

listeners' apprehension of plot in the face of episodic music-narrative genres which are in opposition to the continuity of unified, beginning-complication-denouement genres? Studies of "aberrant" films like *Sous les toits* may lead to interpretations of stage works such as Brecht-Weill theater, whose intent was, among other things, to defy and overthrow purportedly unified genres. (3) Those put off by the abundant, slippery, and exotic jargon of some brands of musical semiotics will appreciate *Unheard Melodies'* clear and accessible exposition and demonstration of basic principles of signification at work in a medium where the dual nature of the sign as envisioned by Saussurian linguistics lends itself to semiotic analysis. Gorbman's approaches to music-narrative interaction at many levels suggest new and interesting directions in semiotic analysis of opera, early Baroque oratorio, and other musical-dramatic productions which have resisted interpretation other than that of pitch structure.

Readers of *Unheard Melodies* will no doubt find other implications for further study and other theoretical points to engage, and it is one mark of a "good" book to call for elaboration and critical response. They will also find superb organization: varied redundancy, with departures from and returns to analytic examples, and tight integration, with summaries that begin and end chapters.

Don't be fooled by the gaudy pop cover. *Unheard Melodies* is a thoughtful, well written, scholarly book whose bibliography alone is worth the price of admission. Any study of film music, serious or tourist, should begin right here.

*Film Music I*. Edited and with an Introduction by Clifford McCarty. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989.

Reviewed by Ronald Rodman

Joining the growing corpus of literature on film music is *Film Music I*, a collection of articles providing a forum for important film-music issues and source materials. The articles, edited by Clifford McCarty, offer diverse perspectives on film music from the Twenties

to the present, while introducing the novice to basic terms and issues in film-music scholarship. McCarty states that the goal of the book is to continue the long-standing tradition of film music literature, which dates back to the early years of film, in such periodicals as *Film Music World*, *Modern Music*, *Films*, and *Film Music Notes*. The title of the volume and McCarty's introduction imply that this is the first of a continuing series of articles of "permanent interest" that will serve as an informative and entertaining historical resource.

McCarty presents the articles of the volume according to a historical chronology of film music. After H. Stephen Wright discusses research materials of film music and their accessibility, the book launches into the silent film era, progresses through sound films of the Thirties and beyond, then finishes with an article by television and film composer (and harmonica soloist!) Eddy Lawrence Manson. The subjects covered reveal the wide breadth and scope of this volume. Four articles are devoted to aspects of film-music history: Fred Steiner's "What Were Musicians Saying about Movie Music during the First Decade of Sound?," William Rosar's "Stravinsky and MGM," Richard Bush's "The Music of *Flash Gordon* and *Buck Rogers*," and Manson's "The Film Composer in Concert and the Concert Composer in Film." Three articles are interviews with or memoirs of film composers, including Rudy Behlmer's highly entertaining interview "Tumult, Battle and Blaze" with Gaylord Carter, "the Dean of theater organists." The two other articles are David Raksin's memoirs of his experiences as a film composer for Twentieth Century-Fox studios in the Thirties ("Holding a Nineteenth Century Pedal at Twentieth Century-Fox") and Leslie Zador's and Gregory Rose's 1970 interview with an irascible Bernard Herrmann. Two articles deal exclusively with theater organ playing, namely Behlmer's article cited above, and "Performing with Silent Films" by a well-known name in the midwest, Dennis James, who is now resident organist for the Ohio Theater in Columbus. Finally, two articles are devoted to analysis of film music: Kathryn Kalinak's "Max Steiner and the Classical Hollywood Film Score" and Steven Wescott's "Miklos Rozsa's *Ben Hur*."

Wright's "The Materials of Film Music: Their Nature and Accessibility" notes the problems in academic research of film music.

According to Wright, the main difficulty is the inaccessibility of original scores, many of which have been destroyed and many of which the producing studios will not release to the public. Wright provides helpful information on locations of film archives in the U.S., including collections at USC, UCLA, the University of Wyoming, Syracuse University, and several other institutions. He concludes with recommendations to facilitate the study of film music: 1) encourage composers to deposit their film scores in the Library of Congress; 2) catalog extant collections of film music; 3) preserve film-score materials through means such as microfilming; 4) create a national union catalog of film music; and 5) inform studio music libraries of the historical significance of their own holdings.

One of the most entertaining articles in the collection is Behlmer's interview of Gaylord Carter, "Tumult, Battle and Blaze: Looking Back on the 1920's-and-Since with Gaylord Carter, the Dean of Theater Organists." Behlmer, a lecturer in film studies at UCLA, conducted the interview of an enthusiastic Carter in 1986 and 1987. The article bristles with anecdotes and gives the reader a sense of what it was like to be a theater musician in the Twenties. Carter explains the mechanics of theater organs and organ playing, and recounts his experiences as organist for the Million Dollar Theater in Los Angeles during the Twenties and Thirties. He also describes the process of score synchronization (with and without a rheostat), the differences between film composing and film-score compiling, and the "right" and "wrong" ways to utilize "Mickey Mousing" (the musical imitation of physical gesture).

In the second article on theater organ playing, Dennis James recalls his experiences as a theater organist for film revivals in the Seventies and Eighties. James documents his performance practices of film editing and of devising "sight cues" and "structure cues" for various scenes in silent films. James reveals his bias for silent films by ending his article with a quote attributed to Mary Pickford: "When films learned to talk, they took a giant step backward."

Fred Steiner's article, "What Were Musicians Saying about Movie Music during the First Decade of Sound?: A Symposium of Selected Writings," is a valuable resource for books and periodicals on film music published in the Thirties. Steiner considers the two primary issues of film music at that time to have been: 1) composers'

and producers' attitudes toward sound in film, and 2) the quest for a formulation of theoretical and aesthetic principles of film music. Concerning the advent of sound in film, Steiner characterizes musicians as enthusiastic while producers were skeptical. The bulk of the article deals with attempts to formulate a film aesthetic in the Thirties. One of the main issues was whether music should be "synchronized" to the visual action or whether it should have its own form running parallel to the action. A great many prominent composers, including Virgil Thomson, George Antheil, and Maurice Jaubert, advocated the latter position. This approach to film music, which emphasized musical autonomy, ran counter to what many other film composers, such as Max Steiner, were doing in the Thirties.

William Rosar's "Stravinsky and MGM" adds an interesting biographical footnote to the life of Stravinsky. The episode revolves around Stravinsky's visit to MGM studios during his American tour of 1935. According to Rosar, Stravinsky was received with a mixture of awe and disinterest by film-music composers in Hollywood. Stravinsky expressed his own disinterest in film music (he called it "monkey business"), but made a bid for a film at MGM. Though MGM chief L.B. Mayer regarded Stravinsky as "the greatest composer in the world" (at least to Stravinsky's face) he would not pay Stravinsky's exorbitant fee nor consent to a one-year waiting period for the score. As a result, a film score by Stravinsky never materialized.

One analysis of a film score is presented by Kathryn Kalinak in her "Max Steiner and the Classical Hollywood Film Score: An Analysis of *The Informer*." The analysis consists of a narrative on the role of Steiner's music in the film. She concentrates primarily on the significance of leitmotifs to the dramatic action, but also notes conventions in film music such as the role of music in conveying internal thought and spoken word, "Mickey Mousing," the use of digetic and non-digetic music, and the importance of the *mise en scène* (the total production). Her discussion includes provocative commentary on the sexist use of jazz, ragtime, and blues in Hollywood's portrayal of immoral women:

Like the Hollywood film itself, which created an image of woman as the projection of its own (male) fear and desire, the Hollywood film score collaborated in the dominant ideology which punished women for their sexuality. The display of female sexuality was characterized by a nucleus of musical practices that carried indecent or shady implications through an association with so-called decadent forms such as jazz, the blues and ragtime; a predominance of woodwinds and brasses, particularly saxophones and muted horns. . . . (p.129)

Richard Bush's "The Music of *Flash Gordon* and *Buck Rogers*" traces the sources of the compilation scores for both the *Flash Gordon* and *Buck Rogers* serials. The practice of compiling scores rather than composing new music was common especially to "B" movies at that time. Actually, only the main title of the *Flash Gordon* series was newly composed; the rest of the music comes from such films as the *Werewolf of London* and the *Bride of Frankenstein*. Cue sheets are illustrated in an appendix to the article, and a page of the manuscript to *Werewolf of London* is also provided.

"Holding a Nineteenth Century Pedal at Twentieth Century-Fox" provides an entertaining memoir of the street-wise film scorer, David Raksin. He recounts his experiences in "team scoring" under Twentieth Century-Fox musical directors Lou Silvers and Alfred Newman. According to Raksin, the process was a hectic mix of committee meetings and synchronization rehearsals, which almost always resulted, quite miraculously, in good music. Raksin credits film music successes to the extraordinary talents of the composers and scorers, not to the long hours and tight budgets.

Like Kalinak's, Wescott's article, on Rozsa's score to *Ben Hur*, is a narrative analysis of recurring leitmotifs. Wescott successfully delineates the interaction between "Roman" music and "Judaic" music in the film, and characterizes each with a discussion of their respective musical parameters. The "Roman" music utilizes Phrygian and Mixolydian modes, contains regular (even unrelenting) four-bar phrase structure and dotted, martial rhythms. The "Judaic" music, on the other hand, utilizes "softer" modes such as

Dorian and Aeolian, and contains more “spun-out” phrases and smoother rhythms. Wescott carefully traces themes and motives through the film as they apply to characters, locations, and situations.

Zador’s and Rose’s interview with Bernard Herrmann took place in 1970 during an apparently stressful period in Herrmann’s career. Herrmann spends most of the interview bemoaning the state of film music at that time and launches into diatribes against film composers whom he considers “amateurs.” (His attack against Maurice Jarre and the score of *Lawrence of Arabia* sparked a published response from Jarre and orchestrator Gerard Schurmann.) An interesting moment in the interview occurs when Herrmann asserts that composing for film is just like composing for any other medium:

. . . I mean these composers that seem to think writing a film and writing something else is different. It isn’t different. It’s all the same. But to them it’s not the same because they’re not composers at all (p. 214).

Herrmann’s view runs contrary to that of Eddy Lawrence Manson, who points out the differences between film composing and composing for other media. Manson’s article completes the volume with enlightening remarks on film composition, by notables such as Paul Chihara, Lalo Schifrin, Quincy Jones, Elmer Bernstein, Jerry Goldsmith, and others. Unlike Herrmann, Manson says that a successful film composer is educated by a combination of “the street and school,” meaning that while formal musical training benefits the film composer, one must also draw from other sources, such as pop music, to reinforce certain dramatic aspects of a film. Manson also discusses the role of traditional art-music forms and processes in film scoring, citing the use of theme-and-variations and fugue in a couple of scores. He claims that while conventional forms work in some situations, a film composer is better off relying on “abstract” or non-traditional forms. He concludes that although music must not disrupt the dramatic action of the film, the best film scores are written to be listened to.

Because this collection of essays contains so much valuable information on the history and analysis of film music, it would be useful for a film studies course as well as for private study. But because of the lack of clear, concise organization of terms and concepts, it may be more valuable as a supplemental reference, not the primary text, for a film course. As a compendium of well-written articles dealing with a wide range of issues in film music, the book is especially useful to serious film scholars.

One such issue: Is film composing different than composing for other media? Bernard Herrmann and Eddy Manson (and the composers he cites) disagree. Another issue: Should film music synchronize with the dramatic action on the screen? Max Steiner and Miklos Rozsa practiced synchronization, but other film composers railed against it. Still another issue: Was setting live music to silent films a more satisfying experience than recording soundtracks to sound films? Gaylord Carter and Dennis James seem to think so, while Fred Steiner, Kathryn Kalinak, and Steven Wescott point out the aesthetic challenges facing composers of sound films.

For the music theory discipline, another issue looms: Despite Kalinak's and Wescott's informative analyses, can one develop an analytical methodology that relies less on narrative and the tracking of leitmotifs and more on the overall musical processes? If this volume serves no other purpose, the articles in it reveal that the study of film music holds the potential of a dynamic new field of research. The fact that film music of the twentieth century may carry as much, if not more, research potential as opera of the nineteenth century should compel theorists and musicologists alike to explore this musical genre.