Kings/Men of the Fighting Lady*; *The Power* (surviving tacks, coupled with *Atlantis: The Lost Continent* by Russ Garcia). All of these releases are taken directly from the original sessions. All are in the best possible sound (mono for *Plymouth Adventure*, *Julius Caesar*, and *The Seventh Sin*). FSM may be contacted online at www.filmscoremonthly.com or by toll-free telephone at 1-888-345-6335 (U.S.) or 1-310-253-9588 (overseas). Fax: 1-310-253-9598. The discs can also be ordered from Screen Archives Entertainment. And in February 2005 they suddenly started appearing in select retail outlets, including Tower Records. The Lincoln Center store in New York City carried virtually the entire collection. Could anybody have imagined the proud display of a forgotten movie's score (like *Valley of the Kings*) a half-century later within a stone's throw of the mighty Metropolitan Opera and Juilliard School?

An imminent release on Telarc will feature the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra and Mormon Tabernacle Choir in extended choral-orchestral suites from the three major epic scores, *Quo Vadis*, *Ben-Hur*, and *King of Kings*. This music was performed in concert in May 2004, with an aggregation of local choirs instead of the famous Mormon group.

A brass arrangement of the "Hail, Nero" triumphal march from *Quo Vadis* appears on the Belgian collection called *Flashlight*, credited to the Belgian composer-arranger S. Verhaert. The Kempisch Jeugdfanfare Orchestra is directed by Manu Mel-laerts.

The Film Music Society (formerly Society for the Preservation of Film Music) has released the original recordings of *The Jungle Book* (1942). The recordings derive from recently rediscovered acetate transcription discs. This is the Korda film score and not the popular suite for narrator and orchestra that has already seen several disc releases.

Rhino Handmade has released *Ivanhoe* from the original mono tracks. The disc contains slightly more music than the splendid Bruce Broughton recording on Intrada. The Rhino edition is available by direct order only. Contact Rhino Handmade at 10635 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90025-4900 (www.rhinohandmade.com).

DRG 10960, *Miklós Rózsa Conducts His Epic Film Scores*, is a CD version of Capitol ST-2837 from 1968. This music previously appeared on Angel 36063 and later on a CD that added three movements of the earlier Capitol *Quo Vadis* Suite.

The *Toccatto Capricciosa*, Op. 36, has been recorded by cellist Ludwig Quandt of the Berlin Philharmonic on Campanella CD 7093901, together with the classic Kodály sonata and two pieces by György Ligeti (best known to moviegoers for the *Requiem* excerpts that were used in *2001*, but actually a very influential composer for several decades). The *Toccatto's* performing history has marked it as perhaps the one Rózsa piece that has consistently appealed to modernist and avant-garde performers.

The October 2003 cover disc of the *BBC Magazine* featured a performance of the *Spellbound Concerto* as well as other film works by Korngold, Waxman, and Leonard Bernstein. The conductor is Leonard Slatkin (music director of the BBC Orchestra). These are the same performances featured on the BBC 4 television documentaries on Rózsa and Korngold that aired in September 2003.

Performances

2003. Joan Carles Suau Rigual reports sponsoring a program of Rózsa's chamber music in Catalonia that included the Introduction and Allegro for Viola Solo (Op. 44), the Six Bagatelles (Op. 12), the Sonata for Flute Solo (Op. 39), and reduced version of the Viola Concerto (Op. 37). Daniel Sanxis (viola), his sister, Nelia Sanxis (flute), and Miguel Angel Dionis (piano) were the key performers.

10 April 2003. A concert recreating "Leonard Bernstein's first success as a conductor" took place at the Audi-Max der Ruhr-Universität Bochum in Germany. Michalil Jurovski led the Bochum Symphony Orchestra in a program that, of course, included Rózsa's Theme, Variations, and Finale, Op. 13.

12, 13, 14, and 17 June 2003. Glenn Dicterow and the New York Philharmonic gave the New York premiere performances of the Violin Concerto under Lorin Maazel. Rea Culpepper, Richard Bush, Jeffrey Dane, Mary Peatman, Mike Reamy, Chris Sciabarra, and Gary Swartz and were among the Society members in attendance. The Violin Concerto was also played on 27 October 2002 by Svend Rønning with George Shangrow conducting Orchestra Seattle.

13 and 14 March 2004. The Oregon Chorale presented *To Everything There Is a Season*, Op. 21. "This masterpiece by Miklós Rózsa is a celebration of the cycles of life and will include a moving multi-media presentation representing the various stages of life."

22 March 2004. A Ben-Hur Suite was performed by the Deutsches Filmorchester Babelsberg, Scott Lawon, conductor, in Dortmund, Germany.

28 March 2004. The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra under John Wilson offered a film music program including the love music from *The Thief of Bagdad*.

4 April 2004. The Cuarteto de Cuerdas de Bellas Artes performed a work by Rózsa (one of the quartets?) at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C.

14, 15, and 16 May 2004. Erich Kunzel and the Cincinnati Pops performed music from *Ben Hur*, *King of Kings*, and *Quo Vadis* on with a huge chorus of some 500 singers. These new suites, designed to highlight the choral passages, were prepared by

Christopher Palmer and later Daniel Robbins and are among the last scores to benefit from Dr. Rózsa's direct input. This music, this time with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, has since been issued on Telarc CD-80631.

28 July 2004. John Mauceri led the Hollywood Bowl Symphony in a performance of the *El Cid Suite*.

7 September 2004. The Sonata for Two Violins, Op. 15a, was performed in Toronto. The performers, Scott St. John and Erika Raum of the University of Toronto, stood beneath a tree while the crowd sat on a small hill.

2 October and 30 October 2004. Sara Davis Buechner performed the *Spellbound Concerto* in Seattle, Washington, and in Grand Forks, North Dakota. She is looking forward to performances of the Op. 31 Piano Concerto, possibly in the Philippines later in 2005.

16 January 2005. Sonata for Two Violins, Op. 15a, was played by the Yale-based Gemini Duo in Norwalk, Connecticut.

9 March 2005. A Steiner-Rózsa concert ("Frankly My Dear, I'm Spellbound") by The Little Orchestra, Dino Anagnost conducting, at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, New York. The Rózsa selections included: Prelude and Parade of the Charioteers from *Ben-Hur*, Love Theme from *El Cid*, Arabesque from *Quo Vadis*, the Violin Concerto, Op. 24 (first movement), with Kurt Nikkanen as soloist, the Waltz from *Madame Bovary*, and the *Spellbound Concerto*, with Sara Davis Buechner as soloist.

12 April 2005. At a New York Philharmonic Pension Fund Benefit concert, Leonard Slatkin's film music program commenced with "Entrance of the Nobles" from *El Cid*.

20 May 2005. Peter Seivewright will perform the Piano Sonata at St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow.

Video Recordings

Recent video releases of Rózsa films include *King*

of Kings, The Thief of Bagdad, Time after Time (with extensive Nicholas Meyer commentary about the score), A Double Life, Spellbound, and The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes (with some of the deleted materials, including previously unheard music), The Red House, and the Four Feathers.

The television staple *Dragnet* returned in spring 2003 in yet a third video incarnation. This time, Miklós Rózsa's part in creating the famous signature motif (first heard in *The Killers* in 1946) was acknowledged in a brief credit.

Publications

Violinist Louis Kaufman's posthumous memoir, *A Fiddler's Tale*, is published by the University of Wisconsin Press. Kaufman was one of Hollywood's leading musicians for several decades and served as concertmaster and soloist in many studio recordings including several by Rózsa. The book includes a couple of letters from MR and a photo of the Louis and Annette Kaufman with Rózsa in later years. The Kaufmans were good friends of Rózsa's and received a subscription to PMS with the composer's compliments. (For a longer review of this fascinating book, see John Fitzpatrick's piece in *Film Score Monthly* [March 2004].)

Nancy Jane McKenney's 447-page doctoral dissertation, *The Chamber Music of Miklós Rózsa* (University of Kentucky, 2002), may be referenced via *Dissertation Abstracts International* (DAI-A 63/01, p. 22, July 2002). The publication number is AAT 3039688 and the ISBN is 0-493-52900-4. The analysis seeks to define the difference between Rózsa's early chamber works and his later ones, concluding (according to the abstract): "The string quartets may have been influenced by Rózsa's experience writing music for film noir . . . Music for such films is highly dissonant and filled with strong accents and jagged rhythms. As his string quartets also exhibit these characteristics and follow the film noir scores chronologically, the quartets may have been influenced by the film music. However, . . . Rózsa's music was gradually becoming more dissonant and less Impressionistic even before he began to compose for film noir. Therefore . . . it is not possible to say conclusively which musical genre had the greater influence on the other."

In Search of Ben-Hur Records: The Saga Contin-

ues. In PMS 59 we reported on K. Selvaraja's extraordinary discography-scrapbook of every Ben-Hur recording ever made—all versions, all imprints, all nationalities. Selva has issued a new edition (July 2003) that stretches to 408 pages and contains reproductions of hundreds of jacket covers, film stills and enlargements, and miscellaneous quotations about the movies and the music. Almost every page has multiple illustrations. If you want details of the Malaysian premiere of the 1959 version or the provenance of the Edison cylinder (no. 7282) that included Edgar Stillman Kelley's "Ben-Hur Chariot Race March" from 1899 and its disc issue from 1913, then this document is the place to turn. Perhaps this amazing treatise should be seen less as a discographic resource (though it certainly has much to offer in that department) than as the summation of Selva's lifelong quest to be the best-informed collector on the planet. That Selva (a Hindu) he has done this under the restrictive Islamic government of Malaysia is a remarkable testament to both his persistence and the universality of Ben-Hur's musicodramatic appeal.

There are a few vinyl discs that Selva has not yet collected. It is likely that some western collectors could help him out in this department. We urge everybody who is interested to get in touch with Selva directly at: K. Selvaraja / A3, Jalan Chenderuh 5 / Taman Bamboo / Batu 4¼, Jalan Ipoh / 51200 Kuala Lumpur / Malaysia (benhurselva@yahoo.com.uk).

Passages

Jerry Goldsmith (21 July 2004)

David Raksin (9 August 2004)

Elmer Bernstein (18 August 2004)

Film music masters and friends of Rózsa.

- ... Richard Mohr, the producer of one of Miklós Rózsa's most treasured albums, the 1963 *Rózsa Conducts Rózsa* (RCA LSC-2802). Mohr was an RCA producer of the classic era of Barber and Menotti and Toscanini and Horowitz. He also produced Texaco's *Metropolitan Opera Quiz* for many years and an NPR series, *Backstage with Richard Mohr*, in 1978. (23 November 2002)
- ... Peter Ustinov, the singing emperor in *Quo Vadis* and a friend of Rózsa's (the Op. 22 String Quartet is dedicated to him). (28 March 2004)
- ... Alicia Markova, ballerina and manager whose

company, the Markova Dolin Ballet, gave Rózsa his first job in England in 1936. (2 December 2004)

- ... James “Pav” Pavelek. His artwork has long been familiar to Rózsa fans, and his documentary footage of MR interviews and concerts was a valuable testament to his lifelong enthusiasm for the composer. (May 2004 in Hawaii).
- ... Bob Blackmore, U.K. Society member. With Alan Hamer and other U.K. members he had assisted Christopher Palmer in the preparation of Miklós Rózsa’s memoirs and other materials. (1 January 2003 in South London)
- ... Frank Morales, a longtime New York member of the Society. (28 November 2002)

Confess Jehovah Thankfully

Many have asked about the lyrics for Plymouth Adventure’s psalm setting, as they are not fully intelligible on any of the recordings. Here, courtesy of Ralph Erkelenz, is the text as transcribed by Christopher Palmer, who prepared the score for the Elmer Bernstein recording:

*Confess Jehovah thankfully
For he is good, for his mercy
Continueth forever.*

*To God of Gods confess do ye,
Because his bountiful mercy
Continueth forever.*

*Unto the Lord of Lords confess,
Because his merciful kindness*

Continueth forever.

*To him that doth himself only
Things wondrous great, for his mercy
Continueth forever.*

For years the Rózsa community depended entirely on print—and the rare phone call—for any news or commentary. That’s changed of course. A good number of us are on line today. We can view our Web site and follow discussions in the Rózsa Forum. A handful of us post comments there. I suppose that many more are silent “lurkers.” In any case, news of performances and recordings always appears first on the Web. But not everybody is part of this world.

Pro Musica Sana remains the preferred medium for the extended analysis and commentary. PMS will continue to appear as long as people are willing to contribute. There has been a quantitative dearth of major articles in recent years, but I do not expect the genre to die out. Not so long as people venture scholarly enterprises as substantial as the King of Kings notes in PMS 60 or the Ben-Hur essay that begins in this issue. Since this installment covers only the first hour of the movie, the publication of at least three more issues is mandated. And of course PMS 62–64 need not be entirely devoted to Rózsa’s masterpiece; we remain open to other submissions while the B-H study goes forward. (The second installment is already prepared.)

But the “newsletter” function of PMS has been largely superseded by the Web. Almost everything you see in this issue’s news section is already familiar to the online community. Herein lie two problems. The first is for the editors: it is hard to bring freshness and energy to the reporting of events that happened two years ago. Still, PMS is the journal of record for Miklós Rózsa and every significant per-

Gleanings from the Forum

formance or recording certainly ought to be noted here. The second problem is for our print readership. How many of you are reading about these performances and publications for the very first time in PMS 61? Should we produce occasional print bulletins for your sake? Let us hear from you

sometime. We want to reach out to the entire Rózsa community.

Here, for the particular benefit of our print readers, is a selection from the “conversations” posted in The Rózsa Forum. The selection, like the essentially unedited content, is casual. It merely displays something of our variety of voices and

viewpoints, with an emphasis on Miklós Rózsa and his music. (As in any such discussion group, there is a tendency to wander “off topic.”) This selection features comments from 2002–2003 because those conversations may have been forgotten even by the participants and because our Web host will eventually delete them to preserve storage space. Be aware that these are merely casual comments. PMS neither endorses the opinions nor guarantees the factual claims. Indeed, some of the information here has been directly contradicted by more recent documentation.

* * *

Lee Hern: I have heard that many people criticize much Golden Age film music, because they say it telegraphs feelings too much, and they find that distracting.

Paul Packer: I’ve noticed this, and I tend to agree with Lee that because so little genuine feeling is to be found in modern films younger viewers find even a spoonful of sentiment too cloying. I’ve been astonished at some of the comments on the newsgroups (from predominantly young contributors) about some of my favourite Gold and Silver Age films and how over-sentimental they are, films that indeed I’d never connected with sentimentality at all (Spartacus, for one). Likewise with the music. Reflecting the film’s content, today’s scores seem merely efficient to me. I hear no great commitment from the composers, and why would there be? Commitment is uncool. There’ll never be another Ben-Hur, not only because there are no Wylers, Frys or Hestons, but because it’s considered passé to express commitment or sentiment, still less religious feeling. I saw a couple of amateur reviews of B-H when the DVD came out referring to the film’s “phony emotional tone”. This is how younger viewers see what we used to call passion, sincerity and commitment. I find it frightening, and it explains why I rarely go to the cinema these days: what they object to in B-H is exactly what I find missing at my local multiplex. (*May 2002*)

Mishka: *la spada del Cid* (1962) is a very silly picture about Cid’s son (!) fighting for his heir. Savina’s music echoes especially in the fanfares and the main title Rózsa’s score. More so does he plagiarize Ben-Hur in *Achille* (1962), mainly the love theme. But Rózsa respected him so much that he allowed the Italian credits for *El Cid* to read

“Musiche composta da Carlo Savina e Miklos Rozsa, Orchestra diretta da Carlo Savina”, because it was an Italian co-production and there had to be an Italian name for the composer after Mario Nascimbene was replaced. *La leggenda di Enea* (1962) plays the “Roman March” from Ben-Hur under the main title, *Nerone e Popeia* (1981) not only quotes passages from *Quo Vadis* word for word, but uses the “Parade of the Charioteers” in a circus scene (as does the *Jim Carrey Man on the Moon*, but there with mention in the end credits), and *La distruzione di Ercolano* (1962) has Eunice’s song from *Quo Vadis* - without words - in it.

But not only music was recycled in Italian movies. *Ponzio Pilato* (1961) was partly shot in the sets of the House of Hur!

The French parody *Deux heures moins le quart avant Jesus Christ* (1982) copies the music from Ben-Hur in slightly different variations. But there I take it as a tribute to Rózsa’s music by Raymond Alessandrini. The medley “Marches romaines” on the LP is great fun and sounds like a composition by Rózsa himself. (*July 2002, re Carlo Savina’s death on 22 June*)

Mishka: John, the source is a many hours long German interview he gave in his Italian residence (I got a - very bad - copy on tape), and which is printed in parts in *Filmmusik-Info Heft 3*, 1981. I understand that he calls Savina a “good friend”, but not that he was “a fine composer”. There are also comments on Rota, Ortolani, Morricone, Nascimbene, Rustichelli and Piccioni. And among other interesting things he states that Paramount wanted him to do Ten Commandments, but MGM didn’t let him go. And that he conducted “More Music from Ben-Hur” with Kloss only attending the sessions, but that by reason of time lack he could not conduct *Knights of the Round Table*. He had to compose 20 hours and sleep 4 hours a day and therefore asked Mathieson to conduct. (*July 2002*)

John Fitzpatrick: *Knights of the Round Table* was on the Turner network today. That evoked memories. For those of us who “came of age” in the 1960s (too late to have seen this one in the theaters), *Knights* was the last great unknown of Rózsa’s career—the last of the big color spectacles that we could aspire to see. As far as I know, the picture was long withheld from television and only

made its first appearance at Christmastime around 1973. And here it was again, twenty-seven years later. I guess *Knights* has now become a sort of kiddie tradition. Maybe it's the film's candy cane color scheme that has bestowed this status. Heaven knows, the movie has precious little to offer for adults. From the moment of Arthur's first battle cry, "For England!" we know the filmmakers are out of their depth. Arthur was, of course, a Romano-Briton fighting *against* the Germanic invaders (i.e., Angles and Saxons) who later became the "English"! But of course history isn't the point here. Forget about the literature as well. Just watch Robert Taylor whistle for his horse and you know where this one is coming from.

Ah, but the music! MR always badmouthed this score, and it's obviously not on a level with *Ivanhoe* or *Young Bess*. Much of the "action" scoring is fairly mechanical. (Varese did an excellent job of editing out the mediocre material.) The episode that stands out for me is the quiet nocturnal meditation of Lancelot and Elaine. The camerawork here is simple: just two lonely figures on their castle ramparts, parted by space and by duty. With little dialogue to jar our ears, the music is left alone to reflect quietly on a timeless dramatic situation. Rózsa alternates and melds the two love themes amid a shimmering string accompaniment. It's romantic and melancholy and poignant—a deeply moving interlude in an ocean of mediocrity.

Thanks for the holiday present, Turner. And thanks to Matthew for running our Forum for another wonderful year. And to all who have participated with such animation and good will. Keep it up, folks. (*December 2001*)

Filmmusicbuff; Having recently bought the re-issue of my idol's *King of Kings* and in playing it, began to reflect on why HIS music still has the power to move and thrill me....The memory of seeing him at the Royal Albert Hall in 1972, is as vivid now as it was then, and on being informed of his death while I was on holiday in Switzerland, slumping on to the bed in my hotel room, and weeping like a child. That HIS music and HIS personality should have such a hold on me after so many years...The power and beauty of his music? The emotional response it triggers in me, regardless of the Record or CD I play? And does it *really* matter? His music is timeless and ageless. What more needs to be said! (*July 2002*)

John Fitzpatrick: I saw *Something of Value* again. It always surprises me that film and score have received so little comment. The film remains extremely strong, surely one of the best projects Rózsa ever had at MGM (or anywhere else). It's one of the most vivid depictions of fratricidal revolutionary violence that I've ever seen – a rival (in its best moments) of *The Battle of Algiers* nearly a decade later. Director Richard Brooks somehow assembled an amazing cast of black performers to depict African politics with a vividness that I'd never seen from Hollywood films before (or since).

Rózsa's score is surely the most adventurous of his career. It is based very largely on Kikuyu chants with only minimal accompaniment from drums and tambourines. There is simple harp and flute for the love music. And do I hear a Flexatone or some such instrument for the eerie treks through the bush? Despite the minimalist approach, the music is unfailingly effective at suggesting the characters' love for their mutual homeland and the grief and terror of their conflict. And, yes, somehow it really does sound like Rózsa, most notably in the strongly accented beat of hummed "friendship" theme for male chorus. Yet what a contrast to his much more conventional (yet very effective) approach to his previous African picture, *The Macomber Affair*. (*July 2002*)

Adam Hart: This little film [*The Light Touch*] was sandwiched between *Quo Vadis* and *Ivanhoe*. The critics seem to rate it average at best. It was among the first American films of Pier Angeli and Stewart Granger. I suspect that Richard Brooks, writer and director, was trying to be satirical. George Sanders may have gotten the joke, but I don't think that the rest of the cast did. There is some wit in the dialog and situations, which is more amusing to think about afterwards, than while viewing.

Rózsa, who has a "musical direction" credit, does provide a score with two themes. I doubt that I could identify the love theme as a Rózsa theme. However, the main theme does have that Rózsa flavor, but overlaid with mandolins and percussion, giving it a very Italian flavor, almost like a tarantella, but with the wrong rhythm. It has a sense of urgency to it, in spite of its own "light touch." The whole plot revolves around the disposition of a stolen painting, and the theme pops up whenever something happens concerning the painting. I took an immediate like to the theme, so I did not mind

hearing it frequently, while I was trying to figure out if the movie was supposed to be “offbeat.” Has anyone else out there tried to “read” this movie?

TomD: That must be Rózsa admiring a painting near the beginning of the “party” scene, shortly before George Sanders speaks. He is photographed almost from behind, and not so easy to recognize. (July 2002)

Breda Von Krolock: I have to disagree with the idea that Rózsa could not write “funny” music. I know, although I can’t cite them all right now, that there are many lighthearted scenes in many films that cause me to smile to myself when I hear them. Rózsa was a master at orchestration, and I think the strength of his comic music lies in that fact. He always used woodwinds to great effect for these scenes. One particular instance that comes to mind is in *A Double Life*. At the beginning of the film, we see Ronald Colman prowling around outside the theater where he is appearing in a play. Several girls walk by and recognize him, and begin to laugh and giggle, and he pulls down the brim of his hat and moves away. The music mirrors, in just a few bars, the girls’ silly excitement at seeing a “real star” close up. He never descended into slapstick in his comic writing, but was always pleasant and charming, witty rather than bellicose. I think in this, his music mirrored his personality. He was charming with a wry sense of humor, and it’s in his music, too. (August 2002)

RLW48: I have said before that I think there is a musical resemblance in the music of both composers, but more evident in Bloch’s Hebraic style of composition. I think it corresponds closely with Rózsa’s style of writing for the Biblical films. I don’t think it’s because Rózsa studied Bloch or was even necessarily aware of his scores. I would attribute it to the fact that both men wrote in a highly dramatic and intense style, and they both relied heavily on modal harmonies and often used similarly constructed chords. Bloch wrote some really delightful piano music for children that I only recently became aware of. It reminds me quite a bit of Rózsa’s earlier piano compositions, such as the bagatelles. Both composers owe a debt to Debussy in their piano writing. In Bloch, it’s really evident in the *Enfantines* I was referring to, and in Rózsa, in his earlier pieces. By the time of the *Sonata* in 1948, and certainly the *Piano Concerto* of 1962, there is no trace of Debussy, or if there is, it’s been so well

absorbed into Rózsa’s own personal style that it’s virtually undetectable. (December 2002)

TomD: There is enough Rózsa score to enjoy [in *Lady on a Train*]. Score is near continuous for about 20 minutes as Durbin explores the household of the victim of the murder she witnessed, looking for clues and running afoul of the menagerie of suspects. The music basically plays to expectations, a little threatening here and amusing there, yet adds a certain sophistication to the standard plot. The middle of movie is spent in a nightclub setting, and I doubt that Rózsa had anything to do with the music at the club, which includes a couple of numbers for Durbin. Rózsa takes over again for the final 20 minutes, as we finally find out who done it. The dramatic music is straight, without parody, but doesn’t strive for any of the depth of Rózsa’s film noir scores, such as *Double Indemnity* and *Lost Weekend*, which were scored prior to *Lady on a Train*. (March 2003)

John Fitzpatrick: One fine moment (among many) shows why there’s no substitute for experiencing the music with the film. Watching the cure of the paralytic, we appreciate how the music hits an especially tortured moment at midstream. This corresponds to the man’s stumble as he seeks to walk toward the light.

Speaking of halting, what do people make of the stop-and-go scoring of the sermon? I used to think this was bad music spotting or editing. Since the sequence is all of a piece, it’s hard to see why one would want to keep altering the emotional pitch. But the scene is widely regarded as a highlight, and maybe there are good reasons for handling it the way Rózsa did.

Alexander Goldstein: think the “stop and go” scoring of the *Sermon on the Mount* was most effective. Walton did something similar with the “To Be or Nor To Be” soliloquy in *Hamlet*. When the music enters, it says “pay attention” -- this is something important or profound. It highlights passages, much like underlining. If it were continuous, such an effect would have been impossible to achieve. Rózsa chose to emphasize certain sections, and it also provides aural variety. Silence is an effective tool as well. I have noticed that Waxman utilizes “stop and go” under dialogue sometimes, although not in as quiet a way as Rózsa does here. (March 2003)

Paul Levesque: To my knowledge, there’s never

been an official explanation for why the performance of *Also sprach Zarathustra* used in 2001 is not credited in the film. But I believe a careful listening will reveal the reason for this. (Those with DVDs of the movie that contain an alternate French soundtrack in 5.1 Dolby Digital will have an easier time of this, since the clarity of the music tracks in this French mix is dramatically superior to the English version.) Listen to the big final C-major organ chord at the end. The whole stereo soundfield shifts for this chord. Now compare the final chord *musically* with the same chord on the original Karajan recording. The final chord in the movie is NOT from the Karajan performance! Presumably Stan-the-Man felt Von K's concluding chord was too weak for his dramatic purposes, so he just went ahead and spliced in a final chord from another performance (perhaps the Karl Böhm), without any regard to what effect this might have on record-company politics. And presumably, the simplest way to avoid opening a can of worms by acknowledging this "composite performance" from different (and probably rival) labels was to attribute the music to no label at all. (June 2003)

RLW48: I have always been attracted to that "last man left alive" scenario, which Richard Matheson explored so well in *I Am Legend*, in which there was only one human left in a world of vampires. I guess I like the idea of someone being able to survive by their own ingenuity when all the conventions of modern life which we take for granted are no longer available. Sort of a modern day Robinson Crusoe story, I guess. So that was one appeal World had for me. And of course, Rózsa's dramatic score is the other. I think, along with Ben Hur, it may have been his last great score in the tradition he developed during the MGM years. I don't mean that El Cid and King of Kings aren't great scores, just that there was a change taking place in Rózsa's compositional style, another "period" beginning, so to speak, and it's not only noticeable in his film work, but in his concert music too. For instance, I think if the *Sinfonia Concertante* had been written in the early 50's instead of the early 60's, it would have sounded much different. Probably more melodic and less violent and dissonant. Anyway, I guess I'm veering from the original point. I would just say that in my opinion, the score for World should be considered one of his major scores of the MGM period. It is some of his most powerful and cohesive scoring. (December 2002)

Doug Raynes: Just got The Seventh Sin from FSM and it's a far better score than I recall from last seeing the film. Despite being made in 1957 it is an archetypal Rózsa '40s score as is more appropriate for the subject matter. Of course, by the late '50s the historical film, typified in particular by MGM, had run its course so Rózsa might well have found the film a welcome chance to revert to his *film noir* style. Some of the reflective, almost pastoral tracks remind me of A Woman's Vengeance and the *Nocturno* from Brute Force (reminding us that there is a veritable gold mine of music from Rózsa scored films of the '40s which have never been issued). Another most welcome release with excellent notes by Jeff Bond and Lukas Kendall as usual. (December 2002)

John Fitzpatrick: Actually there's not much to criticize. Robert Barnett (unknown to me) seems a remarkably well-informed reviewer, down to his familiarity with obscure broadcast tapes of Rózsa premieres. I like his comparisons, which should stimulate further musical explorations: "The cello concerto is quite a rare work. Sombre and rhapsodic, it is a sidestep away from the rich dark world of Bloch's *Schelomo* and Rubbra's *Soliloquy*. The second movement has some eldritch passages witness 6:25 with the cello in its highest harmonics. If you know the ghostly music in Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* you now know where he got the idea from!"

Here's one dubious assertion. Why should anybody suppose that Stephen Sondheim (a very different composer from MR) was influenced by the Cello Concerto, whose first recording appeared in 1982, three years after *Sweeney Todd*? (January 2003)

Doug Raynes: Whilst discussing the use of Rózsa's music, I don't think I've ever heard anyone comment on an obvious use of Rózsa in, of all things, Army of Darkness (a.k.a. Evil Dead 3). Not far into the film, the hero Ash is led in chains to the castle and the unmistakable music "Procession to Calvary" from Ben-Hur is heard for about 5 seconds. It sounds rather effective. Presumably intended as an homage, the rest of the score by Joseph LoDuco is unmemorable but at least he knows good music when he hears it! (May 2003)

Paul Packer: With the release of Cleopatra, Spartacus is now the outstanding omission in the available film music catalogue. I'm sure even those who

don't like the score must wonder at its continuing absence, especially given the release of scores whose value has to be questioned by even the most generous and tolerant of souls. For me *Spartacus* is one of the most important and unique musical efforts in any genre of the last century. I just can't fathom why it's sitting in a vault somewhere when it has admirers as rich and powerful as Steven Spielberg. His milk money alone could finance a release! (*January 2003*)

Mark Koldys: They used the *Dragnet* theme, but jazzed up considerably (of course). The brief on-screen credit mentioned both Schumann and Rózsa as writers of the "original *Dragnet* theme 'Danger Ahead'". This appeared in the opening credits of the episode--if it had been at the end nobody would have seen it because it would have flashed by in tiny type squished onto 1/4 of the screen. (*February 2003*)

Jeff Eldridge: I believe a similarly worded credit was given in the movie-parody with Tom Hanks.

Tom DeMary writes: "I recall the mix in the film as being more tame." The M-G-M music department operated under an edict to mix the music in their films low enough so that every line of dialogue could be clearly understood. Unfortunately, this often resulted in the dramatic impact of the music being severely diminished. See the penultimate paragraph of Bill Rosar's liner notes for *Above and Beyond*, in which he recounts that Friedhofer's score was originally mixed while John Green was on vacation and had to be remixed at a lower level to comply with the studio aesthetic. (*January 2003*)

Paul Packer: Anyone noticed PMS 60 yet? Surely George Komar deserves a huge pat on the back for the KOK examination, which essentially *is* the issue. Can't remember when I've so admired any article in any mag, almost as much for his understanding of the film and the period as the music. But it's the music first and foremost. As I read I could hear it in my head, only now it seemed more ordered, more purposeful, more logical somehow. I thought I'd got all there was to get out of this score, but George has demonstrated to me how much of the inner organisation and interconnectedness I've been missing—and that though I don't read a note of music! Quite a feat, I'd say. (*January 2003*)

Joan Adams: "You can't imagine what a thrill it was to receive my latest PMS issue today. . . . I

think this issue is great as I have recently purchased the *Rhino King of Kings*. I followed each and every passage. This particular soundtrack comes with a lot of baggage for me personally. What a genius this man was! They can all have their Bachs, Bizets, Ravels and so forth. I'm one who doesn't impress easily but this man, Mr. Rózsa, won me heart and soul long before I was an adult. Thank you for all the work you contribute to this publication. I read each installment with great enthusiasm. I particularly loved the issues that included how Mr. Rózsa's music impacted their lives." (*January 2003*)

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