

# *The MIKLOS ROZSA Society*

## "PRO MUSICA SANA"

Honorary President: *MIKLOS ROZSA*

Director: *John Fitzpatrick*

Associate Directors: *Ken Doeckel & Mark Koldys*

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MRS 7

### NEWS:

When the MRS was founded almost two years ago, we thought the newsletter's pages would be largely concerned with the past. That the present issue focuses mainly on works newly written, recorded, or published is a tribute not only to the industry of our contributors but also to the changing times. Comments and interpretations of the new trends follow. More will appear in the future only insofar as members are willing to contribute their work. Someone has finally taken up our suggestion to report on Bernard Herrmann's 1972 London lecture; many other such suggestions remain untouched. MRS6 was the largest and most varied newsletter in the Society's history, yet it drew the least response. As always, it's up to you.

### Sinbad:

The hundred-minute score was recorded in Rome in September, and release of the film is set for December in England and for Easter in the States. Dr. Rozsa reports that working for Schneer and Harryhausen was an absolute pleasure - no interference whatsoever. In fact, the two producers backed up Dr. Rozsa's refusal to disfigure his score with a pop song, as requested by Columbia Pictures. Because of this stand, Columbia decided against releasing a record of the sound track. But Liberty-United Artists has come to the rescue and Rozsa informs us that they will release the album that Columbia scorned. (The production company, by the way, is Ameran, not American, Films.)

### Performances:

The Tripartita premiered on 15 October in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, with Ljubomir Romansky conducting. Andre Previn will

be doing it with the London Symphony and Eugene Ormandy with the Philadelphia Orchestra. The premiere performance was taped for broadcast by the Cologne Radio. The Chicago performance of the Sinfonia Concertante has been temporarily postponed due to the illness of Victor Aitay. Seattle is to hear the work in February and Basel in March. Erzsebet Tusa will repeat the Piano Concerto in Budapest on 18 January. Miklos Lukacs, director of the Hungarian State Opera, will conduct. Also in January, the Cello Concerto will be given in Lisbon. Elmer Bernstein conducted the SPELLBOUND Concerto at the Hollywood Bowl in August. It was part of a "Filmharmonic" concert of the Los Angeles Philharmonic that also featured some Bernstein works and John Green and John Barry conducting their own works and those of Korngold and Walton.

Finally, Dr. Rozsa tells of Detlev Frevesmuhl, a young German who will play the Violin Concerto for the Bremerhaven Radio in March. He is also preparing the Sinfonia Concertante with cellist Erling Blomdal Bengtsson. Frevesmuhl's grandfather Hermann played in the premiere of the Piano Quintet in 1929. His father was concertmaster in Bremerhaven for the Piano Concerto performance there. Says Rozsa: "With three generations of Vrevesmuhls I feel terribly old!"

#### Records:

January release in its "Classic Film Scores" series is entitled "Classic Film Scores for Humphrey Bogart", and will include music from the only Bogart film Rozsa ever scored, SAHARA. Charles Gerhardt will again conduct the National Philharmonic Orchestra in what promises to be one of the most interesting releases yet from this valuable series. Their latest release, "Elizabeth and Essex: The Classic Films Scores of Erich Wolfgang Korngold", is already a best-seller, and includes the DECEPTION Cello Concerto. A review will be forthcoming in a future issue.

RCA's new "Classic Film Scores for Bette Davis" is in stores now, and features music by Steiner, Korngold, Waxman, and Newman. Their longest-ever version of GONE WITH THE WIND is also forthcoming. Among the reissues, Angel has already brought out the classic STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE with three Steiner Oscar-score suites on the reverse side. And Mercury confirms that VERTIGO is to be reissued. (Incidentally, the number for the Polydor reissue of BEN-HUR, Vol. 2, is

2353075). And recording activity continues. Bernard Herrmann has signed to make another recording of his own music for London's Phase Four series, He is also working on a major new American film, though not, apparently, THE EXORCIST, as has been rumored. Korngold's symphonic works are to be amply represented with new recordings of the Violin Concerto and Much Ado About Nothing from Angel joining the previously announced Kempe performance of the Symphony in f# for RCA. Meanwhile, various record outlets, among them August Rojas, are offering "private reissues" of such scores as Herrmann's SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD, which is said to be identical to the original in every respect save the jacket. There is also, says Craig Reardon, a disc including HANGOVER SQUARE, THE BRIDE WORE BLACK, and THE TWISTED NERVE - all evidently pirated. The BRIDE excerpts are somewhat confusingly pressed at 45rpm on what is otherwise an LP! And sound quality does not match the originals. Others in this and similar series are Herrmann's VERTIGO, Steiner's SHE (dubbed from old acetate 78s and not spliced together very carefully), Tiomkin's DUEL IN THE SUN coupled with Raksin's FOREVER AMBER (the original artists' names replaced by the pseudonymous Hollywood Cinema Orchestra that also takes credit for the Herrmann disc), and a release entitled DESTINATION MOON "and other science-fiction themes" on which the first stereo side (pirated from the Omega recording of DESTINATION) runs over 42 minutes!

#### Honorary Member:

We are proud to welcome the renowned Leonard Pennario as our third honorary member. His long association with Dr. Rozsa dates back to the forties and includes brilliant performances of the Piano Sonata and the Piano Concerto (which is dedicated to him). His able playing can also be heard on the new Orion disc. Mr. Pennarie writes, "No one admires Rozsa's music more than I do. I have championed his music for many years because he is a great composer."

#### Publications:

Dr. Rozsa has yet another new composition now, a short "Festive Flourish" in honor of the American bi-centennial, It is being published by Broude Brothers. Breitkopf is also reissuing the String quartet and Sonata for Two Violins, There are said to be plans to record the latter. A recent article by Norman Corwin (Westways, July 1973) on the subject of financial support for the arts refers

interestingly to both Rozsa and Bernard Herrmann, though without naming either composer. Herrmann lectured on 21 October at the Eastman House in Rochester, New York. Boston University, the sponsor of the three-day conference on the sound film, will be publishing the lecture with all the proceedings next year.

Few have written as well of Dr. Rozsa's music as Christopher Palmer. His writings on the composer can be found in this publication, in several British music journals, and on the backs of the new Orion and Polydor records. He has recently completed a larger project of which more next time. Meanwhile, his book, Musical Impressionism, has been published in the U.S. by Scribner's and in Britain by Hutchinson. It is dedicated to Miklos Rozsa.

Corrections:

The following should be corrected on the master membership roster which was distributed with the Summer issue:

Dorval, V.P.  
Gluing, Ted  
Swaitz, Gary

*[Note: Private addresses not reproduced for this archival version]*

New members will be noted in a supplement at some future date. A final note: KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE, for years the lost sheep of the Rozsa canon, is to be televised at last in January. It will be syndicated via videotape. Have your recorders ready.

ANGEL 536063—TWO VIEWS:

Frank DeWald:

I have never had more mixed feelings about a recording than I have about Angel's "Miklos Rozsa Conducts Ills Great Film Music". Elated that Rozsa's music has found its way into Angel's distinguished catalogue, I am nevertheless disappointed that it should be represented there by such a compromising release. There are, of course, some things to cherish here. Virtually the only stereo recordings of Rozsa conducting BEN-HUR and QUO VADIS? will make this disc a must for all Rozsa admirers. But my enthusiasm is considerably mitigated by two basic flaws in the recording.

The first of these is the remarkably uncommitted performance under Rozsa's direction. It is rhythmically slack, lacking in nuance, and generally thoughtless and unsubtle. The notes are all there, of course, but the players seem to be going through them mechanically, without regard for color, line, or shape. It is hard to pinpoint exactly what this means; but if, for example, one compares this version of the EL CID "Overture" with that on the M-G-M recording, one immediately notices that the latter performance has far more rhythmic life and excitement (even keeping in mind that rhythm and tempo are not the same thing). Similarly, "Nativity" from KING OF KINGS as recorded here sounds more like a deliberate triple meter than the flowing duple 6/8 it ought to be. "The Way of the Cross" doesn't build as it should (partly because the initial entry is too loud), the "Parade of the Charioteers" sounds pedantic. It seems slow even though the tempo is identical to Kloss's. The QUO VADIS? "Love Theme" is colorless (the woodwinds are poorly miked and sound unnatural). "Pieta" has more guts than pathos (never anything less than mp). The list could go on, but careful listening will make the point better than words.

The other major flaw is the poor recorded sound. Besides the cathedral-like reverberance which obfuscates much of the orchestral counterpoint and detail, some of the instruments, most notably the woodwinds, are poorly miked and sound harsh and unpleasant. For this reissue, Angel's engineers have graciously done their best to rescue the hopelessly engulfed orchestra from its sonic fog, but, alas, to little avail. It sounds almost as bad here as one would expect it to sound in a theatre.

Bad performance, bad recording - it doesn't add up to much, does it? Well, it is significant that a company of Angel's stature and reputation has seen fit to reissue this music, but one guesses that it is far more for commercial considerations than for musical or artistic ones. Trying to cash in on the current wave of film music mania spearheaded on discs by Charles Gerhardt's justly-heralded RCA recordings, Angel has dug into its vaults and come up with its own "Great Film Music" series. The cause of film music (and of Rozsa's music in particular) would be much better served by a new recording - one with sensitive, musical performances and naturally balanced recorded sound.

Mark Koldys:

Although Miklos Rozsa is one of the best-represented film composers in terms of recorded representations of his work, all too

often these recordings have been seriously flawed in one way or another. The QUO VADIS? sound track has execrable sonics and is musically disjointed and episodic; BEN-HUR is mangled by inferior orchestras and conductors; EL CID has shrill and substanceless reproduction.

It is thus with open arms that we welcome an album featuring selections from these three film scores (along with KING OF KINGS, which fared somewhat better in its "sound track" release), conducted by the composer himself and recorded in resonant, full-bodied stereo sound. This reissue is of value to all who cherish Rozsa's "Biblical-epic" mood, for it nowhere gets a more successful exemplification.

The BEN-HUR excerpts demonstrate this recording's value most clearly. The "Prelude" here receives a vibrant, exciting performance that makes others sound tame. Note particularly the brilliance of the horn statement of the Ben-Hur theme, and the colorful interplay of percussion, both of which are features lost in the other recordings. The "Parade of the Charioteers" is similarly superior to Kloss's run-through, and the other two excerpts are handled with restraint, but not without eloquence.

With QUO VADIS? we get the only stereo representation of these slightly abridged moments from the QUO VADIS Suite, and Rozsa's performances are more lively and more perceptive than Kloss's. The "Triumphal March" in particular struts at a proud tempo.

EL CID is here simply superior to the "sound track" LP in every way: the orchestra is crisper, the performances more assured, the sonics infinitely richer. And the "March" eliminates the annoying reiteration of the score's opening fanfare, and prunes some unnecessary measures of duplication toward its finale.

With KING OF KINGS the recording is less successful, for one thing there is no chorus - sorely missed in a score of this subject matter. For another, the original M-G-M disc was really quite satisfying, rendering these excerpts rather superfluous.

Rozsa's conducting has always been reliable, but groups like the Frankenland State Symphony Orchestra seldom respond with any gusto. Here, the anonymous pickup orchestra displays no such reticence, while retaining a delicacy, though a specifically hearty delicacy, where called for. It is entirely appropriate. Bravo! If only a few more strings had been hired for the recording session, our only quibble (the at-times undernourished violin and cello sections) would be eradicated.

Capitol's stereo sound was first-rate, and Angel's reissue seems to have preserved its excellences. A rich, concert-hall resonance is a welcome change from the usual dead "studio sound" to which we too often become accustomed. And, happily, this resonance in no way obscures any orchestral detail - you'll hear more in this performance of the BEN-HUR "Prelude" than in any other.

All in all, a recommended disc, despite the bits-and-pieces approach to these classic scores, if all of Angel's sound track reissues were of comparable merit, their service to film music fans would be all the greater.

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A NEW LOUISIANA STORY by Mary Peatman:

Roger Manvell and John Huntley in The Technique of Film Music call Virgil Thomson's score for LOUISIANA STORY "outstanding". That it is, and a new recording is welcome news indeed after all these years (Eugene Ormandy's with the Philadelphia Orchestra - Columbia ML 2087- was deleted nearly twenty years ago. Ormandy also conducted on the actual sound track.) This suite, after all, gives us a most generous sampling of the score. If it leaves a little to be desired it is only because, as is so often the case with functional film music, one has to pay a price for the divorce. Siegfried Landau conducts the Westphalian Symphony Orchestra in this performance (Turnabout TV-S 34534). Howard Hanson's Sixth Symphony is the companion piece.

LOUISIANA STORY is an unusual score for several reasons. In the first place, the film is itself a tone poem, relying in great part on the music to give images their unspoken significance and to convey moods and tensions which are not visible at a given, moment on the "surface" of the image. Both the swamp waters and the leaves covering the alligator's nest are cases in point, in that they camouflage the terror of the alligator at first; the music alone hints at what lies beneath. In the second place, the film is not a "talkie". The voice, both human and animal, is important, but its effectiveness is due partly to the restraint exercised in its use.

In the light of both these factors, Thomson had the freedom to compose long, uninterrupted passages, some of which he was later to lift almost verbatim for the suite. Such is the case for the most part with the "Pastoral" (I); it is also true of the "Passacaglia" (III) and the "Fugue" (IV).

Finally, the material - and hence the local color - was already at hand: a collection of the folk music of this French-dominated ("Cajun") area, assembled by Therese Whitfield, served as the source for the vast majority of Thomson's themes.

The music of the Bajou and the Marsh Buggy (I) opens with a series of quiet yet haunting arpeggios which convey the eerie stillness of this world\*. These chords both open and close the film, and while their appearance is quite brief at the end, they nevertheless contribute much to the sense of what Richard Barsun (Non-fiction Film) has called the journey come "full circle": the world left behind almost as it was before the oil drillers came.

A short development of these chords is followed by the introduction of the main theme) a limpid melody in the Dorian mode which is found in the aforementioned collection (Ex. #1). This material,



first introduced by the English horn, becomes linked with the activities of the boy, Alexander, in his more watery haunts. In a subsidiary passage, it is developed into a swelling crescendo with dissonant supporting chords, breaking for a moment the serenity of the mood; then the main treatment returns and the tension subsides. The opening arpeggios follow, played this time more rapidly, a terseness replacing the placid quality of the exposition. The rest of the section is comprised of alternations between the two treatments of these chords. It closes with the slow, peaceful variant which also ends the film.

The "Chorale" (II) presents two themes in alternation: a light, scherzo-like tune linked with the venturesome land excursions of the boy with his raccoon (his movements in this case are quite different from those he employs when driving his canoe-like boat silently through the water), and the awesome, majestic chords which depict the grandeur of the great steel drill tower (Ex. #2).





These chords share with the opening arpeggios the quality of power and eeriness, hinting at that potentially dangerous strength that both the marsh and the oil drill contain. The movement is carried primarily by the gradual crescendo of the chords into a second, slightly altered version which, resolving as it does on a major chord, conveys the completion of the journey of the tower to its proper place. (We have heard this theme before in the film, but in every case it accompanied the tower on a journey still in progress; hence the music remained open-ended.) This unresolved form is the first version represented in the suite. The second, completed form ends the movement; though as a closure to the suite it seems a little abrupt.

Although the subtitle of the "Passacaglia" (III) makes specific reference to the boy's furtive approach to the alligator's nest, this music has a broader function in the film. In addition to its appearance in this context, it also accompanies Alexander's ritualistic act of emptying, with much care and secrecy, his entire bag of salt (his talisman) into the hole of the abandoned "wildcat" shaft in the firm belief that this deed of exorcism will set things right once more. The quiet intensity of the basso ostinato serves to link the sense of the tension of the hunt with the mystery of the rite--and indeed the two are not so far apart. The boy's world is primitive, after all; yet in a strange way he stands as the bridge between nature and so-called "human progress" without himself falling victim to the latter's potentially destructive influence.

The theme proper is built on the Aeolian mode, a close variant of our minor scale. At first quiet and sustained, it is developed with increasing complexity by means of elaborate scale ornamentation; the tension is maintained throughout by constant restraint put on the dynamics until a set of discordant chords, rising in pitch and volume, lead into the climactic opening of the "Fugue" (IV).

As was mentioned earlier, the scoring of this part of the suite follows very closely its carefully structured model. Two statements are involved; the theme proper, which depicts the flight (and which in the film is played to the tune of plenty of splashing), and a quiet counterpart which is identified with the attempts of the boy's father to reach and help his son. This secondary material is not developed to any extent, but it does serve to offset the main subject at two points and

so to hold the impetus of the battle music in momentary abeyance. Here Thomson the classicist comes to the fore with his highly disciplined sense of form; there is a twist of irony, perhaps, in his choice of these self-imposed rules for music to portray such a scene. The one unhappy aspect of the movement, so far as the suite is concerned, is the closure, which at best can only be called convenient: the final flourish is obviously tacked on.

While not all the music is included, this suite does contain a good sample of the score, and most of the missing pieces can be found in the arrangement known as the "Acadian Songs and Dances"\*\*. (Pretty much in pieces, it's a distressing pastiche.) There is one passage in that collection, however, that I would have liked to have seen incorporated into the suite, not only because it is a through-composed piece of adequate length, but also because it is fashioned out of one of the most delightful of the Acadian motifs: the one we associate with the raccoon (Ex. #3). The passage I'm referring to



depicts the animal working himself loose from the boat to which Alexander tied him while he stalked the alligator nest. The music starts "in tune" as the raccoon gets free and starts swimming about the marsh. But as trouble begins, in the form of a pursuing alligator, the music rises to a climax through a development of discord.

This recording isn't bad. Landau's conducting is not Ormandy's, but one need not apologize for this. Landau is interpretative, and some of the music certainly benefits from a different approach. He is also to be given special credit for executing the "Pastoral" at a slower pace: by so doing he restores much of the sense of mystery which this music helps create in the film but which is lost in Ormandy's swift rendition when one is deprived of the pictorial experience. The Westphalian Orchestra cannot match the Philadelphia, true, and few would probably wish to argue with David Hall (Stereo Review, Oct. 73) over the difference. Nevertheless, Landau

does get from it an interpretive sensitivity that is absent in some of Ormandy's faster moments. I admit I do get more out of the "Passacaglia" through the Ormandy disc; but then the constant tensions and shifts between the punctuated ostinato and the swift ripples of the scales that play about it make this passage perhaps the most difficult of all to execute.

Apart from one glaring case of misjudged distance between the mike and an instrument (the cymbal crash at the end of the "Chorale" is terribly out of aural focus) and a slight hiss which is audible in some of the quieter sections, the quality of the recording is adequate. All in all, a performance to be recommended.

\*For a detailed analysis of the interaction between the visuals and the music in this section, see Manvell and Huntley, The Techniques of Film Music, pp. 101-109.

\*\*Recorded by the Little Orchestra Society, Thomas Scherman conducting. Decca DL 9616 (deleted).

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ROZSA ON ORION by Mark Koldys:

A long-awaited release of early Rozsa chamber music has finally been made available (I use the term advisedly - Orion records are not widely distributed, and even special orders are likely to be delayed by months). Violinist Endre Granat and pianists Leonard Pennario and Erwin Herbst perform the Duo Op. 7, Variations on a Hungarian Peasant Song, and North Hungarian Peasant Songs and Dances on Orion OS 73127.

One's first reaction to this disc is a question: why has Orion spent the majority of this disc on two works which have already been recorded? The Duo is the only work here that is new to discs, and the other two compositions have not only been previously recorded, but have been so recorded in stereo, and with full orchestral accompaniment. The point is that with these performances the works have been restored to their original violin-piano formats, and the differences in texture and balance that such a change of necessity must make evident become immediately apparent upon comparing the

respective versions. With the piano replacing the orchestra (although chronologically, it was the other way around) the contrapuntalism in these two scores is emphasized. Variations and Peasant Songs are both derived from folk-song sources, and the use of only two instruments seems to accentuate their "folksiness" in a way that a full symphony orchestra cannot. The orchestral accompaniments are more colorful, and hence more immediately appealing, but the chamber-music quality of the present recording is more authentic to the essential spirit of the works.

The Duo, of course, has less direct folk derivation than either of the other works. It is more closely allied to classical form, both in its reliance upon something close to classical sonata-allegro form in its outer movements and in its rigid four-movement format, a contrast to the free variation form in the other works. Despite this holding in check of the folk elements, the themes are obviously of the same mold as those in the two companion pieces (which proudly pro-claim their folk origin in their titles). This basic similarity makes the coupling of the three compositions on a single disc both correct and perceptive.

The Duo is particularly welcome in this, its first commercial release. Endre Granat, a pupil of Heifetz, shows much of his mentor's virtuosity in his handling of the solo violin part; yet his tone never sounds wiry or thin, as so many of the newer violinists' do. He has the proper spirit for these folkish turns of phrase, and his support in the Duo shows a similar technical command. Leonard Pennario's playing has recently taken on a certain harshness of tone, a percussiveness that is not the great sensitivity he displayed in his classic recordings of the Liszt and Rachmaninoff concerti. On this disc, we are happy to report that he has regained his polished tone to a great extent, and without sacrificing his extraordinary technical command. He at times seems to dig into a few phrases with a little too much gusto, but this is a matter of taste, and certainly it cannot be said that at any point Mr. Pennario's playing exceeds the bounds of interpretative freedom.

With the two other works, Mr. Granat is up against competition, and in at least one instance he does not surmount it. Denes Zsigmondy's violin playing on the Westminster recording of the Variations (18805/14305, deleted) is so totally suffused with gypsy abandon and panache that even Granat's teacher would have a difficult time surpassing it. Granat is never less than first-rate, but there is a certain "tightness" and lack of "schmaltz" that is out-of-place in these carefree displays. And whatever may be one's point of view regarding the orchestra vis-a-vis the piano, I personally find that the orchestral accompaniment is significantly more entertaining, colorful, enjoyable, and interesting. Recorded in crystal-line stereo by Westminster, this recording of the Opus 4 will be hard to top for some time. Granat's version, while welcome, is no match.

The existing performance of the Peasant Songs (Op. 5) is less of a monument, and Granat's work is thereby more attractive by contrast. He is more imbued with the proper spirit than is M-G-M's fiddler (Oliver Colbentson), and Kloss's orchestral support from the Frankenland orchestra never was much to write home about. But it must be said that pianist Erwin Herbst, who accompanies Granat in these two selections, does not display the sort of authority that Pennario so masterfully conveys in the Duo. Herbst's tone is certainly lovely, and one is immediately impressed by his careful approach: there will be no Entremont-style banging here. But after a while one begins to long for some strength in the accompaniment, and Herbst simply does not provide it. He plays throughout both works with a tonal style more befitting Debussy than Rozsa; if these peasants had been French this might be appropriate, but in Hungary this sort of approach simply will not do. As a result, the piano, which should be (and in the Duo is) an equal partner, here is relegated to a rather reticent background role.

Orion's stereo sound separates the instruments quite distinctly: piano on the left, violin on the right, the opposite of most performance practice. The recording itself is of good quality, although the piano's low register does not come through with as much solidity as it could (this could be due to the instrument). And although I am not one who

generally is critical of the quality-control of American record companies, I must also note here that this release is like every Orion record I have ever heard in that the surfaces display numerous assorted clicks, pops, crunches, and growls.

This release is certainly a must for all Rozsa fans, if only for the superb realization of the Duo. In any event, the record represents a disc that all MRS members should support. Record companies exist not for a sole, abstract principle of "art for art's sake", but rather for reasons of more immediate concern, primarily money. Future releases of the same variety cannot be expected if ORS 73127 is not successful.

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NEWMAN ON RCA by John Fitzpatrick:

Alfred Newman is a major paradox in the history of film music. At his best he could write on a level with anyone in the medium. Indeed, there are passages in THE EGYPTIAN and THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD for which I can find no fit comparison in films. One has to go back to Mahler's slow movements or even Parsifal to find such richly expressive harmonies. Yet the same man called himself a "hack musician" and spent much of his time doing inferior work, even rearranging Broadway musicals for the screen.

Newman's conducting career was similarly paradoxical. Kurt Reher, his principal cellist at 20th Century Fox, once compared him to Toscanini. Fritz Reiner paid a more palpable tribute when he sought Newman for his assistant in Chicago. Yet for a conductor of such talent, one who worked with recordings most of his life, Newman's preserved legacy is shockingly small. Aside from the very considerable body of his own music, most of his recordings fall into the pop or promenade concert category. There is scarcely anything more substantial than Puccini.

Charles Gerhardt's new recording (ARL 1-0184), the third in RCA's justly praised Classic Film Score series, is interesting for the light it sheds on both aspects of the Newman paradox. Of the music it gives us a faithful cross section, ranging

ranging from Gershwin-esque symphonic jazz as early as 1931 (STREET SCENE) and as late as 1970 (AIRPORT) to the more serious scores for which Newman is chiefly remembered. Purists will object that the selection does not represent Newman's best work. They are certainly right, and an awful lot more of his music needs to be recorded. But RCA's approach can be justified on historical grounds. The image it presents is essentially true: Newman was a brilliant but variable composer.

Gerhardt's conducting is interesting too, mainly for the light it sheds on Newman's. Astonishing as it may seem, this is virtually the only serious performance we have of Newman music by someone other than the composer himself\*. Generally, Gerhardt does quite well. The lighter pieces mentioned earlier are unexceptionable in performance, and the record's two dark horses, an invigorating hornpipe from DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS and the grim prelude to THE BRAVADOS, are most stirringly played here. Gerhardt handles the coda of the latter especially well, allowing the strings to serve as a beautifully restrained background against which the winds wind down the tension of the preceding march. It is in passages like these that Gerhardt gives every indication that he will develop into a first-rate interpreter of Newman as he is now of Korngold.

The longer selections from THE SONG OF BERNADETTE also come off very well. Few of us will have heard this overture before, but everyone ought to recognize the authentic Newman sound of the opening chords of harsh brass against gentle strings. Perhaps they are a little too gentle here. All the clichés about "sweetness" notwithstanding, Newman commanded some pretty intense bowing from his string section in these forties films. Gerhardt allows a little more vibrato, though he does not fall into the sentimentality that can threaten in this music. I would like to hear a leaner, more analytic sort of reading, such as Pierre Boulez might give. It works for Mahler and it ought to work here.

Unfortunately, Gerhardt's command of some of the more familiar Newman classics is less secure. His ANASTASIA, for example, is positively leaden. From WUTHERING HEIGHTS he gives us only the "Cathy" theme and

that somewhat rearranged. It would have been nice to have the entire prelude, including two additional themes from this extraordinarily rich score. But George Korngold, the record's producer, informs us that, while he had hoped to do more music from this score, he was unable to locate "any scores or even piano-conductor scores from this film, as all of Newman's music library has been donated to the University of Southern California and has as yet not been properly assembled and filed".

CAPTAIN FROM CASTLE fares worse. "Catana" starts well enough, though without Newman's breathless, hushed intensity. But this leads directly into the familiar "Conquest" and the record's first obvious failure. Hitherto, Gerhardt has always made The "National Phiharmonic" sound like a real orchestra and a very fine one indeed. But the players here respond with a lethargy that betrays the music. Worse, the Band of the Grenadier Guards chimes in with its many drums lagging perceptively behind the beat. Even the acoustic goes wrong here, expanding to grotesque proportions as if the two groups were recorded separately under different conditions.

But the real let-down is THE ROBE, which ought to have been the record's climax. It opens well enough in spite of the over-enthusiastic (or over-engineered) percussion section that is evident throughout the record. But the momentum of the piece is soon lost, and the players aren't even together by the finish. The "Elegy" ("Miriam") also starts beautifully, until Gerhardt squelches it with a ghastly reading of the march that blatantly departs from Newman's dynamic markings. Even then, the glorious farewell music might have redeemed things had not somebody dragged in an irrelevant chorus and a really ugly final statement of the march. George Korngold would never have allowed such a thing in his father's music, and I am amazed that he let it happen here. It leaves a bad taste.

The notes for this series have been of consistently high caliber, and Page Cook's here are no exception. They are sober, informative, and rather better than his usual Films in Review columns. I wish his unfortunate blast in the August-September issue were equally restrained. The record undeniably has its flaws. I have tried to point some of them out, and a more capable critic would doubtless do better. But to rail about a failure to capture the "unsurpassed Newmanesque



poignancy of spirit and profundity of soul", the "compassion for humanity", and "spiritual transcendence" of the strings is embarrassing and does little credit to Newman, Gerhardt, or Cook himself. The record deserves better - our full support - not only for its high purpose but also for its real achievement. Most of it is noble music very well performed.

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Two exceptions: the AIRPORT disc is said not to have been conducted by Newman. And the CAPTAIN FROM CASTILE prelude in a concert version gets a fine reading from Richard Hayman and the Manhattan Pops on a stereo Time disc (rereleased on the Mainstream label on MMS 704, "Everybody Loves a Parade" and credited to "The America Concert and Marching Band"!).

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FILM MUSIC...BETWEEN HARD COVERS by John Fitzpatrick:

A bibliography of film music would be a slender volume indeed. What intelligent commentary exists is largely to be found in obscure cinematic and musical journals and not between hard covers. One fine volume is still available - The Technique Film Music by Roger Manvell and John Huntley; London: Focal Press, New York: Hastings House, 1957. It is essential. Its technical look may frighten at first, but no one ever learned anything without stretching his mind a little. But if you don't have this volume already, you would do well to wait a little longer, for a new edition is in progress. Meanwhile, Tony Thomas has contributed his own very different effort - Music for the Movies, New York: A. S. Barnes, London: Tantivy. It fills a real gap and, for an enthusiast, even justifies its \$12 price tag.

Thomas's approach is biographical and historical rather than critical, and he limits himself to Hollywood films. The field is a rich one, and he has much to tell us. His biographical treatments of twenty-four composers from Steiner to Schifrin obviously result from many hours of interviews. Most of them are the fullest accounts in print and worthy supplements (not replacements) for the "career articles" that have appeared in Films in Review. The emphasis rightly

falls on the generation that shaped the art. Korngold gets the longest section, and Newman, Tiomkin, Waxman, Rozsa, Steiner, Herrmann, and Friedhofer are all, treated at length if in a rather peculiar order. The younger composers are represented in somewhat less detail though still adequately. A final chapter begins with a sympathetic account of Henry Mancini's influence and ends with praises for Lalo Schifrin that may raise some eyebrows.

Thomas is a skilled interviewer and editor. It is to his credit that the interlocking series of biographies also gives a lively and coherent account of Hollywood's changing musical scene. All the composers are articulate here, and some of them offer real surprises. Wait till you read Dimitri Tiomkin's plea for more quiet music and even silence in films! Or Lalo Schifrin's admiration for ALEXANDER NEVSKY and BEN-HUR!

Three of the composers are wisely allowed the space to give their own accounts of crucial areas. Ernest Gold is amazingly lucid and concise on the complex technical aspects of the medium. Laurence Rosenthal is briefly stimulating on the aesthetic of the sound track. Actually all the composers contribute to an ongoing discussion of film music theory. Thomas has arranged things so cleverly that certain themes (the relation of cinema to Wagnerian music-drama, for example) recur like leitmotifs throughout the book.

The third such special section is Miklos Rozsa's on historical films and their special problems. No one is better qualified to speak on the subject, and these pages are thoroughly fascinating. It must be admitted, however, that much of this material is already familiar. The words here are fresh and so is the information on the later films. But much has already appeared on record jackets, in Film Music Notes, in Films in Review, and sometimes in all three places.

Thomas's tone is enthusiastic throughout but usually within the bounds of taste. There is little of Page Cook's emotion, rhetoric, or pretentious jargon but - and this is the catch - there is little of Cook's genuine critical insight either. Thomas, in fact, usually keeps off the music entirely. This may be a blessing. When he does offer a purely musical comment he can be puzzling or worse. Alfred Newman's strings, he tells

us, had a "strikingly spiritual quality". "Conquest" is "a deft tribute to Erich Korngold". And so on. I am not arguing; for all I know, these oft-repeated statements may be perfectly true. But Thomas nowhere performs the critic's job of telling us where and why and how.

It is only with Korngold, however, that he really leaps the track. His announcement that ROBIN HOOD is the pluperfect (his italics) blend of image and music is merely unsubstantiated. After all, that was the score that first drew Thomas to film music as a child. (He is candid enough to give us that revealing bit of information in his introduction.) But when he says that "the love theme" (from THE SEA HAWK) is about as close as any composer has come to matching Wagner's Liebested," he is simply being absurd. That sort of thing does not help the cause.

There are other faults too, particularly a nostalgic, gossipy tone that sometimes pays more attention to movie stars than to movie music. Thus in the midst of an all too brief paragraph on Waxman's SUNSET BOULEVARD, Thomas pauses with absolutely stunning irrelevance to tell us about Gloria Swanson's private life! But far worse than this can be forgiven when our need for information is so great. Had Thomas only preserved a few interviews with Newman and Steiner we would all be in his debt. He has done much, much more, and we can all benefit from his work.

Clifford McCarty deserves praise too: he contributed the useful and accurate filmography of the twenty-four composers that closes the book. It is developed, by the way, from his own Film Composers in America which has recently been reprinted and updated. The "updating", unfortunately, has been limited to a list of academy award winners; the actual composer lists still don't go beyond 1953! Tony Thomas also offers a discography at the end of his book. It includes seventy-six composers from several countries and so is of more general use than the rest of the volume. This listing has its share of errors, and there are a great many typos here and elsewhere, but Music for the Movies deserves to have the future editions that will correct them.

HERRMANN IN LONDON by Ted Gilling:

A near capacity audience, full of enthusiasm, watched fifteen film extracts and heard two rare audio tracks interspersed with comments, anecdotes, and opinions from Bernard Herrmann. The clips included NORTH BY NORTHWEST (main titles), CITIZEN KANE (prologue, breakfast montage, singing lesson and opera, finale), THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS (last five minutes from the prayer scene to Eugene and Fanny in the hospital corridor), THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER (Jabez Stone's first encounter with the devil, the barn dance sequence), THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (entry of Klaatu and Gort, the sequence of the earth coming to a temporary standstill), MYSTERIOUS ISLAND (fight with the giant bird), PSYCHO (Norman Bates spying on Marion Crane, followed by the shower murder), FAHRENHEIT 451 (opening and book burning, snow scene and end title), ENDLESS NIGHT (main titles and opening scene). The tape sequences included an old recording of the vaudeville team known as the Two Black Crows which was originally intended to be played under Welles's ending for THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS. Herrmann accompanied this with a detailed description of the film's original ending. The other sound material was a special recording of "Pop Goes the Weasel" in which, for the first time, Herrmann superimposed four violin tracks to create the effect of Mr. Scratch's diabolical musical talents in THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER.

Some of the composer's more revealing comments:

"I've never met a producer who said "I've just finished a film and I don't need you'."

"Most of the film directors that I've had the good fortune to work with have regarded music as something that had to be created with the film. But I have also worked for people who regard music as the gift wrapping department."

"Hitchcock many times would call me and say, 'Do you feel you'll need music for this scene, because if you do I'll shoot it differently, giving you more elbow room'."

"In my mind, the opening scene of CITIZEN KANE needed a variant on the ancient hymn Dies Irae and seemed to me to suggest the subject of Kane which is 'all is vanity'.... At the premiere the audience was so bewildered at not having a main title, they shouted, 'Sound! Sound!'"

"I don't like music scores in films that bring attention to themselves. It's like the cameraman who works to show what a bright boy he is. There are people who make films that way but I can't stand them. I don't want to know there's a camera there; I don't want to know there's a composer there. It's the whole thing together that makes the film."

"Every composer must remember that the music must have a simplicity so that the ear and mind can grasp it the first time through."

"There are very precious, sophisticated composers who think it beneath them to write a film score, but of course they're never asked."

(Regarding the multiple violin tracks on THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER): "When we had the final track, I played it to Heifetz and told him we had engaged a brilliant young Hungarian to do it. He shouted, 'Quick! Quick! Let me meet him!' When we explained what it really was, he was so impressed with the technique that he recorded the Bach Double Violin Concerto playing both parts himself." (And with Franz Waxman conducting.)

"I'm against recording film music. Music is wedded to the film and it's born and dies with its life on the screen. I give way to do it, but by itself, it's quite different. If you write as a film composer, you accept that this is a form which demands this. I happen to think it's the only art in which the 21st century is going to be interested. They're not going to be interested in 20th century music or painting but they will be interested in our films."

"Today film music depends on having a pop song--nothing to do with the film or the actors, just a pop song.... I'll tell you what the film business has become: A patient goes to the doctor because he isn't well. That's what the music is - helping a picture. Then the patient gets well and he goes back to the doctor and says, 'I know you got me well, but you didn't make me rich!' Today, a composer must not only write a film score, he must make everybody rich. Unfortunately, I know nothing about that."

#### FRUM HUNGARY:

Curious about Rozsa's standing in his native land? These excerpts from the Budapest Daily News may shed some light. They are written by Rozsa's friend, Janos Sebestyen of the Hungarian Radio, Mr. Sebestyen is a harpsichordist who has adapted several of Rozsa's piano works to his instrument. He has also taped several interviews with the composer for the radio. These remarks (10 June 1973) were occasioned by the Budapest premiere of the Sinfonia Concertante and by the simultaneous opening of THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES there.

Miklos Rozsa is generally known as a Hollywood composer yet he spends most of his year on the Ligurian seaboard. He caught his first glimpse of the picturesque bay back in 1946, from a rail-car window, and fell in love with it. First he went to live at Rapallo, and later moved over to Santa Margherita. Here he lives, in a rented two-room cottage, from early spring till late autumn; and winter is just around the corner when he returns to his Hollywood villa, to rejoin his family—and his famed collection of pictures and his collection of rare Etruscan relics. It was on the Ligurian coast that he composed his concerto series....

Budapest critics have said of Rozsa that "he continues Kodaly's school". Yet Rozsa never studied with the late maestro. He was a very young man when he emigrated from Hungary and went to Leipzig for his studies. His earliest orchestral pieces were conducted in the thirties, by such greats as Bruno Walter and Pierre Monteux.

Rozsa could hardly wait for his M-G-M contract to run out. When that time came, he at last was able to cut himself loose, and for the last ten years has only taken on background music assignments that appealed to him very much. He devotes most of his time to writing orchestral music, chamber music, choral works. He often conducts programmes of his works in many parts of the globe.

Rozsa is extremely popular in the United States, and also in Europe, chiefly in London. His fans have set up Miklos Rozsa Societies in the U.S. and in Holland.

Despite his successes, Rozsa has never allowed himself to be carried away. A modest, usually tight-lipped person, he

dislikes talking about himself. When he went to live in Hollywood, the Movie City was living through its heyday; today Rozsa doesn't like it there. He despises the "rat-race" for money and fame that pervades life there - that is why he longs to go back to his Ligurian haunt. He has never been back in Hungary since 1931. Today? He feels he is not sufficiently known in his native land, where his works are seldom played. Yet in his heart he has stayed Hungarian. More than that, it is possible to detect Magyar-style motifs in the music of, for instance, BEN-HUR.

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#### LETTERS:

I got the YOUNG BESS (TV) tape and I love it. Now too, I appreciate John Fitzpatrick's article (Spring '72) even more, as it helped me to learn the score more quickly. Studying it in more detail, however, also pointed up a few minor points with which I would disagree, but the only one I will bother to mention is the reference to an "amazingly free passacaglia" in Henry VIII's death scene. To my ears, it is a little too free to be considered a passacaglia, since once the dialogue begins the ground bass disappears (although it returns later). Perhaps it is better called "passacgial" (?), as something which begins like a fugue but then develops into something else is called "fugal". Moot point, I admit. The undebatable fact is that the music is beautiful, well-written for the film, and altogether worth a modern recording.

Frank DeWald, Lansing MI.

Many thanks for the newsletters. I found them full of fascinating information. I look forward to future copies as I have long been a fan and collector of the music of Miklos Rozsa. Needless to say, it was a great pleasure to work with him on our new film. Once again Dr. Rozsa has come up with what I think is a most effective score.

It seems film music has been out of fashion for some years, having to give way to the horrible "beat" rhythms of so-called modern technique. But I think the trend is reversing as I see

the popularity of the new reissues and rerecordings by RCA of the old Korngold, Steiner, and Newman scores. It is most encouraging and a sure sign that taste is on its way back into favour.

Ray Harryhausen, London

We have known and admired Dr. Rozsa since he first came to the United States. He is not only a great composer and a great conductor but also a very great gentleman. We have never heard or seen him do any ungracious or unkind act.... 'We are delighted to have your interesting publications and send our sincere thanks and best wishes.

Louis and Annette Kaufman, LA.

John Fitzpatrick's summary of Rozsa's film music on discs was excellent, but I must beg to differ with some of his conclusions. For one thing, whether the narrator be Leo Genn or Sabu, the baby-talk commentary that obscures the colorful Rozsa scoring in the JUNGLE BOOK Suite is distracting, insulting, and valueless; how much more that music could be appreciated on its own. Similarly his statement (re LUST FOR LIFE) that "even the Frankenlanders" respond well is open to question; that soggy group of musicians has yet to record an assertive, powerful performance of anything. And while we miss the Cid's victory theme on his disc of the EL CID score, an equal or greater injustice was done by the rescoring of the final scene to eliminate the chorus.

Also, while I do not doubt the Ted Wick explanation of the origin of the SPELLBOUND Concerto, I do dispute Mr. Fitzpatrick's contention that "it is not a concerto at all". Granting that many different arrangements of the score have appeared under that title, according to A.S.C.A.P. there is a SPELLBOUND Concerto, formalized and published as such. It has always been my understanding that it is this official version that Pennario recorded on Capitol; what other musicians have done to it (or with it) under that title God only knows.

Adam Bonner, Los Angeles

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THE MRSSS MARCHES ON by Mark Koldys:

Reader response to the last offered MRSSS releases was somewhat disappointing, to say the least. But we were quite surprised to find many interested in ordering cassette tapes. Unfortunately, in most cases that interest did not go beyond the inquiry stage, and I can only presume that the reason for this is the fact that we ask a \$4 tape charge for one C-90 cassette for each two releases ordered. While it is true that cassette tapes of a comparable length can be obtained for considerably less than this \$4 figure, we have found that the added cost of procuring the finest chromium-dioxide tapes available is more than justified in the superior results these tapes provide. Less expensive tapes simply are too problem-prone and/or limited in fi.

We have received a number of suggestions regarding works that would be appreciated as MRSSS releases. We are always open to such ideas, and appreciate all that members have to offer. The three releases announced below are all the result of such suggestions. After all, by releasing items by request, we can be sure that at least somebody will be happy.

- WM-7: ROZSA: QUO VADIS? broadcast of soundtrack with dialogue excerpts (part one).
- WM-8; ROZSA: QUO VADIS? broadcast of soundtrack with dialogue excerpts (part two). MADAME BOVARY: Waltz; (transcribed for piano) Joseph Tura, piano
- WS-3: DELLO JOIO: Air Power Suites (from the scores for the documentary series AIR POWER); The Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy conducting (from a Columbia stereo LP).

Several members have written expressing the point of view that QUO VADIS? is Rozsa's "magnum opus" and that a tape of the complete score would be welcome. Our tape is that, and includes all of the scenes involving any music at all. It is complete beyond the usual TV broadcast in that it also includes the exit music not normally broadcast. Sonic quality has been re-equalized for best audio results. Due to the length of the score, it is necessary to present it in two installments; the second installment features an unusual

"filler". The Waltz from MADAME BOVARY has been performed in many bizarre interpretations, but Joseph Tura's virtuoso piano transcription may be the most interesting one yet.

The Columbia release of Dello Joio's classic AIR POWER score is not all that difficult to find, if you are willing to settle for a mono copy. Columbia apparently pressed very few stereo editions of this collector's item, and most of the copies still in circulation are mono. Stereo editions are so unknown that when we came across one in good shape with fine, shimmering stereo sound, we decided to follow one member's request and release it as one of our releases. The music is at times reminiscent of THE BLUE MAX, but is more squarely within the VICTORY AT SEA tradition, with a few intriguing pre-echoes of Goldsmith.

Those with a keen interest in Rozsa's total musical output will not want to miss our special WX series of tape releases. Information on these releases is available upon request; send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the address given at the end of the newsletter for full details.

Last but not least, we are offering a free-for-nothing bonus to anyone who sends in an order for a tape in any series. We assembled a special film music discography listing over 100 of the most representative and worthwhile film score discs that have been issued, giving composer, title of film, record and label number, and whether or not the recording is in stereo. We originally made up a goodly number of these to distribute to the audience of a radio program, but this audience turned out to be sparser than we had anticipated, and so we offer the remaining copies to MRSSS members and customers. It will be especially useful to the newer converts to film music, as it lists recordings that they otherwise might not know of, and helps them guide their initial purchases to those items most worthy, in the opinion of at least one collector.

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FILMUSIQUIZ #2 ANSWERS by Craig Reardon:

- (1) Bernard Herrmann: MYSTERIOUS ISLAND;
- (2) Max Steiner: THE ADVENTURES OF DON JUAN;
- (3) Miklos Rozsa: IVANHOE.

FILMUSIQUIZ #3 by Jeffrey Dane:

(Ed. note: Filmusiquizzes get tougher and tougher. Mr. Dane has submitted one that is so tough that it doesn't even contain any film music at all! Three selections, all from Rozsa's concert music, are involved. To be fair, we will tell you that Ex. #2 represents Mr. Dane's own notation of music that is not necessarily in such a format originally. Good luck!)

(1)  
Molto Tranquillo (♩ = ca. 50)

pp  
L.H. dolce  
dolcissimo e calando

(2)

mf

gva

27.

Ex. #2  
cont'd.

(3) Name two works in which the following figuration occurs:

MRS DIRECTORY

Ken Doeckel  
750 O'Farrell  
San Francisco  
CA 94109  
Inquiries, dues  
general business

John Fitzpatrick  
1489 Eigenmann  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, IN 47401  
overall policy, news-  
letter material, etc

Mark Koldys  
7545 Manor  
Dearborn, MI  
48126  
tape-  
recordings