

9/75

W. NOAH ANDRE TRUDEAU

NAT: I'll begin with a question that was suggested to me by Bernard ^{HEGEMAN} ~~Herman~~.
Would you label yourself as a film music composer or a composer who writes film music?

JM: I'd say a composer who writes film music.

NAT: Where would you place film music in relation to concert music?

JM: Well my main music has always been concert music and theatre music and film music was after that.

NAT: But, you consider it a form of theatre music, definitely?

JM: Well you haven't got the control in film music that you have in theatre music. You don't decide on the piece that you wrote for the job. You don't decide on the length ~~that you write for the job~~ of the composition. You're ~~not~~ writing to the scene that is finished. It is theatrical of course, but it's a different kind of theatre.

NAT: You got started in the film music business as an orchestrater as I remember. What exactly is, well obviously an orchestrater orchestrates but there more to it than that, isn't there?

JM: Well it goes according to the composers you work ^{with}. Some give you a completely laid out sketch and some give you a piano piece.

NAT: Did you work with any specific composers for any length of time?

JM: Yes, during the war when I was at Warner Brothers, I was assigned to two composers, especially. I did all of their pieces ~~with~~ Adolf ^{DE-NA} Doych and Freddie Hollander. Doych used to write every thing down to the last 16th rest And Hollander used to write Chopin like pieces which had to be turned into Orchestral pieces. So it was a difference of style. Then of course we were all farmed out. I fthere were a rush you'd be assigned to Stiener or anybody.

NAT: Did you work with some of the big ones like Steiner or ~~K~~ Korngold?

JM: Well Warner Brothers had loaned Steiner over to Selsnick and I forget what picture he was doing but he got into some sort of problem and I remember I had to go over and help out. on some of it. I never worked with ~~K~~ Korngold although he was ~~he~~ around the studio.

NAT: What was it like working ~~these~~ these film music...well you're in the golden years now.

JM: Oh sure. You see my name at night as orchestrater on a lot of the old Humphrey Bogart, etc.... I had already been performed. I had a show done by the theatre guild. Frankie and Johnny had already been done at the Chicago Opera Ballet. I ~~was~~ had any number of concert performances and theatrical performances. Then I couldn't get a job in Hollywood. I was considered too wild. I had to get something to do. I was very broke. An orchestration job came up and I took it and I stayed with Warner's for three years, then I couldn't take it any more and I left. Then followed a peculiar of about 5 years inwhich I would be in New York doing something, Ballet Ballads was produced during that time, and other things, and when things would go bad I would go out and get an orchestration job. I rather liked that--it seemed easy. Then finally, in 1950, I got a composition job in Hollywood and from then on I began to be offered composition of pictures.

NAT: What was it you said you got out of orchestration because you couldn't take it any more. What was it you couldn't take. The pressure of the work or the subjectgating your own creative...?

JM: Oh no, I didn't feel noncreative. As a matter of fact, I really learned the orcestra then and I thought I was a good orchestrater when I began but there was nothing like this business of sitting and orchestrating away at 10 or 11 in the mornbng and then gget on the stage in the afternoon and hear it. You really learn what goes with the orchestra and you learn not to make orchestral mistakes. The demands, ^{on my time} and I began to fell that it was more and more cutting into ~~what~~ ~~things~~ I wanted to do. And then you were always in a rush. You were always working all night long.

NAT: When you returned and first started as a composer, what types of films that they gave you. I tend to think that they were little budget films.

JM: They were low budget films and they were mostly dull but it was a better living then being an orchestrater and at that time I was fascinated with the theatre and I was writing things like Ballet Ballads and Golden Apple and while, for instance ~~XXXX~~ both of those were great Steams, they didn't bring in any money. So I would have to ran back to Hollywood to do something to let me write the next one

NAT: But you didn't feel that you were lowering your standards by writing films?

JM: No. It was just another medium but one that wasn't most attractive to me.

NAT: ~~Was~~ Perhaps even in your best of film scores, were you ever trying to somehow sneak in or make a certain musical statement either through the drama or through the music? Meaning were you trying to pass your own message along, your own commentary on the story.

JM: Well you have to. You are Delining the story musically at that point for the audience and you've got to add to the film. You've got to heighnten it or lower it or whatever the problem is there but you're helping the film, you're helping the director , you're helping everybody. You're trying to make the best film you can. As far as musical statements go, I never felt that I was writing any differently for a film, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ then I would write for concert or theatre. Perhaps you didn't have as much time to work on counter points or something. YOU did certain things because there was a lack of time, but there was no question of writing differently for films.

NAT: You obviously had to work with the director and the producer with your score. Did you ever have any great difficulties gettingx your ideas accross to them? Did want to do certain things that they sort of said no because of their lack of musical feelingx or did you have a pretty good collaberation with the peoplx you worked with?

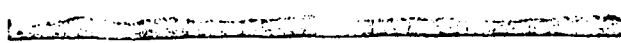
J M: I really worked with the directors. Occasionally, once or twice, I came in an a film early and worked with the director. Mostly I was assigned the film after it was written. I would write the music afterwards and parts that they didn't want they could drop out and they did quite often.

NAT: Are you concerned with the stigma that seems to go with the tag of Film Music Composer? Do you think it's hart the integrity of your serious music?

JM: It hasn't hart the integrity of my serious music but it certainly has hurt my acceptance. The serious composers immediately form a block. You're a film composer now and they have that. To try to break that is almost imposible. On the other hand, I have never seen any of them turn down a film except for now there are no films for them.

Handwritten notes:
film
composer
stigma

NAT:



NAT: You find that even the film music itself is evaluated as music or hardly ever gets a good evaluation.

difficult

JM: Well it's very ~~hard~~ to say. I've made two orchestral suites out of film music. One was a suite from the Big Country one is a suite ~~from~~ called Music from the Flicks, which is from five early films that are of varying quality But ~~xxx~~ there were 5 pieces in them that I liked. More than 5 pieces. I sometimes combine them. Any way I made a film suite out of it. The Big Country, which by the way had an enormous sale in records,----really enormous sale, almost 750,000 records.as I said before--and gets played practically every day on some radio station or other. It was played finally this past spring by the Erie Philharmonic on the other hand it gets played in Europe. And I would think that some conductor would say, "Well, look here's an American score that seems to hit the audience, it makes them ~~feel~~ feel that it is their music." But no. Nobody's interested.

NAT: In a sense then, it would be kind of ironic that you would get back in with the concert hall film music which in a way got you out of the concert hall.

JM: Well, except Big Country is meant for pop concerts and things like that. Our concerts have changed. We no longer have a ~~very varied~~ varied program. We tend to -- those dreary Bruckner symphonies, you know -- and gone are the days before the war when the program had music of all sorts of interest. We now assign that to what we call our promanodes or the pop concerts.

NAT: Could you perhaps in a general sort of way kind of what the process was and how you ~~wrote~~ wrote your film music? Just create a typical film and like usually you came in after the film?

JM: Yes, most of the ~~time~~ time I came in after the film. Generally it was very rough cut and I would sit down with the producer or sometimes with the producer and the director and the music editor who would make notes and we would decide where music went. I had been schooled by Leo Forbstein at Warner Brothers and his theory was he never knew where the brass would want music so he'd score almost everything. My tendency is pretty much the same way. I'll say well let's put music in there if I feel the scene is slightly dull, they can throw it out. After we decide where the music is going to be, the music editor goes back and starts working with his movieola and ends up giving me sheets. I see the film work a few times and I take the sheets and start writing.

NAT: Do the sheets indicate a length of time?

JM: They break up the scene ~~into~~ completely into seconds, 3rds of a second, every two seconds or something. It's a complete break down of the scene. ~~As~~ somebody doing a study of the film would break down the frames practically

NAT: From there what, you do a piano score?

4 or 5

JM: Well I write in a kind of a ~~sketch~~ line, short ~~sketch~~ sketch--short orchestral sketch. If I have time to orchestrate it myself, I can work from that. If not, it's easy on that to mark down exactly what I want him to do and then you move to the stage and start recording and any final changes you want to make, orchestration or cutting or anything, you make them and there.

NAT: Do you find the studio orchestras, are they, they must be quick readers.



JM: They're brilliant. the studio orchestras, at least in the ^{hey} ~~Hague~~ day of the film period let us say between 1935 and 1965, they were the most brilliant musician in the country. I first arrived in Hollywood in 36 and I was astounded by the quality of the orchestras, I wasn't working with films then I was working for the Chicago Opera and ~~xxx~~ instead of spending a dull winter in Chicago I had gone to Hollywood and it was very exiting then.

NAT: I guess the big money attracted the good talent.

JM: The money attracted them but also they played all the time. They played year round and in between there was a tremendous amount of Chamber music going on. The musicians were marvalous. Every studio had an orchestra. Every studio had to have a minimum amount of men and there were about 8 or 10 big studios.

NAT: Did you ever write for the--did you score for this because you knew that the studio had that many players or did you have a freeer hand with the orchestration?

JM: No, you score for what the film wanted. They called in extra men or you didn't have to use the full orchestra if you didn't want to although everybody did. Cause the orchestra wasn't that big. We always wanted more strings that was another. The only thing that would happen was that men would buy paculiar instruments and they would come rashing up to you and saying, in your next film I have a double base oboe or something they found somewhere and say why did you use them. I suppose that was because they would get ~~ex~~ extra money for ~~xxxxxx~~ playing it. So if instead of using a bassoon you used a double base clarinet and it would mean an extra few dollars for the man. Sometimes you did it just to be nice to him.

NAT: Them years later they would ~~xxxx~~ applaud your originallity of orchestration for interducing this rare instrument.

JM: Yes, he used a double-base oboe.

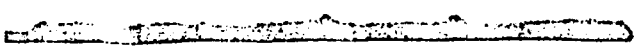
NAT: I'd like to talk specifically about a number of your film scores and specifically the ones that have been recorded. We'll talk about the biggest one first, which of course the Big Country. It seems to me that there is something there besides just another western score. I have a feeling that you kink of reacted to the drama in kinda of a personal way.

JM: Well I was very excited about doing that ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ picture. It was my first really big picture. And it was a western and my own style is American--unconsciously American. I just write that way. It fitted the way I wrote and without knowing it I seemed to have turned out the prototyped western. This is the way to do a western now--the way I didit in Big Country. The style, the
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NAT: Up to that point, you were probably one of the first American composers to score Mitchel. I mean Steiner and Korngold. Steiner did his westerns, but..

M: There were other American Composers but they all wrote that same way. Their western was the western of the Russian steps or the Hungarian plains but this was a western with American ~~rythems~~ ^{rythems}; American tunes and boldness and brashness about it and this was the way to do a western. ^{John} ~~John~~ would come along and do a western with sad Russian Songs in them. ^{Trunk}

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NAT: After you did the film was the score greeted as...were you acclaimed for this score in any way or was it just another job?

JM: Most particularly the composers in Hollywood, I think they realized it was something because I got the nomination for the academy but I couldn't possibly compete with political goings on.

NAT: Do you remember who won it?

JM: Yes, Thomkin won it with "old Man of the Sea." He really campaigned for that part. It's very funny that that score has lasted 17 years. It's still in print.

NAT: It's still as fresh today.

JM: It still goes on. It's lovely that it has that kind of insurance.

NAT: I can see why the Europeans do the concert suite from it. It's that special sort of american quality that really few composers can achieve.

JM: I think I achieved that quality even in the 1st symphony. You can see that same kind of quality.

NAT: Maybe it was Korngold that, a good composer had a good portion of his life devoted to concert music and it was kind of a fatalism to the film music in which he was writing this music and putting this effort into music was only going to be heard once by most people and it was going to be heard in a context where they weren't really listening to it so as a consequence to Korngold, he would, I guess his vln concerto, a popery of film themes. but he basically wanted to say what he felt was good music. Have you ever found yourself quoted some of your film score out of this same sort of fatalistic sense?

JM: No, there are lots of themes I loved to use but...

NAT: I think especially that sonata for clarinet choir, I mean that's got the Big Country written all over it.

JM: No it hasn't. It has my style but it doesn't have a single theme or ~~movement~~ ^{rythem} from the Big Country. I would love to use some of the melodies used in films. They'd make marvelous material, and I created a lot of material. There are all kinds of problems--copy right laws, etc. The thing to do is write new tunes.

NAT: There is one interesting paradox that strikes me is that in the concert hall it's a rare composer that conducts but in film music it's a rare composer who doesn't conduct. Now I noticed you conducted a good many of your film scores. Is this just a natural extension of the way things are done that you have to be right there with the orchestra anyway so you might as well get up in front.

JM: Well, when I went to the Julliard, which was completely a fellowship school at the time I went, my fellowship was in conducting. I then discovered that I don't like conducting before an audience; i'm not an actor. I have no extroversions. But I discovered quite earlier that in the theatre or in a sound stage, I can conduct and I feel that I can do my ~~own~~ own scores better than any one else. I know exactly what I wanted. As soon as the opportunity came where I could conduct I took it.

NAT: I noticed you did. YOU conducted the War Lords.

JM: Yes but that was all after the Big Country.

NAT: No the War Lords you didn't conduct. I'm sorry.

JM: No I didn't conduct the War Lord's because the musical director of the studio insisted upon doing that because otherwise he had no job. I did the Big Country-..

NAT: Now the recordings for both the lBig Country and the Cardinal that you did they were separate recordings made specifically for records.

JM: No they were the soundtrack.

NAT: The sound is just marvelous from the Big Country.

JM: No, the records weren't made separatly and the Big Country was recorded in Hollywood and the Cardinal was recordéd in London.

NAT: Usually when you listen to something taken from the film score it tends to be shorter and more choppy. Like the Big Country, the alabum cuts were about 2 or 3 minutes a piece which is a good chunk of a movie. That's why you surprised me when you said it was taken from the film score. There was no editing there.

JM: But sometimes the ~~saxing~~ the things were edited in the film. They went in and out of them. I believe in writing enough so that you do write a piece. Actually I wish that they would leave those things alone. I think the sense of form in a well-formed piece of lmusic gives to a scene, aids the scene, but it's hard to sell that idea to a director. I'm talking about what happens in opera or a musical comedy even or ballet where the roundness of the performance is added by the music. Good ballets, most paculurialy are always done to music which help them formally.

NAT: In every case after you did the scorèng, did you see the finished product.

JM: ~~WXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Yes.

NAT: Was it ever a case where they ~~xxxx~~ edited it against your intentions.

JM: Yes. One. and I was horified. The producer wasn't in town. He was producing a play in broadway and the director and I worked on the film and we finished what we thought was a very good film . The producer came back and he cut the film to hell and consequently had to ~~km~~ cut the music and shift and change and all kinds of absolutely incredible things happened and destroyed a perfect ly marvelous film and a perfectly wonderful score if I may be immodest, but he destroyed the film too which was awful.

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NAT: But still your name was up there and everybody blamed you for it.

JM: Right. The film ~~xxxx~~ was Five Finger Exercise.

NAT: It's kind of a shame because when people start cursing you for it, they'll curse you for that film not knowing that it wasn't your fault.

JM: Well you've got to take your lumps.

NAT: Iguess it was copland who got the award for everything but the main title which was written at the last minute by somebody else.



JM: You mean on the ^{Heikes)} Ares.

NAT: On the ^{Heikes)} Aress, yeah. Do agree with someone like George Antile who felt that a film score should also stand on it's own as music?

JM: I think mostly it shpuld stand on it's own as music. Yes I do. It should have a vality, it really should. On the other hand if you do a loh of films, you do get in the habit of, ⁽⁶⁾ I suppose I don't know I haven't done that many, but I suppose you woould say, "well this film is nothang, I'm doing it for \$X and I'll just ~~ix~~ toss out something." But I've never felt that way about the films. No matter what they are I always try to exert myself. Maybe it's vanity, but it's also the feeling that perhaps I can help this film somehow.

NAT: Even those Grade B films that you started out with.

JM: Naturally. Which I continued to do. Up untiã the last films I had grade B films mixed wiht some big ones.

NAT: I take it the Big Country didn't open any doors. People didn't say well this guy can really write or did it tighten you? Did you start getting a lot of westerns after that?

JM: Yes, I got offers for westerns mostly. That became very tight. but then I got others.

NAT: One of the others that you got after that... I think the War Lord followed the big Country?

JM: No

NAT: Preceed it?

JM: No the WAR Lord came later. ~~Mid~~ Much later.

NAT: Right, that's what I meant.

JM: I mean, in between there wasafter the Big Country there was Jay Walkers, Mountain Road, and I did.....

NAT: Sounds like a couple of Westerns.

JM: No Mountain Road took place in a building on Burma Road in China or something like that. I forget exactly what it was.

NAT: Did you ever turn down a film? Did they say I want you to score this and you said No Way?

JM: Yes I Have. I've turned * down films for two reasons. Because I felt that they would do better with a jazz or a rock score that I couldn't do or the last few films I've turned down because they've gotten too violent. Just the idea of writing violence for that ⁽⁷⁾ length of time, I found very unattractive or unappealing.

NAT: You never were concerned with whether the film had a potential of being a big film or not It was just a specific task and you were out to do your best job. Whether or not you were doing a Gone with the Wind or a Five Finger Exercise.?

JM: I don't understand.

NAT: Bometimes when you get a big budget film or a feeling that the film is going to be big and you maybe want to approach it in a different manner then maybe if you knew that it was going to be a low hudget film. It's always a question of doing your best.?

JM: It's always a question of doing your best. O f course on a big film, quite often they will give you more time and also they will give you more means and a begger orchestrea.

NAT: But how much time would you say you got per film.

JM: Well it varies. The Big Country took 10 weeks. Some films I got 4 weeks. But then the Big Country had 75 hours of music which is as much as you write for 2 other films. Most films run about 30 - 35 minutes of music.

NAT: Why was there so much music for the Big Country. Just because there was so much on land?

JM: It was three hours. The film was 3 hours long. Most films are about 1 hour and 40 minutes. But the film was 3 hours long and they could have used more music than they had in it.

NAT: Right. Did they cut some out ~~music~~ from the final product?

JM: no, nothing substantial was cut out but they kept saying that they didn't want me to do music here and they didn't want me to do music there. When I realized the enormity of the work that was being asked of me, I agreed with them. I said alright I won't write here and I won't write there. I think that in back of their minds was the fact that they were afraid that I wouldn't have time to do that much, but they could have taken more ~~music~~ music. I thought it was a good film. Proud Rebel was really a marvelous film. I really knocked myself out on it and so did Sam Goldwin Jr. He produced it. I thought it was a beautiful film and it just died. No film could have been prepared more lovingly and with ~~more~~ more intent. Acted better and anything. It's a marvelous film. And the film died.

NAT: What I heard of that one album, I tended to think that your writing wasn't as exuberant or as wide open as the big country.

JM: It's a different subject.

NAT: Right the big Country was the Land and the Proud Rebel was the people?

JM: No..The proud rebel was kind of a human drama and the Big Country was more of an impersonal drama. The Big Country he's writing a passive track in the form of a western. It was a very interesting film. It wasn't very popular here. It managed to make back it's money but in Europe it was enormously popular. They still show it all over the place. In Italy you can still see O Grand Place.

NAT: There's a real kind of motif in there. Did you quote a western tune in that or did you creat that motif.

JM: No I wrote it. I wrote every tune in it.

NAT: All right. Let's move ahead a few years to the War Lord. One thing that interested me in that film is that you didn't attempt any period sounds. It was a very...Well it wasn't a period score. It was a setting in the 12th century which of course sums up some musical ideas off the bat. But you didn't follow any of those. I was wondering why?

JM: Well it was my idea. I mean I think it has an archaid sound.

Nat: Sort of yeah,

JM: But it's according to who's arcaisms your thinking of .This was my idea of arcaisms.

NAT: In your main title to the ~~Archaid~~ Cardinal, you come up with a baroque idea there. You have a kind of motif that ... the echo motif. Now that ~~archaid~~ strikes me as being a very medieval sound thaty ~~you~~ you created in your main title to the Cardinal.

JM: Well the Cardinal is much later. It's a baroque sound. The Cardinal main title was a walk through a ... partly through the vatican not the vatican but the I think they did use Verini's paristyle in front of St. Peter's. But it was some other 16th castles that he was walking through and they put those shots together and you were entirely in a baroque world and I decided that musically at that point you had to throw your audience into that.

You weren't going to be in a baroque world all the time though. you were in it quite a bit. So it would have been silly to do anything but a baroque score.] But for the War Lord, we hadn't the faintest idea what the music sounded like in the 11th century. I just gave it an archaic sound. My idea of archaism. It's k like the Debussy things of Greece. The satie things of Greece. We now accept that as Greece. Whenever you see Greece, go -----. Your not talking about accepting things at convention.] (10)

NAT JM: So you're just kind of reacting to the drama and creating things to the period?

JM: To the period and to the drama.

NAT: I did one program where I played Ivan Hoe, Prince Vallient, and the War Lord, and I compare the ~~three~~ three. Ivan Hoe and Prince Vallient were the typicall larger than life scores and yours used much the same elements. You had the brass opening but ~~it~~ it was a human an almost wistful kind of ... there was a certain quality that just didn't have that bold Waxman or Boad Russia. R0754.

JM: That's the way I felt about that film. Maybe I was...maybe what I wrote... maybe what I was thinking about it was tinged by the fact that I knew the play. Although the film doesn't follow the play too much just in broad outline. But I suppose the memory of the play was always with me.

NAT: I noticed that certain segments of the score was composed by some one else. Was that a question of time pressure?

JM: Well a strange thing happened on that score. When they finished it, on the film a fight started with the studio on one side and Frank, the director and the produce on the other side. Bothe sides started cutting it. Actually the y shouldn't have cut it at all. Shaffer and the producer should have possibly stuck to their guns but it was a losing battle for them I suppose. Because when the film was long, the breath and the perfection of the movement, the slowness of the piece created a feeling of speed. When the film was cut, it lost that and just became and ordinary film and it lost it's quality. I ssat while they were fighting this out and I had a 10 week contract. I hadn't that much time to give and after 5 weeks finally the film was cut down to the 2 hours they wanted. Only 5 weeks I had with an enormous amount of music to write. And there were these battle scene 2 big battle scenes. And I just had to form it out. Then of course everybody knows about it because when it came to putting in on the record, I said well you ~~must~~ must give the auther cre dit. (11)

NAT: They were going to geve you credit ofor the battle scenes?

JM: Oh sure they do on all of them. I had to fight with decca.

NAT: Now the fellow who did it, did he withdrew from your films? Cause it fits very well. I mean you can notice the difference but...

JM: I gave him some phanatic material but most of the time it's brass chords banging around and drums. The usual thing in battles you try to make as much sound...I don't know why they want so much noise in the battle. With all that going on, the smashing of pikes and mases against metal and screaming and roaring and all the rest going on in a medievel battle, why they want more noise but they always do.

NAT: When you apply a score to the screen how much say do you have of the volume that that score is heard at in compaëison to the scenes. Who determindes that? (12)

JM: That's determined in the so called ~~trackdown~~ dubbing ar re-recording room after you've recorded the whole thing and the sound track has been made up and everything is together then everybody gets together in this room with this huge board and they have 20 or 30 tracks running at the same time. Possibly 3 or 4 music tracks and soundtracks, voice tracks.

NAT: So again, that's a decision that's taken out of your hands?

JM: To some extent, but you can go in and fight over that, if you want to. But I find that that is the one point where their pragmatism really arises above ~~that~~ everybody's ego. Certain things have to have values there and those things that have to have value are given value at the correct time. They work very hard on that. It's the one point that you really don't have to fight because your music could get in the way of the dialogue or something or a ~~music~~ soundtrack, fabricated sounds being made up by the sound men get in the way of something other than music. They work that out very well.

NAT: There must have been a sequence where maybe you did a little something that you clever and by the time you see it it is either so overwhelmed ~~for~~ by the visuals or by the dialogue that you tell people to listen and they say "I didn't hear it"

JM: Yeah but might have done something very clever and forgotten it and a most important dialogue is being said, they're going to put you down. People will remember whether a line of dialogue comes out. They won't remember that you suddenly had an oboedomora during a lovely turn. D

NAT: Did you ever have something though where you were so taken by the scene that you specifically scored it to be heard a certain way and had to fight for it to be reproduced that way? Either in terms of the volume or in terms of the cutting? Or again is it just a contract where when you turn over the music,...

JM: Actually you have no control over that. I quite often would go into the dubbing room if I was staying in Hollywood after I was through with the film, and I would go into the dubbing room and watch and I would sometimes discuss things but most of the time I found that they would do it very well. ¹³ They were being very fair to every element in the film. They really try to make as good a film as they ~~can~~ can. They don't want to destroy any of the things that they've paid for. They're not out to undervalue the music or undervalue the dialogue or the acting. They want at that point to make a very good film.

NAT: Did you ever have a score completely thrown out?

JM: No. That happens.

NAT: I heard about the ^{Alex} ~~Ally~~ North score to 2001.

JM: Did that get thrown out?

NAT: He wrote a complete score.

JM: I knew somebody had done it. I didn't know it was Alex North. And then they rescored.

NAT: They just used some classical themes.

JM: LOT's of people have had scores thrown out. ¹¹ ~~Schomkin~~ had a score thrown out.

NAT: Waxmen did a complete score to Gone with the Wind.

JM: Things happen. Then that's the producers prerogative. They hire you to do something and if they can't get what they want, they can go and get someone else to do it.

¹⁴ NAT: We've moved again to the Cardinal and at least now, if I can believe the line of notes, I can believe that it was an exceptional situation which you were invited to come in on the filming?

JM: Yes.

NAT: Was that the first time you had come in early and how do you think it affected your music

JM: Well I'd come in early when I did things like a ballet for Hans Christian Anderson. I did the Little Mermaid Ballad. Actually what happened was Otto Preminger was dragging me all over Europe acting as a music department. We had a lot of pre-recordings. We prerecorded music, we pre-recorded....for dummy music for the ballroom scenes, we had to have music for this and for that. It turned out he needed a lot of music going to help in the making of the picture which ordinarily in Hollywood, the music department would deal with then when you came in you would adjust to it, but here I had to do it because Otto figured out that was the best cheapest way of having a music department. It was fun.

NAT: Do you really think it made a difference in the gramatic part of your score. Were they different some how because you were there at the whole stage of the thing.

JM: I don't know. I really don't know. I can't say. It was a different kind of experience.side 2

NAT: ...referred to as sort of a background music if you had ~~it~~ that tango...?

JM: Well the film itself required that kind of thing, cause it moved around so much. It required tango, it required dixieland jazz, it required everything. So you had to write it

NAT: Well you were told to write dixieland jazz, would you sort of do a pastich of it, because obviously you are not a dixieland composer?

JM: No, but I used to play in a dixieland band. I wrote out a piece and I called 5 guys together and we were on it until it was that was good for the scene and good for what was written and off we went. You can't write out the notes for a dixieland piece. but you can rehearse the men and rehearse with them and work it out, and we did.

NAT: That had that one song that was recorded in the Abbey, I'm thinking of the Grand Chant or something?

JM: That's an authentic of Grand Chant and we had a choir ~~from~~, a famous choir, from a cathedral we had shot at and we brought them up to Rome and recorded them. I had to supervise the recording but otherwise they were experts. The one we use was one of the most famous that we recorded.

NAT: The album claimed that it was especially arranged. What was the special part of the arrangement?

JM: No.

NAT: Nothings?

JM: No. Does it say specially arranged?

NAT: I think so.

JM: Oh the manner of lining notes was carried away.

NAT: That's one thing I always noticed ~~about~~ about soundtrack albums is at their best they are usually pretty ~~incipet~~ incipet. The line of their notes.

JM: That's better than some of the things you buy. I bought a pf concerto by Laler because it's quite rare and I wanted to have it. The line note said that this is a terrible piece and you know no book jacket would ever say anything ~~like~~ like that. Every book is a wonderful book. They entice you to read it. You read the book jacket and it draws you in. But you pick up a recording line and they say, this is an awful work. I never understood it.

Actually I didn't think the piece was that bad and I was furious at the man who wrote ~~it~~ it.

NAT: If you're that interested in the mpiece the line of notes aren't going to scare you away.

JM: Then there are people who say, " A concerto by Mahler, I must have it." ~~Yax~~ YOU're schunding your audience off.

NAT: It's too bad they don't write the notes after the performance. They could tell what it's like from the performance.

JM: They should not be critits. People who write liner notes are supposed to be like the people who write the blur on dust jackets. They should draw you in to byy it.

NAT: I've looked at liner notes to get me in the state of mind to listen to it.

JM: They should do that to. They should give you all the musicallogical reference you need. If your the kind of person, like myself, who wants to know everything musicallogical about.

NAT: You must have read the line of notes for the War Lord. They were just superlities about the score. Not that it's not a good score but just reading that you start shaking your head. They can say magnificent score too many times and you begin to

JM: Well, that's doing it the ~~waxax~~ wrong way. But there is a way of doing it of being moderately or even immoderately enthusiastic about the piece, but telling you everything you need to know musicallogically about it.

NAT: I tend to think, like liner notes never seem... now you've got a soundtrack album which is jus the music, most soundtrack albums don't have the dialogue so your obviously buying it for the music always the notes relate very carefully to scene like in the Cardinal they have a 4 or 5 sentences to the cut, ~~xxxxxxx~~ but it all relates to the ~~xxx~~ scene like in the tango the priest's sister and she dances away. They never seem to deal with the score in musical terms.

JM: Well the people who've written them aren't musical and most paculiarly on mo. liner notes, they seem to consult the composer which I think is ridiculous of the companies. They should consult the composer. He should describe the he should try to use forms, he should describe how he tried to build that piece, then maybe they might get something out of it. The way they do program notes for a concert. But still that's better than, like I said about Laler, saying it was a terrible piece. You mustn't do that. That's the problem with criticism in the theatre. I try as often as possible to go to a play before the previews or else I don't read the reviews. At most I read the first paragraph and the last paragraph, but I don't read the body of the review where they merely tell you the plat. Who the devil wants to go to the theatre and know the plot. I want to be surprised. I very often come out saying I had a marvelous time and they say you know it's a flop and it's going to close in 2 weeks. The cricitits murdered it. That's got nothing to do with it. I enjoyed it.

NAT: So you don't have much use for cricitits ~~xxx~~ at all then?

JM: I wouldn't say that. They're useful.

NAT: What has been your most recent film score to date?

JM: The last one?

NAT: The last one. You say that with a finality. I take it you're not going back.

JM: I don't have to. I don't think I'll do any more and besides the film music of today has moved into a aura in which every film maker is hoping to get a big rock album or something out of it. The film music to aid the film is gone. The film music is going to be a separate commercial entity on its own after the film. Well I did three films all together. I suddenly discovered that I had to buy this apartment that was going cooperative so I made a lot of calls and I ~~did~~ did them boom boom boom one after another. Rachael, Rachael, and I did one in England called Guangy, the Valley of Guangy, and one in Hollywood called Hail Here. And that I think is the last one. And the last one I'll do.

NAT: ~~It~~ It seemed to me that when you were in Hollywood in the 30's and 40's there was still kind of a feeling of there were things to be done with film music. Like a new frontier kind of thing but I...

JM: I wasn't there in the '30's so I never had that experience of actually inventing the method of composing sound films opposed to...there had been a whole group of people who composed scores for silent films which were sent out for the pianist and the organist to read...but when the sound came in, new they had to invent a new--they had to learn how to record the film at the exact time, they had to invent ideas of punching the film and lining the film ~~xxxxxx~~ for the conductor, etc. They had to work out breaking down the scenes. They had to learn how to break down the scene so the composers could read from a printed page after he had learned the film. When I came in, that was already established and by 1950 when I began composing films, they had a whole ~~xxxxxx~~ set up that was wonderful in Hollywood. There was so much at the service, there was a whole department which new how to do it. You knew how to aid you. You had no problems. It was all set up. It's like making musicals. Everybody says how hard it is to make a film musical now, well it is hard because those big staffs that organize film musicals are gone. If you want to make a film musical you've got to do it from ~~xxxx~~ scratch and you've got to do it with people who haven't done it. But they knew all the problems. They knew everything. So people who weren't in the thing could come from NY like myself and they'd make it easy for us. We didn't have to learn anything. It was done for us. But that aspect of Hollywood is over.

NAT: Do you go to the movies often? There is a certain amount of composers that I admire. Jerry Goldsmith is one of them.

JM: Yes, but Jerry goes back along time.

NAT: He's still writing good scores.

JM: Yeah, when he's got good scores to write. Mostly Jerry is doing television now. What I'm thinking of is for instance, Bodonovich wanted to do a great big musical and he didn't have that kind of organization behind him. He was organizing it from scratch. That imitation ~~xxxxxx~~ Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers musical that he did would have been much better if he'd had the whole

musical staff, musical comedy staff from the studio all ready and available and knowledgeable. The little mistakes that he made in that film would have been overcome. It's not his fault. It's just that he was trying to work in a medium that ~~wasn't~~ Hollywood is not prepared for anymore.

NAT: So the one reason that you've gotten ~~out~~ out of film music is that it's a pop approach.

JM: Oh there are a few but they are few and there are a lot of people fighting for them. I'd just assume sit back and write when I want to write.

NAT: When you look back now at the film scores you've done and what work you've done, do you describe the art, the act of creating film music as a craft or as an art?

JM: That's a peculiar question.

NAT: I tend to feel that the people who dump on it ~~xxx~~ critically tend to feel that it's because of the nature of the piece where it's a craft thing where you have X amount of ~~time~~ time to fill it with sort of music but others, people who really love film music see it as an art?

JM: Let me say this. Any composer should be a good craftsman and unfortunately that the schools today are turning out craftsmen in that sense because composition is in a very limited range and composers now don't know the basic grammar. They don't know classic harmony, they don't know counterpoint, they don't know fugue, they don't know form, which means that their craft has to become an inventive craft. That would not be good for films. But when you work on a film, you are an artist and you have a craft and you use both things. You write art and you use your craft to enable you to do it in that particular form which ~~is~~ is the form of having a 2 minute episode and to say what you have to say in the 2 minute episode and that's limited amount of time. You may have 5 or 6 weeks to do the film. So your craft has to be handy. but if you want to write a good score you have to be an artist.]