

Film Score Blogs by Bill Wrobel

Wednesday, September 29, 2004 7:00 pm [Blog #1]

Inspired by Terry Teachout's blog (<http://www.artsjournal.com/aboutlastnight/>) and other blogs, I decided to initiate my own weblog centering primarily on film music, especially film music research (which is what I like to do! :). In fact, I was researching a fascinating film score at USC/Warner Bros. Archives today. More on that later.

As a side note, so to speak, I suppose if there are any readers of this blog (and my "rundowns" main feature) who wish to comment on something or to ask me a question, feel free to e-mail me as given on Front page of the Film Score Rundowns site where this weblog is domiciled. I will see what I can do with such comments and questions. Questions can be asked of astrology as well since I have started to submit "Off Topic" astrological subjects (basically to disseminate Dr. Zipporah Dobyns astrological information). Zip passed away over a year ago, and her daughter (Maritha) allowed me to provide the astrological sessions I attended as a means to perpetuate her legacy and valuable (insightful and helpful) knowledge of astrology. I practice astrology as well but not as a living obviously (I've made my money being a letter carrier for the United States Postal Service for the last 20 years) but as a sideline non-profit tool of understanding (monetarily it's N/A but profitable in terms of psychological gain).

So I may occasionally discuss astrology as the subject spontaneous warrants it, and other non- film music matters at times. I just in fact ran up a chart of a fellow researcher at the Warner Bros. archives who was interested in seeing his chart. I also ran his five-page asteroids list (over 1000 asteroids) that I gave him today. He's a dedicated scholar (retired teacher) who is researching the consummate character actor, Claude Rains. At any rate, film music will be the dominant theme of discussion.

Film music is the #1 subject because it is my first and ruling love. I remember how I liked the old golden age of tv westerns such as *Have Gun, Will Travel* and *Gunsmoke* that I watched when I was a kid. HGWT premiered in 1957 when I was seven years old, and I definitely enjoyed the show. I vaguely recall being impressed by the music (especially the Bernard Herrmann musical clips) but I was not aware of his name back then. I just instinctively liked the music tied with the drama of the westerns. Of course, even before that I loved the *Superman* tv series starring George Reeves. And I was always exciting by the *Superman* March and especially the flying music. Leon Klatzkin is credited for that specific music, but I rather doubt that he actually composed it (but we may never know for sure). I particularly enjoyed the music used in the 1953-54 2nd season (still black and white) that utilized the stock music of English composers. Francis, Day & Hunter and also Paxton were the publishers and the music was licensed for "world-wide tv." I especially liked (as I would later discover in my research) the "Crime Doesn't Pay" cue by Jack Beaver, and the very Herrmannesque "Tell-Tale Heart" cue by John Foulds. "Eerie Night" by F. G. Charrosin was also excellent. "Artic Wastes" by Jack Brown and "Dagger in the Dark" by Ronald Hanmer are also memorable. When you're a kid, you are highly impressionable, and the stage was set for later film music

research because of my early introduction to such dramatic and memorable background underscore. I needed to satisfy my curiosity!

So, as soon as I found out sometime in 1981 (I believe that's the year or maybe 1982) by David Raksin (he tipped me off) that the Herrmann scores were now available for research at UC Santa Barbara, I was off and running! I was the first researcher to bug Martin Silver consistently about seeing those scores, and hand-copying them. I usually had to rent a car each time and drive up there (about a 135 trip). He's a fine man, but I think he was a bit suspicious of me, wondering why I was so interested in his music! I cracked up afterward when he asked me early on, "Can you even read music?" I could (I took classes at LBCC and also self-taught myself), but it was rudimentary compared to now with my exposure to many hundreds of film and tv scores over the last 22 or 23 years. However, it was my early exposure to Herrmann's music that really started to educate me. I was learning from a master composer, a composer whose music I really loved.

I believe I was really first conscious of his music (unconsciously aware in the mid-Fifties) when I saw *Mysterious Island* at the local theatre in west Syracuse on Genesee Street across the street from the reservoir. I was *really* impressed by the score. By the time *Jason & the Argonauts* was released, I was already preparing myself, getting all excited taking the bus downtown Syracuse to see the movie on I believe the actual Friday release day. I wasn't disappointed!

So, slowly over the years, I worked on practically all of the Herrmann scores there at UCSB. Periodically, however, I return now and then to continue my research. For example, I finished my hand copying of his unknown tv score for Universal-Revue. I cannot pin it down. It is likely to be a mystery type of score that was never used. It's not *Kraft Suspense Theatre* to my knowledge, nor the *Bob Hope Chrysler Theatre*. If I ever get a chance to benignly raid the music vaults of Universal Studios (so far for many years it's been a firm policy of being researcher-unfriendly!), then perhaps I will be able to identify it with cross-referencing to all the cue sheets.

In 1989 I started my next major chapter of film music research at USC/Warner Bros. Archives (where Leith Adams was the curator) and also at UCLA Music Library Special Collections where the CBS Inventory # 1 (nearly a thousand boxes) were just available for research. Steve Fry was the friendly and ever-smiling librarian who helped me there at UCLA. He had written a preliminary inventory that was certainly not complete but did provide a dozen or more of Herrmann titles (*Twilight Zone* scores, etc) specifically located in certain numbered boxes. So I went to work! Fortunately, in the first months at least (or first year) it was possible to xerox the scores since Harry Heitzer provided permission for UCLA to do so. But eventually UCLA changed its policy and decided not to allow free and open Xeroxing for research purposes. So, unless you received specific permission in writing from CBS, you needed to hand-copy the music if you wanted a reference copy. From my standpoint that was fine because it's an excellent method of learning. I must've been a scribe-monk in a past life hand-copying pre-Renaissance material since I can do it quickly and tirelessly. It's easier to xerox of course

and I've done so many times (especially the real "notey" cues or sections of cues) at Warner Bros where I received permission to xerox. However, you actually do learn more when you laboriously write it down. It literally "soaks in" and becomes part of your subconscious.

Most people who enjoy, say, Herrmann's music simply want to hear it, perhaps buy a cd to play over and over again. I, on the other hand, was never satisfied with that. Herrmann's music was like, as an analogy, a delicious apple pie cooked by dear old mom. Of course I wanted to eat that pie! More than that immediate gratification, I really wanted to know how Mom (Herrmann) *cooked* that delicious apple pie! I wanted the recipe! And the recipe is the written score itself. The gain is that I have a deeper knowledge of how he constructed those sounds as an artist-craftsman. And the information would help me in learning composition/orchestration skills for my own music.

By, oh, at least 1994 (if not before) I was already starting to randomly have CBS boxes pulled for me at UCLA. I wanted to see if there was other Herrmann treasures buried (un-inventoried) in those thousand boxes somewhere. Indeed yes! Many scores were already inventoried as mentioned earlier (such as the full Box 187 that contains "American Trilogy" and so forth) but many scores were not identified. Part of the reason is that nobody knew the composer's handwriting as I did (in scores where he did not write his name). But most scores were named or signed by Herrmann such as "House on K Street" and "Police Force" that somehow escaped the notice of the librarian. This is understandable since there was such a mix-and-match variety in each separate box oftentimes. One cue on top of the bundle may be by Rene Garriquenc, and the next one by Fred Steiner, and the next one by Herrmann, and so forth! So by at least 1994 thru 1996 I already found most of the Herrmann cues. I believe I have the inventory somewhere on this FSR website. I also found the missing four *Crime Classics* (48 or so that are listed in another Herrmann collection at UCLA) found in the CBS Collection 072. I believe they are "The Seven layered Arsenic Cake of Madame LaFarge," "Billy Bonny Bloodletter," "Robby Boy Balfour" and "Cesare.." (something or other!). CBS Box # 2 actually starts off with the formerly un-inventoried Herrmann cues that I discovered. Fortunately this was so because I started in order with Box # 1! I believe that box had most of the "Indian Suite" cues. Then Box # 5 had "Western Saga" and "Police Force."

There are still some missing Herrmann scores such as most of *Collector's Item* and also that *Rawhide* episode (and so forth). Hopefully they will be found in time.

Naturally I focused on other composers besides Herrmann. My next ruling love was Max Steiner's music, so Leith pulled many scores for me initially. I believe I started with *Lion & the Horse* but I cannot remember precisely. I may have started with one of my favorite B- western scores (and movies) *The Boy From Oklahoma*. I would hand-copy the less-notey cues, and have xeroxed the "busy" cues. Also I worked on Korngold's music, and Kaper's *Them* and a host of other scores and composers. I've probably researched at least 40 Steiner scores—maybe 45! The earliest one was *The Charge of the*

Light Brigade and also *Gold Is Where You Find It*. Generally I did not focus on the earliest scores for Warner Bros. Two scores I researched were Columbia Pictures scores: *Violent Men* and *The Caine Mutiny*. I studied them at the studio. At Disney I worked on *Those Calloways*. Dominic Fidelibus there was quite helpful! I also worked on Disney's *Black Hole* (John Barry) and a few Goldsmith scores, etc. Recently (a year or two ago) there I worked on *Sleeping Beauty* and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. I wanted to see that score because at the time I was starting my own Herrmannesque score for that movie. I had completed my Herrmannesque score to Hitchcock's *The Birds* but never continued on *Leagues* beyond the Main Title and a few sketch notes for subsequent cues. Perhaps soon!

[9:00 pm] I'm recording *The Bachelor* show on ABC for Susan. I managed to record the last half hour to *Lost* for her as well. I'm not too interested in that show, or the music.

Now: Today was a fruitful research day at Warner Bros. Archives. As usual, the 110 Freeway clogs up at the 105 interchange just south of Manchester. So, as usual, I got off on Manchester. Turn left, then turn right on La Cienega and travel 3 miles or so to Exposition to the archives at the Hoffman Building. Haden is the relatively new competent curator there. On Tuesday he pulled *The Wrong Man* for me since I needed to finish my research on that score (cues I missed in the past there and originally at UCSB many years ago). Interestingly, the original autograph ink score is held there at Warner Bros. Archives. Normally Herrmann succeeded in taking his scores home with him, but this time W/B had them! I just posted a few days ago on Talking Herrmann about the new dvd release of the movie:
<http://zarniwoop.intermedia.uib.no/talking/view.cgi?forum=thGeneral&topic=1804>

Just copy and paste it.

At yesterday's follow-up post, I wrote:

"I wonder if anybody caught the joke (or hint) that Hitchcock pulled on the audience? No one's ever mentioned it to my knowledge. Well, go to the dvd Chapter 14 at the 1:39 point. This is the scene where Manny and the rest of the bunch of innocents are driven to prison. This was supposed to be the "Handcuffs" cue that Herrmann wrote but was never used. At the 1:39 point, some prisoners are disembarking the jail truck before Manny. Guess who that guy is with the hat on--the tall, lean guy? It's none other than the same fella who resembled Manny and who was caught at the end of the movie!!"

I wonder if anybody else ever caught that in the past? Apparently Hitch had a great sense of humor! But I believe that a writer of Hitchcock films did comment on it...[After word: I found out that it was Bill Krohn who observed it in his book, "Hitchcock At Work"]

At any rate, back to W/B Archives: I also yesterday looked at the beginning cues for the Any Griffith vehicle *No Time For Sergeants*. It's a delightful and playful Main Title (also called "Hoedown"—as in Country Bumkin Hoedown) that Ray Heindorf

composed along with un-credited David Buttolph. Buttolph also did other cues including “Parachute Jump” and “G I Airmen.” There are also cues by Paul Weeks including “Main Events” and “Cross Country.” I am not familiar with his name. Buttolph of course did the excellent score for the Harryhausen film for Warners titled *Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*. I wonder if they were contemplating the title “Beast From 20,000 Leagues” ?? or “Beast Beneath the 12 Mile Reef” !

Today I primarily worked on Bernhard Kaun’s excellent score for the Humphrey Bogart film, *Black Legion*. Such intricate and sensitive and dramatically appealing craftsman work he did! Stylistically he has similarities or musical sensibilities to Herrmann, Korngold, and (still trying to figure it out). He is not a completely (or near-completely) “mood player” or mood composer as Herrmann, nor is he so melody driven and “catch the action” player as Korngold (and certainly Steiner who is typecast as a “mickey-mousing” composer!). Great nuance in *Black Legion* and notey articulation and wonderful instrumentation colors or combinations. Just starting with his “Main Title” on Bar 2 you find this cascading wave of dynamic ever-building pyramid of 16th note figures combined with 8th figures and other figurations. It’s quite impressive to hear, first of all, and impressive to see on the page. The three-note dark motif that opens the cue in the first two bars is rather Herrmannesque, but then the rapid figurations following are quite Korngoldian! He was a superbly competent and trained composer and orchestrator. I managed to hand-copy the copy “Main Title” cue of 5 pages (19 bars).

Jackson did the “March of Time Sequence” cue but I don’t remember hearing this in the movie. I’ll check. The next Kaun cue after the Main title comes in Reel 4 (a long lapse between music) when Bogey takes the solemn oath of the Black Legion (in effect the black-robed KKK). The three-note motif returns played by the bassoons and trombones, then joined in Bars 3-4 with the horns, etc. I was able to work a bit on most of the score. Cue 16684 (Reel 5/1) comes soon after the oath scene that opens with the furiously driving Black legion car “3” triplet 16th figures building up as a rapid pyramid build. First the VC (celli) play. Top line VC play *mf* small octave C#-D-C# “2” triplet value 16ths (connected by two crossbeams) to Bb-A-Bb 16ths. Repeat same bar and next two bars, while bottom line VC play Bb-Cb-Bb to G-F#-G figures. After a quarter rest (in 2/4 time) viole (and 2 clarinets and bass clarinets) join in on that pattern. The top line plays small octave (see VC). In Bar 2, violins join in (and oboes). Etc. he repeated this overall pattern in subsequent cues when the Black Legion is out to terrorize people they don’t like!

Now: After noon sometime, a gentleman showed up to do research. Apparently he is involved with the Paramount/John Wayne productions deal to release THE HIGH & THE MIGHTY on dvd next year. I showered praises on that long-awaited project, and we very briefly discussed the music by Tiomkin before he settled down to look at legal papers and other documents about the movie. I suggested to him that besides an isolated stereo music track on the dvd (not likely) that they arrange to have someone discuss the music in a documentary (likely) and even have a separate music commentary feature-length (not likely but they’re thinking of it). They haven’t figured out who the likely candidates are who might be involved in the music subject, so I made some suggestions

of other people. I told him I was a long-time film music researcher but I only looked at H & M once, by accident (a Main title adaptation was available at the Reading Room at Doheny Library 10 years ago or more and I worked on it a bit). The researcher/representative inspired me to have the score pulled for me tomorrow (Thursday). I was planning to do Steiner's *Desperate Journey* (I may still do a few beginning cues of it) but I'd prefer to explore Tiomkin's score. Except for its wonderful Main Title and a few other cues, it is not my favorite Tiomkin score. It gets rather overbearing at times! I prefer *Old Man & The Sea* and *Guns of Navarone* and *Fall of the Roman Empire* and *The Command*. I had originally thought of doing some of Steiner's *A Stolen Life* tomorrow, but that won't happen now!

[10:04] Just received an e-mail from Don reminding me that:
"Sat Oct 2 at 7:30 p.m. Chinatown (1974)
Robert Towne award-winning screenwriter, introduces film with remarks at 7:30 p.m. followed immediately by film screening at The Warner Grand Theatre, 478 W 6th Street, San Pedro"

Susan (also named "Stephanie" for years as a secondary name!) and I may go to Ojai that day, so I'm not sure if we can make it back in time to experience the event.

I attempted to talk with Ned at USC Cinema & Television Library yesterday but he wasn't in yet before I had to get to Warner Bros. Archives opening at 10 am. I wanted to find out what he knows about the Mischa Bakaleinikoff (did I spell that right?!) Collection there, and also about the Chuck Connors Collection that houses scores of *The Rifleman* tv show. I wanted to know if the full scores were there.

On Friday I plan to return to UCLA to resume my research on Rozsa's full score to *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid*. It's quite a rare opportunity to research a Universal score, let alone a Rozsa score. All of his full scores composed for MGM were dumped in a landfill back in the late Sixties! I was there (at UCLA, not the landfill) last Friday and also this Monday. I worked on Mancini's *Charade* and *Peter Gunn* and also Malcolm Arnold's *Cowboy in Africa* (aka *Africa—Texas Style!*).

Next week I am not sure what I will do for music research. It's not scheduled. I may attempt to visit Columbia/Sony again to resume my research on *Lawrence of Arabia* and maybe Rozsa's *Sahara* or ????. I would love to see if I can get into Paramount to finally research the only Herrmann feature film score that I never had the opportunity to study: Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. I will attempt it. I could contact Universal too but there's one chance in a million (or billion) that's I'll be able to get in. I could also visit the Margaret Herrick library and study scores there (the Goldsmith sketches are there, and other treasures).

All right, time for bed. I was meaning to start this blog for the last week, and finally I got the time and motivation to do it tonight. I do not plan to write a blog entry every evening of course, or certainly not at this length! I just poured myself a tiny glass of Warre's Ruby Port wine (from Trader Joes) and will perhaps surf the web for a few

minutes. Tomorrow is the first debates for Bush-Kerry. I may listen in but I rather doubt if Kerry will win now. I'm far more interested in he Vice-Presidential debate coming up. I've been listening to KPFK on FM 90.7 on my trips to and from the archives. Interesting "leftist" guests. KPFK is the only "left" station left (as they advertise!).

Good night!
