

Film Score Blogs [Blog # 23]
Monday, September 5 at 9:21 pm]

Commence Monday, August 29, 2005 at 9:17 am:

[New of the day: Hurricane Katrina (category 5) slammed into New Orleans and Mobile this morning. Fortunately, so far, the damage is not “catastrophic” as feared]

This particular blog could justifiably be called the “Forbidden Planet” blog since it revolves, like the planet Altair, almost exclusively around that 1956 movie.

Specifically, it revolves around the newly released Scarecrow Press book by James Wierzbicki, Louis and Bebe Barron’s FORBIDDEN PLANET: Film Score Guide No. 4. James was the contact (Associate) Editor of my paper, “Self-Borrowing in the Music of Bernard Herrmann,” published in the special Herrmann double issue of *Journal of Film Music* 2 (2003).

Yesterday (Sunday) I submitted my long review of the book at the Talking Herrmann discussion board. It was in two parts because the entire review was too large for a single submission. Fortunately I had written my four and a half page review as a Word doc (as I do for these blogs and rundowns), so I did not lose my data. A day or two before, I also submitted to Talking Herrmann my review of Film Score Guide No. 5: Bernard Herrmann’s The Ghost and Mrs. Muir by David Cooper. I will paste these two reviews below in case readers of these blogs do not frequent the Talking Herrmann site. After all, I am sure there are people who do not care for Herrmann’s music and hence have no interest to visit Talking Herrmann! And I doubt more than fifty people or so will read the review(s). I may edit and/or expand on the original review:

... I already discussed in Talking Herrmann about how I received three Film Score Guides from Scarecrow Press, including David Cooper’s comprehensive analysis of GHOST & MRS MUIR, and Janet Halfyard’s “Danny Elfman’s BATMAN” (Guide No. 2). I have yet to thoroughly read Janet’s analysis but am looking forward to it.

Yesterday I finished nearly all of Wierzbicki’s highly readable work; that is, you will not be burdened by excessive musicological jargon. It is an entertaining and informative read. I liked the book! In certain terms, it is an experimental analysis, just as the Barron score is an experimental, unusual score for Hollywood back in that Golden Age years. I recommend that you buy the book if you like the movie and the score, and if you have that innate curiosity to learn more about it (from Wierzbicki’s perspective and from culled data from Bebe Barron and others). The book is “something different” (again, just as the score itself and the feature film).

While I enjoyed the book, and recommend it, I must also say that it can be a rather frustrating book at times. It’s a mixed picture. For one thing, it’s what can be termed a good *speculative* analysis; that is, there is *no* written score to analyze (unlike, say, the Herrmann analysis of *GHOST & MRS MUIR* that has a definite written score any researcher can view). This book is departure from the norm. I was actually quite surprised when I first found out that Kate Daubney, editor of the Scarecrow series of Film Score Guides would ok the publication of this analysis (although I was quite pleased). After all, it would seem highly unlikely that this in-depth analysis of, in effect, a non-film score (no written score) in a “Film Score Guide” would ever manifest, but it did! Its manifestation

was rather low on the (conventional) probability scale. I think it was very good strategy to do this since it will attract curiosity seekers just as myself. I do not think (I hope I'm wrong) it will sell as well as, say, Cooper's *GHOST & MRS. MUIR* (since it is not a mainstream written score analysis), but its existence and availability certainly got my attention enough that I would put my money down to get a copy. I was more interested in first reading Cooper's book, that is, but I was definitely more interested in then reading Wierzbicki's book before the *BATMAN* analysis.

So Wierzbicki had to base his observations and conclusions "entirely on aural experience" (page 65). Again, there is no objective written score to read, although there is an objective soundtrack album to listen to. I suspect James has the aptitude of perfect pitch or very high pitch discrimination (and good ear training) Back in 1972 I had my aptitudes tested at the esteemed Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation in New York City, and my "Pitch Discrimination" aptitude was a B or average, so I could never successfully attempt to do what James did for his book. This aptitude, they say, "seems more than music, almost a niceness of sense perception." It is used especially by violinists and singers (but not as much by pianists). Fortunately I have an "A" on the aptitude of Tonal Memory so I have a "good ear" for melodies remembrance, and so forth.

Perhaps helped by this aptitude, Wierzbicki became a "pattern-maker" in this book analysis or, more accurately, a "pattern-decipherer." He would in Chapter 4 make written transcriptions or versions of the audio. With great pitch discrimination, I would assume he could do an excellent job of putting-to-paper elusive sounds that can be rather hard to pin down (especially electronically generated weird sounds, I would think). That is why I earlier said it was a good "speculative" analysis because I think there is room for doubt in some of the transcriptions, making it debatable (not beyond a reasonable doubt). It would be a personal "aural" (still somewhat subjective) experience—unlike a written score that will be exactly the same seen by anyone (though perhaps widely "interpreted" differently!). The author may feel quite sure about some of the published transcription examples but I, as a reader, did not feel as sure in some instances (although I was always fascinated in seeing those written versions).

For example, the opening 16 seconds of the Main Titles (page 66) was given a one-line (one staff) treatment. It shows the Line 3 Db whole note "flute" tone tied to a half note down to Line 2 Bb up to Line 3 E quarter notes down to Line 2 C whole note followed by "bell" tones at about the :12 point of Line 1 Eb quarter note to C quarter note tied to "3" triplet value 8th to C-C triplet 8ths (all three are crossbeam connected) to same middle C whole note. Well, I listened to the track on the dvd (I still have to find a copy of the cd) and I did not come to the same assessment of the sounds (as transcribed), especially towards the end of this bit with the "bell" tones and the triplet figure. I heard more than a triplet series of notes, perhaps double that number. Even with my average pitch discrimination, I didn't think the initial Db high tone was exactly on the mark. Could it have been the Gb (F#) tone? I must say, however, that the book stimulated me to go to my old Casio sampler and I had fun "playing" with the various transcription examples!

I think James was pretty well on the mark with the transcription example (Figure 4.11, page 85) of "Robby, the Cook, and 60 Gallons of Booze." It was fun simulating this series of notes. There is of course no meter designation (like 4/4) although I felt initially

there was a 5/4 pattern (if I projected my own “pattern-making” tendency!) but with each “4” being given a triplet subdivision or triplet value (as James did when he started at the :04 point). I can imagine a composer conventionally using a “comical” bassoon for this sequence, followed at :12 or :13 with the comical solo trombone for the second timbre sequence. James had a triplet value quarter rest to Line 1 G triplet value 8th up to A triplet value quarter note back to G 8th up to Bb quarter note back to G 8th (followed by an 8th rest) to B down to G 16ths (16th rest following) to Bb 8th down to G 16th, and so forth. I experimented with this on my Casio (“Music Box” stop and other electronic-sounding stops). It sounded good, although I experimented with another sequence of notes starting on A to B to C, and so forth.

At any rate, the feeling I got with this kind of analysis with no universally agreed-upon referent (a written score) that it was could become a case of differing opinions on “consensual” reality. Put differently, I may be holding what I think is a small orange, but you come along and say it a lemon! There is no consensual reality or agreement. So the danger is it becoming an occasionally confusing, even frustrating, experience. It opens up the likelihood of readers saying politely, “Well, I beg to differ!” Once again, I need to find the cd. I wonder if I can conveniently find it locally at Tower Records? I have the dvd (and vhs) video, and I believe most people will have THAT has a reference source instead of the cd, although James uses the cd as the reference source (understandably since it is in stereo, more clearly heard, and so on). But this too can be frustrating. I would’ve liked the dvd also used as a timing marker reference, especially in noting precise differences in the feature film music and the cd version music. It would’ve been interesting if the book came with a cd of the music attached, and just adding another \$13 or so for the item! This has been done before; for example, “Film Music Screencraft” by Mark Russell and James Young from Focal Press. It was a big coffee table book I bought at USC five years ago for \$44.99. It was 192 pages in length, had lots of photos, and many written score reproductions. Very nice!

So Wierzbicki did a fine job in his attempt to decipher and musically intellectualize and describe what essentially is a listening experience. Chapter 1 is “Origins and Connections,” and quite informative. Even more interesting is Chapter 2’s “Compositional Techniques” that more squarely discusses the phenomenon of electronic music. Chapter 3 is a very nice read, “Historical and Critical Contexts.” My only gripe is that it did not provide any interview of Bebe Barron. I know Louis passed away, but isn’t she in good enough health these days to allow an in-depth interview? A perceptive interview discussing the topics of the book (methodology of how the score was done, etc) would’ve been an invaluable part of the “historical” context, an important document (much as the Zador interview with Herrmann proved quite illuminating ay times). In the Preface (page xii), James wrote, “I am also indebted to Bebe Barron, who graciously responded to requests for information regarding compositional processes...” Then later on in the “Conclusion” section of Chapter 4 (“The Music”), he wrote, “One can speculate as to whether or not the Barrons had such ideas in mind when they first created their music for FORBIDDEN PLANET and, later, when they compiled the soundtrack album. There is no evidence, however, that they did.” Well, if she had given information to the author as alluded to in the preface, why must there be a “speculation” involved? Didn’t she clarify such points? Or did she simply forget? This is confusing to me, as a reader. That is why I wish a lengthy interview was included that would precisely discuss such

points regarding working methods, intents, and so forth. It seems like a missed opportunity and would've increased the importance of this book in terms of including a historical document (in-depth interview). It's hard enough to independently decipher the "inner order" of events or actions or intent of another person/composer, but it is perhaps made a bit easier if you have the opportunity to interview the person and more directly ascertain their worldview mentality ("from the horse's mouth," so to speak!). I think the book did a terrific job in giving precise and more attention to the trees than the forest itself, but I would've liked a bit more direct input from the composer herself (the intuitive half of the team) and learning more about HER own unique vision. But I understand that it was created a half century ago, so unless detailed notes or a diary was made, it may have been an unattainable mission in the present time.

Chapter 4 is the technical or analytical musical meat of the book, and the chapter I was most interested in. Chapter 5 ("The Film Score" deal more generally, in a sense, in terms of how the "music" functioned in the visual layout of the film, etc. Chapter 4 included many written transcriptions/versions of the electronic sounds, providing an admirable cue-by-analysis. As stated earlier, I had fun with the examples given but also had difficulty with some of them (Main Titles, Ancient Krell music, etc). That's why I wish Barron were directly asked, for instance, "Do you consider the opening tone to be D-flat in pitch?" It wouldn't hurt to ask. What did you intend? Was it a hit-and-miss situation?

This brings up questions in my own mind, and I thank Wierzbicki's book for stimulating me as such! Would you say that the Barrons were "composers." ? Generally speaking, yes, but conventionally, no. Music is vibrations and its effect upon the body and the psyche. Electronically generated tonalities are vibrations as well, artistically applied (as in FORBIDDEN PLANET). And I feel that their "score" was an excellent fit. I do not know, on one level, if they are "composing" or more picking-&-choosing (quite excellently) random, arbitrary sounds, weaving them into a coherent and indeed "meaningful" whole. However, if I were a producer, and I had the power to choose, of course I would've PREFERRED a Herrmann score instead, if that opportunity was made available. A STAR TREK:TMP type score by Goldsmith would've been interesting as well! Nevertheless, I liked the electronic tonalities the Barrons created. What they created is good! There was never anything like this done before (that is, for the entire score!). It was unique!

My question is: Would the listener like a STEADY diet of this? Unlikely. It's like a steady diet of atonal music—it would make you scream! Or most people. The Barrons specialized musically/compositionally that other (mainstream) artists and performers would not relate to, or at least for long. Their strange uniqueness did indeed fit this sci-fi movie but it did not fit the overwhelmingly conventional standards and practice in Hollywood. The unions were threatened; the studios thought it was an oddity, and so forth. It was an oddity that definitely stood out and grabbed your attention, but there was no mainline, enduring interest in that type of music. The powers-that-be felt that it was meant more a "special effect" sound than as a mainline focus. I personally liked the "music" and its multiplicity of freakish yet appealing tonalities. But imagine if Herrmann did a complete score using only the theremins. It would be quite distinctive, but I doubt it would have enduring "greatness." Most composers like Rozsa and Herrmann thought of such effects as a terrific spice or flavoring, but they didn't want it as the main meal!

The Barrons will be forever known for their FORBIDDEN PLABET contribution, but what else comes to mind? That's it. With Herrmann, however, people will associate him for many scores of distinction, including CITIZEN KANE, DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, VERTIGO, PSYCHO, etc. It was interesting reading in the book about the historical context. Apparently the Barrons made a really bad judgment call by suing MGM. It was a bad ego move because then their short welcome to Hollywood was really cut short. They were no longer "in." Don't call us; we'll call you (like never). Even Herrmann, in a sense, was no longer "in" after his TORN CURTAIN episode because he didn't want to commercialize his music and make it more 'marketable' with songs! Moreover, the Barrons specialize in that unusual type or quality of music. It was definitely typecast as "Outer Space" music. Maybe they should've worked in the late Fifties and early Sixties for CBS and contribute to their Music Library sounds. It probably would've been implemented in a lot of tv shows/episodes (TWILIGHT ZONE, etc). Still I greatly admire their creativity that was directed into a far different organizing framework (electronic tonalities). They disliked convention. But I think their creativity became too narrowly-focused and could not flourish and expand in the context of their times.

Another point is that their original compositions can never really be duplicated. The circuits burn out, and they're gone forever. A written score by Herrmann, say, can indeed be duplicated (the quality of duplication depends on various factors such as the players, the conductor, acoustics, etc). But the Barrons' music is like musical snowflakes, ever again exactly duplicated. That is one stream that will never be crossed again in the same spot and manner. Some of the same can be subjectively interpreted as, say, musical water droplets, while someone else may interpret it differently as "rippling: effects or whatever. But if it positively affects you, then it doesn't matter. It's an "experience" that you can enjoy and find meaning. The same applies for Wierzbicki's book. As given earlier, it is definitely an analysis that is out of the norm (like the Barrons' score and movie). Like the Id monster, the score is invisible—in fact, it doesn't exist substantially as a written document but only as an aural event/experience. Wierzbicki admirably attempts to make it less invisible in understanding, to make it more substantial in his precise (or precisely subjective) analysis.

Give it a chance. The reading/writing style is very good, and entertaining (and instructive in the more technical areas). He was in a sense in the Krell laboratories, experimenting and having fun deciphering or translating this aural score into another manner of expression and understanding. This was a hard task given that there was no "physical instrumentality" (no written score) available to him! Good job!

Bill Wrobel

I also added replies to that thread/topic of Talking Herrmann, primarily responding to the comments of "Mr. Scratch" (Avie Lee Hern):

Yes. The Barrons stated (as given in page 41) that they worked "day and night" in their New York work studio "laboriously...composing and producing large-scale overall patterns of sounds" in a three month period. I would think listening day & night to the unpolished freakish experimental tonalities would've damaged their psyches in some way! They would get SO myopically close and absorbed in it, it's hard to imagine that

they would still have the objectivity to select what was good & usable. I remember hearing the same comments from the Disney illustrators commented in the dvd of SLEEPING BEAUTY. There was great fatigue at the end of the long project. I wonder if Herrmann felt the same way with his WUTHERING HEIGHTS--in effect, saying, "Let's get it over with already!"

It's sad to hear from the book that the producers simply released the rough cut of the movie after the previews. They felt it was good enough. There was no Robert Wise to polish the work. You can tell this occurred from the various awkward scenes and transitions.

Thanks for the offer of the cd copy of Forbidden Planet, but I'll pass....I am now reading the BATMAN film score guide by Janet Halfyard. There are no reproductions in that book of the orchestrated score (except on page 133 of two bars of Finale type printing of the "Descent into Mystery" cue), and no reproductions of Elfman's sketches. That's a bad selling point for this book (unlike Cooper's books that has loads of reproductions). Moreover, there is no interview with Elfman. Too bad.

Bill

Another reply as follows:

I didn't see your second reply until I already sent my response, otherwise I would've commented on your Krell music opinion.

Well, in the book on page 82, a discussion of the "Ancient Krell music" is made. He quotes Rebecca Leydon's paper on the music for the movie. In her opinion, she seems to feel that the Krell diegetic music was "appropriately set off from the rest of the soundtrack not only by the long delay loops, but also by its intricate contrapuntal texture...Both the 'subject' and transposed 'answer' recur periodically throughout the passage over the constantly varying wooly background. The music evokes the feeling of an archaic *ricercare*, perfectly fitting for this representation of alien antiquity."

Well, not to *my* ears does it sound appreciably different from the rest of the score. To me, the odd electronic tonalities were meant to be associated with the Krell planet. That author may feel that the music is different for that one diegetic piece (playback pellet music device), but I don't (or it's a very subtle difference). You are right in stating that the Barron music would've been far more effective that that single diegetic scene IF that was the only Barron tonality heard (against a conventionally composed score by David Rose or whomever). It would grab your attention instantly. But because the complete score is electronic, the intended effect is now non-existent, unnoticeable, "been there, done that." The score itself is fine because it admirably fits that "alien" context or aural feeling of being on the Krell planet. So I don't know if I would want the Barron music to be only heard at that scene. But, as given by you, that one scene loses the impact it could've had. Maybe they should've played an Elvis song instead ! After all, he was a universal hit back in the mid-Fifties, right?!

Also, if the Krell ultra-atonal random music was their highest stage of civilization, no wonder they went extinct half a million years ago!

Another reply:

...Yes, a good deal of "scholarly" musical analysis terminology tends at times to be as impenetrable as Krell steel ! I sometimes wonder whom those authors are trying to impress. It's like an academic double-speak jargon that might need an intelligence-boostered Morbius to decipher. Fortunately the FORBIDDEN PLANET book doesn't have that problem. Intelligence can sometimes appear convoluted, but truth usually speaks simply and directly. I mean, as an example, maybe back in the antiquated era of Kant you can read "Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics" (1783), but I wouldn't want to read about "Prolegomena of Krell Music." It's hard enough to understand Krell electronic tonalities for long, let alone deciphering unnecessary and pretentious terminology that can far more easily be substituted with "Introduction" or "Theory" or even "Preface." Or how about "Isomorphism of Hip (and) Hop" ?!

Anyway, if you did indeed buy the Wierzbicki book and read it already, what is your opinion or review? Did you like it?

[10:21 am. My wife bicycled just now to the local DMV. I am, incidentally, on vacation this week. Otherwise I would be working a long six-day week this particular week. I was very hot locally last Thursday thru Saturday, and hot Sunday afternoon. It's a bit cooler today. We took five-month old "Miss Kitty" and "Misty" to be fixed on Friday. Happily they are recovering quickly. The boys ("Chester" and "Jacques" were fixed two weeks earlier.]

Now: There may be more replies to my thread as the day progresses, so I'll add to them when appropriate. I am a bit more slowly reading the Film Score Guide No. 2 by Janet Halfyard: *Danny Elfman's BATMAN*. I probably won't make a special review of it on Talking Herrmann beyond the few side comments I made already in reply posts.

Below is my Talking Herrmann review of David Cooper's book from a few days ago:

Today (Friday, August 26) happened to be my day off. At 12:45 pm, the UPS man rang my door bell and dropped off three Scarecrow Press Film Score Guides (that I ordered eight days ago last Thursday). One is Film Score Guide No. 2 "Danny Elfman's BATMAN" by Janet K. Halfyard (177 pages). Another is Film Score Guide No. 4 by James Wierzbicki titled "Louis and Bebe Barron's FORBIDDEN PLANET" (185 pages). I definitely would not have expected a Film Score Guide on FORBIDDEN PLANET, especially since there is no written score to analyze! So I was particularly keen to want to read his rather Uranian (out-of-the-ordinary) approach to a Uranian (sci-fi) score/film. I will do so after I have completely finished my read on David Cooper's book.

This brings us to the third book purchased, "Bernard Herrmann's THE GHOST and MRS. MUIR," Film Score Guide No. 5. I spent a few hours on it, and need yet to give it a complete read. However, I can assuredly attest that Mr. Cooper has "done his homework" in this fine work. It would've been interesting if he had been approached to speak a second (but not necessarily secondary) commentary track for the dvd (although Husted's comments and elaborations were quite thorough and revealing). This book was originally scheduled to be released sometime in November but, as indicated in a heads-up post in another MUIR thread in Talking Herrmann, it was given a big swell push forward to a mid-August release.

The Chapter structure is the same as in his previous analysis written four years

ago, "Bernard Herrmann's VERTIGO: A Film Score Handbook" ("Handbook" instead of "Guide" since Scarecrow Press took over the series from Greenwood Press). Chapter One discusses Herrmann's career (and its influences) up to the writing of MUIR. Cooper wrote in page 10 of VERTIGO, "In mood, orchestration, and even to some extent thematic identity, it seems to foreshadow his music for VERTIGO." However, he does not appear to elaborate on this contention or association in the MUIR book, unfortunately. I would've liked to have read an expansion of this connection. He does, however, elaborate more (first given also on page 10 of the VERTIGO book) on the connection to Britten's "Dawn" Sea Interlude from PETER GRIMES (see pp 31-32 MUIR). This is interesting. I'd like to hear that Britten music now (probably I'll go to Tower Records soon!). Of course, Cooper appropriately focuses on Herrmann's radio scores as a major influence up to 1947.

Chapter Two discusses Herrmann's musical style. Unlike the VERTIGO book, Cooper initially decided to use as framework/model the idea of "codes" offered by someone named Gino Stefani. They involve "isomorphisms," "intertextuality," and other "signifiers." While I would prefer a far simpler approach (and easier read), it was nevertheless interesting to see how a writer finds significances. His idea of significances may not necessarily be mine (or yours) but looking for patterns can take any of many forms or approaches. Each can be valid. The key is whether it can help explain the dynamics of the music, giving it a different perspective or slant. The most important perspective, usually, is the composer's. What does (did) he say specifically about the music, how he approached it artistically and intellectually? Herrmann's own ideas of significances in terms of looking for patterns (and meaning) is the first consideration. Unfortunately, interviewers normally don't think about asking such weighty considerations to composers. Sometimes the composer may simply have a "gut" artistic response to a scene, creating a Music Form (such as his "sea chanty" or variant "sea shanty") based on past habits or influences from another or (whatever). That piece of music may or may not have any great "meaning" intellectually but simply imbued with a normal association--so there's no need to "read" too much into it. Sometimes a composer may want to be clever and create a deeper meaning or association. For instance, Goldsmith commented on this in a specific piece of music in his dvd commentary for HOLLOW MAN. He mentioned that most people simply did not "get it" or something to that effect, but that didn't bother him.

At any rate, that sea chanty music is what Geoffrey Hodson (the noted Theosophist in his clairvoyant analyses of music) might describe as having a definite "music form." It has a form no less than the common practice of associating types of music with universal scenes or ideas--such as "Seascapes" music in the CBS Music Library Logs. For example, Reel 50 of Library X (10) is indeed called "Seascapes." The first track is from the Herrmann radio cue "Dauber #1" cue # 387-1, take 1, version 4: "Soft lyric suspenseful seascape to tail." "Dauber # 2) is described as "Rich sweeping seascape; latter part is neutral dark seascape." "Dauber #13" is described as "Storm at sea" ! Of course, Herrmann composed a "Storm" cue in MUIR. That both have a certain recognizable or associative (seascape) Music Form.

This second chapter starts the terrific practice of including samples of the holograph score (full score in Herrmann's hand). Page 38 offers the cue, "Consolation," and page 42 offers the title page of the "Prelude." I wonder why the BATMAN book did

not offer such examples? I did not expect, of course, Elfman to have provided other than a sketch, but it would've been nice seeing an orchestrator's full score page or two. Chapter Three discusses the "Context" of the score in terms of the film itself, the book, and so forth. There is no "musical meat," so to speak, in this chapter but it's an interesting read. But you can also refer to the excellent commentaries presented in the dvd.

Chapter Four is an "Overview" of the score. Cooper provides many interesting tables of information (Cues list, tempo marking list, deletions & additions, etc). He also discusses the recycling of music between MUIR and the opera, WUTHERING HEIGHTS, giving quotes from the Zador interview. This was also discussed in that special Herrmann double issue in THE JOURNAL OF FILM MUSIC, and discussed very briefly in the Husted commentary on the dvd. What I found most illuminating in this chapter was Cooper's discussion of how Philip Dunne (screenwriter) may have influenced Herrmann writing of the score. I did not realize the direct connection until I read this book. I still am unsure if Herrmann commented on how (or if) he was actually influenced by the screenplay. That is, did Herrmann read it before he took pen in hand, or did he simply look at the preliminary version of the film? Also, would he have really "needed" such promptings from Dunne (directly or indirectly)?? Herrmann knew what he was doing. He had at least unconsciously "picked up" psychically the worldview of Dunne, translated now as musical expression. I'll have to give this section of the chapter a closer read in the next day or two.

Chapter Five is the real "meat" of the book: a cue-by-cue analysis of the score. You will gratifyingly find many holograph score reproductions here, including "Comeback" on page 87. This is where Herrmann constructs that sound effect that Husted discussed in the dvd as that "impactless sound" (go to Chapter 3 of the dvd starting at 4:12). Herrmann annotates "Record after the chord is struck." In version B, he annotated "put mike over piano strings--record after chord is struck." He also wrote, "Note: Superimpose both tracks in recording."

I'd like to continue my review but I need to go very shortly and pick up my two female cats at the vet five miles away (they were "fixed" today!). At any rate, I would highly recommend this soft cover book. As given earlier, I think a good selling point is having the many reproductions of the holograph score (under a dozen) and the many abbreviated examples (single staves, two staves, etc). Plus it's a very affordable price at \$24.95 (as opposed to the hardcover price of \$65 to \$75 or more in the old Greenwood Press versions). Plus you will read the thoughtful and detailed analyses of Cooper. I was already starting my own "rundown" of the score before I received this book today, and I almost feel like not continuing since Cooper did a pretty thorough job of it. But I will anyway! Having those holograph reproductions will definitely aid in "visualizing" my own rundown analysis. I was surprised that the Scarecrow Film Score series allowed a second Herrmann analysis by the same author. I had the impression they wanted to do a different composer for each guide. I'd like to see another Max Steiner score being analyzed.

Time to go.
Bill Wrobel

The following is a reply to Mr. Scratch:

I think she covered over the portrait itself. At any rate, chapters and sections of various books discuss this "sexual" aspect in MUIR, but circumspectly (Captain Gregg being the personification of passion). Early on Mrs. Muir successfully breaks free of Victorian confines, and yet keeps her Victorian modesty when the portrait of Gregg is "staring" at her! But like attracts like, and she is just as willful and stubborn as the Captain is. There is no sex here per se, but call it romantic spiritualism. Spiritualism, incidentally, was in vogue at the turn of that century. Anyway, many of these ideas are discussed in books that you can partly access in Google Print. You can read in page 48 ("The Romantic Ghost" chapter) of Lee Kovacs THE HAUNTED SCREEN. You can read Jeanine Basinger's A WOMAN'S VIEW: How Hollywood Spoke To Women. Just type in "Ghost and Mrs. Muir" and you'll find many hits.

I believe I read in JOSEPH MANKIEWICZ: CRITICAL ESSAYS the concept that Gregg and Muir were soul mates in the sense that each became more of a complete person thanks to the other. He mellowed out in her presence (became in touch with his own anima), while she got in better touch with her own animus after interacting with the Captain. They each became a more complete self. Superficially of course, it is often construed as a "true love" story. I read from a web site somewhere that a remake is being attempted or planned. Perhaps they will call it "Sleepless in Gull Cottage" ! Film is a multi-artistic medium. Herrmann's contribution was invaluable, elevating an already good film. It had conceptual flaws, mind you (especially the conflicting image/actions of Mrs. Muir), so it's "superficial" in certain aspects despite the inherent theme of feeling deeply (water) and hence becoming a more complete person (inwardly in terms of self-actualization, and outwardly in terms of connecting with another person). But Muir was not portrayed as a very realistic person emotionally. She's devastated when the dandy Miles (George Sanders) is exposed for what he really is. So she isolates herself (romantically) back in Gull Cottage for the rest of her life. She did not really succeed in breaking out of Victorian romanticism/ideals. While I admire the film, I certainly do not share in Greg Kimble's (dvd commentator) feeling that it is by far his favorite film. It does not even share my Top 100. My Top 100 would include unusual or unlikely "B" movies such as THE LION & THE HORSE (Max Steiner score), and BOY FROM OKLAHOMA (also Max Steiner), and so forth. Perhaps if it was a western called THE GHOST FROM OKLAHOMA (playing a pacifist ghost sheriff) I may've liked it better! :)

Anyway, I am still trying to determine from Cooper's book if indeed Herrmann read the screenplay by Dunne. Dunne made many musical allusions in his treatment. Cooper writes (bottom page 61), "...it is notable that he does follow Dunne's guidance (which largely presupposes a leitmotivic treatment) reasonably closely in around 25 percent of the cues." This is significant since Herrmann was not normally known for his leitmotif approach, despite this being his "Max Steiner" score! I am wondering if it is coincidental that Herrmann follows Dunne's general suggestions. After all, as given earlier, Herrmann would instinctively know what he is doing. A thematic approach involving the sea would be obvious, and so also "ghost" mood music. I am glad Dunne was so sensitive and sophisticated musically in temperament, but I don't know if Herrmann was directly influenced. This is not clearly stated (that I can tell so far). So I am not that sure that it was part of Herrmann's working method in this case.

As given before, the primary influence is what the film itself is telling the composer. Every composer (or at least most composers) has a characteristic working method or kind of structure (how he organizes the music). It would normally be a style that suits his personality and general artistic leanings--even if he was merely being a commercial composer and "just doing a job." Herrmann recognized the quality of MUIR and he contributed another layer of excellence to the project. He would immediately note the seascape themes (right from the opening credits in fact) and hence write in such a character. Since water often symbolizes emotional depth (as in a romance theme), then the music would potentially be charged with great poignancy and "depth" as well. So the type or character of music he wanted to convey would be to simulate the sea motifs and its symbolism of emotions, and the capacity to feel deeply (as Gregg did for Muir, and Muir did for the Captain).

Anyway, I feel that MUIR is a strongly integrated score (as the repeated leitmotif approach seems to attest). It is not an episodic score, although Herrmann would include such music when needed (comic relief cues, etc). Overall, however, the score feels more like a symphonic, romantic tone poem. John Williams considers this score and VERTIGO as being the two Herrmann scores he admired most (Total Film Magazine, Issue 8 in 1997). And of course Herrmann himself loved it, and incorporated part of it in Act Four of his WUTHERING HEIGHTS. Perhaps he wanted to get that opera finally finished after all these years of arduous application, and applied MUIR's excellence as part of the opera instead of writing something original. It certainly did "fit." But he was playing games with Zador (and with himself) by denying that there was no obvious connection (saying that it was a "ghostly" similarity instead, so to speak!). While what a composer says is always a first consideration, this doesn't mean you always believe what a composer says!

Incidentally, there is an interesting book I perused briefly via Google Print called MUSICKING by Christopher Small. In pages 179-180, he discusses the concept of significance. Cooper talks about signifiers in his book. Well, Small writes about the "...impossibility of total conscious control over their [composers] every gesture..." that they are often ..."content to let go and let the subconscious guide their performance.." The composer may structure the music in a characteristic learned style (habits) or technique, but people tend to be ruled by their habits. We are not as necessarily "conscious" as we think we are! Habits tend to rule our lives. Small says, "No musician can completely understand the significance of what they are doing..."

I received an e-mail from Stephen in London a few days ago informing me of updates regarding his planned definitive bio on Max Steiner. He has received some help from Daubney, has contacted BYU, Olivia DeHavilland, and others, but he needs to come to the States to research the music. I had already given him a phone number lead regarding Ed Leaney since he was a big researcher of Maxie and Leaney also happened to live in the London metropolitan area. Well, Stephen informed that that he finally phoned but found out that Ed died in March of this year. Edward Alfred James Leaney was born May 1, 1922 at I believe 7:59 am. If this time is correct, he has a 26 Gemini rising (Ascendant). At the month of death, progressed Moon was conjunct Pluto in Cancer and quincunx progressed Mars in the 6th. Progressed Sun was at 29 Cancer. Progressed MC was conjunct natal Sun. He had heart trouble, I understand, so perhaps he

succumbed to a heart attack (Sun symbolism). Transiting Pluto was conjunct Mars in the 6th. Ed did meticulous research of Maxie's early career, and I can attest to this since I quickly scanned his notes ten years ago when I visited him. A detailed sample of this in terms of a chronology was presented in 1996 in "The Max Steiner Collection" publication from BYU. I also met Bob Blackmore back then in that visit. He died a few years ago.

[resume Labor Day, Sept 5 at 9:21 pm]

I finished about halfway of my *Ghost & Mrs. Muir* rundown, ending (for now) on "Poetry" (reel 4/pt 3). I will shortly send Sarah the partial rundown and probably tell her to place it in the "Back Page" of the Herrmann items. When that rundown is finished (and another score rundown but not sure what right now) then it will be "officially" updated on the Front Page in about a month or two. I will also send this Blog #23 in a few minutes.

The only other news is that Film Music Radio is "on the air," so to speak, via streaming Internet. It is hosted by Ford Thaxton. I listened via my dialup service for about four minutes but got tired of the frequent buffering interruptions, and I did not particularly like this week's first featured music of contemporary film score music called, I believe, "Book of Stars." I will attempt again on other weeks, especially if it is Golden Age music presentations, interviews, etc. But without broadband I am afraid I will experience more buffering delays.

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