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Projections of Musical Jewishness: Composers of Hollywood's Golden Age

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Music

by

Aaron J. Fruchtman

August 2016

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Byron Adams, Chairperson

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The Dissertation of Aaron J. Fruchtman is approved:

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University of California, Riverside

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Projections of Musical Jewishness: Composers of Hollywood's Golden Age

by

Aaron J. Fruchtman

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Music
University of California, Riverside, August 2016
Dr. Byron Adams, Chairperson

This dissertation investigates landmark Jewish topic film scores by composers writing dramatic music in the Golden Age of Hollywood (1932-1960). This study is a synoptic presentation of the musical Jewish world of Hollywood. During this period, Jewish composers, who had generally been viewed as marginal figures in music history, found a rare moment of insider status and wrote music informed by their Jewish heritage. Drawing from extensive archival research, I examine the life and music of Max Steiner, one of the most successful composers in Hollywood history, with special emphasis placed on his influential score to the “ghetto film” *Symphony of Six Million* (1932). A separate chapter explores Alfred Newman’s scores to a collection of Jewish topic films

including *The House of Rothschild* (1934), *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947), and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959). This is then compared and contrasted with Newman's musical portrayals of the numinous in his scores to several post-war biblical epics, particularly focusing on *The Robe* (1953) and *David and Bathsheba* (1951). The final chapter focuses on the issue of cross reference in three seemingly disparate films on Jewish subjects by Franz Waxman, Alfred Newman, and Ernest Gold. The themes from *Mr. Skeffington* (1944), *David and Bathsheba* (1944), and *Exodus* (1960) share striking similarities, prompting an investigation of the musical sources that influenced these composers. The search aims to better understand Jewish musical signifiers in Hollywood. The film scores presented in this dissertation are texts that can offer understandings about the composers who created them and their shared social world in Hollywood. With this study there is a new point of departure for discussions about the complicated connection between musical Jewishness and Hollywood.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

On April 17, 1961, comedian Bob Hope hosted the Thirty-Third Academy Awards at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium. Among those nominated for Best Music Score of a Dramatic or Comedy Picture were Elmer Bernstein (1922-2004) for *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), André Previn (b. 1929) for *Elmer Gantry* (1960), Alex North (1910-1991) for *Spartacus* (1960), and Dimitri Tiomkin (1894-1979) for *The Alamo* (1960). On this night, the newlyweds Bobby Darin and Sandra Dee, who had recently met on the set of *Come Sunday* (1961), presented the Academy Award for Music Score to Ernest Gold (1921-1999) for the Zionist epic *Exodus* (1960).¹

For the past several decades, Jews had vanished from the Hollywood screen, but with Gold's Academy Award for *Exodus* Jews were accepted openly in the industry and fully into American society. That all of Gold's fellow nominees were Jewish like him was not surprising to anyone familiar with Hollywood film music. With few notable exceptions, most film composers of the period were Jewish.² Even within a movie industry that was dominated by Jews, a disproportionate number of film composers were

¹ Also nominated for *Exodus* were Sal Mineo for Actor in a Supporting Role and Sam Leavitt for Cinematography (Color).

² Those exceptions include Hugo Friedhofer (1901-1981), Henry Mancini (1924-1994), and Roy Webb (1888-1982).

of Jewish heritage.³ This study explores landmark Jewish topic film scores by Jewish composers writing from 1932 to 1960, a period that has been called the Golden Age of Hollywood motion pictures.⁴ This study will be a synoptic presentation, or as Wittgenstein might say, a “perspicuous representation” of the musical Jewish world of Hollywood, and will examine closely scores of films that had Jewish topics as well as their composers’ social and cultural world. Influenced by Neal Gabler’s social history of the Hollywood moguls, this investigation presents a broad survey of the landscape of Jewish composers working in Hollywood.⁵ As well as surveying this landscape, this study will posit a new understanding of the “Hollywood sound” and an historical examination of the composers’ American Jewish experience. Cultural historians and Jewish studies scholars have considered the influence of Jewish immigrants on America’s motion picture industry.⁶ This study is the first to examine these issues in connection with film scoring and expand the discourse to musicology.

³ Most of the Hollywood studio “moguls” were Jewish. Darryl F. Zanuck (1902-1979) was the rare exception of a non-Jewish Hollywood executive, while Harry Cohn (1891-1958), William Fox (1879-1952), Samuel Goldwyn (1879-1974), Carl Laemmle (1867-1939), Jesse Lasky (1880-1958), Marcus Loew (1870-1927), Louis B. Mayer (1884-1957), David Sarnoff (1891-1971), Joseph Schenck (1878-1961), David O. Selznick (1902-1965), Harry Warner (1881-1958), Jack Warner (1892-1978), and Adolph Zukor (1873-1976) proved the rule.

⁴ For the purpose of this dissertation I will eschew all traditional guidelines regarding definitions of Jewishness, such as those delineated by patrilineal or matrilineal descent. I am not limiting the definition of a Jew. I will discuss composers who were religiously observant as well as those that identified only culturally. Likewise, a Jewish topic film score is broadly defined as a score accompanying a film with a Jewish topic.

⁵ See Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1988).

⁶ See Lester D. Friedman, *Hollywood’s Image of the Jew* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1982). Patricia Erens, *The Jew in American Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984). Omer Bartov, *The “Jew” in Cinema: From the Golem to Don’t Touch My Holocaust*

During the Golden Age of Hollywood (1932-1960), Jewish composers, who had generally been viewed as marginal figures in music history, found a rare moment of insider status and were at times able to create music informed by their Jewish heritage.⁷ Much scholarship on early Hollywood has focused on the Jewish studio moguls that created films that portrayed an idealized melting pot, which functioned to assimilate and propel Jews into the American mainstream.⁸ On the musical front, scholars have traced the influence of traditional synagogue melodies on popular American songs by Gershwin, Berlin, and Kern, among others.⁹ However, none of these studies has addressed the pervasive Jewish musical sensibility of Golden Age Hollywood film scores or investigated the American Jewish experience of these film composers. As a result, composers have been overlooked in histories of the studio system as mere providers of “background” music. In fact, they were important and influential figures, articulating Jewish identity. The effect of their Jewishness either cultural or religious has rarely been

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005). Eric A. Goldman, *The American Jewish Story Through Cinema* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013).

⁷ The term Golden Age of Hollywood characterizes the grand period of Hollywood cinema during the studio era. Hollywood historian Thomas Schatz considers that the Hollywood studio system, “reached maturity during the 1930s, peaked in the war years, but then went into a steady decline after the war, done in by various factors,” including antitrust suits and the rise of television. Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 4. Affixing precise dates to the period are not crucial to understanding its style or artists. Therefore the era can be considered broadly from the 1930s to 1960, which corresponds with the films surveyed in this study that begins with *Symphony of Six Million* in 1932 and concludes with *Exodus* in 1960.

⁸ Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own*, 145.

⁹ See Jack Gottlieb, *Funny, It Doesn't Sound Jewish: How Yiddish Songs and Synagogue Melodies Influenced Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, and Hollywood* (Albany: State University of New York, 2004).

remarked upon. This study addresses this gap in scholarship by analyzing a collection of landmark Jewish film scores composed during Hollywood's Golden Age. I present case studies of individual films with Jewish topics and explore the Jewish musical roots of the scores. The crucial aspect of this investigation is the music itself as well as its relationship to the picture.

The almost total absence of scholarship on this subject is astonishing especially when considering the sheer number of Jewish composers working in Hollywood during this era. As musicologist Michael Long notes,

Finally the historiography of Hollywood as a twentieth-century Jewish 'Empire,' even while it has included Jewish composers and musicians among its roster of mentionables, has not prompted similarly detailed investigations of the extent to which the Jewish background of personalities or repertoires in the area of film music played a crucial role in the reception of most non-indigenous musics, including that of the European orchestral concert hall, in a broad range of twentieth-century American mass media.¹⁰

Likewise, in Nathan Platte's dissertation on musical collaboration in the films of David O. Selznick, he observes the complex relationship between Jewish identity and culture in Hollywood that "is salient to Selznick and Steiner, not to mention Bernard Herrmann, Franz Waxman, and other individuals."¹¹ Despite Platte's apt observation, no dissertation or book-length studies have tackled the subject. Such attempts as have been made to date have been minor at best, and inconclusive at worst. In 1986, Russian-Jewish musicologist Anatole Leikin proposed leading an ambitious research project to document the "careers

¹⁰ Michael Long, *Beautiful Monsters: Imagining the Classic in Musical Media* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 74.

¹¹ Nathan R. Platte, "Musical Collaboration in the Films of David O. Selznick, 1932-1957" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2010), 51, footnote 68.

and artistic contributions of Russian Jewish émigré musicians and their offspring to Hollywood film music.”¹² The announced project hoped to study the Jewish influence on the “Hollywood School.” Regrettably the *B’nai B’rith Messenger* announcement of this study incorrectly stated the researchers had garnered \$100,000 in funding, when in fact they were actively seeking that same total. The money was never raised and the project withered on the vine. In 1988, Clifford McCarty (1929-2005), the consummate film music researcher who followed in the footsteps of Lawrence Morton (1908-1987), sent a letter to Brandeis University’s National Center for Jewish Films requesting a list of composers for Jewish-themed films.¹³ The task was deemed too monumental for the staff and McCarty subsequently dropped the inquiry. Unfortunately this correspondence is all that is held in his research folder entitled “Jewish Films and Composers.”¹⁴ In 2003, Lewis Stevens offered a six-page section of his book *Composers of Classical Music of Jewish Descent* to American-Jewish film composers, which amounts to simply providing a bare list of noted Jewish composers in Hollywood without attempting any cultural analysis or any explanation whatsoever of why Jews were successful there.¹⁵ In 2012, musicologist and cantor Jonathan L. Friedmann offered an insightful seven-page article

¹² “Study Launched, North Honored,” *B’nai B’rith Messenger*, June 27 – July 4, 1986, 8.

¹³ McCarty dedicated the second edition of his invaluable reference work *Film Composers in America* to his mentor Morton. Clifford McCarty, *Film Composers in America: A Filmography, 1911-1970*. 2nd Ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁴ “Jewish Films and Composers” folder 8.f-30 in the Clifford McCarty Collection housed in the Margaret Herrick Library Special Collections. Hereafter abbreviated as CMC, Herrick.

¹⁵ Lewis Stevens, *Composers of Classical Music of Jewish Descent* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2003), 47-53.

entitled, “The Jewish Roots of Hollywood Film Music,” describing the reasons why film music is a Jewish genre.¹⁶ Until the present study, this constitutes all of the limited scholarly inquiry into the subject in English—or, indeed, any other language.

Sensibility and Performance Practice – More Schmaltz, Please!

John Williams (b. 1932), the most recognizably successful film composer of the modern era, is wholly cognizant of those composers who preceded him. Williams observed, “Anyone growing up in music as I have done has so many teachers who are Jewish; it's so much a part of what we know and what we do. Those modalities and peculiarities are very familiar to us.”¹⁷ Williams, who is not Jewish, deliberately evokes Jewishness in his score to *Schindler's List* (1993). Williams studied composition with Sephardic-Jewish émigré Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968) in Los Angeles and piano at The Juilliard School with Dutch-Jewish pedagogue Rosina Lhévinne.¹⁸ Once in Hollywood he worked as an orchestrator and pianist for Alfred Newman (1900-1970), Franz Waxman (1906-1967), Elmer Bernstein, and Bernard Herrmann (1911-1975). As he testifies in this interview, Williams was influenced directly by his Jewish teachers as

¹⁶ Jonathan L. Friedmann, “The Jewish Roots of Hollywood Film Music: Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Hanns Eisler, Alex North, Franz Waxman, Ernst Toch, Bernard Herrmann,” *Western States Jewish History* XLV, No. 1, (Fall 2012): 47-54.

¹⁷ Jack Sullivan, “Conversations with John Williams,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 53, no. 19, (January 12, 2007): B12. Accessed January 16, 2016. <http://chronicle.com/article/Conversations-With-John/4906>

¹⁸ James Westby's dissertation on Castelnuovo-Tedesco is the most comprehensive study of the Italian-born composer's work in Hollywood. James John Westby, “Castelnuovo-Tedesco in America: The Film Music” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1994).

well as by osmosis, working side by side with Jewish composers in Hollywood. Williams notes these “modalities and peculiarities” are familiar to him and implies there is a Jewish sensibility evident in Hollywood scoring.

Two reasonable critiques of my study are interrelated to my selection of Jewish composers as a topic itself. First, is my study an attempt at “Jewhooing?” This term as used by David Kaufman describes Jews identifying and pointing out other famous Jews.¹⁹ The exercise is common among Jews nowadays and results from several factors including but not limited to Jewish insecurity, pride, and a desire to be accepted by the majority culture. This critique has merit and is partially accurate. I approach this topic from a foundation based on identity formation. I have always been interested in Jewish historical topics and film music, therefore the merging of the two seemed aptly tailored to a dissertation-length study. The second and more serious critique concerns identifying people as Jewish who were not comfortable being labeled as Jewish during their lives. Am I thus racially essentializing people such as Max Steiner (1888-1971), who, as will be discussed in the next chapter, was ambiguous at best about being labeled Jewish? I am not “outing” anyone whose Jewish heritage is not now a matter of public record or music history. I do employ questions surrounding Jewish identity as a lens through which to better view their work as well as Hollywood during their lifetime. Furthermore, I have been careful not to essentialize these composers either ethnically or in terms of religion. I have avoided the Procrustean bed of trying to make my subjects fit a preordained pattern

¹⁹ David E. Kaufman, *Jewhooing the Sixties: American Celebrity and Jewish Identity*; Sandy Koufax, Lenny Bruce, Bob Dylan, and Barbara Streisand (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012).

so that they all prove in the end to be religiously observant and spiritually fulfilled Jews. Indeed, that would make for a brief and boring study. Thankfully, Steiner, Newman, Waxman, Gold, and others were not easily categorized and never boring. There is not, nor cannot be, a “normative Judaism,” for these composers or anyone else: there are as many Jewish identities as there are Jews.

The great French novelist and Dreyfusard Émile Zola once sagely noted, “Art is “a corner of nature as seen through a temperament.”²⁰ Zola is helpful in beginning to answer a question relevant to this study that will be revisited several times in these pages: Is there anything overtly “Jewish” in the music of Jewish Hollywood composers? Zola’s aphorism points the way towards an understanding concerning the Jewish Hollywood composer’s *innate* sensibility coming through their scores. These composers, who masterfully donned virtual personae and numerous masks, could not completely conceal their own identities.²¹ Even when seeking to assimilate into American society, their Jewish sensibility or “temperament” was never abandoned. Like the tide to the shore, they were drawn toward familiar markers of Jewish sensibility. There is a Jewish

²⁰ This famous saying is found in Zola’s *L’Oeuvre* (trans. *The Masterpiece*) and translated in Brian Nelson, *The Cambridge Companion to Zola* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4.

²¹ In the emotional ending to *Dark Victory* (1939) Bette Davis must blindly walk up a set of stairs using her hands to feel the way. During shooting Davis stopped director Edmund Goulding and asked him if Max Steiner would be composing the score to the film. He answered that he did not know. She responded, “Well, either I’m going to climb those stairs, or Max Steiner is going to climb those stairs, but I’ll be God-damned if Max Steiner and I are going to climb those stairs together.” This takes the notion of “accompaniment” to new heights. Davis views Steiner as a virtual persona who could have Mickey-Moused her walk up the stairs, thus walking “with” her as she said. “Dark Victory Trivia,” <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0031210/trivia>. Accessed January 21, 2016.

endowment of temperament, an inherent tendency beyond the Hollywood personae that inform the musical styles of any of these composers. It is worth noting that few of the film composers mentioned here would have been particularly enthusiastic to be pigeonholed as expressing just Jewish musical sensibility. Still, that lack of enthusiasm did not efface the presence, either robust or ghostly, of that sensibility. While some klezmer musicians revel in their Jewish identities and evince a strong tie to traditional music, these Jewish film composers of the Golden Age had to serve, first and foremost the dramatic goal of a film. That was their job, and each did it superbly. However, there were situations in certain projects where these composers were able to express their own particular brand of Jewish sensibility; given the situation of Hollywood until *Exodus* was nominated for multiple in 1961, such opportunities were rare. When they did occur, the results were invariably revealing.

Nathaniel Shilkret (1889-1982), the noted conductor who commissioned and composed for the 1945 *Genesis Suite*, intended for that score to straddle the line between art and popular music. He commissioned Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) and Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), the two towering figures of twentieth-century concert music.²² In addition to Schoenberg and Stravinsky, Shilkret commissioned Alexandre Tansman (1897-1986), Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, and Ernst Toch

²² It is well known that Schoenberg and Stravinsky hoped to work in Hollywood, whether for financial gain or for the idealistic dramatic possibilities of the new medium. However, for a variety of reasons neither was successful in completing a Hollywood film score.

(1887-1964), all composers of concert and film music, to write for the project.²³ Arnold Schoenberg's performance instruction for his "Prelude—Earth Was Without Form" from the *Genesis Suite* read "Always without Hollywood style of vibrato and portamento; even larger intervals must not be connected by gliding but, if necessary, but stretching [*sic*]. This gliding is of detestable sentimentality."²⁴ Despite Shilkret's desired "crossover" appeal for *Genesis*, Schoenberg clearly wanted to separate his score from the "Hollywood sound." For our purposes, Schoenberg's instruction aptly describes a Hollywood performance practice characteristic of many Jewish composers and string players.²⁵ In the parlance of the contemporary composers this overtly emotional, even sentimental, style was considered *schmaltzy*. Hugo Friedhofer (1901-1981) and David Raksin (1912-2004) used to write on their sketches, "Please, no chicken fat on the bows!"²⁶ As conductor Alfred Newman was particularly well known for eliciting a *schmaltzy* sonority from the

²³ James Westby provides detailed information on the *Genesis Suite* including the commissioning process, rehearsals, reception history, and interviews with several musicians who performed at the premiere. Westby, "Castelnuovo-Tedesco in America," 283-96.

²⁴ Sabine Feisst, *Schoenberg's New World: The American Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 104.

²⁵ The brief discussion of performance practice in Hollywood in this chapter is merely touching on a larger subject that deserves its own study.

²⁶ William Rosar, "Bernard Herrmann: The Beethoven of Film Music?" *The Journal of Film Music* 1, no. 2/3 (Fall-Winter 2003), 130, footnote 54. Rosar rightly points out that the "all-too-familiar sound" of *schmaltz* could have Jewish, Roma (colloquially known as "Gypsies"), Ukrainian, or Slavic origins but points to an "Eastern European Jewish *melos*, exemplified by Klezmer."

strings.²⁷ In retrospect, Raksin softened his words and took the Yiddish-isms out of the appraisal saying,

When Newman conducted some of my earlier movie scores at 20th-Fox, we often disagreed as to the degree of volatility that was appropriate. But there was never any doubt in my mind that he could do wonderful things with whatever we put before him, as well as his own music.²⁸

It seems “volatility” has replaced “chicken fat” or *schmaltz* and Raksin reflects tactfully on Newman’s treatment of his scores. The lead proponent of this instrumental practice was violinist Louis Kaufman (1905-1994). His childhood teacher Franz Kneisel chided his young talent saying:

He seemed to be often irritated by what he considered to be excessive Jewish emotionalism. This never bothered me, although he often called me *der kleiner Rabbiner* (the little rabbi) when he thought I had overstepped the bounds of correct taste. Even as I respectfully adhered to his basic musical tenets, I insisted on performing in my own way, as I had been so strongly influenced by the playing of Mischa Elman, Jascha Heifetz, and Fritz Kreisler.²⁹

Kaufman learned this “excessive Jewish emotionalism” from the three Jewish masters of the violin.³⁰ Kaufman, whose playing won the admiration of composers such as Ralph

²⁷ *Schmaltz*, the Yiddish word (deriving from the German *smelzen* meaning “to melt”), is defined as rendered chicken fat, an element often found in Jewish Ashkenazi cooking. In English, the term denotes an overly sentimental music or art. The term was used in the Yiddish-American theater in this fashion and migrated into the American vocabulary through vaudeville, Broadway, and Tin Pan Alley.

²⁸ David Raksin, *David Raksin Remembers His Colleagues: Hollywood Composers* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford Theatre Foundation, 1995), 14.

²⁹ Louis Kaufman and Annette Kaufman, *A Fiddler’s Tale: How Hollywood and Vivaldi Discovered Me* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 27.

³⁰ Another Jewish master of the violin, Yehudi Menuhin, remarks, “So significant is the proportion of violinists with international careers who are Jewish that the specification of ‘Jewish violinist’ may appear to some people as totally superfluous, as may indeed the further qualification ‘Russian.’” Yehudi Menuhin, “The Violinist,” in *Next Year in Jerusalem: Portraits of the Jew in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Douglas Villiers (New York: Viking Press, 1976), 329.

Vaughan Williams, offered a performance practice or sensibility that was appreciated in Hollywood where Kaufman recorded for Max Steiner, Franz Waxman, Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957), Herbert Stothart (1885-1949), Bernard Herrmann, Alfred Newman, among many others.³¹ Despite the ubiquity of this performance practice many composers were often censorious towards the term and practice. Ernest Gold was asked to define *schmaltz* and responded:

Regarding 'schmaltz'. I consider it a cynical and derogatory [*sic*] term that I have never had occasion to use as I tend to be neither cynical nor patronizing when it comes to music, my own or anyone else's. I feel that the term 'schmaltz' says something about the person using it, but not about the music under discussion.³²

Of course, *schmaltz* is in the ear of the beholder. Even so, the term is often used in a pejorative manner similar to the way "shtick" is bandied about by comedians. An exception to this disparaging usage is found in a memo from David O. Selznick to Max Steiner about the score to *Gone with the Wind*. Selznick says,

I think the score is coming along fine and if you will just go mad with schmaltz in the last three reels I will undoubtedly be as happy through the years with the memory of a great Steiner score as has always been the case in the past.³³

³¹ Eleanore Rogers noted that the majority of Hollywood studio musicians were of non-American birth. With many of the principals and soloists hailing for England or of Jewish extraction, most notably of the latter group: Toscha Seidel, Louis Kaufman, Max Rabinowitsh, and Bronislaw Gimpel. Eleanore Rogers, "Musicians in Hollywood," *Film Music Notes* 1, no. 7 (April 1942): 6.

³² Ernest Gold Questionnaire, July 12, 1976. The author thanks William Rosar for sharing a digital scan of the questionnaire. This questionnaire was the beginning of an aborted project of asking composers their thoughts on the primary function of music in film and the definition of *schmaltz*.

³³ Memo from David O. Selznick to Mr. Forbes, Mr. Steiner, Mr. Kern, November 17, 1939, reprinted in Rudy Behlmer, ed., *Memo from David O. Selznick* (New York: Random House Publishing, 2000), 256.

Selznick is imploring Steiner to be excessively sentimental in the final 30 minutes of the score, something Selznick found successful in their previous collaborations. Selznick certainly is not requesting an inflected Jewishness here for an epic glorifying the Confederacy. Offering an alternative viewpoint, Hugo Friedhofer responded to a claim that there should be a distinction between good and bad *schmaltz* with the line, “*Schmaltz* is *schmaltz*.”³⁴ Tellingly Friedhofer considered his own “luv” music for March and Loy in *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946) as *schmaltz*.³⁵ This wry observation might imply that Friedhofer and other composers of the Golden Age thought love themes were *sui generis* considered *schmaltz*.

Pastiche

In a revealing routine, comedian and pianist Victor Borge (born Rosenbaum) (1909-2000) explained how a modern composer fashions a hit song. Borge points out the contents needed on his piano consisting of “a batch of music, some old, some new, all kinds of music, a pair of scissors, and some glue in a big bowl like this. And now I would like to show you how to compose a song hit, we hope, in a jiffy.”³⁶ At this point Borge begins to play through possible compositions for “inspiration.” Brahms’s lied entitled “Wiegenlied: Guten Abend, gute Nacht,” (better known as Brahms’s “Lullaby”) is “too

³⁴ William H. Rosar, email to the author, July 21, 2015. Friedhofer’s remark came in a private discussion where Rosar claimed “there is good schmaltz not just bad.”

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Victor Borge, *Victor Borge’s Funniest Moments*, directed by GMG Productions, Chicago, IL: Questar, Inc., 2006. This routine can be found in many incarnations throughout Borge’s career.

slow.” Tchaikovsky is too “bombastic.” Schubert’s “Serenade” from *Schwanengesang*, D.957, though, is deemed “a lovely theme and no one will know that.” He continues in this amusing fashion cutting and pasting masterworks to a blank canvas creating a modern tune and receiving uproarious laughter from the audience. Borge, a Danish Jewish émigré who escaped the Nazi occupation of Denmark by fleeing to Finland and then eventually to America, makes light of the phenomenon of modern—normally Jewish—songwriters imitating or stealing themes from the classical repertoire.³⁷ Borge demonstrates that this form of pastiche is a cultural norm. Later examples of this compositional practice will be seen throughout this dissertation.

In his seminal book, *The Austrian Mind*, William Johnston makes the connection between Jewish sensibility and the topic of pastiche. Johnston sees that “Mahler’s musical citations resembled pastiches by his fellow Bohemian Jew Kraus,” Johnston remarks that Mahler’s “plagiarism of motifs anticipated a technique that composers for motion pictures have perpetuated.”³⁸ Johnston sees pastiche as a practice that originated with Jewish musicians from Austria that migrates to the scores composed especially for silent era pictures.³⁹ Jewish literature scholar Sanford Pinsker sees the impetus for American Jews to create works of pastiche as an assimilative tool:

³⁷ Borge founded a scholarship fund named Thanks To Scandinavia that provided Scandinavian students with scholarships in gratitude for their help in rescuing Jews during World War II.

³⁸ William M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848-1938* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 138.

³⁹ Russian and Soviet composer Alfred Schnittke (though of German-Jewish lineage on his father’s side) deliberately embraced polystylism during his two decades composing film scores and consequently began using this compositional characteristic in his concert works. Alexander Ivashkin, “Schnittke, Alfred,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, accessed February 23, 2016,

The zigzagging alternations are symptomatic of deeply divided impulses in American-Jewish life—to swallow the popular culture which surrounded it, to, in a word, assimilate *everything*; at the same time, to remain separate, slightly superior, culturally intact. The result is pastiche.⁴⁰

Sources and Players

As part of a society of close-knit colleagues in the studio system, film music developed a specific vocabulary foreign to many musicologists. It is important to take time here to explain some of these terms and the overall music scoring process before progressing further. First, the simple part, the music scoring process is part of the post-production stage.⁴¹ Composers of the Golden Age created in a significantly different manner than their colleagues, such as Stravinsky, who composed concert music. The obvious fact is that Hollywood composers write for a collaborative medium; their task is to enhance a film's dramatic goal. Less apparent is the compositional process. One can

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/music/51128>. John Webb sees Schnittke's polystylism being "drawn from the German tradition of Mahler, Schoenberg, and Berg." John Webb, "Schnittke in Context," *Tempo*, New Series, No. 182, Russian Issue (Sep., 1992), 22. Schnittke's quote reads, "I knew my home was not here (in Russia) and for a long time I thought it might be there (in Germany.)" as opposed to the Russians such as Shostakovich. Webb does not directly connect Schnittke, Mahler, and Schoenberg's Jewish heritage to their use of polystylism; however, he does explain Schnittke's *link* to Jewishness (and non-Russianness) by pairing Schnittke's quote on homelessness with Mahler's infamous quote: "I am thrice homeless. As a native of Bohemia in Austria, as an Austrian among Germans, and as a Jew throughout the world. Everywhere an intruder, never welcomed." Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters*, revised ed., trans. by Basil Creighton, ed. with an introduction by Donald Mitchell (New York: The Viking Press, 1969), 109.

⁴⁰ Sanford Pinsker, "Mel Brooks and the Cinema of Exhaustion," in *From Hester Street to Hollywood: The Jewish-American Stage and Screen*, ed. by Sarah Blacher Cohen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 249.

⁴¹ The pre-production stage consists of developing or securing rights to a screenplay and hiring a cast and crew. The production stage is where the film is actually recorded. The post-production stage involves editing of sound, visual effects, and music.

imagine Wagner composing in his embroidered robe, while sipping Champagne in a room filled with polished ormolu. The Hollywood composer worked strictly according to a schedule dictated by the studio—waiting around for inspiration would have gotten them fired, and quickly. Furthermore, these pages looked quite different from scores of concert music. Therefore, we must identify the types of source materials. This study focuses on originally composed music scores.⁴² A score is the entire notated musical accompaniment for a film. The score is comprised of discrete segments of music, referred to as cues, synchronized with individual scenes or sequences. An original musical “sketch” is an unfinished draft of a cue in the composer’s hand (almost always in pencil) on two to six staves. There is understandable confusion with the term among non-film music practitioners, as “sketch” corresponds directly with a *particella*, which is a “short” or “condensed” score in the concert-music repertoire. Certain writers have contested this terminology. Nathan Platte is uncomfortable with such vocabulary as it “creates semantic friction between the function and status of these documents,” pointing toward the traditional definition of “sketches” in musicological literature.⁴³ To assuage his misgivings, Platte created the readily understandable “pencil draft” as a substitute term.⁴⁴

⁴² Many different types of film scores exist including original, collaborative, composite, and compiled.

⁴³ Platte, “Musical Collaboration,” 20. Platte demonstrates the traditional view with Nicholas Marston’s definition of a sketch from *Grove*, see: Nicholas Marston, “Sketch,” *Grove Music Online*, January 2001. Accessed December 12, 2015. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

⁴⁴ Platte, “Musical Collaboration,” 20.

Platte concedes that other scholars, such as Ben Winters, use the term “short score.”⁴⁵

Likewise, music editor and author Roy Prendergast provides an example of a “short score” from Laurence Rosenthal’s *On Wings of Eagles* (1986) that is consistent with this usage.⁴⁶ Platte’s rationale for avoiding the designation “short score” is his apprehension “that it might be too easily confused with the piano-conductor score, a similarly condensed orchestral score that arises later in the scoring process.”⁴⁷ His concern is founded on both scholarship and common sense. However, there are three issues that Platte does not address. First, what do the composers themselves call these scores? Generally, film composers of the Golden Age themselves used the word “sketches.” Second, there is a long—at least in terms of film music history—scholarly tradition of referring to composer’s handwritten manuscripts as “sketches.”⁴⁸ Lastly, and most importantly, “sketch” accurately describes what the material looks like on the page. The “sketch” is the film composer’s *draft* that is usually realized by an orchestrator and

⁴⁵ Ben Winters, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold’s The Adventures of Robin Hood: A Film Score Guide* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2007), 85-88. It should be noted this book belongs to the “Film Score Guide” series edited by Kate Daubney (who wrote the first title of the series when it was still with Greenwood Press, see Kate Daubney, *Max Steiner’s Now, Voyager: A Film Score Guide* (Westport: Greenwood Press), 2000.) Currently the Film Score Guide series sits at nineteen volumes and counting.

⁴⁶ Roy M. Prendergast, *Film Music: A Neglected Art: A Critical Study of Music in Films* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 253-62.

⁴⁷ Platte, “Musical Collaboration,” 21.

⁴⁸ See copious examples of this usage of the term “sketch” in the following works classifying film music materials: Lawrence Morton, “Film Music of the Quarter,” *Hollywood Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (Spring, 1951), 285. H. Stephen Wright, “The Materials of Film Music: Their Nature and Accessibility,” in *Film Music I*, ed. Clifford McCarty (New York: Garland, 1989), 5. William H. Rosar, “On Classifying Film Music Materials,” *The Cue Sheet* 6, no. 2 (April 1989), 49. Stephen M. Fry, “A Glossary of Film Music Terms,” *The Cue Sheet* 10, no. 1-2 (1993/1994), 28.

should be considered as a “sketch” until fully realized. As for the rough drafts of thematic sketches, none survived from the films analyzed in this study. Woefully, most Hollywood composers did not retain their thematic sketches, meaning there is no film music equivalent to the Beethoven sketchbooks that help musicologists understand the composer’s thematic development process.

Beyond pitch material, these sketches are annotated with additional information. For the composer, there are timing notes, as well as dialogue and action cues that help facilitate “catching” significant dramatic moments.⁴⁹ For the orchestrators, there are indications of instruments and textures desired in the orchestral score. The completeness of musical thought in such a sketch varies greatly between composers; the brevity of information provided by the composer expands an orchestrator’s contribution. From the sketch, an orchestrator realizes a full orchestral score in either pencil or pen; in the Golden Age, the orchestrators and copyists used specially treated ink on staff paper called “onion skin.” Like the confusion regarding the nomenclature of sketches and scores, the designations “composer,” “arranger,” and “orchestrator” need clarification within the context of Hollywood film music. Leo Arnaud (1904-1991), who worked as a composer, orchestrator, and arranger at MGM for thirty years, seems particularly qualified to explain the distinctions: “To arrange means to translate the thoughts and emotions of a composer through the means of voices and instruments. Orchestration simply involves

⁴⁹ “Catching” is the exact synchronization of music to action in a film. For example, when a bass strikes a note in step (pun not intended) with each of a character’s steps down a staircase. Continuous synchronization of this sort is referred to as Mickey-Mousing, the term obviously derived from its frequent use in animation. Max Steiner is well known for his recurring use of this technique.

the combining of instruments of different timbres so as to obtain contrast and color.”⁵⁰

Arnaud views “arranging” as a creative endeavor while “orchestrating” is a glorified “paint-by-numbers” task. Film and television composer and at one-time president of the American Society of Music Arrangers Eddy Lawrence Manson (1919-1996) goes even further. He defines the job of an “arranger” as detecting “potential in some wasted tunes and created whole new sources of enjoyment by RE-COMPOSING these tunes.”⁵¹ Both Manson and Arnaud define “arranging” as an art, while viewing “orchestrating” as a skill. In the American Federation of Musicians’ contract of April 1944, orchestrating is defined as “the art of scoring the various voices of an already written composition complete in form. A composition is considered complete in form when it fully represents the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic structure.”⁵² For an alternate viewpoint, composer, arranger, and orchestrator Leo Shuken (1906-1976) commented on orchestrating for Dimitri Tiomkin:

When I looked at the sketch, I felt like I was in a cafeteria – like somebody handing you a tray and telling you to pick something out because there was no orchestra big enough to play everything that was on the sketch, so I just picked out what I thought were the salient or important points and went from there, fortunately it worked out.⁵³

⁵⁰ Leo Arnaud, “Distinctly Different,” in *Music and Dance in the California and the West*, ed. Richard Drake Saunders (Hollywood: Bureau of Musical Research, 1948), 43.

⁵¹ Eddy Lawrence Manson, “Manson on Music,” *Overture* (October 1977). The context of Manson’s musings are critical, as he was currently president of the aforementioned American Society of Music Arrangers when writing in *Overture*, the newspaper of the local chapter of the musicians union. At the time arrangers did not receive royalties and Manson was clearly writing on their behalf.

⁵² American Federation of Musicians Contract, April 1, 1944. Section IV, No. 25, 5.

⁵³ Elmer Bernstein, “A Conversation with Leo Shuken,” in *Elmer Bernstein’s Film Music Notebook: A Complete Collection of the Quarterly Journal, 1974-1978* (Sherman Oaks: Film

Shuken had to transmogrify Tiomkin's highly contrapuntal and elaborately pianistic writing into orchestral timbres: if some notes went by the wayside, that was no tragedy. Shuken went on to say this process was not exactly the work of a "glorified copyist."⁵⁴ Elmer Bernstein, who conducted the above interview with Shuken and employed him on over fifty occasions as his own orchestrator, said,

I always thought that one of the most exciting things about working with orchestrators was that no matter how detailed the sketch is, the orchestrators really make a contribution – there is absolutely no question about that. I think Bernard Herrmann has long held that if you have a complete sketch of the opening bars of *Lohengrin* to six different orchestrators, you'd still get six different results.⁵⁵

These more balanced statements about the importance of the Hollywood orchestrator ring true due to a myriad of artistic choices inherent in the orchestrator's work. The remark that Bernstein attributes to Herrmann is logical and revealing for a composer who refused to work with an orchestrator.⁵⁶ To discount the work of Hugo Friedhofer, Earle Hagen (1919-2008), Edward Powell (1909-1984), Arthur Morton (1908-2000), Ray Heindorf

Music Society, 2004), 110. Shuken also discussed working with different composers and the fullness (or lack thereof) of their sketches. He contrasts Alfred Newman's cues that "gave me a chance to write," with the "completely full sketch" of Henry Mancini. Ibid., 116.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 110.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 110.

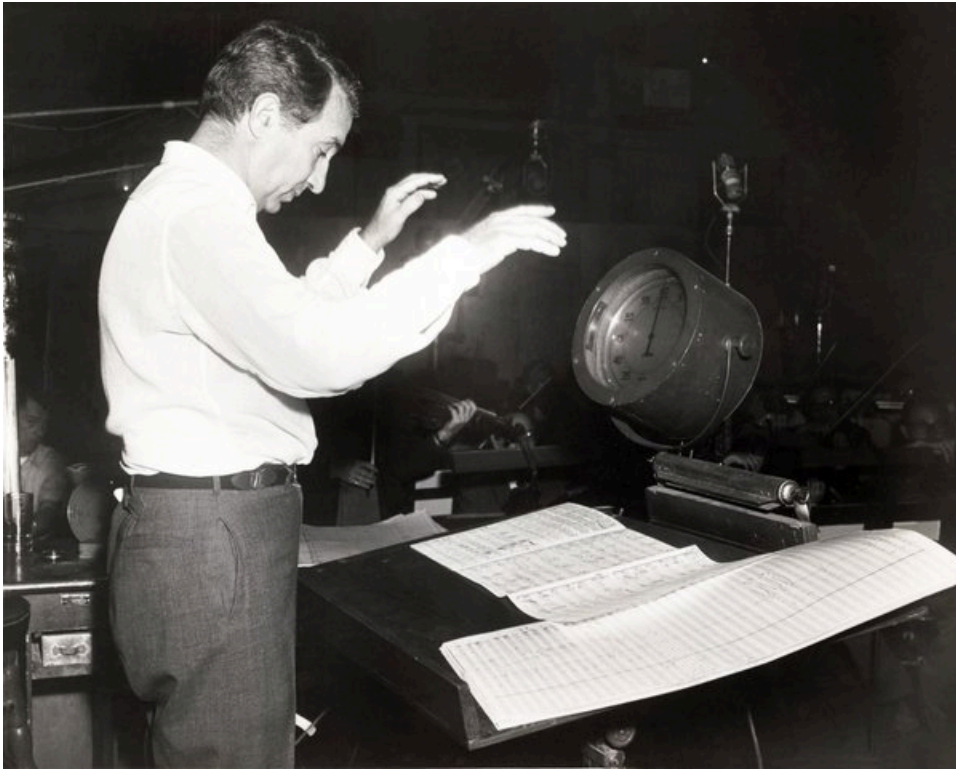
⁵⁶ Lionel Newman, Alfred's brother and successor as music director at Twentieth Century Fox, thought Herrmann "was a marvelous orchestrator, but he couldn't write a tune to save his ass." Steve C. Smith, *A Heart at Fire's Center: The Life and Music of Bernard Herrmann* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 274-75. Lionel is pointing out why Herrmann disavowed collaborating with an orchestrator (as it was his own musical strength) but also unintentionally demonstrates how important an orchestrator could be for a composer.

(1908-1980), or any of the other marvelous orchestrators in Hollywood would be to underestimate grossly their great contribution to Golden Age movie music.

Returning to the source materials that will be delved into further, a conductor book is a bound copy of the conductor parts, which are selected reductions (usually two to six staves) of the full orchestral score.⁵⁷ Copyists prepare these in pen for use during the recording, editing, and dubbing process, as well as for studio reference purposes. During recording sessions most composers conduct from these books not the full scores (see fig. 1.1).

⁵⁷ Mervyn Cooke explains how due to time constraints, “sometimes no full score was prepared, with appropriate instrumental parts being copied out directly from the short score.” Mervyn Cooke, *A History of Film Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 74. Similar to piano-vocal scores for operas, conductor parts come directly from theater music where conductor-pianists played from a condensed score with cues for the orchestra.

Figure 1.1. Alex North conducting *Spartacus* (1960) at Goldwyn. Notice he conducts from the conductor part with a copy of the full score on the podium for reference.



Who are the music department players? The staff consists of composers, arrangers, orchestrators, copyists, and a music director. Except in unusual circumstances, the studio music department received three to six weeks to complete a score from “spotting” to recording.⁵⁸ With such inflexible time constraints, time being money, the collaborative team must work quickly and efficiently. Therefore, while the great majority of film composers were fully equipped technically to complete a full score given

⁵⁸ After the final cut of the film, the director, producers, film editor, music editor, and composer attend a spotting session where these players decide on the function and placement of music in every scene.

unlimited time, few were granted the luxury.⁵⁹ In most cases, it was not a matter of skill but rather a matter of time that made orchestrators a necessity. Roy Prendergast describes how Golden Age music departments functioned similarly to those manufacturing commercial products:

First, the music departments of the studios were a plant. There was usually a music building on the studio lot containing executive offices, cubicles for composers to work in, a music library, and a sound stage where the scores were recorded ...Second, the music departments consisted of a compartmentalized labor force: executives and their secretaries; bookkeepers, librarians; rehearsal pianists; composers, arrangers, and orchestrators; copyists, proofreaders. And orchestral musicians ...Third, the autonomy of the music department was restricted by the necessity for close cooperation with producers, directors, sound engineers, the studio's legal department, and the comptroller.⁶⁰

At the helm of the factory was the music director who was first and foremost responsible for providing the finished audio recording of a score to the studio. Beyond that, duties varied widely between studios and music directors including but not limited to executive administration concerns, assigning composers and orchestrators to particular films,

⁵⁹ Bernard Herrmann is the most well-known composer to eschew working with an orchestrator. Despite his protestations to the contrary, even the "Dean of American Composers," Aaron Copland, worked with an orchestrator on three of his six film scores. When asked in a 1980 interview if he employed an orchestrator in Hollywood, Copland responded, "Oh, I did my own orchestrations." Roger Hall, "An Interview with Aaron Copland," *The CinemaScore and Soundtrack Archives*, October 24, 2013, accessed November 28, 2015. <http://www.runmovies.eu/?p=5702>. Originally published in *Soundtrack Magazine* 19, No. 75 (2000). In Clifford McCarty's essential reference work *Film Composers in America*, he attempts to detail the collaborative contributions of every American film composer working between 1911 and 1970 (over 20,000 films). McCarty shows Copland worked with seven orchestrators on those three films, including Hollywood veterans Jerome Moross and Arthur Morton on *The North Star* (1943). Copland's deliberate fiction is a result of his concert music background that associates genius with autonomy. Erich Korngold was certainly capable of writing beautifully for the orchestra, but in Hollywood he worked with orchestrator Hugo Friedhofer. McCarty, *Film Composers in America*, 72.

⁶⁰ Prendergast, *Film Music: A Neglected Art*, 36. Prendergast provides an excellent organizational chart that clearly delineates the music department's delegation of duties on page 37 of the same text.

conducting scores, selecting preexisting music, and composing scores, as was the case with Alfred Newman. The composer writes the musical work and is generally the only member of the team credited with “original” scoring.⁶¹ As noted above, the orchestrator realizes the composer’s short score crafting a full orchestral score. A contingent of highly talented and largely unknown—at least to the movie-going public—orchestrators had the laborious job of fashioning roughly eighty minutes of music from the composer’s sketch in a matter of weeks.⁶² A copyist then turns the full score into instrumental parts for the recording session; an army of proofreaders was then summoned to correct any mistakes in the parts before the recording sessions: time was money.

Understanding these definitions and processes is crucial to understanding fully the job of the composers under consideration here: these constitute the primary materials that will be referred to repeatedly over the course of this study. Two archives served as my main repositories for primary source materials. The Max Steiner Collection at Brigham Young University contains sketches, scores, and scrapbooks created by the composer. Steiner’s financial records and correspondence—especially his German-language letters to his family in Nazi-occupied Austria have been translated and studied here for the first time—along with his unpublished memoir, *Notes to You*, help to paint a picture of the

⁶¹ In the well-known story behind the music to *Modern Times* (1936), United Artists music director Alfred Newman paired Hollywood-newcomer David Raksin with director and “composer” Charlie Chaplin. Chaplin hummed or whistled tunes to Raksin who was tasked with arranging these musical bits into a coherent score, which Newman later conducted. For Raksin’s reflections on working with Chaplin, see: Tony Thomas, *Music for the Movies* (Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 1997), 212-13. This particular arrangement was exceptional but ghostwriting and un-credited composers were (and are) a part of Hollywood music.

⁶² Some orchestrators eventually became credited Hollywood composers such as David Raksin and Hugo Friedhofer.

“Dean of Film Music.” The University of Southern California Cinematic Arts Archives provided the other major archival sources for this study as it contains the Alfred Newman Collection, Elmer Bernstein Collection, MGM Music Collection, and Warner Bros. Archives. This archive holds an enormous number of conductor books and a more select number of sketches and full orchestral scores. The RKO Radio Pictures Studio Records at UCLA, the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Franz Waxman Papers at Syracuse University, and Sol Kaplan Collection at the American Heritage Center of the University of Wyoming all provided specific scores and correspondence for this investigation as well.

By far these archival primary source materials represent the core of this dissertation. Though the work of many scholars in diverse fields have contributed to my study. Nathan Platte, Michael Long, and Mark Slobin have all conducted research on the life and work of Max Steiner, often leaving specific questions relating to the composer’s sense of Jewish identity unanswered. I have attempted to answer some of their questions directly. Fred Steiner and William Rosar have greatly influenced the chapter on the music of Alfred Newman. While the primary research focus is on film music, this study led to a deep exploration of Jewish music studies through the work of Philip Bohlman, A.Z. Idelsohn, and Jonathan Friedmann. Wherever possible, I have attempted to provide the thoughts of the composers themselves through interviews and writings found in such journals as *Elmer Bernstein’s Film Music Notebooks* and *Film Music Notes*, among many others.

Each of the following chapters reveals a different aspect of the “story” of Hollywood’s Golden Age Jewish composers. With that in mind, there are biographical, analytical, and philosophical inquiries but they all ask the same question in different ways. Reading the scholarship of Carlo Ginzburg has shaped my thinking and provided a methodological approach for this dissertation. Ginzburg is a well-known Italian historian and proponent of microhistory. The field is often misunderstood, due to its name, as a focus on small or esoteric subjects; the prefix “micro,” however, is short for “microscope,” not “micro,” as in small. Put simply, microhistory is an analytic approach to history that sharply focuses on minute details of a particular subject. Ginzburg explains, “In reducing the scale of observation, that which for another scholar could have been a simple footnote in a hypothetical monograph on the Protestant Reformation in Friuli was transformed into a book.”⁶³ Ginzburg alludes to his most famous work *The Cheese and the Worms*, where he reconstructs the world of a sixteenth-century miller by examining inquisitorial records.⁶⁴ Inspired by this model, I attempt to piece together the Jewish world of Golden Age Hollywood film music by looking at representative films, scores, and composers. Ginzburg’s “clue-based evidential paradigm” is best represented in my fourth chapter that reconstructs the musical world of Jewish Hollywood by investigating a short, yet distinctively Jewish theme. But his approach was always present in my archival investigations.

⁶³ Carlo Ginzburg, John Tedeschi, Anne C. Tedeschi, “Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know About It,” *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (Autumn 1993), 22.

⁶⁴ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982).

Chapter Two examines the life and music of Max Steiner, one of the most successful composers in Hollywood history. The investigation begins with a biographical sketch of the Viennese émigré including an exploration of his family's complicated relationship with Judaism and Austrian assimilation. Steiner's conflicted relationship to his Jewish identity does not resolve itself with his arrival in the United States; instead he is confronted with inquiries into his heritage and religious associations. The second half of the chapter looks at Steiner's seminal score to the "ghetto film" *Symphony of Six Million* (1932) based on a story by Fannie Hurst. In the score, Steiner quotes several traditional Jewish melodies and one famous concert work by a German anti-Semite. The chapter concludes with a discussion of producer David O. Selznick's influence on the score and how their shared conflicted Jewish identities shaped the film.

Chapter Three focuses on Alfred Newman's scores to a collection of Jewish and non-Jewish topic films in an effort to compare and contrast Newman's musical portrayals of spirituality. The chapter begins with a consideration of Newman's early score to *The House of Rothschild* (1934) with his allusions to programmatic works and a quotation of the Yiddish folk song "Eli, Eli" that Steiner also appropriated in *Symphony of Six Million*. Next, Newman's score to *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947) is adapted from an earlier score, which was highly influenced by a famous collaborator. For the final Jewish topic film, *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959), Newman borrows from an unexpected musical source in an attempt to universalize the film's message. From the study of Newman's explicitly Jewish film scores, the investigation turns to his most successful work in the genre of post-war biblical epics, particularly focusing on *The Robe* (1953) and *David and*

Bathsheba (1951). This is followed by an examination of Newman's practice of musical borrowing to create a complex web of associations in his evocations of spiritual film characters.

Chapter Four commences with brief biographical sketches and appraisals of the Jewish identities of Franz Waxman, Alfred Newman, and Ernest Gold. The chapter then turns to its main objective of a close examination of three musical themes from the Jewish topic films *Mr. Skeffington* (1944), *David and Bathsheba* (1944), and *Exodus* (1960), respectively composed by Waxman, Newman, and Gold. Executive Jack Warner and his production team on *Mr. Skeffington* were unsure about the degree to which—or if they should at all—call attention to the eponymous protagonist's Jewish identity, Waxman had no such quibbles and provides the character with a leitmotif filled with markers of Jewishness. Alfred Newman's "Nathan theme" from *David and Bathsheba* and Ernest Gold's main theme for *Exodus* share striking resemblances to Waxman's "Skeffington theme." With these similarities in mind, efforts are taken to reveal source materials and their usages in all three films; in effect reconstructing the compositional process of three Golden Age masters and their evocations of musical Jewishness. The chapter concludes with an analysis of several other related themes for Jewish characters by Elmer Bernstein, Miklós Rózsa (1907-1995), George Antheil (1900-1959), and Sol Kaplan (1919-1990).

Chapter 2

Max Steiner's Jewish Identity and Score to *Symphony of Six Million*

Born as Maximilian Raoul Walter Steiner, the composer explains the shortening of his name in Hollywood:

Raoul, I eliminated (maybe because of Castro's brother?) Walter, I thought too effeminate. Maximilian, I later had to cut down because it took up too much room on the screen when I took up my present profession of composer, conductor and scorer of motion pictures. Result: just plain Max Steiner.⁶⁵

Steiner excised Raoul and Walter from his distinguished list of names leaving him with a distinctly German-sounding name, while recognizing that it could often stand as a Jewish-Ashkenazi name as well.⁶⁶ The ambiguity inherent in this decision is a suitable metaphor for Max Steiner's Jewish identity. This chapter explores Steiner's heritage and identity as well as considering how that identity influenced his score to the 1932 film *Symphony of Six Million*.

Max Steiner, who in his heyday was called the "Dean of Film Music," is now mainly remembered for his film scores to *King Kong* (1933), *Gone with the Wind* (1939),

⁶⁵ Max Steiner, "Notes to You: An Unpublished Autobiography," 1963–1964, Max Steiner Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter abbreviated as "MSC"), Box 1, Folder 1, 1.

⁶⁶ Raoul is a French variant of the German Rahlf while Walter is from Old High German. Maximilian is German from the Roman name Maximus. Steiner derives from the German *Stein*, meaning stone.

Casablanca (1942), but he composed music for over 200 other films as well.⁶⁷ Steiner became the “sound” of RKO Pictures and Warner Bros. with his scores to Bette Davis romances, Errol Flynn westerns, and Bogart dramas. Steiner was one of a significant group of Jewish composers who flourished during what has been called the “Golden Age of Hollywood” that also included Franz Waxman, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Dimitri Tiomkin, Alfred Newman, among others.

Scholars rarely touch upon Max Steiner’s Jewish identity though the topic is perhaps as equally complex and intriguing as those of art-music composers, Arnold Schoenberg, Gustav Mahler, and Erich Wolfgang Korngold.⁶⁸ In Steiner’s unpublished memoir, “Notes To You,” Steiner reveals his family’s illustrious history in Vienna. His grandfather, Maximilian Steiner, managed the famous *Theater an der Wien* and produced

⁶⁷ Steiner won three Academy Awards for *The Informer* (1935), *Now, Voyager* (1942), and *Since You Went Away* (1944).

⁶⁸ Equally relevant comparisons could be made to composer Franz Schreker and critical theorist Theodor Adorno. Schreker’s Jewish father who converted to Protestantism and Catholic mother raised him as a Catholic. However, he was usually assumed to be Jewish because of his professional relationships and modernist musical aesthetics. See Christopher Hailey, *Franz Schreker, 1878-1934: A Cultural Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 148, 286. Adorno was likewise raised by a Jewish father who converted to Protestantism and a Catholic mother and was never comfortable being considered a Jewish exile in America. See Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 19-20.

Most musicologists have ignored Steiner’s (and his contemporaries’) Jewish heritage though from conducting numerous personal conversations, most have assumed that he was Jewish. Many film music surveys recount Steiner’s favored stories of his musical theater family. See the following two representative examples of biographical sketches of the composer: Thomas, *Music for the Movies*, 141-46. Max Steiner’s pre-Hollywood life is well recounted in Peter Wegele’s book, however discussion of his Jewish heritage is relegated to a footnote. Peter Wegele, *Max Steiner: Composing, Casablanca, and the Golden Age of Film Music* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 46-7, footnote 80.

the premieres of numerous operettas including Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*.⁶⁹ Gabor Steiner, Max's father, built and owned the *Riesenrad*, the Ferris wheel and landmark of the *Prater* amusement park, which also housed his "Venice in Vienna" attraction. The Steiners were connected socially with the Austrian aristocracy, which enabled Max to mingle with musical luminaries including Franz Lehár, Gustav Mahler, and Jacques Offenbach. Furthermore, Richard Strauss was a family friend: Max called him "Uncle Richard."

In his memoir, Steiner only briefly reflects upon the family's religious and ethnic background. He relates that his mother, Maria Hollman, "was a devout Catholic"⁷⁰ and that his father's family came from Temezvar, Hungary, a German-speaking town, but he omits his father's religious background entirely.⁷¹ The Steiners did not practice any

⁶⁹ Steiner claims that his grandfather "owned and ran" the *Theater an der Wien*. M. Steiner, "Notes to You," 3. The current management of the *Theater* explains that Maximilian was a "co-director" with Marie Geistinger from 1869 to 1875, then sole director from 1875 to 1880, followed by Franz Steiner (Max's uncle) running the *Theater* from 1880 to 1884 after Maximilian's death. "They did not own the theatre, but were tenants." Philipp Wagner, email to the author, March 3, 2015.

⁷⁰ M. Steiner, "Notes to You," 20. There is a noteworthy corollary between Viennese-Jewish philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's family situation and Steiner's.

⁷¹ There is a similarity between Steiner's description of his parents' heritage and that of Bohemian music critic Eduard Hanslick. Eduard's father was Czech and his mother was Jewish. Similarly to Steiner, Hanslick plays up his German lineage despite his Czech and Jewish roots. In his illuminating work on German identity in Vienna, David Brodbeck points out, "Hanslick's silence on the ethnic and religious background of his parents probably had more than anything to do with his self-perception as a German liberal: as I shall suggest, this was the identity that mattered most to Hanslick, and it reflected his cultural beliefs, not his racial or ethnic heritage." David Lee Brodbeck, *Defining Deutschtum: Political Ideology, German Identity, and Music-Critical Discourse in Liberal Vienna* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 27-28.

religion in their home.⁷² Gabor Steiner, Max's father, born in 1858 to Jewish parents married Maria Hollman, a Catholic, in 1883. Maria converted to Judaism in advance of the couple's nuptials. This was commonplace in Austria, as Jews and Christians were legally mandated to convert to the other partner's religion or declare oneself without religious affiliation (*konfessionslos*) in order to wed.⁷³ Gabor then converted to Protestantism and was baptized in 1894 at the age of 36. Steiner never mentions either of these conversions in his memoir and we are left with several questions. If we are to believe Steiner, that his mother was a devout Catholic and the family was religiously non-observant, then why did Gabor not convert to Catholicism at the time of their wedding? Of course, Catholicism was the religion of his wife and that of the dual-monarchy of Austria-Hungary. Scholars may never know the truth of the Steiner's situation, but the decade between their marriage vows and Gabor's conversion to Protestantism was transitional for Vienna's relationship to its Jewish citizens. In the 1880s, many Jews were enamored with Vienna and the equal rights and freedoms Emperor Franz Josef bestowed upon them.⁷⁴ Karl Lueger (1844-1910), an infamous anti-Semite, was still a Democrat and ran for mayor of Vienna on a platform for equality.

⁷² Maximilian Steiner, Max's grandfather, received a burial in the Jewish section of the Zentralfriedhof cemetery. The burial record can be found here: http://www.genteam.at/index.php?option=com_friedhof_ikg&id=62656&limitstart=0&view=detail&lang=en

⁷³ Steven M. Lowenstein, "Jewish Inter-marriage and Conversion in Germany and Austria," *Modern Judaism* 25, no. 1 (February 2005): 24.

⁷⁴ For a balanced take on the Jewish "cult" of the Emperor Franz Joseph see Robert S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford: Published for the Littman Library by Oxford University Press, 1989), 106-08.

However, by the time of Gabor's conversion to Protestantism in 1894, Dr. Lueger was only 10 months away from being elected mayor of Vienna on a platform that used "the Jew" as a scapegoat to rally anti-liberal forces. As will be discovered shortly, Gabor, Max's father, perceived the rising surge of anti-Semitism in Vienna and possibly decided a conversion was a smart political and business decision. As for why he chose Protestantism instead of Catholicism, historian, Marsha Rozenblit, posits, "For some Jewish converts, Protestantism may have appeared more palatable than ornate, ritualistic Catholicism."⁷⁵ Later evidence suggests his conversion was anything but a spiritual decision. Gabor Steiner fled Austria after the *Anschluss* and arrived in America on September 9, 1938. After disembarking from the S.S. Europa, he was asked to declare his race or peoplehood. Gabor answered, "Hebrew."⁷⁶ From studying the ship's manifest, it is apparent that some passengers with surnames of Jewish descent declared themselves as German or Austrian, but Gabor identified as Hebrew.

As for Max Steiner, his relationship to his Jewish identity remains an enigma. Film music historian Peter Wegele states, "Steiner did not talk about his Jewish faith in public."⁷⁷ Even among friends, the usually gregarious Steiner remained taciturn on

⁷⁵ Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 136.

⁷⁶ See the ship's manifest here: http://interactive.ancestry.com/7488/NYT715_6217-0018/25586829?backurl=http://person.ancestry.com/tree/72297214/person/38250734127/facts/citation/241957482986/edit/record.

During a 1921 vacation to New York, Gabor had previously identified himself as German. See the 1921 ship's manifest here: http://interactive.ancestry.com/7488/NYT715_3065-0129/4026101329?backurl=http://person.ancestry.com/tree/72297214/person/38250734127/facts.

⁷⁷ Wegele, *Max Steiner*, 46.

discussions of his heritage. In a recent oral interview with one of Steiner's friends, John Morgan noted, "Max didn't talk about his family or pre-film life."⁷⁸ It should always be remembered that Steiner was born and raised in a Vienna with escalating political, cultural, and racial anti-Semitism. The Steiners envisioned themselves as an assimilated Jewish family and thoroughly Viennese. At the same time, they could not help but have a Jewish identity in *fin de siècle* Vienna. While Steiner was in attendance at the *Franz-Joseph-Gymnasium* in 1900, 126 of the 290 students (43.4%) enrolled were Jewish.⁷⁹ Marsha Rozenblit describes the Jewish experience of attending a *Gymnasium*: "Acquiring secular knowledge was a Jewish group activity, and the group nature of this experience modified and attenuated assimilation."⁸⁰ Despite the Steiner family's intent, it was impossible to be assimilated completely in Viennese society. There was an overrepresentation of Jews in the *Gymnasien*, as Vienna only had an 8.8% Jewish population.⁸¹ Historian Steven Beller observes, "It was inevitable that Viennese modern culture would be largely Jewish, for the cultural elite tended to be made up of Jews among other Jews."⁸² Steiner belonged to this educated cultural elite of Vienna. Furthermore as a family intimately connected to Vienna's musical culture, Steiner associated with other Jews even more than most of the cultural elite. Many of the most

⁷⁸ Morgan, John. Interview by Aaron Fruchtmann. Personal interview. Los Angeles, July 23, 2014.

⁷⁹ Rozenblit, *Jews of Vienna*, 105, Table 5:1.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁸¹ Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 17, Table 2:1.

⁸² Beller, *Vienna and the Jews*, 69.

influential composers and performers in *fin de siècle* Vienna were of Jewish heritage including among others Karl Goldmark, Gustav Mahler, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, and Franz Schreker.

In addition to the increasing anti-Semitism led by Lueger, there was a pride in Jewishness accompanied by the new political ideology of Zionism and Jewish nationalism. The *Neue Freie Presse* ran stories of Austrian economic boycotts and intimidations of Jewish businesses, as well as copious coverage of the Dreyfus affair in France.⁸³ The “Jewish Question” was ubiquitous. Many Jewish families, including the Steiners, sought total assimilation into Viennese society; this proved impossible. If Gustav Mahler converted to Catholicism, married the Viennese-born Alma Maria Schindler, and occupied the prestigious directorship of the Vienna Court Opera and still knew he could not shed his Jewish identity, Max Steiner may well have felt unintentionally bound to his heritage. Max resided in a villa Gabor purchased from Archduke Franz Ferdinand. He was impressed and enamored with a moribund aristocracy. The liberal utopia of the 1860s and 1870s seems not to have ceased in Steiner’s home throughout the 1880s to 1900s. The chaos of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna is unremarked upon in Steiner’s remembrances. Author Hermann Broch explains a possible reason for the Steiners’ naiveté:

The apocalyptic hovered over the entire world, most hectically over Germany, most gently in the actual center of decline, Austria; for the center of a typhoon is always governed by the vacuum and its stillness. If tension and anxiety were everywhere else, here no one was anxious, for a sense of decline had in any case

⁸³ The *Neue Freie Presse* reporter dispatched to cover the Dreyfus trial and degradation was none other than future Zionist leader Theodor Herzl.

dominated for a hundred years, and if elsewhere people sought after new means of breaching the threat of ruin, here they were content with the means of conservatism and conservation, because it no longer paid to start new experiments—it was only worth delaying the unavoidable end.⁸⁴

Perhaps Steiner was so entrenched in his aristocratic social world that he shut out contradictory and unpleasant memories. It is also possible the Steiner family was cognizant of the critical events changing their nation. The Germanization of Austria through the Linz Program of 1882, which Carl E. Schorske notes was not “directly anti-Semitic in intent” would soon become a nationalist force against Vienna’s Jews.⁸⁵ Likewise Karl Lueger’s election as mayor of Vienna in 1897 was the end of all hope for Viennese liberalism. Lueger’s infamous line on Jewishness, “*Wer Jude ist, bestimme ich* (Who is a Jew is something I determine),”⁸⁶ must have shook the internal confidence of Jewish families seeking Viennese assimilation. Steiner’s carefully tailored memoir belies truths he knew all too well. In a letter sent across the Atlantic to Max from Gabor, his father states,

It has become extremely difficult here. Because of the hounding of the Jews...If I didn’t have you, the only thing possible would be to shut down. It is horrible the way things are going. The theaters are having a miserable time, two have already closed. The *Theater and der Wien* is miserable, The *Volksoper* is close to shutting down.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Hermann Broch and Michael P. Steinberg, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and His Time: The European Imagination, 1860-1920*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 175.

⁸⁵ Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 126. Two of the central creators of the platform were indeed Jews—Victor Adler and Heinrich Friedjung.

⁸⁶ Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna*, 145. Nazi leader Hermann Göring would later appropriate this phrase in his speeches about German Jews.

⁸⁷ Letter to Max from Gabor, Hainbach 2/12, MSC, Box 1, Folder 5. The Register of the Max Steiner Collection notes this letter is from Gabor between 1933-1942. Regrettably Gabor omitted

It is unclear if “the Jews” mentioned in this letter should include the Steiners or not but the situation had certainly affected Gabor’s finances and made him skeptical of a future in Vienna.

Once in America, Steiner still contended with questions about his identity. On August 14, 1937 Steiner received a solicitation from John Simons, editor of the biographical publication *Who’s Who in American Jewry*, requesting Steiner review an article about himself set to be included in the forthcoming third edition of *Who’s Who*. Marie Teller, Steiner’s secretary at Warner Bros., responded, “although it is not generally known, Mr. Steiner is not of the Jewish Faith inasmuch as his father is a protestant and his mother is catholic [*sic*].”⁸⁸ Simons responded that, “I am including in the current edition biographical sketches of all notable men and women whose racial descent is Jewish whether they profess the Jewish faith or not” and to review the article.⁸⁹ Teller again responded for Steiner and insisted that he “does not wish to be represented”⁹⁰ and does not have time to correct the article.⁹¹ Simons made clear that they nonetheless

the year in the date of this letter. The letter’s signature is nearly illegible but shares writing traits with signatures of Max’s aunt Jennie. However the content of the letter seems presumably written by Gabor.

⁸⁸ *Who’s Who* Correspondence, MSC Box 4, Folder 1.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Simon’s desire to include Steiner in *Who’s Who* against his wishes has precedents. In 1927 Gdal Saleski published *Famous Musicians of a Wandering Race*, which contained biographical sketches of Jewish figures. The composer section includes Maurice Ravel, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Max Bruch; all non-Jewish composers with a tenuous connection to Jewish music and heritage. Gdal Saleski, *Famous Musicians of a Wandering Race: Biographical Sketches of Outstanding Figures of Jewish Origin in the Musical World* (New York: Bloch Pub. Co., 1927),

planned to include Steiner in their biography and requested Steiner specify his allegiance to a religious denomination. The next salvo in the correspondence comes from Steiner's attorney, Sanford I. Carter, "Mr. Steiner's very obvious reasons for not wishing to be included in this publication have already been explained to you and I, frankly, cannot understand your insistence and your refusal to respect his wishes."⁹² Carter admits that this is an "awkward situation" and that his New York partner "will discuss the matter personally with you."⁹³ After reiterating Steiner's desire of omission from the publication the lawyer also cautions that this would be a violation of Steiner's privacy. In the final piece of correspondence Simons reiterates that Steiner will be included in their exhaustive biographical compendium. Regrettably we will never know the substance of the personal conversation between Steiner's New York representative and Mr. Simons. Steiner is indeed included in the biographical dictionary and the concluding line of the entry notes that Steiner "Professes Christianity."⁹⁴ Is this what Steiner or his representatives explained in person? Or was something else discussed? Perhaps the next letter found in the Steiner Collection sheds light on this situation.

On March 29, 1939 Steiner sent a letter to Hal Wallis, executive producer of the Warner Bros. film *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, for which Steiner had composed the score,

59, 70, 9. The three gentile composers remain in Saleski's 1949 edition, renamed as *Famous Musicians of Jewish Origin*. Gdal Saleski, *Famous Musicians of Jewish Origin* (New York: Bloch Pub. Co., 1949), 129, 147, 29.

⁹² *Who's Who* Correspondence, MSC Box 4, Folder 1.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ John Simons, ed., *Who's Who in American Jewry: A Biographical Dictionary of Living Jews of the United States and Canada* (New York: National News Association, 1938), 1036.

asking that his name be excluded from “publicity and credits in connection with”⁹⁵ the film. Steiner pleads with Wallis, “Will you please make sure that this is attended to, because I really am very worried and wish I had never agreed to do the picture. I still have my aunt in my house in Vienna.”⁹⁶ Unlike the editor, Simons, Hal Wallis, Steiner’s friend and frequent collaborator, granted Steiner’s request. The aunt referred to in the correspondence is Jennie Steiner who later became Jennie von Singer when married to Baron Ferdinand von Singer, who Steiner asserts was a member of the Singer Sewing Machine family.⁹⁷

Steiner’s Philanthropy

Steiner’s conflicted sense of Jewish identity is further explicated by his philanthropy. Steiner constantly overworked himself at the studio and managed his finances poorly. He paid alimony to several ex-wives and supported multiple family members in the United States and in Europe. Despite Steiner’s successes in Hollywood, he was always behind on his taxes and fretting over expenses. The Max Steiner Collection at Brigham Young University preserve Steiner’s financial records for the years 1939-1952. During that interval, Steiner periodically donated to The Red Cross, The LA War Chest, Red Cross Infantile Paralysis and Community Chest, and Cedars of Lebanon

⁹⁵ Hal Wallis Letter, MSC Box 4, Folder 1. *Confessions* was one of the first openly anti-Nazi films produced in Hollywood. The majority of the cast and crew were uncredited.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ M. Steiner, “Notes to You,” 4.

Table 2.1 Steiner’s Non-Jewish Philanthropy⁹⁸

Charity	Year	Amount Donated in Dollars	2015 Inflation Equivalent Dollars
Red Cross	1945	350	4,624.23
LA War Chest	1945	1,000	13,213.22
Red Cross Infantile Paralysis	1946	1,000	12,196.82
Red Cross Infantile Paralysis	1948	1,000	9,868.80
Red Cross Infantile Paralysis	1949	1,000	9,993.19
Red Cross Infantile Paralysis	1950	1,000	9,868.80
Cedars of Lebanon Hospital	1951	250	2,467.20
Cedars of Lebanon Hospital	1952	250	2,243.75

Hospital (see table 2.1). Notably the only consistent donation Steiner made was to the United Jewish Welfare Fund—a Jewish fund founded to respond to the “refugee crisis [in Europe] and the struggle to secure the new State of Israel.”⁹⁹ Steiner established a weekly direct deduction from his Warner Bros. salary check to be donated to this fund (see table 2.2). This arrangement lasted for all of the years of which financial records are held in the BYU archive’s collection and ranged from \$1000 per year and increased to \$2000 per year by 1952. Social historian Neal Gabler asserts, “Jack Warner demanded

⁹⁸ The final column in Table 2.1 represents the equivalent amount in 2015 dollars using an inflation calculator from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which can be found here: <http://www.bls.gov>.

⁹⁹ Deborah Dash Moore, *To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and L.A.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 193. Moore also observes that more than fifty percent of the Welfare Fund’s donations came from Hollywood. *Ibid.*, 60. The inflation calculator above helps demonstrate Steiner’s sizable donations to the charity.

Table 2.2 Steiner's Jewish Philanthropy

United Jewish Welfare Fund		
Year	Amount Donated in Dollars	2015 Inflation Equivalent Dollars
1939	1,500	25,665.97
1940	1,000	16,988.43
1941	1,500	24,269.18
1944	1,050	14,189.20
1945	1,000	13,213.22
1946	1,500	18,295.23
1947	1,500	15,998.07
1948	1,500	14,803.20
1949	2,000	19,986.29
1950	2,000	19,737.59
1951	2,000	18,295.23
1952	2,000	17,950.04

that his Jewish employees donate a percentage of their salary to the United Jewish Welfare Fund.”¹⁰⁰ Steiner never mentions such a dictate in his memoir and there seems to be no hard evidence to support this claim. His silence leads one to believe he approved of the donation. A few months prior to his death, Steiner would receive a Golden Book Certificate from the Jewish National Fund on the occasion of his eighty-third birthday.¹⁰¹ That recognition demonstrates Steiner's consistent donations to multiple Jewish

¹⁰⁰ Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own*, 289.

¹⁰¹ Samuel and Hagith Sternberg inscribed the certificate and would also honor Steiner with 10 trees planted in Israel after the composer's passing in 1972.

philanthropic endeavors throughout his life. This connection to Jewish charities contradicts Steiner's public persona but reveals his private sympathies.¹⁰²

Steiner's Score to *Symphony*

Steiner's Jewish identity informs his work as a film composer as well as his activities as a philanthropist. This is evinced in his score for the film *Symphony of Six Million*. The plot of this film is particularly telling in this context. Felix Klauber,¹⁰³ the protagonist, (played by Ricardo Cortez¹⁰⁴) a virtuous young Jewish boy is seen developing through childhood and becoming a neighborhood general practitioner and surgeon who looks after the community without concern for payment of services—he is an idealist of the highest order.¹⁰⁵ His older, scheming brother, Magnus, the antagonist,

¹⁰² Hollywood writer Ben Hecht described the moguls guilt-ridden support of Jewish charities: “Hollywood’s Jews, like rich and important Jews everywhere, are easy marks for Jewish philanthropies. They seldom turn a frock-coated panhandler from their door. They are as eager to support Jewish orphanages, hospitals and other charity projects as the projects are eager to be supported. This eagerness (on the part of my rich landmen) is the product of a guilt that blooms in the soul of the immigrant Jew who turns into an American nabob.” Ben Hecht, *A Child of the Century* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 538.

¹⁰³ Named Felix because of Felix Mendelsohn, but also as a Jewish name that everybody recognized as such.

¹⁰⁴ Born Jacob Krantz.

¹⁰⁵ There is symbolic, or even mythological, importance to Felix being a doctor. Physician and author, Peter E. Dans, notes, “Felix (Ricardo Cortez), their eldest child, desperately wants to serve the poor by becoming a doctor. The movie’s old-fashioned scrolling narrative announces his admission to medical school as if it were a Bar Mitzvah: ‘After years of devoted study striving towards an ideal, dream becomes reality as the boy becomes man!’” Peter E. Dans, *Doctors in the Movies: Boil the Water and Just Say Aah* (Bloomington: Medi-Ed Press, 2000), 231. Dans then notes Felix’s dual relationship as savior in a medical and spiritual sense, as the “personification of Richard Selzer’s well-known image of the surgeon as doctor-priest or, in Felix’s case, a doctor-rabbi.” Dans, *Doctors in the Movies*, 231.

(played by Noel Madison¹⁰⁶) lusts for material success, convinces Felix the family needs financial assistance and that Felix must leave the Lower East Side for a fancy Park Avenue office. Felix complies and his move uptown is monetarily successful. In consequence, however, he neglects his family and the ailing children of the tenements. Birdie, Felix's sister, is the most remarkable and sophisticated character—unsurprisingly, as this is based on a story by author Fannie Hurst.¹⁰⁷ Felix's father, Meyer Klauber (played by Gregory Ratoff¹⁰⁸) is a cross between the traditional stern patriarch and the modern pathetic father-figure of so many Jewish family dramas. Meyer is occasionally rigid as a parent but his affable nature usually shades him towards the pathetic.¹⁰⁹ Meyer works as a garment cutter, a typical Lower East Side job for an Eastern European Jewish immigrant.¹¹⁰ Felix's mother, Hannah Klauber (played by Anna Appel), is a Long-

Additionally, positioning Felix as a doctor endowed him with particular distinction to the film's Jewish audience, as Irving Howe opines, "Jews have had an overwhelming reverence for doctors, which made them regard medical aid as their first need." Irving Howe and Morris Dickstein, *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 150. The physician being tied to a dignified British-inspired leitmotif adds a secondary level of representation to the message—which will be discussed shortly!

¹⁰⁶ Born Noel Nathan Moscovitch.

¹⁰⁷ Literary scholar Stephanie Thompson notes Hurst was an "outspoken commentator on women's rights." Thompson, Stephanie Lewis, *Influencing America's Tastes: Realism in the Works of Wharton, Cather & Hurst* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 156. Thompson also sees Hurst as "teaching" her readers about social issues throughout her writing. *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰⁸ Born Gregory Ratner.

¹⁰⁹ For example, Meyer does not violently discipline his children, unlike Cantor Rabinowitz in *The Jazz Singer* (1927).

¹¹⁰ See Irving Howe's depiction of the Jewish garment industry in the Lower East Side. Howe and Dickstein, *World of Our Fathers*, 154-59.

Suffering Mother, who only lives for her children's successes.¹¹¹ Later, Meyer Klauber, Felix's father, collapses and a brain tumor is diagnosed. Felix is persuaded by his mother, Hannah, to operate on his father; the operation is unsuccessful and Meyer dies on the table. Soon after, Felix is given a last chance at redemption when his gentile, childhood girlfriend, Jessica, (played by Irene Dunne) requires spinal surgery.¹¹² This operation is successful and Felix departs Park Avenue for his former clinic on Cherry Street—redemption achieved, melodramatic sentiment espoused, and early-Hollywood values imparted. Given its period, the title *Symphony of Six Million* refers to the six million residents of New York City in 1932. Of course, there is a chilling coincidence in entitling a Jewish-themed film with that ominous figure given the later significance.¹¹³

Symphony is a holdover from the era of silent films, as it is part of a distinct genre of “ghetto films,” which would be “soon replaced by the Street Film” a genre term coined by film historian Patricia Erens, in which obviously Jewish characters are given

¹¹¹ The Long-Suffering Mother is an archetypal term coined by Patricia Erens. Erens, *The Jew in American Cinema*, 135. For a comprehensive study of the many faces and stereotypes of the Jewish mother, see: Joyce Antler, *You Never Call! You Never Write!: A History of the Jewish Mother* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹¹² Two side notes about Jessica: 1) Steiner accompanies this non-Jewish character with the music of “Hatikvah,” the future national anthem of Israel. The music of “Hatikvah” composed by Samuel Cohen in 1888 set Naftali Herz Imber's lyrics written in 1878. The text's message is one of hope and longing for the Jewish homeland. The seemingly incongruent pairing of non-Jewish character with the Jewish national anthem is likely symbolic for Steiner and Selznick. This “hope” is for complete assimilation into American society through intermarriage. 2) Jessica was duly named, likely because Hurst is playing on an association with Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, where Jessica is the daughter of Shylock and in love with Lorenzo, but here, Jessica is Felix's non-Jewish love interest.

¹¹³ There is added significance to the word “*Symphony*” in the title as this score represents one of the first important soundtracks to implement dramatic symphonic scoring.

supporting roles.¹¹⁴ The film's executive producer¹¹⁵ David O. Selznick disagrees with Samuel Goldwyn's infamous quote, "You can't have a Jew playing a Jew, it wouldn't work on screen."¹¹⁶ A Jewish cast member performs each of the Jewish roles in *Symphony*. Erens describes that, "For most of the thirties the Jew as a recognizable character practically disappears from the screen."¹¹⁷ Then, why was *Symphony* allowed to be so overtly Jewish?

Writers J. Walter Ruben and Bernard Schubert based the screenplay of *Symphony of Six Million* on Fannie Hurst's story "Night Bell." Hurst was a wildly successful author and an assimilated Jew uncomfortable with her Jewish identity. She said Felix Klauber, the story's protagonist, should be a man, "unconsciously possessed with a Christ-like instinct for service"¹¹⁸ and the family should be "Jewish incidentally."¹¹⁹ *Symphony* is a vehicle for discussing social mobility in the manner of a parable. The message can be summarized as "money is the root of all evil." Hurst wanted the characters to assimilate

¹¹⁴ Erens, *The Jew in American Cinema*, 135. Another holdover is the biographical film *The House of Rothschild* (1934), which is discussed in detail in chapter 3.

¹¹⁵ Selznick introduced the title of executive producer in Hollywood with its first appearance in the credits to *The Lost Squadron* (1932).

¹¹⁶ Friedman, *Hollywood's Image of the Jew*, 74.

¹¹⁷ Erens, *The Jew in American Cinema*, 135.

¹¹⁸ Brooke Kroeger, *Fannie: The Talent for Success of Writer Fannie Hurst* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1999), 184.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

and create the Hollywood-favored “melting pot”¹²⁰ cultural model that homogenized immigrants and hoped to aid Jewish assimilation into American society. Then how did this become a Jewish film? Director Gregory La Cava added sentimental—or as Hurst later noted “*passé*” touches—while Selznick hired a conventionally Jewish cast and, most significantly, assigned Max Steiner to score the film. At first Selznick only asked Steiner to score Meyer’s death scene, but was sufficiently impressed that he asked him to score the balance of the film with original music.

Figure 2.1 *Symphony of Six Million*, Still from Klauber Surgery Scene



Symphony of Six Million (1932) bears a striking narrative resemblance to another intergenerational “conflict” film, *The Jazz Singer* (1927). Both films arrive at a dramatic climax accompanied by the music of *Kol Nidrei*. In the case of *Symphony*, specifically the

¹²⁰ *The Melting Pot* (1908) by British Jewish playwright Israel Zangwill is about a Russian-Jewish composer who emigrates to America and falls in love with a Gentile. He composes a great American symphony entitled “The Crucible.”

Kol Nidrei, Op. 47, for violoncello and orchestra written by German composer Max Bruch, who was certainly not Jewish.¹²¹ Unexpected to many, Max Bruch admired the *Kol Nidre* melody but held anti-Semitic convictions. Bruch was a Bismarck German nationalist, and his biographer, Christopher Fifield, describes his religion as “militant Protestantism.”¹²² Bruch characterized Steiner’s Hollywood colleague, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, as a “Jewish rogue” who “writes senseless stuff in the manner of Reger.”¹²³ Meyer Klauber is linked melodramatically to *Kol Nidre*. We know ultimately the outcome of Felix operating on his father as we hear the strains of the melody played (and interlaced with Ratoff’s recitation of the *Shema* prayer¹²⁴) as he is wheeled into the operating room (see fig. 2.1). Musicologist Michael Long states that, “*Kol Nidre* was ensconced in Hollywood’s imagination as a musical utterance of lamentation.”¹²⁵ Most famously *Kol Nidre* is used to express sentimentally the passing of Cantor Rabinowitz in *The Jazz Singer*. While *Kol Nidre* accompanies this scene to emotionally link the score with previous representations of Jewish bereavement in American mass media, more

¹²¹ Bruch’s *Kol Nidrei*, which is based on fragments of the chant, is associated with the High Holidays by many cantors. In fact, Bruch’s setting is still played in most Reform synagogues in an arrangement for solo violoncello and piano or organ. As we will learn shortly, this is ironic to say the least. Bruch became aware of *Kol Nidrei* through his friend, Berlin synagogue cantor, Abraham Jacob Lichtenstein. Ruth HaCohen, *The Music Libel Against the Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 333.

¹²² Christopher Fifield, *Max Bruch: His Life and Works* (London: Boydell Press, 2005), 109.

¹²³ Fifield, *Max Bruch*, 300. Like the anti-Semitic Richard Wagner, Bruch’s ideological prejudice did not preclude him from embracing several close friendships and professional relationships with Jewish artists including Joseph Joachim, Otto Goldschmidt, Hermann Levi, and Ferdinand David.

¹²⁴ Observant Jews recite the *Shema Yisrael* prayer as their final words before an expected death.

¹²⁵ Long, *Beautiful Monsters*, 86.

importantly Felix is asking Meyer for absolution for his sin.¹²⁶ Poetically, Meyer must die as moral retribution for Felix's sin of neglecting his community in favor of financial success. Steiner musically portrays this by quoting *Kol Nidre*, a ritual that exempts Jews from broken vows.

Figure 2.2 Steiner, *Symphony of Six Million*, “Papa – Papa!,” mm.1-12. Score and annotations are transcribed from the original sketch. MSC. Box 7, Folder 35, Volume 8.

Part I.
CUE: Papa - Papa!
Adagio molto triste

Reel 9

operating room, Father dead.

mf

pp
(after death)

7

30 PIANO

B

They wheel the old man out!

p ORGAN
(Talk to Bernard)

¹²⁶ *Kol Nidre* (All Vows) is a legal formula exempting Jews from past and future oaths. The declaration was likely created in the eighth century. For a thorough history of *Kol Nidre* see Lawrence A. Hoffman, *All These Vows: Kol Nidre* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Pub., 2011).

Meyer Klauber's death is scored with the first three measures of *Kol Nidre* followed by a five-measure development of the descending half-step motive derived from the first two notes of the *Kol Nidre* theme. This is immediately followed in measure nine by the famous Yiddish song by Mark Warshawsky, "Oyfn Pripetshik." The song's first three verses tell of a rabbi teaching his students the Hebrew alphabet. The fourth stanza darkens the mood with the line "how many tears lie in these letters." In Steiner's usage there is a layered meaning. The song has been heard throughout the film as source music played by Birdie, Felix's sister.¹²⁷ Meyer, the family's patriarch, wanted Birdie to learn music and for all of his children to be educated Americans. Birdie is the only Klauber offspring able to successfully manage the unique challenge of acculturating American values and retaining a strong Jewish identity. As a song "Oyfn Pripetshik" serves to exemplify intergenerational conflict within the Klauber family.

Is Steiner using Jewish musical materials for "local color?" Of course, musical exoticism was and remains common currency in Hollywood film scores. Or is Steiner more familiar with the materials and therefore capable of creating evocative and trenchant allusions by using these traditional melodies?¹²⁸ This is the only cue in the

¹²⁷ Source music comes from a specified or implied narrative source. As opposed to scoring that comes from an unspecified external (to the narrative) source.

¹²⁸ Steiner composed scores for several Jewish-themed films after *Symphony* including: *Marjorie Morningstar* (1958), *The Life of Emile Zola* (1937), and *The Jazz Singer* (1952). Though to ascribe much significance to this fact would be misleading, as Steiner was likely assigned these films as the top composer at RKO and Warner Bros.—there was a well understood hierarchy at Warner Bros. with Steiner, Korngold, and Waxman, respectively, being assigned the top films.

score that Steiner scored for organ and the role the instrument plays is telling.¹²⁹ In the composer's short score, he writes a terse note to the orchestrator, "Organ (Talk to Bernard [*sic*]),"¹³⁰ meaning his long-term collaborator Bernhard Kaun. Musicologist Tina Frühauf points out, "The organ came to be regarded as emblematically Christian"¹³¹ because of the role of the organ in Catholic Church services, while the instrument has had a marginal role in Jewish music, and one filled with controversy. Instrumental music was banned in synagogue services after the destruction of the Second Temple as a sign of mourning. Frühauf explains that the organ reappeared in Jewish worship in the 16th century but not until the *Haskalah*¹³² was the organ reintroduced into Jewish worship in the Reform liturgy.¹³³ Reform synagogues believed it "encourage[d] a mood of devotion,"¹³⁴ while Orthodox leaders argued it was a "sign of assimilation and imitation

¹²⁹ In addition to organ, Steiner concludes Meyer's death cue with ascending harp glissandi signifying a heavenly climb and a death knell repeated six times by church bells—quite the significant choice of instrumentation. It is worth noting, Max Bruch also made many arrangements of his *Kol Nidrei*, and among them are a solo organ arrangement and a second version with organ accompanying a solo violoncello.

¹³⁰ This is the only point in the score Steiner has a reminder note to discuss an issue with Kaun. As Steiner had studied the organ with Josef Brenner at the Imperial Academy of Music in Vienna, it seems likely this comment is to discuss the type of organ to be used. Michael Long keenly notes the organ is "not a grand organ, but the small sound associated with poor synagogues and domestic parlors." Long, *Beautiful Monsters*, 99. Perhaps this is a similar sound to the organ found in the Berlin home of Jacob Herz Beer, father of Giacomo Meyerbeer, where large Reform services were held in 1815. Tina Frühauf, *The Organ and Its Music in German-Jewish Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 29.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³² The Jewish Enlightenment (18th-19th centuries).

¹³³ Frühauf, *The Organ and Its Music in German-Jewish Culture*, 28.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

of Christian worship.”¹³⁵ Does Steiner see the organ as part of the German Jewish cultural and social assimilation that he espoused? Or does Steiner think of the organ as a non-denominational “spiritual object”¹³⁶ that conveys piety?¹³⁷ Perhaps this is simply a relic of silent era pictures with its prevalence of scores for organ. Rick Altman, scholar of film sound, demonstrates the connection between church and silent film music suggests, “as is typical for imports from another realm with its own strong traditions, the pipe organ had a hard time shaking off its church connections.”¹³⁸ Altman is describing a pipe organ, which has a long history of sacred and secular repertoires, however he seems to be implying that the American popular consciousness associates the organ with a religious setting.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 45.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 12.

¹³⁷ Likely Steiner was not taking sides in the organ dispute, historian Jonathan Sarna describes as having, “clearly separate[d] Reform Jews from their opponents, who in response began to call themselves ‘Orthodox.’” Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 86-87.

¹³⁸ Rick Altman, *Silent Film Sound* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 331.

Figure 2.3 Steiner, *Symphony of Six Million*, “Main Title,” mm. 1-8

In contrast to the Old World themes of Meyer Klauber, his assimilated son who leaves the tenements is attached to a leitmotif that is clearly not Jewish (fig. 2.3). Felix’s theme is closely related to the main theme from the trio section of Elgar’s *Pomp and Circumstance March* No. 4 in G, Op. 39, No. 4 (fig. 2.4). The themes share important features: a heroic upward melodic contour and a rhythmic punctuation of each quarter-note beat.¹³⁹ In one of Steiner’s thematic sketches he instructs the orchestrator, “This

¹³⁹ Additionally, one of Steiner’s thematic sketches instructs, “This Melodie to be played according to Mood: A.) Moderato (dolce). B.) dolorosa C.) March a la Pomp and Circumstance for End of Picture, etc.” *Symphony of Six Million* Orchestra Parts, RKO Studio Records, Performing Arts Special Collections, University of California, Los Angeles (hereafter abbreviated as RKOSR), Box M-812, Folder 50-23.

Figure 2.4 Elgar, *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 4* in G, mm. 71-85

G *Nobilmente* *legato*

Cl. in B $\flat$ *p*

Bass Cl. in B $\flat$ *p*

Bassoon I II *p*

Contrabassoon *p*

Horn in F I II *legato* *p*

Horn in F III IV *legato* *p*

Trumpet in A I

Trumpet in A II III

Timpani *staccato* *p*

Harp *staccato* *p*

G *Nobilmente* *legato* *p*

Violin I *simile*

Violin II *simile* *p*

Viola *simile* *p*

Violoncello *simile* *p*

Contrabass *simile* *p*

Melodie to be played according to Mood: A.) Moderato (dolce). B.) dolorosa C.) March a la Pomp and Circumstance for End of Picture.”¹⁴⁰ While Elgar was a philo-Semite bewildered by German anti-Semitism, his *Pomp and Circumstance* music is, in the words of noted Elgar-scholar Byron Adams, “the least Jewish music ever written.”¹⁴¹ However, the *Pomp and Circumstance* marches are locally patriotic, not nationalistic, and are aspirational marches toward the future, which Steiner could have applied to the determined assimilation of the Klauber family. Furthermore this theme can be seen as aspirational of Anglo-American acceptance in the same fashion that Steiner’s own family coveted Viennese assimilation a few decades earlier.¹⁴²

Perhaps Steiner’s sense of Jewish identity influences the composition of this cue. However, Steiner is drawn melodramatically toward the principal instrument of Christian worship that provides the audience with an unmistakable instrumental sonority intentionally conveying a *religioso* feeling. On the other hand, Steiner proves conversant with musical elements from the Jewish heritage he attempts to publicly conceal. The *Kol*

¹⁴⁰ Max Steiner, MSC, MSS 1547, Box 7, Folder 35, Volume 8. This multi-faceted typology relates to the whole tradition of “typing” music according to tempo, expressive marking, and genre and demonstrates Steiner’s consciousness of that tradition.

¹⁴¹ Byron Adams. Interview by Aaron Fruchtmann. Personal interview. Los Angeles, May 16, 2014. In a letter to Adela Schuster on March 17, 1933, Elgar observed, “I am in a maze regarding events in Germany – what are they doing? In this morning’s paper it is said the greatest conductor Bruno Walter & stranger still, Einstein are ostracized: are we all mad? The Jews have always been my best & kindest friends – the pain of these news is unbearable & I do not know what it really means.” Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 809.

¹⁴² Elgar’s famous march also symbolizes the English “stiff upper lip,” nobility even in the face of adversity, and can be related to the archetype of the “hero’s journey” in that regard that features in so many films. Felix could be viewed as a hero for leaving the monetary success of a Park Avenue practice and returning to the tenements.

Nidre and “Oyfn Pripetshik” are not just markers of “ethnic color,” Steiner is creating a *midrash* (or exegesis) on Jewish identity in America.

There is no evidence that Max Steiner ever stepped foot into a synagogue whether in Vienna or Los Angeles. His art-music background and education evinces a strong connection to the classical masters and concert music tradition.¹⁴³ Consequently it is unsurprising that Steiner’s setting of *Kol Nidre* is *influenced* by that of the non-Jewish Max Bruch, as opposed to any settings by Aharon Beer or Louis Lewandowski both noted synagogue composers.¹⁴⁴ As has been mentioned above, the similarities between Bruch’s *Kol Nidrei* and Steiner’s cue are striking and unmistakable. The comparisons between Bruch and Steiner’s settings are remarkable. Steiner’s short score (see fig. 2.5) is nearly identical to the Romantic composer from *Köln*, sharing small details including tempo marking (*Adagio ma non troppo*), accents, phrasing, and harmony.

¹⁴³ Steiner studied for one year at Vienna’s Imperial Academy of Music with several prominent teachers: Herman Graedener (harmony), Robert Fuchs (counterpoint), Felix Weingartner (composition and choral work), Josef Brenner (organ), Professor Wottawa (brass), and Arnold Rose (violin).

¹⁴⁴ It seems reasonable to call this cue an arrangement of Bruch’s *Kol Nidrei* even if it is not credited as such.

Figure 2.5 Steiner, *Symphony of Six Million*, “Father and Son,” mm.1-8

Father & Son - Wheel father in.
Adagio ma non Troppo
 Cello

4/43

old man prays!

Preparation for the operation.

4/56

5/8

7

In measure nine of Bruch’s *Kol Nidrei* the statement of the “Hebrew folk” melody begins (see fig. 2.6). The motive is broken into three-note segments with eighth rests, implying breaths, in between each “sigh” of the rhapsodic solo cello imitating the *chazzan*, or cantor’s, voice. The accompanying string orchestra slips in between the rests

A

9 Solo.

Violoncello
espress.

Violin I
p

Violin II
p

Viola
p

Violoncello
p

Contrabass
p

Vc.
pp

Vln. I
pp

Vln. II
pp

Vla.
pp

Vc.
pp

Cb.

and accents the pauses with dramatic tenuto quarter notes. Steiner's short score quotes Bruch's mm. 9-16 before diverging with a statement of "Oyfn Pripetshik." Orchestrator Bernhard Kaun makes all the alterations to Steiner's quotation of Bruch's *Kol Nidrei*.¹⁴⁵ In mm. 1-4 of the full score, Kaun thickens the instrumental texture with the clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, horns, trumpets, and trombones doubling the lines of the string orchestra. In mm. 5-8 the trumpets and trombones continue in this fashion while the bass clarinet and bassoon shadow the solo cello melody.¹⁴⁶

The father of Jewish musicology, Abraham Z. Idelsohn, noted about Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* that,

In Bruch's conception the melody was an interesting theme for a brilliant secular concerto. In his presentation, the melody entirely lost its original character. Bruch displayed a fine art, masterly technique and fantasy, but not Jewish sentiments. It is not a Jewish *Kol nidré* which Bruch composed.¹⁴⁷

The concert treatment dismissed trills, *appoggiaturas*, and triplets indicative of Beer and Lewandowski's settings. Bruch would have concurred with Idelsohn's description of his

¹⁴⁵ Kaun, the son of the famous German composer and conductor Hugo Kaun, was a veteran composer and orchestrator who worked at R.K.O. and Warner Bros. with Steiner and orchestrated some of his most famous scores including *King Kong* (1933), *The Informer* (1935), and *Gone with the Wind* (1939).

¹⁴⁶ Kaun's doublings could have been made for practical acoustic concerns, as William Rosar stated, "some doublings were just to boost the audibility of instrumental lines so that they would record on the sound track (the most famous example being the 'recording tuba' that was powered by an air pump, and which is used throughout *King Kong*!)" William H. Rosar, email to the author, October 30, 2015. The orchestra for Symphony had 35 players a fairly sizable ensemble for 1932.

¹⁴⁷ Abraham Zebi Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1992), 466.

Op. 47, as he had a lifelong passion for folk music that inspired many of his compositions. Bruch explained,

As a rule a good folk tune is more valuable than 200 created works of art. I would never have come to anything in this world, if I had not, since my twenty-fourth year, studied the folk music of all nations with seriousness, perseverance, and unending interest. There is nothing to compare with the feeling, power, originality and beauty of the folksong.¹⁴⁸

Throughout his oeuvre Bruch composed works based on Scottish, Finnish, Swedish, and Welsh folk music. His anti-Semitism was for a group (not necessarily personal) and not even for musical materials of this group. The *Kol Nidre* melody enchanted Bruch as folk material and he could separate it from the Jewish nation. Though it seems he expected Jews to attend his concerts and buy his sheet music when he stated,

I got to know both melodies in Berlin, where I had much to do with the children of Israel in the Choral Society. The success of *Kol Nidrei* is assured, because all the Jews in the world are for it *eo ipso*.¹⁴⁹

Despite Bruch's increasing anti-Semitism with age and musical isolation, Leon Botstein proposes, "we might as well forgive him for being a prejudiced non-Jew; he nonetheless clothed the essential narrative of the Jewish nation in music of eloquence, drama and beauty."¹⁵⁰ Botstein is referring to Bruch's oratorio *Moses*, Op. 67, but his exoneration of Bruch would seemingly remain unmodified.

¹⁴⁸ Fifield, *Max Bruch*, 48.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁵⁰ Leon Botstein, "How an Anti-Semitic Composer Created 'Kol Nidre' and 'Moses,'" *The Jewish Daily Forward*, March 24, 2014, accessed November 12, 2014, <http://forward.com/articles/194853/how-an-anti-semitic-composer-created-kol-nidre-and/?p=all>

Arnold Schoenberg ignores or is unaware of Bruch's anti-Semitism, however when he created his *Kol nidre*, Op. 39, found "One of my main tasks was vitriolising [sic] out the 'cello-sentimentality of the Bruchs, etc. and giving this DECREE the dignity of a law, of an 'edict'."¹⁵¹ Schoenberg, with his return to Judaism and his study of *Kol Nidre* with Rabbi Jacob Sonderling, understood a different meaning of the "prayer."¹⁵² Schoenberg had converted to Lutheranism but returned to Judaism, due in part to the rise of Nazism. Therefore Schoenberg responded to *Kol Nidre*'s main concept of abrogating vows and oaths—he could be spiritually released of his conversion to Christianity.¹⁵³ Steiner was not searching for the same spiritual cleansing. What is interesting here is not that Max Steiner favored an anti-Semitic composer, as opposed to any traditionally Jewish models. The fascination arises from the fact that Steiner was probably unaware of Bruch's prejudice and thought his *Kol Nidrei* was essentially Jewish music that would fit well with the scene.¹⁵⁴ Unlike Schoenberg, Steiner appreciated the deep emotion inherent

¹⁵¹ Arnold Schoenberg, *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, ed. Erwin Stein (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 213. Emphasis retained from the original document.

¹⁵² *Kol Nidre* is a legal formula not a prayer.

¹⁵³ Klára Móricz mentions that Schoenberg alludes to Wagner's "Tarnhelm" motive from *Götterdämmerung*, adding particular irony as Schoenberg uses a Wagnerian message of absolution to connect to his reentry into Judaism. Klára Móricz, *Jewish Identities: Nationalism, Racism, and Utopianism in Twentieth-Century Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 250-51.

¹⁵⁴ In 1925 Ernő Rapée published his *Encyclopedia of Music for Pictures*, a practical text designed to provide musical suggestions for theater music directors. The book is organized by musical and dramatic categories, such as, (Arabian, Oriental, and Agitato). For the section entitled "Hebrew Music," there is a collection of nearly fifty arrangements. Despite the "Hebrew" moniker, popular Yiddish songs dominate the list, with a smattering of sacred and biblically-inspired melodies. *Hatikvah*, *Eli, Eli*, and three versions of *Kol Nidrei* are included. Notably one of the *Kol Nidrei* versions included by Rapée is by Max Bruch. Clearly not much has changed

in Bruch's setting. Furthermore, Steiner, like many of his contemporaries incorrectly believed Bruch to be Jewish and his setting as authentic. Gdal Saleski the compiler of the text *Famous Musicians of a Wandering Race*¹⁵⁵, later re-entitled *Famous Musicians of Jewish Origin*¹⁵⁶, held this false assumption when he listed Bruch as Jewish. However Steiner did know that Bruch's *Kol Nidre* would be recognizable to the movie-going American public. The melody had previously appeared in film scores by Joseph Carl Breil (1870-1926) in D. W. Griffith's (1875-1948) *Intolerance* (1916) and Louis Silvers' (1889-1954) *The Jazz Singer* and often was included in vaudeville performances.¹⁵⁷

Kol Nidre is a most unusual declaration. It is not a prayer but a legal formula that absolves one of sins. *Kol Nidre*, and specifically the music of *Kol Nidre* in the Ashkenazi tradition, has come to encapsulate *Yom Kippur*, the High Holidays, and perhaps even, Judaism.¹⁵⁸ This was not the role intended or desired by the rabbis of the Talmud, but today even for many Jews unaffiliated with Judaism for the liturgical year, they still attend the so-called "*Kol Nidre*" service. Specifically, the power of *Kol Nidre* affected the

from the silent-era until Steiner's usage of "Hebrew Music" in *Symphony* in 1932. Ernő Rapée, *Encyclopedia of Music for Pictures* (New York: Arno Press, 1970), 246.

¹⁵⁵ Saleski, *Famous Musicians of a Wandering Race*, 9. Bruch's biographer observes, "During the Third Reich an attempt was again made to label Bruch a Jew, but in November 1933 this was corrected at the insistence of his family. Bruch himself always considered that the composition of *Kol Nidrei* was the reason for the confusion." Fifield, *Max Bruch*, 16.

¹⁵⁶ Saleski, *Famous Musicians of Jewish Origin*, 29.

¹⁵⁷ This trend of signifying Jews by associating *Kol Nidre* with a character or idea continues in American media with Elmer Bernstein's *Cast A Giant Shadow* (1966). There is also such a tradition in American Yiddish language films: *Kol Nidre* (1930 short film), *Kol Nidre* (1939), and *Overture to Glory* (1940).

¹⁵⁸ This Ashkenazi melody is first documented in the sixteenth century. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development*, 159-60.

philosopher Franz Rosenzweig. In the now famous story, Rosenzweig, an emancipated German Jew, intended to convert to Christianity as part of his progressive philosophy. Rosenzweig declared he “could turn Christian only *qua* Jew—not through the intermediate stage of paganism.”¹⁵⁹ Therefore on October 11, 1913 Rosenzweig attended a *Yom Kippur* service in a Berlin orthodox synagogue. Rosenzweig’s biographer, Nahum Glatzer, explains that the service was “a profound, instantaneous event.”¹⁶⁰ This was an irrational moment that changed his otherwise rational life, after which Rosenzweig becomes intellectually and emotionally tied to Judaism. He planned to approach the baptismal font but his experience with *Kol Nidre* and Yom Kippur transformed his spiritual life and philosophical career.

Steiner’s patent appeal to sentiment in *Symphony of Six Million* proved successful with Jewish audiences. An April 15, 1932 review in *The Jewish Criterion* celebrating “Our Film Folk,” Helen Zigmond confessed, “While we’re on the ‘Symphony’... If the story doesn’t draw tears, the beautiful strains of ‘Eli, Eli,’ ‘Kol Nidre,’ ‘Hatikvah,’ and ‘Auf’n Pripitochok’ will do the trick.”¹⁶¹ In contrast, Chapin Hall, critic of *The New York Times*, is less specific about the Jewish musical material when stating, “‘Symphony of Six Million’ employs melody to great advantage during some of the most dramatic scenes.”¹⁶² The *Los Angeles Times* was terse in its assessment of the score: “A musical

¹⁵⁹ Franz Rosenzweig and Nahum N. Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 25.

¹⁶⁰ Rosenzweig and Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig*, XIX.

¹⁶¹ Helen Zigmond, “Our Film Folk,” *The Jewish Criterion*, April 15, 1932, 7.

¹⁶² Chapin Hall, “Hollywood Turns to Music in Films,” *New York Times*, April 3, 1932, X4.

score by Max Steiner synchronizes agreeably.”¹⁶³ Hollywood writer and *Los Angeles*

Times critic Norbert Lusk points out,

It is generally liked and among experts who appraise box-office value it is considered good for the four weeks scheduled on Broadway, with satisfactory returns wherever it is shown, particularly in Jewish neighborhoods where overdrawn characters along familiar lines are more highly regarded than plot or suspense.¹⁶⁴

Despite the positive contemporary reception, *Symphony of Six Million* is a deservedly forgotten film that is relegated to the footnotes of film studies scholarship. However film music scholars have attached particular significance to Max Steiner’s score.¹⁶⁵ Film scholar Stephen Handzo opines, “The real foundation of Steiner’s career, and Hollywood film music, was *Symphony of Six Million*.” Similarly, in John Stevens adoring pamphlet on Max Steiner, he suggests that *Symphony*, “was instrumental in convincing producers that background music...would work well.”¹⁶⁶ Steiner also weighed in on the score’s importance in his characteristically humble, yet curiously statistical manner: “Both pictures (*Symphony* and *Bird of Paradise*) had been shot for music. The directors and

¹⁶³ Philip K. Scheuer, “Doctor’s Life Dramatized,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 16, 1932, A8.

¹⁶⁴ Norbert Lusk, “‘Symphony of Six Million’ Rated Good for Four-Week Scheduled Run on Broadway,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 1932, B15.

¹⁶⁵ In 1933 Sam Fox Publishing Company released the Max Steiner Compositions Vol. 1, which included a three-line piano-conductor score entitled *The Cohen Family*. The four-movements are The Mother, The Son, The Daughter, and The Mother-in-Law. These exact themes and arrangements can be found in the R.K.O. Studio Records held at UCLA. On one sheet, “Felix” is crossed out and below is written “The Son from The Cohen Family.” This movement is a short score of Felix’s theme. Likewise, Mvt 4 (The Mother-in-Law) replaces “The Tea and Jewish Women.” Clearly there is dual use of themes for *Symphony* and *The Cohen Family*. The themes were likely composed for *Symphony* and then repurposed for *The Cohen Family* to bring Steiner and Sam Fox additional revenue after the success of the film.

¹⁶⁶ John Stevens, *Max Steiner* (Albury: Miklos Rozsa Cult, 1975), 4.

producers wanted music to run throughout, and this gradual change of policy resulted in giving music its rightful chance. One-third to one-half of the success of these pictures was attributed to the extensive use of music.”¹⁶⁷ Steiner’s assertion that both films “had been shot for music,” seems improbable at best, at least in *Symphony*’s case. Steiner recounts the decision to include dramatic scoring on *Symphony* in his memoir:

On this picture, Mr. Selznick instructed me to score one reel ie. [*sic*] about 1,000 feet or ten minutes of music, to see whether it would interfere with the dialogue or help. It was decided that it did help and the top brass was delighted.¹⁶⁸

This statement reveals that the film was certainly not “shot for music.”¹⁶⁹

Often the designation of “first score” or “first underscore” is attributed to *Symphony*. That sort of adulation is found in Peter Wegele’s comment; “It was Max Steiner’s 1932 music for *Symphony of Six Million* (directed by Gregory La Cava) that initiated the era of dramatic music in Hollywood.”¹⁷⁰ Later, Wegele is equally admiring when he says, “And with that, Steiner implemented a new technique in film scoring, underscoring.”¹⁷¹ Michael Slowik devotes considerable attention to Max Steiner and *Symphony* in his work on early sound film, *After the Silents*. Slowik attempts to

¹⁶⁷ Max Steiner, “Scoring the Film” in *We Make the Movies*, ed. Nancy Naumberg (New York: Norton, 1937), 220.

¹⁶⁸ M. Steiner, “Notes to You,” 115. Reel 9, the climactic death of Meyer Klauber, is the scene Selznick had Steiner attempt.

¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, a comment from MGM composer Nacio Herb Brown discussing *Symphony* causes me to hedge my confidence in this assertion, as he states, “A score was prepared by Max Steiner which, at first, was to have run behind all scenes. This was found impractical, but it does background all the dramatic moments of the film.” Hall “Hollywood Turns to Music in Films,” X4.

¹⁷⁰ Wegele, *Max Steiner*, 5.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

“decenter” *King Kong* (1933) from the epicenter of Golden Age film music and demonstrates Steiner’s propensity for emphasizing “his own historical importance to the development of sound film music.”¹⁷² Slowik convincingly shows earlier examples of techniques and aesthetics that Steiner was credited with inventing or revolutionizing. Slowik has brought to our attention several examples of dramatic scoring that predate *Symphony* including: *The Singing Fool* (1928), *Lights of New York* (1928), *Weary River* (1929), and *The Squall* (1929).¹⁷³ Slowik sees Steiner positioning himself as the “Great Man” where “lone individuals are responsible for leaps forward in artistic sophistication.”¹⁷⁴ There is much truth to Slowik’s assertions about Steiner’s ego and musicologists desire to position him at the center of “progress.” Leonard Bernstein falls in line with those who praise Steiner, as he proclaims, “If Max Steiner had composed nothing for the screen other than ‘Gone With The Wind’, we should still be forever in his debt.”¹⁷⁵ In the end Slowik admits, “Ironically, if one were forced to choose a film that gave ‘birth’ to the Golden Age of film music, Steiner’s *Symphony of Six Million* would constitute a better candidate” than *King Kong*, as *Symphony* better adheres to Golden Age

¹⁷² Michael Slowik, *After the Silents: Hollywood Film Music in the Early Sound Era, 1926-1934* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 5.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 62, 90-93.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 4.

¹⁷⁵ Michael Burrows, *Mario Lanza and Max Steiner* (St. Austell: Primestyle Ltd., 1971), 31. Regrettably this short and strange book does not provide any citations. Slowik might find some humor in this Bernstein remark, which is not lost on this author. Bernstein is praising the credited Steiner for a famously patchwork score that was the work of numerous composers and orchestrators (some credited and others not). This sort of statement falls in line with Slowik’s “Great Man” theory.

values.¹⁷⁶ Specifically it is “less obtrusive,” contains less Mickey-Mousing, is leitmotivic, and uses preexistent music.

Symphony is remembered for its original score; however, as demonstrated throughout this chapter, Steiner mainly uses preexistent Jewish musical materials. An unattributed writer at the *Los Angeles Times* writes,

An ‘operatic underscoring’ is the technical designation of the musical complement composed by Max Steiner for R.-K.-O.-Radio Pictures’ ‘Symphony of Six Million.’ The underscoring goes through every foot of the film and is a combination of Steiner’s compositions and his own orchestrations of Hebrew classics, including Eili Eili, Kol Nidre, Hatikvah and Auf’n Pripitochok. All of the music was written in Hebrew idiom. He credits the original idea for this treatment to David O. Selznick, executive vice-president in charge of R.-K.-O. production.¹⁷⁷

David O. Selznick had a major influence on the creation of *Symphony*’s score. Selznick’s career as a filmmaker began with silent pictures and many of the standardized techniques were engrained in his aesthetics.¹⁷⁸ With regard to music, this is evinced by his propensity for using preexistent material despite—or because of—any attached connotations. Steiner in his 1937 chapter in Nancy Naumburg’s *We Make the Movies* declared:

It is my conviction that familiar music, however popular, does not aid the underlying score of a dramatic picture...I am, therefore, opposed to the use of thematic material that might cause an audience to wonder and whisper and try to recall the title of a particular composition, thereby missing the gist and

¹⁷⁶ Slowik, *After the Silents*, 264.

¹⁷⁷ “Picture to Be Given Operatic Underscore,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 3, 1932, B18.

¹⁷⁸ Platte explains, “Selznick’s first four feature films were silent, and many of his sound films would prompt commentators to note specifically silent-era qualities, often having to do with story type or visual style. Platte, “Musical Collaboration,” 34. Platte also notes, “music was one way in which he perpetuated the feel, prestige, and sound of these earlier times.” *Ibid.*, 424.

significance of a whole scene which might be the key to the entire story. Of course there are many in our industry who disagree with my viewpoint.¹⁷⁹

Steiner articulated this perspective only five years after *Symphony*!

As was traditional in the silent and early sound era, Steiner appropriated preexisting musical materials in his score for *Symphony*. As discussed above, these ethnically inflected melodies characterized the Jewish identity of the Klauber family. What is not clear, however, is who, exactly, made the decision to use *Kol Nidrei* and other traditional materials. Did David Selznick, steeped in silent-era production practices, thrust the decision upon Steiner? Or did Steiner's opinion change with time?

Musicologist Nathan Platte perceptively notes, "Inspection of *Symphony of Six Million* (1932), *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1936), and *Since You Went Away* (1944) further reveals Selznick's indebtedness to musical practices of the silent cinema."¹⁸⁰ Specifically,

The reused melodies not only recall the borrowing and pastiche practices of silent-era musical accompaniment, but their absent texts also connect with audience members' personal musical associations and memories.¹⁸¹

Using Jewish musical materials serves an additional function, as Irving Howe writes,

In the past, employed by a Jolson or a Cantor, Yiddish had served as a kind of secret sign, a gleeful or desperate wave to the folks back home by a performer who liked it to be known that he was still a Jewish boy faithful to the old plebian ways and the bracing street vulgarisms.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ F. Steiner, "Scoring the Film," 225.

¹⁸⁰ Platte, "Musical Collaboration," xvi.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 49.

¹⁸² Howe, *World of Our Fathers*, 569.

Reception of the Jewishness of the material is largely dependent upon complicity—that is, being an insider—even though the concert work was well-known to non-Jewish audiences.¹⁸³ Revealingly Steiner explained the kindred nature of his music and the pre-existing materials, saying, “I’ve used some original Jewish melodies, but all of these have been rearranged and reorchestrated by me and you can’t tell where the originals leave off and my own stuff comes in.”¹⁸⁴ Beyond the well-crafted transitions between source and score of which Steiner seems particularly proud, composer and music commentator Jack Gottlieb describes how Steiner reveals a keen understanding of the musical meaning of the Jewish material:

At first, it seems that Steiner uses these melodies willy-nilly, placing them throughout the film indiscriminately. It may well be, however, that his choices were symbolic. ‘Kol nidrei’ (All Vows) is indicative of vows taken or broken; ‘Eli, Eli’ (My God, a threnody of abandonment), and ‘Hatikvah’ (The Hope) exhibit a yearning for redemption; ‘Oyfn pripeshtik’ (By the Fireplace, a children’s learning song) pointing toward future generations—all pertinent to the drama.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ The use of preexistent Jewish musical materials is, in the words of Mark Slobin, “simulating the vernacular.” Mark Slobin, *Global Soundtracks: Worlds of Film Music* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 50. The score sounds plausibly Jewish to the audience. Steiner’s music is redolent of the imagined shtetl. However like with all texts, the particular melodies have more meaning to some audience members than others: such as, insider and outsider affiliation. Jewish and non-Jewish audiences would have divergent readings of the film and score. There is a dialogue, of sorts, between composer and audience. Critical theorists, Judith Still and Michael Worton, explain intertextuality as, “a text...cannot exist as a hermetic or self-sufficient whole, and so does not function as a closed system.” Michael Worton and Judith Still, *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 1. They continue to explain that there is a circular nature to intertextuality as the *writer* brings influence from what they have read and the *reader* brings experience and theory to the reading that influences the meaning. The text described by Worton and Still is the written word but applies equally well to any form (like music) that imparts a message.

¹⁸⁴ Ronald Haver, *David O. Selznick’s Hollywood* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1985), 75. Steiner’s statement seems to naïvely assume audiences would not recognize the obvious quotations from Bruch’s *Kol Nidrei*.

¹⁸⁵ Gottlieb, *Funny, It Doesn’t Sound Jewish*, 47.

In an unattributed *Los Angeles Times* article, Steiner is quoted with Selznick's policy on music in films,

‘David O. Selznick came to the conclusion that any music, whether classical or popular, that is known—even if not by name—to the general public, is distracting. He said to me one day: ‘Steiner, when a tune has been heard before, the people in the audience search their memories. They say, ‘where did we hear that before? Just what is that melody?’¹⁸⁶

There are copious conflicting statements by Steiner and Selznick. Their shared Jewish heritage and background in silent films appear to have made using preexisting Jewish musical materials seem suitable and authentic in this situation.¹⁸⁷ Steiner and Selznick wanted the viewer to recall the melodies and, even more telling, their texts. Another conflicting comment from Steiner from February 1931 declares,

When music is found in Radio films, it will be secondary to the plot action and the movement of the story itself. Music will be largely incidental, and often atmospheric. It will not come into a picture from some mysterious source (the orchestra pit?) but by some logical, and, if possible, visual means – such as the turning-on of a radio or a phonograph in a scene, or a glimpse of an orchestra or chorus.¹⁸⁸

This is a clear statement of aesthetic principle that flies in the face of Steiner's remarks from a year later about his pioneering efforts in dramatic underscoring. James Wierzbicki notes that, “Coming from Steiner, this emphasis on exclusively diegetic music is perhaps

¹⁸⁶ “Classical Composers Banished from Films,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 16, 1932, B10.

¹⁸⁷ Selznick was slightly less conflicted about his Jewish identity than Steiner, but this will be discussed in more depth later in the chapter.

¹⁸⁸ Philip K. Scheuer, “Musical Picture Quietly Undergoes Renaissance,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 22, 1931, B9.

surprising.”¹⁸⁹ This leaves us with two options: the first is that Selznick had a different (and implicitly more important) opinion about *Symphony*; the second is that he was speaking during an incredibly fluid period in early sound film music aesthetics, where even a few months can change practices drastically. The latter option seems most plausible. Film music scholar Kathryn Kalinak views “Steiner’s propensity for references both direct and indirect to popular music, folk tunes, and the classical repertoire” as a “personal stamp in a medium often oblivious to his contribution.”¹⁹⁰ Kalinak points to Steiner’s use of preexistent referential material in *The Informer* (1935) in the shape of Irish folk tunes. This “personal stamp” continues throughout Steiner’s career, with further examples appearing in *Gone with the Wind* (1939) and *Casablanca* (1942).¹⁹¹

In addition to David Selznick’s strong influence on the musical score, he shared a conflicted Jewish identity with Steiner. Selznick was a child of Lithuanian-Jewish immigrants. Lewis and Florence Selznick, David’s parents, did not raise their children with any Jewish education whatsoever. “David and Myron wanted to pass in Gentile society...But they were angry about this act, like any people engaged in betrayal.”¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ James Eugene Wierzbicki, *Film Music: A History* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 124.

¹⁹⁰ Kathryn Marie Kalinak, *Settling the Score: Music and the Classical Hollywood Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 113-14.

¹⁹¹ Steiner uses the Confederate anthem “Dixie” as well as several Stephen Foster songs in *Gone with the Wind*. “La Marseillaise” is used as a motif connected to the underground in *Casablanca*. But like *Symphony* all of the tunes are signifiers of an idea. They are not just local color.

¹⁹² David Thomson, *Showman: The Life of David O. Selznick* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 58. Selznick’s anger continued, as his attempts to “pass” in Gentile society were thwarted. He could not become a member of the restricted Los Angeles Country Club; instead, he joined the Hillcrest Country Club founded for Jews. Leonard J. Leff, *Hitchcock and Selznick: The Rich and Strange Collaboration of Alfred Hitchcock and David O. Selznick in Hollywood* (New York:

Selznick's biographer, David Thomson, believed Selznick "wanted a world that had forgotten Jewishness, which means he was either much ahead of his time or very insecure."¹⁹³ The latter option is most plausible, as David experienced psychological friction about his identity.¹⁹⁴ Ronald Haver, another Selznick biographer stated about *Symphony*, "Selznick too was pleased, feeling that he had been instrumental in presenting a realistic view of Jewish family life and tradition. It was a film that he always put on his list of pictures he was proudest of."¹⁹⁵ Haver opines,

Although he didn't consider himself first and foremost a Jew, Selznick was ever mindful of his heritage and background, and the article may have triggered a conscious resolve to depict Jews as more than just stereotyped comics, to present Jewish traditions and attitudes sympathetically, something that had been done only infrequently by Hollywood, notably in *The Jazz Singer* and *Abie's Irish Rose*.¹⁹⁶

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), 98. Steiner's situation, like Selznick and other Jews in Hollywood, is prefigured eerily by the situation of French Jews during the Dreyfus Case. Although the novelist Marcel Proust's mother was Jewish and unashamed of that fact, his father was a Gentile and Marcel himself was baptized a Roman Catholic. He did not consider himself a Jew until the Dreyfus Case made his denial a practical impossibility. Proust became an energetic supporter of Dreyfus, to his credit. After this, his Jewish identity became part of his identity. Even so, history itself forced this upon Proust and others. Steiner and Selznick (and the Warners) were not welcome in WASP society in Los Angeles, so they created parallel institutions that were, however, not obviously Jewish (i.e. country clubs that would accept them). Still the sting and the reminder was always lurking around the corner. Once Hitler arrived, there was no ignoring their identity.

¹⁹³ Thomson, *Showman*, 341.

¹⁹⁴ Thomson tells how in the last years of his life, Selznick asked an observant Jewish friend to speak to his daughter Mary Jennifer about Judaism. Ibid., 691.

¹⁹⁵ Haver, *David O. Selznick's Hollywood*, 75.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 73. The article mentioned is from *Time* magazine and depicts Jews as "crafty." Selznick "carefully preserved" the aforementioned article.

Haver is correct that Selznick did not consider himself “first and foremost a Jew,” however that does not mean others in Hollywood agreed with this image.¹⁹⁷ There is an oft-told story of Selznick’s close friend and collaborator Ben Hecht asking him to cosponsor a cause to help refugees in Europe and liberate Palestine from the British. As the story goes, Selznick refused to join the cause as he proclaimed, “I’m an American and not a Jew.”¹⁹⁸ To this remark Hecht challenged Selznick to a stunt. Hecht would call three Hollywood figures of Selznick’s choosing and ask if they thought Selznick was an American and not a Jew. Selznick played along and Hecht proved his point as all three (Martin Quigley, Nunnally Johnson, and Leland Hayward) thought of Selznick as a Jew. Hayward went as far as saying, “For God’s sake, what’s the matter with David? He’s a Jew and he knows it.”¹⁹⁹ Selznick conceded and cosponsored the cause.

Selznick was not the only Jew striving for assimilation in Hollywood. Steiner recounts a letter from Beth Meakins, Alfred Newman’s first wife, and his response to her in “Notes to You”:

‘Dear Max: Please do me a favor, do not call Alfred Al anymore. It sounds so Jewish and so unimportant, so please call him Alfred.’ I replied to her letter as follows: ‘My dear Beth: I shall be delighted to call Al Alfred. I agree Al is very bad and always ruins everybody. Look at Al Jolson, a complete failure. Also Al Smith, the Governor of New York (sic), another no good bum. So I will do as you

¹⁹⁷ Selznick was a member of Temple Israel of Hollywood – a Reform Jewish synagogue – particularly well known at this time for its Hollywood membership including Al Jolson, Hal Wallis, and Edward Laemmle.

¹⁹⁸ Ben Hecht, *A Child of the Century* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 539. Similar versions of this story may be found in Gabler’s *An Empire of Their Own*, 290-91, and Thomson’s *Showman*, 659-60. It should be noted that Ben Hecht was one of the few openly Jewish and Zionist filmmakers in Hollywood.

¹⁹⁹ Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own*, 291.

wish and more. I will also write the Governor of California requesting that he change the name of Alcatraz to Alfred-catriz, so people won't think it's a Jewish prison. See you Saturday at 6:30. Love, Max.'²⁰⁰

A bit can be read into this short recollection. From the Newman side, Alfred Newman's mother, Luba, gave Alfred and his brother Lionel particularly English names to coincide with the Westernization of their surname from Nemorofsky to Newman. This did not go far enough for Newman who yearned for total assimilation. Steiner's characteristically witty response to Meakins' request is similarly telling. Steiner mocks the assimilatory request of another Jewish composer despite his personal struggles with Jewish identity. Even in the "insider" world of Jewish Hollywood there was a desire to become American in name and appearance. Bernhard Kaun disclosed to William H. Rosar that Steiner would tell him in confidence at Hollywood parties that, "They all think I'm Jewish!"²⁰¹ This was not a joke in Steiner's telling and confirms Steiner's predilection for publicly disavowing his Jewish heritage especially with the gentile Kaun.²⁰²

This chapter seeks in part to stimulate interest in an awareness that Michael Long suggests is lacking, as he explains, "Steiner's music is a looming presence in academic music studies, but here again its frame in Yiddishkeit has remained virtually ignored, aside from a few brief remarks, often no more than quips."²⁰³ As related in this chapter,

²⁰⁰ M. Steiner, "Notes to You," 167.

²⁰¹ William H. Rosar, email to the author, May 19, 2015. This anecdote was related to Rosar in a personal conversation with Kaun.

²⁰² Ibid. As Freud observes, a joke is very revealing of a psychological state. Rosar also mentions that Kaun would let the Warner Bros. staff believe he was Jewish.

²⁰³ Long, *Beautiful Monsters*, 97.

Steiner publicly disavows Judaism.²⁰⁴ Is this investigation, which reveals Steiner's Jewish heritage, comparable to John Simons including Steiner in the *Who's Who in American Jewry* compendium against his wishes? Or, worse yet, is the "outing" of Steiner's Jewishness effectively a racist act? To place Steiner's music in a cogent historical context, speculation about his Jewish identity is required, although armchair attempts at psychoanalysis can—and perhaps should—be avoided. But these questions must be asked. It seems doubtful that Jewishness featured strongly in Max Steiner's daily social routine. He perceived himself as proudly Austrian and later patriotically American. Even so, whether due to internal or external forces, Steiner was ever mindful of his Jewish heritage—he could not help but be aware of the ways in which his past impinged upon his present.²⁰⁵

Symphony of Six Million is an explicitly Jewish story—one of the last of its kind—before Hollywood producers shied away from their Jewish topics in favor of promoting an idealized world—one symbolized by the American "melting pot." Steiner's score for *Symphony* uses a collection of Jewish sacred and secular musical materials to evoke a range of emotions in its intended audience: American Jews. Steiner's

²⁰⁴ Bernhard Kaun disclosed to William H. Rosar that Steiner would tell him in confidence at Hollywood parties that, "They all think I'm Jewish!" Confirming Steiner's predilection for publicly disavowing his Jewish heritage especially with the gentile Kaun. William H. Rosar, email to the author, May 19, 2015.

²⁰⁵ One of the aspects of Viennese history was the shock with which Viennese Jews reacted to Hitler's racial policy. They thought that conversion made them "safe." Indeed, Viennese anti-Semitism was based as much on religion as race, although ethnicity was never banished entirely. Historian Steven Beller comments ironically about Austrian Jews that whether they felt pride in their heritage or carried a "negative consciousness" both were "uniquely Jewish experience[s]." Beller, *Vienna and the Jews*, 75-76.

ambivalence towards his Jewish identity manifests itself in his words, philanthropy, and music. He even mentions the plot of *Symphony* in his memoir, “‘Symphony’ was the story of a Jewish doctor who moved from Eastside New York up to Park Avenue and for a time, forgot his heritage.”²⁰⁶ Escaping his own heritage and identity was something Max Steiner was never able to accomplish fully, despite his efforts and equivocations.

²⁰⁶ M. Steiner, “Notes to You,” 115. It is possible Steiner’s last wife, Lee, helped him to come to terms with his identity struggles later in life as she herself was Jewish.

Chapter 3

Alfred Newman: “I’m Just a Melancholy Jew”

Lovingly referred to as “Pappy” by his colleagues, Alfred Newman was one of the key figures in Golden Age Hollywood film music. Biographical information about Newman is provided in Chapter Four, while the focus of this chapter is on the composer’s scores to spiritually-related films. Newman was not an observant Jew, but was still prone to using Jewish expressions at home and at the studio. His friend and collaborator, Ken Darby remembers when his seventh and final child was born Newman joyfully exclaimed, “Well, that completes my Menorah.”²⁰⁷ Film-music historian Tony Thomas opines that Newman’s religious scores “revealed Newman himself to be a man of faith, something his manner tended to belie.”²⁰⁸ Thomas’ assertion might be true, as he knew Newman personally. However, Newman’s religious beliefs were personal and idiosyncratic. He did not write or talk about his Jewish heritage, identity, or beliefs. Therefore, this chapter will discuss only his *music* for spiritual films rather than speculate on his convictions. Newman’s mastery of evoking the numinous in music is the crucial element under investigation. The following chapter does not flow chronologically; instead Newman’s Jewish themed films are examined first followed by a contrasting approach to several non-Jewish films.

²⁰⁷ Scott Dawes and Rich Upton, “Ken Darby: Alfred Newman’s Right Hand Man,” *Film Score Monthly* 41-43 (Jan/Feb/Mar 1994): 31.

²⁰⁸ Thomas, *Music for the Movies*, 69.

The House of Rothschild

Newman composed the score to several important films with Jewish subjects as well as numerous (non-Jewish) spiritual films. Newman once described himself to Fred Steiner by saying, “I’m just a melancholy Jew.”²⁰⁹ A sorrowful composing persona served Newman well when he came to write his first score with explicitly Jewish elements. The first example comes from *The House of Rothschild* (1934) (hereafter referred to as *Rothschild*) a Twentieth Century Pictures prestige film that chronicled the Jewish banking family’s rise from local merchants to pre-eminent international financiers. The film was produced by Darryl F. Zanuck, who was not Jewish, and directed by Alfred L. Werker, who was. Zanuck had previously produced the film *The Jazz Singer* (1927) while at Warner Bros; this film is well-known for its deeply Jewish plot. Eric Goldman describes Zanuck’s uniqueness in Hollywood, stating, “Back in 1934, the timing for producing a film about the rise of an international Jewish banking family was also questionable, but Zanuck, the formidable producer, was undeterred by conventional wisdom.”²¹⁰ The “conventional wisdom” of the time was not to allude specifically to Jews or Jewish matters in Hollywood movies. Jews as such virtually vanished from the screen except for in rare instances such *Symphony of Six Million*, which is discussed in Chapter Two. As Neil Gabler opines, “What the Hollywood Jews wanted, was a way of maintaining their Judaism (they couldn’t avoid it) without being

²⁰⁹ William H. Rosar, email to the author, June 8, 2015. This was contrasted with what Steiner deemed Korngold’s “*joie de vivre*.”

²¹⁰ Goldman, *The American Jewish Story Through Cinema*, 51.

too pushy about it and rousing the gentiles.”²¹¹ Zanuck was indifferent to such scruples and was happy to ruffle feathers when he found an interesting subject for a picture. When Zanuck left Warner Bros. and founded Twentieth Century Pictures with Joseph Schenk in 1933, Zanuck began a formidable and longstanding collaborative relationship with composer Alfred Newman (who would replace Louis Silvers as music director of Zanuck’s Twentieth Century Fox²¹²). Zanuck and Newman worked on five pictures in 1933 and the early part of 1934 before Newman was assigned the job of scoring *Rothschild*.²¹³ The period drama received strong and mostly positive reviews with many critics commenting favorably on Newman’s score.²¹⁴ One such review mentions, “Al Newman’s scoring of the picture has taken full advantage of its dramatic possibilities and skillfully weaves in the exquisite native Jewish melodies.”²¹⁵ Fred Steiner (in his

²¹¹ Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own*, 280.

²¹² In New York in the early 1920s, Louis Silvers invited his close friend Max Steiner to join him in Hollywood as a composing team for cinema. Max rebuffed the invite as, he said, “I didn’t think there was any future in it.” M. Steiner, “Notes to You,” 95. Silvers went on to compile and write original music for the score to the landmark Jewish topic film *The Jazz Singer* (1927). Silvers had previously worked as Al Jolson’s touring music director before their collaboration on the early “talkie.” In addition to Silvers place in history from his work on *The Jazz Singer*, Silvers was the music director on *The Terror* (1928), which was the first sound horror film consisting of photoplay music and several original cues by Silvers. Mervyn Cooke, *A History of Film Music*, 51.

²¹³ *The Bowery* (1933), *Blood Money* (1933), *Advice to the Lovelorn* (1933), *Looking for Trouble* (1934), and *Moulin Rouge* (1934).

²¹⁴ *The House of Rothschild* was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Picture and was Twentieth Century Picture’s best grossing film of the year. Douglas W. Churchill, “The Year in Hollywood: 1934 May Be Remembered as the Beginning of the Sweetness-and-Light Era,” *New York Times*, December 30, 1934, X5.

dissertation on Newman) dismisses the importance of *Rothschild* due to “little original composition...[that] consisted largely of conventional material such as entrance music, processional marches, source music for court balls, and the like.”²¹⁶ While Steiner’s point is generally true, there are some important and revealing exceptions.

The “Main Title” for *Rothschild* demonstrates Newman’s technique of creating a patchwork consisting of a series of musical pastiches. Newman used this technique of scoring films with notable success throughout the 1930s (Victor Borge’s display of pastiche composition from the Introduction is prefigured here). *Rothschild* opens with the Twentieth Century Pictures logo and Newman’s iconic accompanying fanfare in B $\flat$ major.²¹⁷ The Main Title cue opens with a blazing theme stylistically inspired by

²¹⁵ “Well Directed, Acted, Produced: ‘The House of Rothschild,’” *Hollywood Reporter*, February 23, 1934. The author thanks Ned Comstock for sharing a digital scan of the review. The reviewer suggests there are several “native Jewish melodies” in the score but there is only “Eili, Eili.” Likely, Newman’s own themes were confused as traditional melodies.

²¹⁶ Frederick Steiner, “The Making of an American Film Composer: A Study of Alfred Newman’s Music in the First Decade of the Sound Era” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1981), 261-62. At this first citation of Fred Steiner’s study it is important to indicate that it was the first musicological dissertation on a film music topic. Rarely is a subject’s first scholarly inquiry as erudite as Steiner’s. Frederick Steiner, the composer and scholar, still provides a model for precision in detailing historical facts and profound musical analysis.

²¹⁷ Newman composed the Fox fanfare for Twentieth Century Pictures in 1933. He added an extension to the fanfare for the CinemaScope release of *The Robe* (1953). Newman’s youngest son, composer David Newman, recorded the current version accompanying Fox pictures in 1997. Many film composers have altered the fanfare to more appropriately suit their own scores. John Williams begins his score to *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope* (1977) intentionally in the same key (B $\flat$ major) as Newman’s to honor the master composer and to connect the two themes seamlessly. Previously, Williams had wanted to arrange the fanfare for a “whiny Arab band” before his score for *John Goldfarb, Please Come Home!* (1965) but was told “absolutely not” by the studio executives. Richard Dyer, “Where is John Williams Coming From?,” *Boston Globe Magazine*, June 29, 1980, accessed May 5, 2016, http://www.jwfan.com/?page_id=4494. In *Alien 3* (1992), Elliot Goldenthal arranges Newman’s fanfare faithfully but when the final dominant chord is struck he adds a large dissonant tone-cluster chord before the screen fades to black

Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* and *March Slave* over the Darryl F. Zanuck Production title card.²¹⁸ Newman's choice of Tchaikovsky as a model was ideal for setting up this particular film. By evoking Slavic music, Newman instantly tells the viewer that the Rothschilds were Ashkenazim whose distant origins were in Russia and Poland. Newman continues this trope throughout the film, for even though *Rothschild* is set in Germany, Austria, England, and France much of the music is redolent of Russian nineteenth-century music, particularly Tchaikovsky.²¹⁹ An ascending scale leads into a new theme (fig. 3.1) on the *Rothschild* title card. Here the strings play an impassioned, indeed *schmaltzy*, theme punctuated by bursts from the brass (mm. 8-11) symbolically reminding the audience of a cantor chanting with responses from the congregation.²²⁰ The Tchaikovsky-inspired opening section in C minor, gives way as Newman introduces the important B $\flat$ (# $\hat{7}$) creating a harmonic minor scale.²²¹ Another Russian composer, Nikolai

foreshadowing the character's imminent doom. Richard Hartley also arranges the fanfare for sparse rock and roll piano and drums before *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975).

²¹⁸ William Rosar explains that Newman's "main influence for dramatic music was Tchaikovsky, apparently the only symphonic composer whose style of orchestration his orchestrator Ray Heindorf had mastered well enough to imitate." William H. Rosar, email to the author, August 7, 2015. Rosar's explanation is accurate regarding Heindorf's abilities but it is also worth noting Newman's and Tchaikovsky's styles and temperament were well aligned. Newman's orchestral style changed dramatically when orchestrator Edward Powell joined his staff and the now characteristic Newman high divisi strings and counterpoint were born.

²¹⁹ What Newman could not have known was that Tchaikovsky, like most of his class, was anti-Semitic. Musicologist David Brown declares, "despite his admiration for the Rubinstein brothers, Tchaikovsky had a streak of anti-Semitism in him." David Brown, *Tchaikovsky: The Man and His Music* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2007), 181.

²²⁰ Admittedly the author's subjective symbolic reading implies Newman was familiar with the responsorial tradition between cantor and congregation, which in fact he might not have known.

²²¹ While the harmonic minor scale is not technically a "Jewish scale," it serves as a short hand for it and is certainly what Newman intends.

Figure 3.1 Newman, *The House of Rothschild*, “Main Title,” mm. 8-13. Score and annotations are transcribed from the original conductor book. Alfred Newman Collection, JoAnn Kane Music Service (hereafter abbreviated as “JAKMS.”)



Rimsky-Korsakov, inspired this second theme, as the motive and treatment here are strikingly similar to the opening of *Scheherazade*, Op. 35 (1888) (fig. 3.2).²²² Rimsky-Korsakov’s theme is intended for the Sultana Scheherezade, the storyteller of *One Thousand and One Nights*, colloquially known as the *Arabian Nights*. While the

²²² Happily, Rimsky-Korsakov was the rare Russian composer of his time who was not anti-Semitic. As Richard Taruskin explains, “He proved it in a time honored way, by not only permitting but practically forcing his daughter Nadya to marry a Jewish conservatory pupil, Maximilian Steinberg, who had become her father’s pet.” Richard Taruskin, *On Russian Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 197.

Figure 3.2 Rimsky-Korsakov, *Scheherazade*, mm. 14-16

The musical score for measures 14-16 of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* is presented in two systems. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Lento' with a quarter note equal to a half note. The piano accompaniment in the first system begins with a 'colla parte' instruction and a forte (*f*) dynamic, featuring a series of triplets. The violin part, marked 'espressivo', also features a series of triplets. The second system shows a change in dynamics to mezzo-forte (*mf*) and then piano (*p*), with the tempo remaining 'Lento'. The violin part continues with triplets and concludes with a triplet of eighth notes.

harmonies in *Scheherazade* and *Rothschild* are dissimilar the melodic shape and orchestration are alike.²²³ The “oriental flavor” of the Russian composer’s score could have served as a model for portraying the “otherness” of a great family of Jewish financiers. As the credits continue to roll, Newman produces arrangements of *La Marseillaise* and *God Save the King* anticipating the worldly influence of the Rothschild

²²³ Newman employs a C harmonic-minor scale in contrast to what Richard Taruskin dubs the “Korsakovian scale” or octatonic scale heard throughout *Scheherazade*. Richard Taruskin, “Chernomor to Kashchei: Harmonic Sorcery; Or, Stravinsky’s ‘Angle,’” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 38, No. 1 (Spring 1985), 132.

family by the end of the film. The British royal anthem leads into Newman's original "Arliss Theme." The English actor, George Arliss²²⁴ performs the dual roles of patriarch Mayer Rothschild and his son Nathan, but this theme was reserved only for the latter character. The "Arliss Theme," despite its connection to a Jewish figure, contains no musical markers of Jewishness. If anything, the theme is redolent of "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" in a chorale-like setting; this allusion signals to the viewer that the Rothschild family has relocated to Germany by the time the action begins. The cue concludes with a four-measure arrangement of the German folk tune "Freiheit die ich meine," as the film begins with a card announcing, "Frankfort, in Prussia 1780."

The "Death Scene" (marked as "cue #5" in the conductor book) is the only other explicit allusion to Jewish music in *Rothschild*. The family patriarch's death is provoked by a robbery from the city's tax agents. After hearing the news, Mayer delivers the following speech to his children:

Mayer: Listen. You are young. Your lives are before you. You have got to fight. Fight for yourselves. Fight for our people. Mama, I have to cheat the tax collector before my own children. Do you think I want to do that? I live honestly. I trade honestly. I want to be honest with them but they won't let us. We are Jews; taxed to death, forbidden to learn a trade, forbidden to own land, they keep us in chains, they send men here to rob us. So work and strive for money. Money is power. Money is the only weapon the Jew has to defend itself with.
[Mayer collapses...]²²⁵

²²⁴ Five years earlier Arliss performed the lead role in *Disraeli* (1929), which Patricia Erens surmises the actor "drew heavily on DISRAELI for much of the characterization and sentiment" in *Rothschild*. Erens, *The Jew in American Cinema*, 159.

²²⁵ *The House of Rothschild*, directed by Alfred L. Werker (1934; Twentieth Century Pictures), 00:13:34, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfsqmfRyT_I. As this film has yet to be released on any format for home viewing, the author has provided the above YouTube link.

Following his collapse, Mayer has more impassioned final words to his family from his deathbed about trading with “dignity” and securing rights for the Jews of Europe. The speech is accompanied by Newman’s most overt Jewish cue. But what makes this musical scene so Jewish, that is, besides the *mise en scène* consisting of shadowy lighting and the sizable menorah on Mayer’s nightstand, the cue (fig. 3.3) opens (mm. 1-2) with a melancholy series of descending thirds—a sighing figure if you have ever heard one—that matches the family’s utter despair.²²⁶ The string melody begins with A-G#-F-E-D implying A harmonic minor. In measure three and four, the sighing figure repeats and is varied but in a higher register thereby increasing the emotional intensity. The strings perform the melody with *molto vibrato* and *portamento* reminiscent of the style of the eastern-European Jewish itinerant fiddler.²²⁷ This fitting music portrays Mayer’s imminent death and with his death the vanishing “Old World.” Measure six begins with an ornamental figure accentuating the augmented second between G# and F $\natural$. In measure eleven, Newman arranges segments of the famous Yiddish song “Eili, Eili” (usually seen

²²⁶ The sighing figure is found throughout Ernest Bloch’s *Schelomo: Rhapsodie Hébraïque for Violoncello and Orchestra* (1917). Newman scribbled “Ernest Bloch – 474” on the flyleaf of his personal copy of A.Z. Idelsohn’s *Jewish Music: Its Historical Development*. The corresponding page in the text contains Idelsohn’s appraisal of Bloch’s “designated” Jewishness and “At best, Bloch’s music may be said to have a touch of Orientalism.” Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, 474. This “touch of Orientalism” might have been just the element Newman was looking for when scoring *Rothschild*.

²²⁷ Newman was studying with Schoenberg at the time of his scoring *Rothschild*. This style of performance was what Schoenberg had in mind when he wrote his performance instruction for the *Genesis Suite* (quoted fully in the Introduction) about not gliding between notes as it creates a “detestable sentimentality.”

Figure 3.3 Newman, *The House of Rothschild*, “Death Scene,” mm. 1-8

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 4, and the second system contains measures 5 through 8. The music is written for piano in 4/4 time. The right hand of the piano part carries the primary melody, which begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a 'STGS' (string tremolo) marking. The melody is characterized by a recitative-like quality, featuring various intervals and a triplet in measure 6. The left hand provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. The vocal line, indicated by a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#), consists of whole notes in measures 1-4 and 5-8, with rests in measures 1-4 and 5-8.

as “Eli, Eli”) for strings and choir.²²⁸ The quiet strings play the melody in unison, and then octaves, while the choir solemnly hums a counter melody. In measure nineteen, the recitative-like material from the “Main Title” returns again sounding like a cantor and congregation singing antiphonally. This scene departs from Newman’s usual evocation of the Rothschild family. Indeed, this passage is reminiscent of silent era Jewish films with

²²⁸ Jacob Koppel Sandler composed the sentimental song and Cantor Joseph Rosenblatt’s performances and recording made it famous. While, the song is associated with the “Old Country,” Sandler wrote the song eight years after immigrating to America. For the intriguing history of the song including a copyright infringement case, see: Joshua S. Walden, *Sounding Authentic: The Rural Miniature and Musical Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3-8, 203-07. Max Steiner also quotes “Eili, Eili” in his score for *Symphony of Six Million*.

overtly Jewish characters and Yiddish source music. This simple but heartfelt cue aptly conjures up the sadness of the scene as well as the dignity of this distinguished family. Newman's musical depiction of Jewishness expires with the family's patriarch and the score continues with the "conventional materials" Fred Steiner dismissed earlier. Lester Friedman explains, "All in all, *The House of Rothschild* sends mixed messages. It overtly intends to glorify the Rothschilds. But its covert innuendos replace positive images with troubling doubts, as if a totally positive portrait is impossible."²²⁹ With Friedman's critique in mind, it is possible to see why the death scene was selectively edited and used without copyright permission in the propagandistic "documentary" *Der Ewige Jude* (*The Eternal Jew*, 1940) to paint Jews in an unscrupulous light to German audiences.²³⁰

Gentleman's Agreement

With the Second World War drawing to a conclusion in 1944 and with knowledge of the Holocaust increasing among the American public, Warner Bros. gingerly treaded on the subject of American anti-Semitism with *Mr. Skeffington*, which will be discussed at length in the next chapter. At the same time, Democratic congressman John E. Rankin called gossip columnist Walter Winchell a "kike" on the floor of the House of Representatives; Congress responded with a standing ovation. Such a brazen anti-Semitic display in Washington, made while American forces, whose ranks included Jews, of

²²⁹ Friedman, *Hollywood's Image of the Jew*, 72.

²³⁰ Epstein, *American Jewish Films*, 38. *Der Ewige Jude* was perhaps the most viscerally disgusting propaganda film produced during the Nazi reign. "The dehumanized figures of starving Jews in rat-infested alleys that made Germans cringe in horror during screenings," also lead to poor box-office returns. Bartov, *The 'Jew' in Cinema*, 14-15.

course, fought the Nazis, “made a strong impression on Laura Z. Hobson.”²³¹ Rankin’s bigotry spurred Hobson (born Zametkin) to write her novel *Gentleman’s Agreement* (1947).²³² The book immediately became a *New York Times* bestseller and had Hollywood studios bidding on the story rights with Darryl Zanuck securing the rights for \$75,000. Zanuck was the right man for the job. As Eric Goldman explains, “A big question was whether America was mature enough to address the issue and whether Hollywood moviemakers were sufficiently secure to examine so controversial a subject. Making a movie about this social problem could be highly explosive.”²³³ Most Hollywood executives, especially those of Jewish heritage, preferred not to take financial risks with social-message films. After the silent-film era, Jewish executives eschewed Jewish film topics for a variety of reasons. Along with Rabbi Max Nussbaum at Temple Israel of Hollywood, Rabbi Edgar Magnin of the Reform Jewish Wilshire Boulevard Temple was the spiritual advisor to many in Hollywood. His cautious advice on the subject was in accord with the executives, as he grumbled,

All they talk about is the Holocaust and all the sufferings. The goddamn fools don’t realize that the more you tell gentiles that nobody likes us, the more they say there must be reason for it. They don’t understand a simple piece of psychology.²³⁴

²³¹ Otto Friedrich, *City of Nets: A Portrait of Hollywood in the 1940’s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 362.

²³² Hobson was the daughter of Michael Zametkin editor of the well-circulated Socialist *Jewish Daily Forward*.

²³³ E. Goldman, *The American Jewish Story*, 51.

²³⁴ Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own*, 349.

On the other hand, Zanuck, who was the head of Twentieth Century Fox and raised as a Protestant, relished such an opportunity. He reaped financial rewards with strong box-office returns for *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947), which won the Oscar for Best Picture and became *the* prestige hit picture of 1947.²³⁵ On a deeper level, Zanuck felt a duty to make this film. He explained his rationale to Laura Hobson when she directly asked him about his motives:

‘I have three children—Darrylin and Richard and Susan.’ He was looking past me, as if he were looking at the faces of his son and two daughters, then all in their teens. ‘If this country ever did go fascist,’ he went on, ‘and they said to me, ‘Well, pop, what did *you* do to stop it? You had the studios, the money, the power – what did *you* do to fight it off? ...I want to be able to say to them, ‘Well, I made *Wilson*, and then I made *Gentleman's Agreement*, I made *Pinky*.’²³⁶

Zanuck's touching words describe the high ethical standard of an unconventional filmmaker who proved repeatedly that “social message” films could be highly profitable. Zanuck tapped director Elia Kazan for the production.²³⁷ Made two years after the cessation of the Holocaust, *Gentleman's Agreement* makes glancing reference to the destruction of European Jewry. It focuses instead on American social discrimination and

²³⁵ It is worth noting, in most studies of American Jewish films, *Gentleman's Agreement* is paired with *Crossfire* (1947). Edward Dmytryk's *film noir* drama also considered American anti-Semitism. *Crossfire* producer Dore Schary and *Gentleman's Agreement's* Zanuck competitively raced their productions ahead of schedule trying to beat the other's film to the theaters and “be the first to release a picture on anti-Semitism.” E. Goldman, *The American Jewish Story*, 57. While *Crossfire* is a well-made social message film, Roy Webb's score is perfectly uninspired and derivative of his many previous *film noir* scores.

²³⁶ Laura Z. Hobson, *Laura Z.: The Early Years and Years of Fulfillment* (New York: Donald I. Fine, Inc., 1986), 434.

²³⁷ Zanuck's status as a Protestant from Nebraska was critical to the creation of these “message films.” There is a parallel between Zanuck and Edward Dmytryk (discussed in Chapter Four). Here are two non-Jewish filmmakers unafraid of dealing with anti-Semitism. Likewise director Kazan and Zanuck followed up *Gentleman's Agreement* with their next social message film about racism against African Americans in *Pinky* (1949).

racial stereotypes. The protagonist, Phil Green, played by the iconic Gregory Peck, as a reporter who assumes a Jewish identity in order to experience fully anti-Semitism for an article he is writing. As with the book, the film presented Jews in a compassionate manner with the aim of inspiring racial tolerance. Newman's score to *Gentleman's Agreement* contrasts greatly with his earlier musical representation of Jewishness in *Rothschild*. This post-war neo-realist drama contains dramatic scoring only for the "Main Title" and "End Credit" cues.²³⁸ Darby and Du Bois explain Newman's sparse scores from this time period at Fox saying, "The composer often leaves large stretches of films without any music—a trait quite noticeable in his early work and one that was, perhaps, abetted by Fox studio chief Darryl Zanuck's dislike of excessive scoring."²³⁹ What little music was composed has no readily discernable Jewish qualities. However, knowing Newman's sensitive dramatic instincts, a closer reading is warranted. Newman develops two themes in the "Main Title" of *Gentleman's Agreement*. First, "Blue" (fig. 3.4) is a fairly derivative jazzy melody, though lushly orchestrated.²⁴⁰ Second, Newman adapts the main theme from Samuel Goldwyn's *Street Scene* (fig. 3.6), Newman's ersatz Gershwin score from 1931.²⁴¹ The score is orchestrated by Edward Powell a "good Gershwin

²³⁸ Newman also supplies two original compositions for source music played during two dinner scenes.

²³⁹ William Darby and Jack Du Bois, *American Film Music: Major Composers, Techniques, Trends, 1915-1990* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1990), 74. The trend of truncated scores was not limited to Zanuck alone, but served as a practice with most Fox films of the time.

²⁴⁰ "Blue" is found in Newman's sketchbook for the year 1946 but it is not clear if the theme was written expressly for *Gentleman's Agreement*.

²⁴¹ As noted elsewhere in this chapter, Newman had no compunction about borrowing from himself and used the *Street Scene* theme again in *Cry of the City* (1948). It was also used in other

Figure 3.4 Newman, *Gentleman's Agreement*, “Main Title,” mm. 1-8. Score and annotations are transcribed from the original conductor book. ANC, Box 4A.

"BLUE"

STGS.

FLS 8va
SAXS

(TRBS SUST.)

①

②

Twentieth Century Fox productions by composer Cyril Mockridge (under Newman's musical direction) in *I Wake Up Screaming* (1941), *The Dark Corner* (1946), *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1950), and *How to Marry a Millionaire* (1953) and by David Buttolph in *Kiss of Death* (1947). The *Street Scene* theme became what Christopher Reynolds refers to as an "allusive tradition," where many composers use a motive and Reynolds points out "in such instances it is not necessarily the first use of the motive with a particular meaning that defines a motive as symbolically significant, but a subsequent usage." Christopher A. Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion: Context and Content in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 145. All of the subsequent quotations of the *Street Scene* theme are especially linked with a New York City urban landscape. Newman created a personal musical topic for the city of New York that he and his disciples applied where appropriate. He got the most out of this tune as he conducted a concert version of the piece with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in February 1933 and later adapted the theme into an orchestral work entitled, "Sentimental Rhapsody," and a song (with lyrics by Harold Adamson) of the same name. It should be noted that most of the Jewish aspects of Elmer Rice's Pulitzer Prize winning play *Street Scene* were removed from the film and transformed into a more generic immigrant's tale in the tenements of New York. Darryl Zanuck approved of Newman's self-borrowings and said in an inter-office memo, "Dear Al: Do nothing but continue to use 'Street Scene' wherever it fits." Marmorstein, *Hollywood Rhapsody*, 222.

This type of collaborative atmosphere was common at Fox with Newman at the helm. As Lawrence Morton points out, "His authorship of ideas is often forgotten as other composers borrow them and transform through their own creativity. But most of his colleagues are quite aware of his contributions." Lawrence Morton, "Film Music Profile: Alfred Newman," *Film Music Notes* 9, no. 5 (May-June 1950): 16.

Figure 3.4 Newman, *Gentleman's Agreement*, “Main Title,” mm. 1-8 (continued)

The musical score for Figure 3.4 is a piano introduction for the 'Main Title' of Newman's *Gentleman's Agreement*. It is in 3/4 time and the key of B-flat major. The score is divided into two systems, each containing three measures. The first system (measures 1-3) features a treble staff with a piano introduction and a bass staff with a piano introduction. The second system (measures 4-8) features a treble staff with a piano introduction and a bass staff with a piano introduction. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The piano introduction is marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The piano introduction is marked with a piano (p) dynamic.

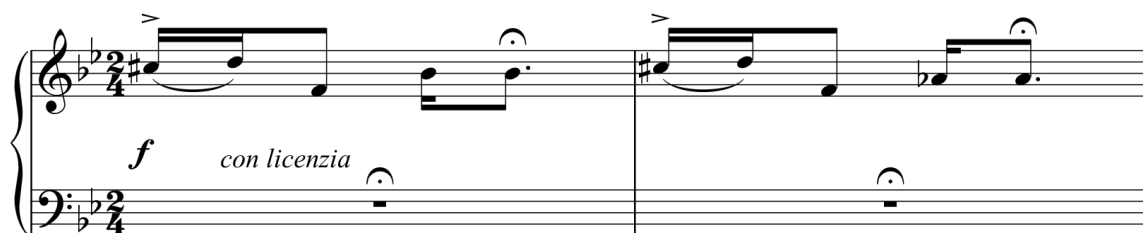
friend, who spent a lot of time at the Gershwins’,” and had orchestrated for George previously.²⁴²

Certainly the cue is a “stylistic allusion,” to Gershwin’s symphonic jazz, a term J. Peter Burkholder uses for allusions “not to a specific work but to a general style.”²⁴³ Fred

²⁴² Edward Jablonski, *Gershwin: A Biography with a New Critical Discography* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 315.

Steiner, however, sees the *Street Scene* theme as containing a “strong resemblance between Newman’s melody and the principal motive of Gershwin’s first prelude.”²⁴⁴ Gershwin’s prelude (fig. 3.5) begins in B $\flat$ major with a five-note motif: $\sharp 2-\hat{3}-\hat{5}-\hat{1}-\hat{1}$ then $\sharp 2-\hat{3}-\hat{5}-\hat{1}-\hat{1}$. While Newman’s D major melody is $\sharp 2-\hat{3}-\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{7}-\flat 6-\hat{5}$ then $\sharp 2-\hat{3}-\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\flat 7-\hat{6}-\flat 6-\hat{5}$. Steiner latches on to the first three notes of Gershwin’s motive and perceives Newman’s theme as derived from the former. Gershwin composed the *First Prelude*, the first of his *Three Preludes* from 1926, only seven years before Newman’s score and, as will be explained shortly, Newman was well versed in Gershwin’s music. Steiner’s observation is absolutely accurate, but in fairness to Newman, the figure that Steiner cites is a common gesture when using a seven-note blues scale. This allusion has multivalent meanings, however. On one level, Gershwin’s music certainly represents sophisticated “concert hall” jazz—that is music in a “jazz” idiom that is notated rather than improvised. On another level, Gershwin’s music embodies a complicated combination of Jewish and African American musical elements signifying America and, more specifically, New York City.

Figure 3.5 Gershwin, *First Prelude*, mm. 1-2



²⁴³ J. Peter Burkholder, “The Uses of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field,” *Notes*, Second Series 50, no. 3 (March 1994), 854, Table 1.

²⁴⁴ F. Steiner, “The Making of an American Film Composer,” 244.

Figure 3.6 Newman, *Gentleman's Agreement*, "Main Title," mm. 25-31

TPT. SOLO
"STREET SCENE"

P1B

NEW YORK SCENES

VLNS. 8va

SAXS.

25 26 27

For Newman, Gershwin was a musical idol as well as a close friend. His early association with George and Ira Gershwin furthered Newman's career.²⁴⁵ Newman conducted Gershwin's music for the popular revue George White's (born Weitz) *Scandals of 1920 and 1921* and the premieres of the musicals *Funny Face* (1927) and *Treasure Girl* (1928).²⁴⁶ Newman served as music director for *The Goldwyn Follies* (1938) and later for *The Shocking Miss Pilgrim* (1947), a film adaptation of the musical

²⁴⁵ Newman recounted his chance introduction to Gershwin in an interview with Tony Thomas. Gershwin was a sixteen-year-old song-plugger at Remick's in New York and Newman was thirteen. Newman had accompanied his aunt, a soprano, while looking for some music for a vaudeville performance for her quartet. Gershwin demonstrated several songs for Newman's aunt and coaxed by his aunt, Newman performed for George. Soon enough the two young talents became close friends. The interview is found on the album *George Gershwin Remembered* released by Delos in 1987 and reissued and accessed by the author in 2009 by Naxos Digital Services: http://library.stanford.edu/naxos_id=FA8100.

²⁴⁶ Howard Pollack, *George Gershwin: His Life and Work* (Berkeley: University of California, Press, 2006), 248, 250, 407, 429.

Ira Gershwin created with Kay Swift utilizing his brother's posthumously found unpublished sketches.²⁴⁷ Newman conducted recordings of Gershwin's *Second Rhapsody*, *Cuban Overture*, and *Variations on "I Got Rhythm"* with the Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra and pianist Leonard Pennario. This is all to say, Newman was hardly alone in his adulation for Gershwin's music. Gershwin influenced numerous composers, such as Oscar Levant and Vernon Duke (born Vladimir Dukelsky). Furthermore, music of the non-Jewish film and television composer Leith Stevens was obviously closer to Gershwin's harmonic and stylistic vocabulary than that of Newman.²⁴⁸ There were personal reasons for Newman's close identification with Gershwin. Newman saw a family situation quite similar to his own; both composers were first-generation Americans born to Eastern-European Jewish immigrant parents. After Gershwin's youthful death in 1957, Newman testified that he suffered a "frightful and irreparable loss."²⁴⁹

Newman paid homage to Gershwin in the music he composed for *Gentleman's Agreement*. This film pointedly shows assimilated Jewish characters to viewers, people

²⁴⁷ Pollack, *George Gershwin*, 693- 94, 685. Newman's career as a conductor on Broadway deserves its own study but he worked for many of the greats in addition to Gershwin, including Jerome Kern, Rodgers and Hart, among many more. Oscar Levant made a point of signaling out Newman's skill with the baton, calling him the "best conductor by far in Hollywood." Oscar Levant, *A Smattering of Ignorance* (Garden City: Garden City Pub. Co., 1942), 124. Amusingly Max Steiner complained to Levant about the praised heaped on Newman while Steiner's music was disparaged by Levant. Levant responded, "I always malign the people I love best. Just remember, I used twelve pages to say how lousy you are and I only used two pages to say how good Newman is." M. Steiner, "Notes to You," 166.

²⁴⁸ Stevens' Piano Concerto in C Minor (originally composed for the 1947 film *Night Song*) is redolent of Gershwin's own *Rhapsody in Blue*.

²⁴⁹ Pollack, *George Gershwin*, 116.

“who are just like everyone else.” To simultaneously reveal their Jewish identity and reassure viewers about their essential loyalty to American ideals, Newman cannily alludes to the “symphonic jazz” idiom employed by Gershwin in his *Rhapsody in Blue*. What better—or more economical—way to indicate “Jewish New York” than George Gershwin! The entire film is filled with this kind of depiction of Jewish normalcy. As Lester Friedman states, “The very fact that Gregory Peck assumes a Jewish persona so easily bespeaks volumes for Hollywood’s vision of what it means to be Jewish. It takes no more than dark hair and eyes to fit right in.”²⁵⁰ Contemporary critics found *Gentleman’s Agreement* to be profoundly important, as well as dramatically impressive. One reviewer exclaimed:

This is the fantastic accomplishment of a picture which is proud of its social contribution, and admittedly was rushed to completion in record time because of its pertinence to a world-wide problem...As uncompromising as its subject, ‘Gentleman’s Agreement’ will do more to advance the cause of tolerance than a thousand speeches and a thousand books.²⁵¹

While Newman’s score is not quite as groundbreaking as the film, it provides a fascinating approach to portraying Jewishness in a less overt manner than in *Rothschild*.

²⁵⁰ Friedman, *Hollywood’s Image of the Jew*, 128. Omer Bartov perceives a more nuanced reading than Friedman, explaining, “Making the heroically handsome Peck into a Jew both strengthens and weakens the film...we must ask whether the movie ultimately resolves the problem it set out to confront or ultimately evades it.” Bartov, *The ‘Jew’ in Cinema*, 38. Hollywood screenwriter Ring Lardner is even more critical saying, “the movie’s moral is that you should never be mean to a Jew, because he might turn out to be a gentile.” Friedrich, *City of Nets*, 366.

²⁵¹ “Bold, Brilliant Film Sets High in Achievement,” *Hollywood Reporter*, November 10, 1947. The unnamed reviewer also mentions in passing “Alfred Newman’s music is perfect.” The author thanks Ned Comstock for sharing a digital scan of the review.

The Diary of Anne Frank

The Diary of Anne Frank (1959) was directed by George Stevens (1904-1975) and is based on a play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett. This play, which won the Pulitzer Prize, is based on material that was drawn directly from Anne Frank's personal diary of her experiences as a young Jewish girl hiding from the Nazis in Amsterdam. The film was nominated for eight Academy Awards including Best Picture, and won three Awards including for Shelley Winters who won Best Supporting Actress for her portrayal of Petronella van Daan, a member of the other family sharing the crowded attic space with the Franks. Many look to the words of young Anne Frank for optimism in times of adversity. The eloquent film was well received by reviewers and at the box office as well. Some film historians have had second thoughts, however. Desser and Friedman, for example, consider *The Diary of Anne Frank* as succumbing "to the universalization of the Holocaust, the Jew representing all humanity or their extermination greatly deemphasized."²⁵²

What has not been debated is the quality of Alfred Newman's music for *The Diary of Anne Frank* (hereafter referred to as *Diary*). At the peak of his creative powers, Newman crafted a deeply moving score. In many ways, *Diary* was the perfect film at the perfect time for Newman. He had already developed a personal style of spiritual film music with his scores to *The Song of Bernadette*, *David and Bathsheba*, and *The Robe*. Even so, there were many problems with the scoring process, as Newman and director

²⁵² David Desser and Lester Friedman, *American Jewish Filmmakers: Traditions and Trends* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 217.

George Stevens clashed over the music with several scenes having to be revised. Ken Darby (1909-1992) relates that Stevens demanded, “you couldn’t have any low notes in your work; he said it was too dolorous.”²⁵³ It is fair to assume, Newman would lump Stevens in with the “plus-music boys”²⁵⁴—a large contingent of Hollywood executives who knew their own job—“plus music.” Despite the collaborative tensions, Newman looked back fondly on *The Diary of Anne Frank*, saying, “I have written many scores for films...None has touched me as personally as *The Diary of Anne Frank*.”²⁵⁵ Such a confession of personal involvement is highly significant, as Newman was well known for his workmanlike attitude to music. His nephew, singer-songwriter and Hollywood composer, Randy Newman, remembers his uncle referring to his film music as, “writing great bloody hunks of music to order.”²⁵⁶

After the Jewish portrayals of the Rothschilds and Phil Green, for Anne Frank, Newman turned to a more “universal” musical idea of spirituality. Newman’s main theme

²⁵³ Scott Dawes and Rich Upton, “Ken Darby: Alfred Newman’s Right Hand Man,” *Film Score Monthly* 41-43 (Jan/Feb/Mar 1994): 32. Darby did not work with Newman on *Diary* as he was assisting Andre Previn with *Porgy and Bess*. Though Darby and Newman worked for Stevens in a successful yet tumultuous relationship (Newman and Stevens began collaborating on *Gunga Din* in 1938). Darby ended up writing a book that was published posthumously on the trying experience of working with Stevens on *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. Ken Darby, *Hollywood Holyland: The Filming and Scoring of The Greatest Story Ever Told* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1992). Darby also arranged portions of the score to *Greatest Story* and *The Robe* into the cantata *The Man from Galilee*.

²⁵⁴ David Raksin, “Whatever Became of Movie Music?,” in *Celluloid Symphonies: Texts and Contexts in Film Music History*, ed. Julie Bess Hubert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 374.

²⁵⁵ Page Cook, “The Sound Track” *Films in Review* 41, no. 10 (October 1990): 502.

²⁵⁶ David Kamp, “How Randy Newman and His Family Have Shaped Movie Music for Generations,” *Vanity Fair*, February, 2016, accessed March 10, 2016, <http://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2016/02/randy-newman-musical-family>.

to *Diary* closely resembles the opening Communion theme of Richard Wagner's reimagining of the Holy Grail legend, *Parsifal*.²⁵⁷ Wagner's final music drama is a religious drama based in German myth.²⁵⁸ The melodic similarities are so closely related there is no question that Newman is drawing upon Wagner's theme.²⁵⁹ The Communion theme (fig. 3.7) is $\hat{1}-\hat{3}-\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{3}-\#4-\hat{5}$. While the *Diary* theme as found in the "Prelude"²⁶⁰ (fig. 3.8) is $\hat{5}-\hat{1}-\hat{3}-\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{3}-\hat{5}-\hat{7}-\hat{3}-\#4-\hat{5}$. If the *Diary*'s opening note (D) is ignored and considered only as a chordal tone before leaping up to the first *actual* notes of the melody, then these two themes proceed in (scale degree) unison for eight notes before Newman diverges with a three-note figure leading to the $\#4$ just as Wagner's melody flows. If these three notes are elided (which, is arguably even less reasonable than omitting the opening note of Newman's theme) the two melodies are intervallically identical for ten pitches.²⁶¹

²⁵⁷ Newman alludes to Wagner's *Parsifal* in previous scores as well. In the concluding scene of *The Dark Angel* (1935), Newman nearly quotes the "Grail" motive as two friends bid each other adieu, as one will marry their shared childhood friend and the other will gallantly walk away heartbroken.

²⁵⁸ Taruskin refers to *Parsifal* as "incidentally Christian." Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 480. Communion, of course, is the most Christian symbol of bonding adherents to each other and Christ.

²⁵⁹ Page Cook mentions in passing the opening theme is a "dignified and Parsifal-like melody of great restraint and warmth." Page Cook, "The Sound Track," *Films in Review* 41, no. 11-12 (November-December 1990): 570. As the connection is so apparent it is surprising that Cook's remark is the only reference to this connection found in the literature.

²⁶⁰ The film begins with an approximately three-and-a-half minute "Overture" over a somber blackened screen. The Fox logo then appears and Newman's own Fox Fanfare is omitted, as it was not appropriate for the grave context.

²⁶¹ The author's machinations should not obscure the main point that these two themes share a close resemblance.

Figure 3.7 Wagner's Communion theme in *Parsifal*, mm. 1-6



Figure 3.8 Newman, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, “Prelude,” mm. 1-8. Score and annotations are transcribed from the original conductor book. Alfred Newman Collection, University of Southern California, Cinematic Arts Library, (hereafter abbreviated as “ANC.”) Box X.

The musical score for Newman's "Prelude" from *The Diary of Anne Frank*, measures 1-8, is written for two staves in 3/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes several annotations and markings:

- Measure 1:** "F.I. MAIN TITLES VLNS." and "E.I.B." are written above the staff. The dynamic is *mf*. The bass line is marked with a circled 1.
- Measure 2:** "STGS.-W.W.-HRNS." is written above the staff. The dynamic is *mf*. The bass line is marked with a circled 2.
- Measure 3:** The bass line is marked with a circled 3.
- Measure 4:** The bass line is marked with a circled 4.
- Measure 5:** The bass line is marked with a circled 5.
- Measure 6:** The bass line is marked with a circled 6.
- Measure 7:** The bass line is marked with a circled 7.
- Measure 8:** The bass line is marked with a circled 8. The dynamic is *f*. The annotation "ADD BRASS" is written above the staff.

Other markings include "poco piu" and "ADD W.W." (Woodwinds) above the staff in measure 8.

This evident thematic similarity generates an obvious and unsettling question: why is Newman alluding to *Parsifal*, which was written by an anti-Semite and is considered by many scholars to be anti-Semitic in the way in which Wagner treats the character Klingsor?²⁶² Roy Prendergast suggests Newman looked to Wagner's music for influence on *Diary* and other scores, saying,

When confronted with the kind of dramatic films presented to them, Steiner, Korngold, and Newman merely looked (whether consciously or unconsciously is unimportant) to those composers who had, for the most part, solved almost identical problems in their operas.²⁶³

In Newman's case his borrowing is "conscious." But, is there a topical connection between *Diary* and *Parsifal*? In his discerning study of *Parsifal*, William Kinderman opines, "The Communion theme embodies both the theological virtue of love and the sufferings of Amfortas."²⁶⁴ Accordingly, Newman alludes to Wagner's dual meaning theme as *Diary* also contains two essential messages: faithful hope and tragedy. Musicologist Mervyn Cooke notes this duality in Newman's score saying, he "injected much of his music with a sense of youthful innocence rather than impending tragedy."²⁶⁵ Newman acknowledged his motivations stating,

I was very familiar with Anne's diary and our script, that all the music would be motivated by high ideals, the tenderness and the spiritual qualities inherent in their family life and their special badge of courage...For Anne, I tried to achieve

²⁶² For a convincing explanation of the Jewish attributes of Klingsor see: Marc A. Weiner, *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 184, 247.

²⁶³ Prendergast, *Film Music*, 39.

²⁶⁴ William Kinderman, *Wagner's Parsifal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 200.

²⁶⁵ Mervyn Cooke, *A History of Film Music*, 106.

in her music her youth, her simple candor, her warmth, and her abiding and inspiring faith.²⁶⁶

Anne's faith prompted Newman to look to Wagner's sign of ultimate faith in his Communion theme. After visiting the home in which the Frank family hid, Otto Frank, Anne's father, asked Newman to describe the music he intended to compose for the film. Newman explained:

I could only tell him in the abstract that what touched me most about the book was its spirituality, and that was what I wanted to say in the music. This seemed to please him. When it came to the actual scoring – I didn't try to illustrate, except in a few places, what was happening on the screen, so much as invoke in the music the remembrance of happier times, and the longings for the future – the longings of an oppressed people.²⁶⁷

Returning to the resemblances between Wagner and Newman's themes, the key relationships correspond as well. The Communion theme is first stated in A $\flat$ major and subsequently in C minor. Likewise, the *Diary* theme is stated in G major and (in m. 8) in B major.²⁶⁸ This harmonic relationship of a third is a spiritual musical signifier in Newman's scores, as will be discussed further both in this chapter and the next. Newman's sign, seems to originate with Wagner, though, as Kinderman suggests, "The tonal pairing of A $\flat$ and C is worked out elaborately in the prelude and in many related passages, becoming in effect a symbolic tonal representation of the changing state of the Grail."²⁶⁹ So, too, Newman's usage is symbolic, but, like most symbols, it is open to a

²⁶⁶ Cook, "The Sound Track," 502.

²⁶⁷ Thomas, *Music for the Movies*, 106.

²⁶⁸ The Communion theme alternates between major and minor while Newman's remains firmly in major.

²⁶⁹ Kinderman, *Wagner's Parsifal*, 200.

dizzying variety of interpretations. In another study Kinderman describes Wagner's intentions with the theme stating, "The initially unharmonized line, with its suspended rhythm and avoidance of stress on the downbeat, evokes the aura of Gregorian chant."²⁷⁰ Newman's reasons for modeling his music upon Wagner's theme expand further when the association to Gregorian chant is considered. There is spirituality inherent in the Communion theme that appealed to Newman for *Diary*. There is a universal, non-specific spirituality inherent in the Communion theme that Newman considered appropriate for *Diary*. While Newman's theme does not use the "suspended rhythm" Kinderman describes, he still creates temporal fluidity with the chain of suspensions heard in the violins and French horns in measures two through seven.²⁷¹

Newman references the "incidental" or "faux" Christian music of Wagner to indicate spirituality, while the screenwriters adapted Anne's diary to make the film less identifiably Jewish and more universally understood. In the process of expropriating and, in a sense, redeeming *Parsifal* through using it in this new context, did Newman also include any musical markers of Jewishness in his score? The answer is very little, but they are noticeable. In measure six and seven an ornamental figure accompanied by a #VII (F# major) chord concludes the first phrase of the cue. The chord turns out to be a

²⁷⁰ William Kinderman, "The Third-Act Prelude of Wagner's *Parsifal*: Genesis, Form, and Dramatic Meaning," *19th-Century Music* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2005), 165.

²⁷¹ This "chain" was a common device of Edward Powell's. While Earle Hagen receives the orchestration credit on "Prelude," Powell orchestrated much of the rest of the *Diary* score and it appears Hagen copied much of Powell's approach in the cues Hagen orchestrated. For other examples of the "chain of suspensions," listen to the Main Title arrangement of the "Cathy theme." Starting in measure four (notated as "D") almost every chord has a suspension. This was one of the many ways Powell influenced Newman's style.

modulatory chord (acting as a dominant) to the closely related key of B major. However, at first it is not heard that way, as the surprising half step root movement of the progression (G major to F# major) has an incongruously eastern-sounding cadence.²⁷² Newman took Wagner's pseudo-Christian Communion theme and transferred it into a marker for Jewishness. The metamorphosis is subtle—perhaps even forgotten as the next phrase begins in measure eight—but Newman knew what he was doing, even if the symbolic meaning is obscured to others. One can surmise Newman wanted to connect the European Jewish tragedy to a worldwide audience. Similarly, Lawrence Epstein explains how the film alters the diary:

And the movie deliberately tries to make Anne universal. In her diary, Anne reflects that she and her family were not the only Jews to suffer, that all through history Jews have faced danger and death. But this idea in the film is transformed to 'We are not the only people that've [*sic*] had to suffer. There have always been people that've had to – sometimes one race, sometimes another.' This is a noble and true idea, but it violates both the message from Anne's diary and the uniqueness of the Holocaust.²⁷³

The Robe

Alfred Newman and Miklós Rózsa composed the scores to most of the successful post-war biblical epics.²⁷⁴ In particular, Newman's scores to *David and Bathsheba*

²⁷² The only other recognizable musical marker of Jewishness occurs in mm. 15-17 with a brief duet between a solo violin and solo violoncello that is performed heavily with portamento. Of course, this could be argued as simply a sentimental gesture and not particularly Jewish.

²⁷³ Lawrence J. Epstein, *American Jewish Films: The Search for Identity* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2013), 67.

²⁷⁴ Rózsa composed the scores to *Quo Vadis* (1951), *Ben-Hur* (1959), *El Cid* (1961), and *King of Kings* (1961). Rory Guy said Rózsa and Newman "seemed to vie for the title of God's kapellmeister." Marmorstein, *Hollywood Rhapsody*, 189.

(1951), which will be discussed in the next chapter, and *The Robe* (1953) set the standard for music composed for these religious dramas.²⁷⁵ *The Robe*, directed by Henry Koster (born Kosterlitz), was the first film released in CinemaScope, a technique that created a widescreen format by using an anamorphic lens, as well as stereophonic sound.²⁷⁶ The film, which is loosely based on incidents found in the New Testament, stars Richard Burton as Marcellus Gallio, a Roman military tribune ordered by Pontius Pilate to crucify Jesus. After the crucifixion, Marcellus wins Jesus' robe in a dice game but the garment transforms him into a Christian. Christopher Palmer dismisses the movie saying, "The film is not highly regarded today, yet it inspired Newman. Perhaps he was affected by its ethos rather than its quality."²⁷⁷ Palmer was not alone in his feelings about *The Robe*, as Newman's score so deeply moved Franz Waxman that he resigned from the Academy of

²⁷⁵ Newman, as well, co-composed the score for *The Egyptian* (1954) with Bernard Herrmann. Then in 1965, Newman wrote the score for the musically disastrous *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, which is briefly discussed in Chapter Four.

²⁷⁶ *The Robe* was based on best-selling historical novel of the same name by Lloyd C. Douglas. In addition to *The Robe*, Koster and Newman collaborated on *My Blue Heaven* (1950), *Elopement* (1951), *A Man Called Peter* (1955), and *Flower Drum Song* (1961). Koster remembers the momentous moment he left Germany, saying, "I had to leave Berlin very early, a few days after Hitler took over the government. I had a terrible encounter with a Nazi officer, and I couldn't go home anymore. I had to jump on a train and escape, and I did." Koster like many of his colleagues escaped the Nazi and succeeded in Hollywood. Henry Koster and Irene Kahn Atkins, *Henry Koster* (Metuchen: Directors Guild of America, 1987), 9.

The anamorphic lens compresses a wide angle view on to 35 mm. film. John Belton, "Technology and Innovation," in *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 266. CinemaScope's stereophonic sound was a three-channel stereo system. Film historian David Bordwell explains that, "Three microphones, spread across a sound boom, yielded the sound to be played through the three theater speakers. A fourth track carried added sound effects." David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 360.

²⁷⁷ Christopher Palmer, *The Composer in Hollywood* (London: Marion Boyars, 1990), 83.

Motion Picture Arts and Sciences when Newman was not nominated for a Best Score Oscar.²⁷⁸

As with all biblical films made in Hollywood during this period, Jesus' face is never shown to the audience. Therefore Newman was confronted with the task of finding a way of musically portraying "the robe"—the physical symbol—of Jesus. Due to Jesus's status as an itinerant rabbi who constantly quoted Hillel, a theme based on Jewish musical elements was a possibility. Some commentators have even assumed Newman took that approach, as Tony Thomas asserts, "*The Robe*, with its scholarly usage of ancient Hebraic music. The sincerity of feeling in Newman's religious subjects is beyond reproach, and reveals an aspect of his nature otherwise never referred to."²⁷⁹ However, there is no reason to assume Newman chose to research "Hebrew music" in preparation for composing music for *The Robe*. Even so, Thomas knew Newman personally and perhaps was aware that Newman had studied "Jewish music" while composing his score to *David and Bathsheba* two years earlier.²⁸⁰ While several scholars have analyzed the famous "Robe" music of the "Prelude," revisiting this music with two distinct new goals justifies its inclusion in this study. These goals are alternative influences on Newman's music followed by his self-borrowings, adaptations, and later uses of the material in the context of a "spiritual" picture. As alluded to earlier in this chapter, Newman, like his

²⁷⁸ Cooke, *A History of Film Music*, 99. Waxman would adapt certain materials from Newman's score (such as the crucifixion cue) for his own score to *Demetrius and the Gladiators* (1954) the sequel to *The Robe*.

²⁷⁹ Thomas, *Music for the Movies*, 69.

²⁸⁰ *Jewish Music* is the title of a landmark text of Jewish musicology by A.Z. Idelsohn closely studied by Newman and discussed in Chapter Five.

colleagues Korngold and Steiner, used Wagnerian techniques such as the leitmotif to unify his scores: a particularly eloquent example of this procedure is his score to *Wuthering Heights* (1939). However, in Newman's scores for biblical epics thematic leitmotifs gave way to harmonic progressions or "figures." As such, the music that delineates the spiritual garment itself is not melodic but harmonic; this distinctive "figure" returns with every appearance of the robe itself, or indeed any allusion to Jesus.

The "Prelude" consists of three discrete sections. Section A has a fluid chordal progression with long held notes in the voices (all dyads) and strings accompanied by an accented dirge-like gesture in the brass that propels each successive chord to the next. Jesus' robe is characterized by a flowing series of seemingly unrelated triads. The A section begins in C minor and can be considered a tonal center but as Stephen Meyer concedes, "In terms of traditional Roman-numeral harmonic analysis, Newman's progression is difficult to understand."²⁸¹ The progression flows C minor – E $\flat$ minor – C minor – A major – C – minor – B major – A $\flat$ major. As explained, C minor functions as a tonal center but only as a point of departure and return. The combination of flexibility and distinctiveness inherent in this harmonic pattern is apparent in measure seven when for the first time Newman proceeds from B major to A $\flat$ major instead of the expected return to C minor. Three of the four scholars who have investigated this figure were content to declare, "The Prelude's" harmonic progression is "unrelated by key."²⁸²

²⁸¹ Stephen C. Meyer, *Epic Sound: Music in Postwar Hollywood Biblical Films* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 100.

²⁸² Palmer, *The Composer in Hollywood*, 84. Harold Brown writing in the year of the film's release, calls it a "chaconne theme – a series of juxtaposed major and minor triads derived from

Stephen Meyer on the other hand, offers a more creative explanation for Newman's progression, seeing the chords,

Being generated by semitonal or tonal voice leading. Following this logic, the E $\flat$ minor sonority of the second measure is derived from the original C minor triad by shifting the root down a whole step and the fifth down a half step. The remaining chords of the progression can be derived using similar operations.²⁸³

Meyer's analysis is intriguing and might very well be how Newman came upon the theme while at the piano.²⁸⁴

In section B the dirge-like gesture floats to the full strings while the choir intones a chromatic "eastern-inflected" melody.²⁸⁵ In section C the brass returns to prominence with a royal proclamation befitting a sovereign on high. A closer investigation of section A is required to achieve the two unsettled goals of this section. *The Robe* "Prelude" contains four defining features. They are a distantly or unrelated triadic harmonic progression, a rhythmic dirge-like gesture, a tolling timpani, and juxtaposed ascending and descending lines that are orchestrated for the pitched percussion. The opening four measures of "The Prelude" (fig. 3.9) incorporate the first three elements (progression, dirge, and tolling). The fourth significant feature (fig. 3.10) occurs in measures seven and

the tones of the chromatic scale, and radiating from a central C minor triad as a tonal center." Harold Brown, "The Robe," *Film Music* 13, no. 2 (November-December 1953), 3. Lastly, Roger Hickman states, "The Christ/Robe theme juxtaposes unrelated major and minor triads." Hickman, *Miklós Rózsa's Ben-Hur*, 88.

²⁸³ Meyer, *Epic Sound*, 100.

²⁸⁴ Newman traditionally composed at the piano and kept important scores close to him. Perhaps in this case Strauss' "Presentation of the Silver Rose" from *Der Rosenkavalier* might have rested upon the piano rack.

²⁸⁵ Most of the leitmotifs in the score derive from the melodic material found in section B.

Figure 3.9 Newman, *The Robe*, “Prelude,” mm. 1-4, ANC, USC

VOICES *poco maestoso*
AH (SEMPRE)

W.W. 8va
BRASS

ff

① ② TIMP. ③ ④

eight functioning as a transitional element to the B section, but more importantly the textural change of an active pitched percussion section with an ascending harp part signifies heavenly ascent.²⁸⁶

Figure 3.10 Newman, *The Robe*, “Prelude,” m. 7

GLOCK

HP.
CEL.

⑦

²⁸⁶ In addition to the spiritual connotations associated with such a musical gesture this is pure Mickey-Mousing on Newman’s part.

As mentioned previously in relation to Newman's *Diary* and *Gentleman's Agreement*, Newman's compositional process often involved musical borrowing. In the case of *The Robe*, Stephen Meyer surmises that the second movement of Dvorak's Ninth Symphony, Op. 95 ("From the New World," 1893), might have had structural influence on Newman's "Prelude," while the "ominous priest" music of Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila* and Verdi's *Aida* provide harmonic and textural precursors. But, otherwise, Meyer believes:

There is no sense here of quotation or borrowing, but rather of an imaginative recycling of deeply rooted musico-dramatic topoi. Newman was a master of what I would like to call the intermediate level of musical reference: of music that seems to hover at the edge of recognition in order to create—at least for some audience members—a rich network of associative relationships.²⁸⁷

To illustrate this idea more clearly, Meyer references Newman's allusions to Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in *Street Scene* that have been discussed above. Meyer continues:

The relationship between the title theme for *The Robe* and its analogous nineteenth-century prototypes is admittedly not as close as that which obtains between *Street Scene* and the Gershwin piece, and it seems likely that Newman's appropriation of early music in *The Robe* took place on a more subconscious level.²⁸⁸

Meyer's claim can be easily refuted, however. Before the biblical epics, Newman had learned to effectively evoke the numinous, indeed, the miraculous, in the score that he provided for *Song of Bernadette* (1943).²⁸⁹ Lawrence Morton describes Newman's initial thoughts on scoring the famous "Vision Scene" in *The Song of Bernadette*:

²⁸⁷ Meyer, *Epic Sound*, 103.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ As Fox music director Newman originally signed Igor Stravinsky to compose the score for *Song of Bernadette*. Stravinsky's music was rejected and Newman took on the job himself and

Newman's first reaction to the scene, when he saw it in the projection room, was to 'hear' the scene in terms of the great religious experiences that had previously been interpreted musically by the masters – that is, in terms of Wagner's 'Grail Music' or Schubert's 'Ave Maria,' to name the most obvious examples.²⁹⁰

Instead of these two possible influences, for *Bernadette*, Newman turned to another setting of "Ave Maria," this one by Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611), for inspiration. Newman expropriated Victoria's motet in his older score to *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1939), where it is dramatically connected with the massive edifice of the magnificent Parisian cathedral.²⁹¹ The motet-derived theme subsequently resurfaces in *Bernadette* as the "Sancta Maria" theme (fig. 3.11) associated with Bernadette's visions of the Virgin Mary. The sonorities and harmonic movement found in "Sancta Maria" serve as the structural basis for *The Robe* figure. Newman's theme from *Bernadette* progresses from G# minor – E major – C# minor – A major – B major – E minor – C major – D major – G major. Except for the final cadence (IV-V-I), the harmonic progression is similarly ambiguous just like the progression found in the "Prelude" to *The*

thereby won his third Academy Award. The material Stravinsky composed for the "Apparition of the Virgin" ended up in the middle movement of his *Symphony in Three Movements*. Marmorstein, *Hollywood Rhapsody*, 88. Stravinsky had similar results with his rejected score to *Commandos Strike at Dawn* (1942). Alexandre Tansman was Stravinsky's assistant and Hollywood advisor on the score, which now is held in the Tansman papers at the Sacher Foundation in Switzerland. Louis Gruenberg had the distinction of composing a replacement score for Stravinsky.

Newman found the dramatic approach to scoring "faith and fanatic, political skepticisms, and the ever subtle presence of the infinite, was to me, at least a challenge." "Notes on Alfred Newman," *Film Music Notes* 3, no. 4 (January 1944), 11.

²⁹⁰ Morton, "Film Music Profile: Alfred Newman," 16.

²⁹¹ The connection between Victoria's "Ave Maria," Newman's *Hunchback*, and *Bernadette* is found in Roland Jackson's fascinating study of authorship and influences in *Bernadette*. Roland Jackson, "The Vision Scenes in *Bernadette*: Newman's and Powell's Contributions," *Journal of Film Music* 3, no. 2 (2011): 122.

Robe. Half of the root movement shifts by thirds, another example of the method that Newman's used to create a sense of the supernatural. More subtly, the rhythmic figure of *The Robe* descends from "Sancta Maria." The first three half notes slowly push towards A major, but then in measure two, the four half notes leading towards the dotted whole note "tonic" in measure four becomes a rhythmic motif used by the inner voices of the brass in measures one and three of the "Prelude" (again see fig. 3.9).

Figure 3.11 Newman, *The Song of Bernadette*, "Sancta Maria" Theme, mm. 1-4²⁹²



The Counterfeit Traitor

Newman employed the same techniques for creating musical signifiers of religious awe in *The Counterfeit Traitor* (1962), a spy melodrama, directed by George Seaton (1911-1979) and starring William Holden (1918-1981) as Eric Erickson an American-born Swedish businessman coerced into spying for the Allies while working in Nazi Germany. Over the course of the movie, Erickson comes to believe in the Allied cause. One of his espionage partners, Marianna Möllendorf, played by Lilli Palmer (1914-1986), is a religiously observant Catholic and functions as an ethical voice in the film. Marianna is a member of the anti-Nazi German underground working with

²⁹² This example is transcribed from Roland Jackson's already mentioned article. Jackson, "The Vision Scenes in *Bernadette*," 119. In turn, Jackson transcribed it from Newman's conductor score of *Bernadette* held at USC in the Alfred Newman Collection.

Erickson. As such, she staunchly supports the Allied cause, but she is nevertheless conflicted about her convictions, as she understands that her actions directly lead to the death of innocent German citizens along with the targeted Nazis. With this internal friction overwhelming her, Marianna seeks refuge in a confessional. Unbeknownst to her, two Nazi agents have tracked her to the church. One of them sits behind the confessional screen posing as a priest. After learning of her treason, Marianna is led off to face a Nazi firing squad.

Newman's cue "Sacred and Profane" for this dramatic scene elicits spiritual music. After the church bells ring, Marianna walks into the church (fig. 3.12) and a B-minor chord sounds in the French horns and trombones. This is the beginning of a dirge-like progression that alternates between B minor (i) and E major (IV) triads. As one must by now surmise, the dirge is related to *The Robe* figure, but not as directly as might have been at first surmised. The dirge is heard throughout the cue giving the scene forward movement as Marianna slowly gathers the courage to speak to the priestly impostor. Newman, and orchestrators Leo Shuken (1906-1976) and Jack Hayes (1919-2011), masterfully disperse the figure through the orchestral families, so that the alternating chords grow ever more compelling.

Figure 3.12 Newman, *The Counterfeit Traitor*, “Sacred and Profane,” mm. 1-4

Mariana turns & walks into church.
(sotto voce) ①

HORNS

BNS. (cued B.CL.)

In measure forty-two (fig. 3.13), Marianna confesses: “I gave information and because of it a city was bombed.”²⁹³ As she utters the words, “because of it,” a soft chime is struck, that must be understood as signifying the lives lost in the bombing, but also, Marianna’s impending doom. As she closes her eyes and lowers her head in shame, the dirge figure returns (in m. 43) now alternating between F minor and B♭ major. It is possible to read into this harmonic shift—minor to major that was previously major to minor—as having symbolic meaning. The subtitle of “Sacred and Profane” is “Marianna’s Regeneration.” The Christian theological concept of regeneration, as achieved through baptismal grace, washes away sin.²⁹⁴ Perhaps Newman’s harmonic shift from major to minor that “transforms” into minor to major symbolically means Marianna has been spiritually forgiven even if she dies in order to be redeemed. This idea is hardly far-fetched given Newman’s approach to religious subjects. In fact, Christopher Palmer states that Bruckner influenced Newman’s sonorities: “In general, Newman is little

²⁹³ *The Counterfeit Traitor*, directed by George Seaton (1962; Hollywood: Paramount Home Entertainment, 2004), DVD, 01:25:48.

²⁹⁴ Bruce A. Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of God* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006), 281.

interested in polyphonic interaction between instrumental groupings. He prefers to think in terms of blocks of sound, either individually or as a unit.”²⁹⁵ Returning to Newman’s “Sacred and Profane,” the final statement of the dirge-like figure, during the visual revelation of the Nazi, who is missing a clerical collar, generates very dissonant harmonies. Instead of generally consonant dyads and triads Newman used previously, a new chordal construction of a C major triad (in the French horns and trombones) rubs over a D $\flat$ -A $\flat$ dyad (in the basses and tuba) forming a sharp dissonance. On the last beat of the measure, the construction is inverted and a D $\flat$ major triad is heard above a C-G dyad. Clearly, Newman will not show grace to a Nazi impostor.

Figure 3.13 Newman, *The Counterfeit Traitor*, “Sacred and Profane,” mm. 42-48

The musical score for Figure 3.13 is arranged in three systems. The top system contains the French Horns (HNS.) and Woodwinds (W.W.) parts. The middle system contains the Basses (B.) and Trombones (TBS.) parts. The bottom system contains the Piano (P.) part. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'poco marcato' and 'pp'. The score is for measures 42-48 of the piece 'Sacred and Profane' from the film 'The Counterfeit Traitor' by Elmer Bernstein.

²⁹⁵ Palmer, *The Composer in Hollywood*, 74.

Figure 3.13 Newman, *The Counterfeit Traitor*, “Sacred and Profane,” mm. 42-48
(continued)

4:04 2/3
END OF SCREAM
CHIME & TAM-TAM

(HNS.) (47)

sub. *ppp* (48)

TIMP & B. DR.

sub. *ppp*

ff

TUBA BASSES W.W.

sub. *ppp*

CELLI

sub. *ppp*

In the final scene Erickson heads to his assigned hiding spot in the attic of a windmill. As he enters, Erickson sees a sick man breathing heavily on the floor. In measure thirty (fig. 3.14) of “Escape from Denmark,” Erickson turns the man over to see his face. Chromatic chords build tension and offer color for four measures but cannot be said to have a tonal function at the moment, although these measures will soon assume a dominant function. However, the rhythmic motive recalls the dirge-like figure (though slightly altered) from Marianna’s earlier church scene, though without an apparent reason in the story for a musical reminder of the prior situation. On beat two of measure thirty-three, the audience

Figure 3.14 Newman, *The Counterfeit Traitor*, “Escape from Denmark,” mm. 30-37

1:35 2/3
HAND ON BODY
*piu mosso e
agitato un poco*

un poco rit.

listesso (THIS BAR :05)

TENSELY -TRISTE
(30) (31) (32) (33)

3 add OPEN TRPT.

VLE. (stand divisi)
pp V.C. (+w.w.)

CLTS.
BSNS.

E.H.

cresc. poco a poco

MTD. HNS.
TBNS.
TUBA
ETC.

(HN.)

1:50
STAR OF DAVID
(1 BAR = 05 3/10)

ONE LINE OF DIALOGUE (NO FURTHER DIALOGUE
"SWEDEN" IN SCENE.)

Relax a tiny
fraction

pp (34) (35) (36) (37)

sord.
VLNS.

DEATH TOLL
LARGE B.D.

pp

SOLO CELLO

TIMP.

pp

TIMP.

MOLTO DIM.

mf MOLTO CRESC. **fff**

sees Erickson's eyes bulge and the woodwinds, strings, and brass play a highly dissonant chord (E, G, G#, B, D, F). On the downbeat of the following measure (again see fig. 3.14) the viewer sees what Erickson already has noticed: the man's jacket contains a tattered spot where a *Judenstern*, the yellow cloth patch star Jews were forced to wear by the Nazis, must have once been sewn. Newman annotates his score with a timing note and the words "Star of David." A thickly orchestrated A minor chord is struck and begins the complete dirge-like figure previously associated with Marianna's spiritual moment.²⁹⁶ Though, in this cue, Newman adds a tolling timpani pattern marking the man's grave situation. The same timpani figure is found in measure two, four, and six of *The Robe* as well. In measure thirty-five, Erickson asks the man, Klaus Kinski, a concentration camp escapee, if he is trying to escape to Sweden like him. With an affirmative nod, Newman responds by gently moving the ominous dirge figure to the upper string (played *con sordino*) musically portraying Kinski's temporary comfort. The coloristic timbre of the muted strings recalls the angelic voices of *The Robe* choir. The dirge-like figure signifies spirituality for Marianna in the confessional and for the Jewish Kinski as Erickson rescues him.²⁹⁷ Newman portrays Christians and Jews as inherently related in their suffering at the hands of the Nazis.

²⁹⁶ Finally with the large A-minor chord in m. 34 the previous chords are interpreted as resolving to a minor tonic. This provides a strong cadential quality associated with a dramatically revealing visual.

²⁹⁷ His relief is short-lived as Kinski dies on the rescue boat to Sweden.

A Man Called Peter

Strangely enough, Newman borrowed the dirge-like figure in *The Counterfeit Traitor* from his score for *A Man Called Peter* (1955). Henry Koster directed both films. *A Man Called Peter* is based on the biography (of the same name) about Peter Marshall the Scottish-born Presbyterian pastor to several American presidents and Chaplain of the United States Senate. The dirge-like figure appears in only two consecutive scenes in the third act. First, Peter has returned from another fruitless visit to the doctor, as the physician cannot help his wife, Catherine, suffering from tuberculosis. As he speaks to God of his anguish, the dirge figure slowly emerges. This scene leads into Peter delivering a sermon in a pulpit. Here he speaks of a “woman from Galilee” who if she could but touch Him she would be cured of her malady. He fervently says, “Just as He passes, she is able to reach out her hand and with the tip of her finger she touches His robe. It was enough.”²⁹⁸ The scene shifts to Catherine’s bedside as she listens to her husband’s sermon, which is being broadcast. After the line about Jesus’ robe, she switches off the radio and speaks to God, which Newman underscores with music that is directly related to the famous dirge from *The Robe* in a cue entitled “Faith and Recovery” (fig. 3.15).

²⁹⁸ *A Man Called Peter*, directed by Henry Koster (1955; New York: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2005), DVD, 01:33:27.

Man Called Peter and the opening movement of Debussy's Sonata for Violin and Piano (1917) (fig. 3.16). In Debussy's final composition, the piano progression begins G minor – C major – G minor – C major – E $\flat$ minor (or i – IV – i – IV – vi), while the violin melody echoes the harmonic construction below in the piano. The "Faith" dirge in *A Man Called Peter* circles around an alternating B minor – E major (i – IV) progression. In both dirges there is a feeling of earth-bound strength and spiritual timelessness. The progression could seemingly continue oscillating back and forth *ad infinitum*. Newman's impetus for using such a progression for a scene of religious faith is symbolically significant.

Figure 3.16 Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano, 1. Allegro vivo, mm. 1-8

Allegro vivo (55=♩)

Violin

Piano

pp dolce sostenuto

p dolce espress.

p poco

A similar progression with related dramatic impulses appears in the famous aria “Un bel dì vedremo” (fig. 3.17) from Giacomo Puccini’s (1858-1924) *Madama Butterfly* (1904). In measure fifty-eight Butterfly sings, “*Tienti la tua paura, io con sicura fede l’aspetto.*” [Banish your idle fears, for he will return, I know it.]³⁰³ This is an aria of hope

³⁰³ Giacomo Puccini, *Madama Butterfly*, New York: G. Ricordi & Co., 1908, accessed March 14, 2016, International Scores Music Library Project,

in which Butterfly's expresses her belief that her lover will eventually return to her. While not the Christian faith found in *The Robe* and *A Man Called Peter*, or the Jewish and Christian associations in *The Counterfeit Traitor*, Butterfly's faith also has a transcendent essence that Puccini associates with the harmonic and rhythmic figure beneath the climax of this moving aria. The tremolo and dotted eighth-to-sixteenth note figure has an almost imitatively similar effect to the long-short-short-short-long rhythmic pattern found throughout *The Counterfeit Traitor* and *A Man Called Peter*. Furthermore, the resolute harmonic progression of i – IV, i – IV found in “Un bel dì vedremo” can be found in both of Newman's scores. Unlike the many other known instances of borrowings within Newman's scores, the parallel with Madama Butterfly is, admittedly, speculative. Even so, the concept is the crucial aspect. The i – IV progression and dirge-like rhythmic figure meant otherworldliness to many composers and, in turn, became a marker of spirituality in Newman's film scores.

Figure 3.17 Puccini, “Un bel dì vedremo,” mm. 58-60

The musical score for Puccini's "Un bel dì vedremo" (mm. 58-60) is presented in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The vocal line (soprano) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a "poco rall." marking. The lyrics are: "Tien - ti la tua pa - u - ra, io con si-cu - ra fe - de l'a -". The piano accompaniment features a strong bass line with chords and a melodic line in the right hand. The piano part also includes a "poco rall." marking.

Conclusions

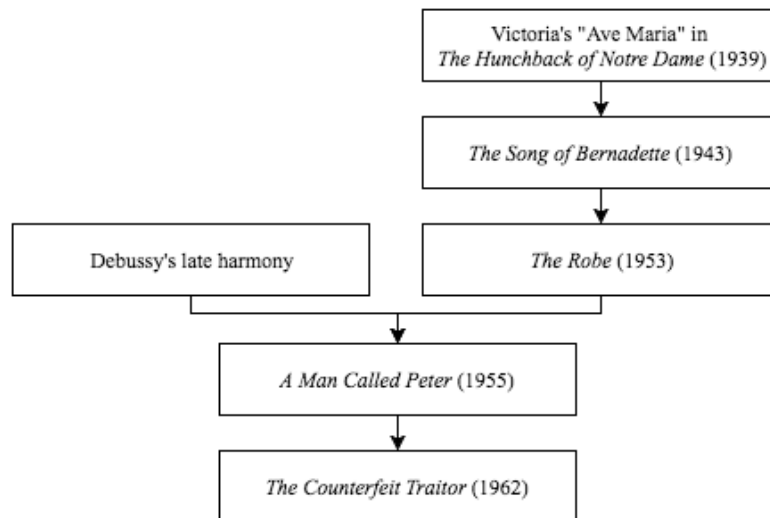
This chapter is arranged in two larger subsections: explicitly Jewish topic films and non-Jewish spiritual films. More importantly, this chapter discusses Newman's unique ability to express the numinous in music. His own beliefs remain hidden behind an opaque veil. Fred Steiner conveys Newman's strange personal background in relation to his frequent scoring assignments:

Whatever the reality may have been, the irony of the situation—a Russian-Jewish musician from the New Haven ghetto composing music for films with such overtly Christian themes (music for all the world to hear)—must have bemused the composer himself.³⁰⁴

No matter Newman's personal convictions, he created a personal style that has come to evoke spirituality in Hollywood film scores.

³⁰⁴ F. Steiner, "The Making of an American Film Composer," 201-02.

Figure 3.18 Musical Borrowings in the Spiritual Film Scores of Alfred Newman



Furthermore, this chapter might have been called, “A Study of Musical Borrowings in the Film Scores of Alfred Newman” (see fig. 3.18). As has been demonstrated repeatedly, Newman freely borrowed from Wagner, Debussy, Victoria, and, most of all, from himself. Due to the pressures of being a lead composer and musical director at Twentieth Century Fox, some scholars are critical of Newman’s self-borrowing and allusions to other composers’ works. Darby and Du Bois suggest Newman, “was not averse to borrowing from himself, and many of his leading themes bear startling family resemblances to each other.”³⁰⁵ Continuing with this topic they seem to imply a certain cynicism to the practice saying, “One Newman melody often appears to be an adaptation of another, in which a similar rhythmic pattern is carried over but disguised with altered pitches.”³⁰⁶ Christopher Palmer’s reading is more nuanced in

³⁰⁵ Darby and Du Bois, *American Film Music*, 74.

³⁰⁶ Darby and Du Bois, *American Film Music*, 110.

explaining, “There is a process of cross-reference unique in Newman. Themes and even whole sequences are repeated or re-worked in contexts of like emotional nature.”³⁰⁷

Audiences consciously or unconsciously recall musical themes and borrowings and allusions are potent compositional tools reminding audiences of previous situations and associations.

Newman was untroubled by anachronisms between music and film. He borrowed a sixteenth century sacred motet composed by a Spanish priest honoring the Virgin Mary to portray the Parisian cathedral of Notre Dame. Soon Victoria’s motet resurfaces in a Bernadette’s visions of the Virgin Mary, which makes sense religiously if not in terms of time and place. In a similar fashion, Newman stylistically alludes to the most famous New York Jewish composer’s portrayal of urban living. Then Newman reuses music intended to cast an aura around Bernadette’s visions for a representation of Jesus himself and then later for a Scottish preacher as well as a concentration camp escapee. Not to mention, maybe most effectively, Newman borrows the “incidentally Christian” music of the most virulently anti-Semitic composer of the twentieth century for a story of a Jewish victim of the Nazis. Newman gave a voice of awe to Hollywood’s ethnic and religious characters, whether or not he believed in anything at all.

³⁰⁷ Palmer, *The Composer in Hollywood*, 80. Palmer is referencing related materials in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *The Song of Bernadette*, *The Robe*, and *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, but the statement applies more generally to Newman’s oeuvre.

Chapter 4

Search for a Jewish Urtheme:

Mr. Skeffington, David and Bathsheba, and Exodus

Following in the wake of the usage of certain pre-existing scores, such as Bruch's *Kol Nidrei*, and certain melodic formulae that symbolized Jewish identity for Hollywood film composers is the issue of cross reference within this community. In order to investigate such cross-references, it is illuminating to examine the music of three seemingly disparate films on Jewish subjects by Franz Waxman, Alfred Newman, and Ernest Gold. *Mr. Skeffington* (1944), *David and Bathsheba* (1951), and *Exodus* (1960) possess few similarities except for a connection, explicit or implicit, to a Jewish storyline or character. Interestingly enough, Alfred Newman and Ernest Gold allude to a theme that Franz Waxman composed for the least overtly "Jewish" of these three movies, *Mr. Skeffington*. Was this intentional or unintentional? Did Newman and Gold deliberately draw upon Waxman's portrayal of musical Jewishness for their own Jewish-themed film scores?³⁰⁸ If so, what prompted Newman and Gold to do so?

³⁰⁸ While others, such as Jack Gottlieb and Stephen Meyer, have made connections between these three scores previously (and are discussed later in this chapter), William Rosar brought the thematic similarities to my attention; his insights and advice have helped form this chapter immeasurably.

Franz Waxman's *Mr. Skeffington*

Franz Waxman (born Wachsmann) was born on December 24, 1906 in Königshütte, Upper Silesia, Germany.³⁰⁹ His parents, Otto (Hebrew name Josef bar Schmuel) and Rozalia (*née* Perl), were married on November 12, 1894. Franz was the youngest of seven children of a traditional Jewish family. Franz learned Hebrew and at thirteen years of age became a bar mitzvah. Due to the nature of Otto's successful career in the metals industry, the Wachsmann family moved often; starting in Königshütte, and then on to the Silesian village of Tworog, followed by Breslau, and eventually to Opole. Marek Cieśliński says, "The family was not a particularly religious one, but it did participate in services in the synagogue in Opole."³¹⁰ At sixteen, Franz moved to Dresden to study at the *Musikakademie*.³¹¹ In 1923, he moved on to the German capitol, where Waxman studied with faculty from the *Berliner Musikhochschule* but did not officially enroll. Waxman was a pianist (along with Friedrich Hollaender³¹²) in the

³⁰⁹ Königshütte is now Chorzów in southern Poland. The area has been contested over the centuries by the dominant central European powers. Jews made up only a small portion of Königshütte (1.5% at Franz's birth) but the vibrant community had a large synagogue and numerous Jewish community and religious organizations. Marek Cieśliński, "The Upper Silesian Traces of Franz Waxman," *The Cue Sheet* 22, no. 1/2 (Jan/Apr 2007), 31-36.

³¹⁰ Cieśliński, "Upper Silesian Traces," 35. Unfortunately Cieśliński's fascinating essay on the Wachsmann family is weakened by an absence of citations.

³¹¹ Andrzej Gwoźdź, "The German Years of Franz Wachsmann," *The Cue Sheet* 22, no. 1/2 (Jan/Apr 2007), 37. This article provides the only detailed history of Waxman's time with the Syncopaters and career scoring for German films.

³¹² Friedrich (later Fredrick Hollander in Hollywood) helped Franz secure his first important film scoring assignment orchestrating and conducting for Josef von Sternberg's *Der blaue Engel* (1930). Cooke, *A History of Film*, 65-66.

popular Berlin jazz ensemble Weintraub Syncopators.³¹³ His association with Hollaender led to Waxman scoring a dozen films for the largest German film studio, Universum Film AG (UFA).³¹⁴ With the election of Hitler in 1933 and the resultant forced firings of Jewish staff members at UFA, Waxman was out of a job. Soon thereafter, in 1934, Nazi thugs gave Waxman a severe beating.³¹⁵ This deplorable incident sent him to Paris and hastened his move to Hollywood: Waxman traveled to America with his wife Alice.³¹⁶ As is well-known, California benefited considerably from German prejudice; an almost unimaginable assembly of Austrian and German intellectuals, writers, and artists joined Waxman into exile in Los Angeles.³¹⁷ Once in Hollywood, director James Whale, who

³¹³ The Weintraub Syncopaters often played Berlins most famous vaudeville theater, the Wintergarten, which was coincidentally managed by Franz Steiner, Max's uncle. M. Steiner, "Notes to You," 3. The Syncopaters left Germany in September 1933 to tour the free world. None of the members returned to Germany, with ensemble founder Stefan Weintraub retiring to Australia. Michael H. Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 40.

³¹⁴ David Neumeyer and Nathan Platte, *Franz Waxman's Rebecca: A Film Score Guide* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 4.

³¹⁵ Wachsmann could have been targeted for being a Jew but also because he was a jazz musician. See Michael Kater's intriguing study of jazz in the Third Reich. Kater also mentions Adi Rosner, a fellow Weintraub Syncopater, was likewise attacked by the Nazis. Kater, *Different Drummers*, 40.

³¹⁶ The Wachsmann family was visited by terrible misfortune, as one of Franz's sisters, Dorothea, died as an infant and his brother Max died in combat fighting in the First World War. The Nazis sent his brother Fritz to Auschwitz before transporting him at the end of the war to Buchenwald where they murdered him. As per the *Yad Vashem* Victims' Database: <http://yvng.yadvashem.org/>. Franz saved his parents from the Holocaust by bringing them to America. Thomas, *Music for the Movies*, 94-95.

³¹⁷ The topic of German and Austrian émigrés in California has seen much scholarly attention but a few notable works deserve mentioning that are not directly quoted in this study but influenced my understanding of the subject: Jean-Michel Palmier, *Weimar in Exile: The Antifascist Emigration in Europe and America* (London: Verso, 2006). Ehrhard Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). Jarrell C. Jackman and Carla M. Borden, *The Muses Flee Hitler:*

knew of Waxman's score for Fritz Lang's *Liliom* (1934), hired Franz to write original music for *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935).³¹⁸ The success of that score led to Waxman's appointment as music director at Universal Pictures. He stayed there only briefly, moving to MGM in 1936 to focus on composition rather than administration. Later, Waxman also collaborated with David Selznick and Alfred Hitchcock on *Rebecca* (1940) and Billy Wilder on *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). Waxman enjoyed an illustrious career as a film composer, by which he financed his true love, writing concert music.³¹⁹ Aside from his own works for the concert platform, Waxman conducted and financed works of numerous friends and fellow émigrés through the Los Angeles Music Festival that he founded in 1947.³²⁰ Music theorist and film music historian David Neumeyer said about the Festival's uniqueness, "The great majority (about 40) were West Coast premieres, and almost all of those were compositions from 1900 or later, reflecting the unique role of the Festival's concerts in the cultural life of Southern California."³²¹ Later in life, Waxman

Cultural Transfer and Adaptation, 1930-1945 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983).

³¹⁸ Neumeyer and Platte, *Franz Waxman's Rebecca*, 6.

³¹⁹ Waxman achieved an uncommon feat in winning Academy Awards for Best Original Score in successive years for *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) and *A Place in the Sun* (1951). He was nominated ten other times as well.

³²⁰ As the Los Angeles Philharmonic's programs tended towards the standard repertory with little music by living composers, many of the well-known émigrés had trouble obtaining premieres in their adopted city. Waxman premiered countless works by émigrés and European composers as director of the Music Festival. Dorothy L. Crawford, *A Windfall of Musicians: Hitler's Émigrés and Exiles in Southern California* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 52-53, 96, 172-64.

³²¹ David Neumeyer, "Waxman and the Two Decades of the Los Angeles Music Festival 1947-1966," *The Cue Sheet* 22, no. 1/2 (Jan/Apr 2007), 26. Neumeyer created a table containing all of the works performed at the festival, which can be found at <http://franzwaxman.com/franz-waxman/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/second.html>.

composed two scores related to Jewish texts: the dramatic song cycle, *The Song of Terezin*, based on children's poetry written while they were detained in the *Teresienstadt* concentration camp and the composer's final composition, the oratorio, *Joshua*, which was a tribute to his wife, who had been struck down with a terminal illness. Musicologist Rachel Segal perceptively characterizes Waxman's relationship to his Jewish identity: "He was not an observant Jew but clearly his cultural heritage and the impact of the oppressive regime he had escaped in Europe were intensely important to him, and he took great care to do justice to the subject matter on which he based these compositions."³²² Given the paucity of extant biographical source material, little has been written about Waxman's Jewishness, but clues to his convictions can be found in his music itself.

In 1944, Waxman composed the score to *Mr. Skeffington*, one of the first Hollywood films to engage, however obliquely, the topic of American anti-Semitism. Even as the American public gradually came to understand fully the horrors of the Holocaust, Hollywood proved reluctant to tackle American anti-Semitism as a movie topic.³²³ *Mr. Skeffington* is a vehicle for Bette Davis—some production notes even humorously label the film *Mrs. Skeffington*—whose didactic lesson concerns the

³²² Rachel Segal, "Franz Waxman: A Musical Innovator," *The Cue Sheet* 22, no. 1/2 (Jan/Apr 2007), 19.

³²³ The reason why Jewish studio executives eschewed Jewish topics during this period are many. The two most common replies are: 1) a fear of losing the important German box office revenue (of course, this answer became moot after America joined the war); 2) a fear of inciting more anti-Semitism by discussing the subject. As if the hatred would disappear if it was ignored. The first point of view is argued in: Thomas Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler: 1933-1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013). The second response is demonstrated again and again in Neal Gabler's, *An Empire of Their Own*, which chronicles the Hollywood moguls and their early-life experiences with anti-Semitism. The most common reaction from the moguls was to drape themselves in American patriotism and place their Jewishness in a closet.

corrosive effect of excessive personal vanity, but anti-Semitism is implicit in this sad tale.³²⁴ Davis' character, Fanny Trellis, is a social climber—note the name “Trellis”—much admired for her physical charms. With age and illness, however, Fanny loses her physical qualities that previously drew suitors to her door. The one person who truly loves Fanny is Job Skeffington, played by Claude Rains, a successful Jewish businessman. Certainly the author's selection of the name Job symbolizes the long-suffering Jew and alert viewers would certainly remark upon this allusion. The screenwriters shied away from an overt discussion of Job's Jewishness, however. Their aversion to explicit Jewishness on screen was a common trend in earlier Warner Bros. films, where the Jewishness of certain characters is obscured if not wholly repudiated.³²⁵ Early in *Mr. Skeffington*, a conversation between Fanny, her brother, Trippy, and their cousin, George, reveals Skeffington's Jewish identity:

Fanny: Trippy has a job now and is working very hard.
 Trippy: I certainly am. Only I don't like to hear it referred to as a *job*.
 [Fanny Giggles]
 George: What do you do?
 Trippy: Customers man, Skeffington and Company.
 George: Skeffington and Company? That's the Jewish firm?
 Trippy: Yes.
 George: How do you like working for him?
 Trippy: Oh, he's all right. Just like any other boss.
 George: Well...³²⁶

³²⁴ Warner Bros. paid Mary Annette Beauchamp Russell \$50,000 for the rights to *Mr. Skeffington*.

³²⁵ *The Life of Emile Zola* (1937) chronicles the French author's life including his famous response to the Dreyfus Affair, however the word “Jew” is never uttered in the film's script—effectively removing Jewishness from the historical moment. Again in *Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet* (1940) the Jewish identity of Dr. Paul Ehrlich is washed away by Warner Bros. Max Steiner composed the scores for both films.

³²⁶ *Mr. Skeffington*, directed by Vincent Sherman (1944; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2005), DVD, 00:07:32. The author italicized the word “job” to highlight the moment of

The dialogue begins with Trippy and Fanny sharing a whimsical moment of wordplay on the words “Job” and “job.” It is also crucial for Job’s Jewishness to be articulated clearly at this juncture, as Rains’ portrayal does not provide any overt markers of his heritage. At the same time, Trippy, played by Richard Waring, explains that Job, although a Jew, is “like any other boss,” as the screenwriters want to have their cake and eat it. Later, Trippy will voice his disapproval of Fanny and Job’s marriage due to his anti-Semitism, while the filmmakers continue to espouse tolerance through similar moments of levity. This comedic maneuver is employed in two ways: to soften the audience’s heart through laughter; or as an oblique approach to a delicate topic in Hollywood.³²⁷ Historian Omer Bartov points out:

Mr. Skeffington, as the foreign-sounding name of its male protagonist indicates, is an early attempt to show the ‘Jew’ in a good light, but it is also suffused with traditional anti-Jewish prejudices that assume an essential difference between Jews and non-Jews, even when the former are portrayed as perfectly decent individuals.³²⁸

amusement and Trippy’s stress on the word. George’s line inquiring about working for a Jewish boss concerned the Office of War Information Bureau of Motion Pictures (to be discussed in greater detail shortly) as the deputy of the Bureau, Nelson Poynter, stated in a letter to Jack Warner, “as though working for a Jew might be different from working for a Gentile.” Memo to Jack L. Warner from Nelson Poynter, Office of War Information Bureau of Motion Pictures, October 20, 1943. *Mr. Skeffington*, Story Department Folder 2085, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California. Hereafter abbreviated as “WBA, USC.”

³²⁷ Harley Erdman says, “Traditionally the Jewish man must perform himself as a less-than-masculine money grubber who borders on laughing stock. As such a marginalized laughing stock, the Jew can be accepted as a good guy in the melodramatic struggle against evil.” Harley Erdman, “M.B. Curtis and the Making of the American Stage Jew,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 15, No. 1 (Fall, 1995), 32. The article provides an intriguing perspective on the history of Jewish representation on the stage.

³²⁸ Bartov, *The “Jew” in Cinema*, 37.

The story department's notes for *Mr. Skeffington* confirm Bartov's point about the character of Job Skeffington, describing him as "a spectacularly rich Jew with an extraordinary gift for growing richer. Small, Semitic looking, agile and sinewy, he has a unerring instinct for attracting money and for manipulating it with the easy mastery of genius."³²⁹ From this one suspects that the author of this observation had George Arliss in mind, either as Disraeli or the patriarch of the Rothschild family. Representations of the American stage and screen Jew evolved from the 1880s, through three main avenues: the Yiddish theater; the comic routines and songs of early vaudeville; and Hollywood roles tailored for popular Jewish-American performers, such as Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor, and Sophie Tucker, or the nearly forgotten M.B. Curtis. Through comic or musical routines, these performers showed Americans a new side to Jewish figures that went beyond moneylenders and materialistic villains. Bartov sees Skeffington's portrayal as an attempt to humanize Jews for the movie-going American public. Directly before shooting commenced on *Mr. Skeffington*, Jack Warner summoned director Vincent Sherman (born Abraham Orovitz) and screenwriters, brothers Julius and Philip Epstein, into his office and asked the puzzling question, "Do you think it's absolutely necessary Mr. Skeffington be Jewish?"³³⁰ The filmmakers explained the crucial need for Skeffington to be portrayed

³²⁹ Alice Hunter's "Story Notes" for *Mr. Skeffington*, Sept. 18, 1940, 1, 2085, Story Folder, WBA, USC.

³³⁰ Bill Whitaker, Liner Notes, *Franz Waxman's Mr. Skeffington*: Moscow Symphony Orchestra, cond. William T. Stromberg, Marco Polo 8.225037, 1999, compact disc, 8. Warner received a good amount of mail about the Jewish portrayal of Skeffington after the premiere, most of it highly favorable. Actor Lou Holtz sent Warner a telegram: "Saw Skeffington last nite [*sic*] you are a great Jew a great American and a great picture producer." Letter from Lou Holtz to Jack Warner, August 31, 1944, Correspondence file, 2085, WBA, USC.

as Jewish. Hearing their arguments, a skittish Warner relented. However, what Sherman and the Epstein brothers could not have known at the time was the motivation for Warner's question came from a letter received from the United States Office of War Information Bureau of Motion Pictures.³³¹ Colonel Jack Warner had met with Nelson Poynter, the second-in-command of the Bureau on February 25, 1943.³³² The following day Poynter sent Warner a four-page letter delineating the Bureau's problems with the script for *Mr. Skeffington* followed by a one-page letter once the final script was revised approximately eight months later. Poynter proclaimed:

Although it is obviously not the intention of the writers, this portrayal of the unhappy lot of an American of Jewish faith would reinforce Nazi propaganda about treatment of minority groups in this country. Fortunately, this serious problem could be easily eliminated from the story by deletion of the several references (pp. 10, 49, 102) which establish Mr. Skeffington as a member of a minority group and by changing the reasons of his blindness upon his return from Nazi Germany.³³³

³³¹ President Franklin Roosevelt created the Office of War Information in June 1942 as an intermediary force between Hollywood and the government that attempted to imbue government-approved propaganda into movies. Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Censored: Morality Codes, Catholics, and the Movies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 298.

³³² There is an amusing anecdote in Jack Warner's autobiography on how he petitioned General Henry Arnold to make him a one-star general for his help with armed-services films. The two compromised and Warner left as a lieutenant colonel. Jack L. Warner and Dean Southern Jennings, *My First Hundred Years in Hollywood* (New York: Random House, 1965), 283-84.

³³³ Memo to Jack L. Warner from Nelson Poynter, Office of War Information Bureau of Motion Pictures, October 20, 1943. *Mr. Skeffington*, Story Department Folder 2085, WBA, USC. Poynter had various concerns with the script including: 1) The reactions shown by other Americans toward a minority group are undemocratic. 2) The characterization of Skeffington unwittingly confirms the Nazi Propaganda line. At 01:25:00, Job explains to his young daughter her parents' "different faiths." The daughter says, "I haven't noticed any difference, Daddy." But Job responds, "I'm Jewish. Your mother is not. Now, if you stay here with your mother, you'll never know what it is...[he stops himself]...I mean if you come to Europe with me it's different there." This scene is a rare moment of open discussion of Job's religion and (likely) based on Poynter's anxieties with the script, the screenwriters pointedly differentiate the religious freedom of America and the intolerance of Europe.

The Warner Bros. production team revised some of the script based on the Bureau's recommendations, but glancing references to Skeffington's Jewishness were retained. In the end, the Bureau was concerned still about *Mr. Skeffington*'s "unwitting substantiation of Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda"³³⁴ and disapproved of the film.

Franz Waxman's score makes him appear more confident in his sense of Jewish identity than Jack Warner. He did not hesitate to provide Job Skeffington with a clearly Jewish leitmotiv that appears throughout the picture. Likewise, Waxman's score and Rains' performance are far more nuanced than the screenplay itself. As expected in a Main Title cue, Waxman prepares the audience for the musical themes to be presented throughout the score. However, at first glance, the music seems ill suited to the film. As mentioned previously, *Mr. Skeffington* was intended as a dramatic vehicle for Bette Davis, but Waxman opens the film with a four-measure fanfare filled with militaristic snare drum accents.³³⁵ This approach might not seem unduly surprising, as Hollywood composers often use Puccini-like pageantry to begin many different types of pictures. For example, David Raksin opens his romantic score to *Laura* (1944) with a startling cymbal crash more suited to a fanfare than the lushly romantic *film noir* theme that follows. Waxman's fanfare (fig. 4.1) in the "Main Title" to *Mr. Skeffington* has a strangely Hebraic quality, however. The fanfare opens in the heroic key of E $\flat$ major. The modally-

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Perhaps Waxman is commenting upon the upcoming battles between Fannie's many suitors.

inflected harmonies that follow the tonic are surprising, but not yet obviously Jewish.³³⁶

The four descending chords leading back to the tonic (in measure three) stand out due to their descending parallel fourths. The trumpet flourish (in measure four) foreshadows a melodic gesture attached to a Jewish cultural icon at the end of the cue. This line serves as a modulatory transition into the parallel minor key (E $\flat$ minor). The entire section is

filled with awkward rhythmic gestures more associated with jazz and Jewish dance music than fanfares.

Figure 4.1 Waxman, *Mr. Skeffington* (1944), “Main Title,” mm.1-4, transcribed from the original conductor book, Franz Waxman Papers, Special Collections Research Centers, Syracuse University Libraries, hereafter abbreviated as FWP.

The musical score is for the 'Main Title' of the film *Mr. Skeffington* (1944), measures 1-4. It is in E-flat major, 4/4 time, and features a key signature of two flats. The score includes staves for STGS W.W., BRASS, and a double bass line. The STGS W.W. staff has a 7-measure flourish in measure 4. The BRASS staff has a 3-measure flourish in measure 4. The double bass line has a 1-measure flourish in measure 4. The score is marked with 'ff' (fortissimo) and includes a key signature change to E-flat minor in measure 4.

³³⁶ The orchestra oscillates between E $\flat$ -major and C-major chords. This repetition between the modally-inflected chords appears throughout the film scores of biblical epics and in particular in the scores of Alfred Newman (as surveyed later in this chapter and detailed throughout chapter 3).

Figure 4.1 Waxman, *Mr. Skeffington* (1944), “Main Title,” mm. 1-4 (continued)

The musical score for measures 1-4 of the "Main Title" from *Mr. Skeffington* (1944) is shown. The score is in B-flat major, 4/4 time. It features a piano introduction with sixteenth-note chords in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. The trumpet enters in measure 3 with a fanfare marked *ff* and a sixteenth-note triplet. The score includes staves for piano, violin, and trumpet.

In measure five of the “Main Title” (fig. 4.2) Job Skeffington’s motif is stated for the first time in the violins and French horns. The Skeffington theme is heroic, noble, and overtly Jewish. The bold opening upward leap of a fifth is followed by the confident repeated notes (down a whole step) played tenuto providing an almost regal quality. Musical Jewishness is implied through an unexpected harmonic shift to the parallel minor key after the major-key fanfare, which is a common compositional strategy found in traditional Jewish liturgical music. The Magein Avot synagogue mode begins in minor, modulates to the relative minor before returning to original minor.³³⁷ Additionally, the cadence (in measures seven through eight) from D major (VII) to E $\flat$ minor (i) is

³³⁷ The major-minor alternation found in Magein Avot synagogue melodies weave their way into the songs of Tin Pan Alley and Broadway as demonstrated convincingly here: Gottlieb, *Funny, It Doesn’t Sound Jewish*, 132-33. Also, see David Jenness and Don Velsey, *Classic American Popular Song: The Second Half-Century, 1950-2000* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 158.

Figure 4.2 Waxman, *Mr. Skeffington*, “Main Title,” mm. 5-8

frequently found in the Adonai Malakh mode, which has similarities to the Mixolydian mode.³³⁸

The consequent phrase of Skeffington’s theme is stated (in measures nine through twelve) by the violas, celli, and bassoons accompanied by an ethereal tremolo pattern in the high strings and woodwinds. Measures thirteen through seventeen constitute a brief melodic development section before Waxman reprises Skeffington’s theme in measure eighteen (fig. 4.3). Waxman assigns this restatement to a solo trumpet. Again, (like the rhythmic patterns mentioned earlier) reminding the audience of both jazz and Jewish

³³⁸ The Adonai Malakh mode is technically closest to the Mixolydian mode but it contains both $\hat{3}$ and $\flat\hat{3}$ (in the second octave) bringing the mode close to the blues scale as well. Here is one reason for the oft-noted confluence of Jewish and African-American music in the popular songs of the early Twentieth Century.

Figure 4.3 Waxman, *Mr. Skeffington*, “Main Title,” mm. 18-24

The musical score is written for a string quartet and an electric violin (EL. VIOL.). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 6/4. The score is divided into two systems, each containing four staves.

First System (Measures 18-20):

- Staff 1 (Violin):** Labeled "(STGS)" and "VIOL". It begins with a *mf* dynamic. The melody consists of a half note B-flat, a half note A-flat, a half note G, and a half note F, all tied across measures 18, 19, and 20.
- Staff 2 (Violin):** Labeled *mf*. It begins with a half note B-flat, a half note A-flat, a half note G, and a half note F, all tied across measures 18, 19, and 20.
- Staff 3 (Violin):** It begins with a half note B-flat, a half note A-flat, a half note G, and a half note F, all tied across measures 18, 19, and 20.
- Staff 4 (Violoncello):** It begins with a half note B-flat, a half note A-flat, a half note G, and a half note F, all tied across measures 18, 19, and 20.

Second System (Measures 21-24):

- Staff 1 (Electric Violin):** Labeled "(solo VLN)" and "EL. VIOL.". It begins with a *mf* dynamic. The melody consists of a half note B-flat, a half note A-flat, a half note G, and a half note F, all tied across measures 21, 22, and 23.
- Staff 2 (Violin):** It begins with a half note B-flat, a half note A-flat, a half note G, and a half note F, all tied across measures 21, 22, and 23.
- Staff 3 (Violin):** It begins with a half note B-flat, a half note A-flat, a half note G, and a half note F, all tied across measures 21, 22, and 23.
- Staff 4 (Violoncello):** It begins with a half note B-flat, a half note A-flat, a half note G, and a half note F, all tied across measures 21, 22, and 23.

The score concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 24.

dances.³³⁹ The “Main Title” ends with a *schmaltzy* solo violin cadenza—an obvious marker of Jewish identity—over an E♭ major seven pedal chord. The resolution occurs in the original parallel major key (E♭ major) and directly segues (*attacca*) into “After Main Title,” which imitates Gershwin’s *An American in Paris* (1928) complete with syncopated taxi horns as cab drivers deliver suitors to Fannie’s door in the film’s opening sequence.

The first dramatic statement of the Skeffington theme (after the “Main Title”) occurs in “Skeffington Arrives.” Like many of his Hollywood colleagues who were German émigrés, Waxman composed using Wagnerian-inspired *leitmotiven*; he follows this procedure for *Mr. Skeffington*. The evocative cue introduces the Skeffington leitmotif, which serves as musical portrait.³⁴⁰ This representative theme adds two

³³⁹ Despite the common association of the cello to Jewish music, mainly because of Bruch’s *Kol Nidrei*, the violin and clarinet were also common instruments in Jewish ensembles because of their portable nature and use in klezmer ensembles, while the trumpet is more commonly found in jazz. Many popular works for violin are in the Hebraic idiom including Bloch’s *Baal Shem: Three Pictures of Chassidic Life* and Achron’s *Hebrew Melody*.

Joseph Achron (1886-1943), the Lithuanian-Jewish composer, only scored one film, a short experimental ballet film at that, in Hollywood. The 1934 Paramount short, *Spring Night*, is clearly inspired by Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes. Edward Powell, who often worked with Alfred Newman at Fox, orchestrated the impressive short score. Achron is mostly remembered for his *Hebrew Melody*, Op. 33 when performed by violinist Jascha Heifetz. In 1935 Helmar Lerski made a short film entitled *Hebrew Melody* that featured violinist Andreas Weissgerber strolling through Jerusalem performing Achron’s same-titled composition. Achron was personally close with many of the major composers in Hollywood and why he never scored more films is a small mystery. Instead, Achron ended up teaching composition and violin lessons from his Hollywood home. A 1937 musician’s magazine announced Achron’s arrival in Hollywood just above an advertisement from Achron offering lessons and listing his home address and phone number. “Joseph Achron: Now Teaching in Hollywood,” *The Pacific Coast Musician*, February 6, 1937, 7.

³⁴⁰ This use of “musical portrait” should be thought of in a similar fashion to those Elgar composed for his friends in his *Variations on an Original Theme*, Op. 36, better known as the *Enigma Variations*.

characteristic elements to Rains' reserved portrayal of Skeffington: Jewishness and nobility. David Neumeyer and Nathan Platte posit, "If there is a consistent 'Waxman sound' in the films for which he wrote the underscore, it is in significant part due to longtime collaboration with his orchestrator, Leonid Raab."³⁴¹ His collaboration with Raab (1900-1968) began with Waxman's arrival at MGM and continued on *Mr. Skeffington*.³⁴² Fellow émigré Paul Dessau (1894-1979) composed a few cues for the picture as well as possibly contributing to the orchestration.³⁴³ "Skeffington Arrives" is a distinctively orchestrated cue (such as Neumeyer and Platte describe) introducing Skeffington.³⁴⁴ The theme is stated four times: first, with unison violas and bass clarinet over harp arpeggios (mm. 1-2); secondly, with unison violas and a similar harp figuration (mm. 6-8); for the third time, with a solo French horn and a sparser harp accompaniment (mm.48-50). The final statement (fig. 4.4) proves most interesting with solo viola accompanied by trombones, bass clarinet, timpani, and vibraphone (mm. 69-73). The first three statements confirm Skeffington's nobility found in the "Main Title." With the

³⁴¹ Neumeyer and Platte, *Franz Waxman's Rebecca*, 19-20.

³⁴² Leo Forbstein was music director at Warner Bros. at the time.

³⁴³ Despite Dessau's name appearing on the conductor books of a few cues his name is omitted from the July 10, 1944 revised cue sheet for *Mr. Skeffington*. Found in FWP, OS 68A. Dessau's specific involvement on the picture is a bit murky, however John Morgan opines, "Other European film composers gave Dessau work because he was a terrific composer and was having a rough financial time during the mid-forties." John Morgan email to the author, April 16, 2016.

³⁴⁴ Waxman explains that he is "first of all thinking of orchestration before the thematic material, because I believe the texture, and color, and orchestration are the fundamental things to think about." Tony Thomas interview of Franz Waxman, CBC Radio, May, 1960.

Figure 4.4 Waxman, *Mr. Skeffington*, “Skeffington Arrives,” mm. 69-73

MODERATO

HN.

VIOLA (69) (70) (71) (72) HN. (73)
SOLA + VIB. + + +

BNS.
B. Cl.

TIMP.

TIMP. 3 p ppp

fourth statement of the Skeffington theme (fig. 4.5). Waxman uses the dark timbre of a solo viola over a stark B minor chord in the trombones and bass clarinet and an ominous timpani in order to paint a darkening musical picture. The timpani sounds even more foreboding in the following measures with a funereal figure that may well foreshadow Skeffington’s eventual incarceration in a German concentration camp. The solo viola unforgettably calls attention to his *otherness* in a party where he is the only Jew. The final coloristic three-note figure of the muted French horn and vibraphone is synchronized perfectly as Fannie enters the room. The eerie coloration adds an uncanny touch to the situation as future husband and wife meet for the first time.

Figure 4.5 Waxman, “Skeffington’s Theme”



The first four measures of Waxman’s theme for the Jewish financier are seemingly original material inspired by multiple sources. The theme begins with an upward leap of a fifth that is a typical opening phrase or feature of the *Magein Avot* synagogue mode (generally corresponding with the Aeolian mode).³⁴⁵ Followed by a variation of the motive already analyzed in measure five and six with an added $\flat 7$ before the tonic. Waxman alludes to Max Bruch’s *Kol Nidrei* (fig. 4.6) in the middle motive (mm. 5-13) of the theme. Measure five of the Skeffington theme ($\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\flat\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}-\hat{4}-\flat\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$) is a melodic pattern consisting of a stepwise ascent, a stepwise descent, a leap of a fourth, and concludes with a stepwise descent. The melodic pattern starting in measure eleven (beat four) of *Kol Nidrei* is the same (on a different scale degree) but varies slightly with the omission of the fifth note of the pattern. The allusion continues in measures ten

³⁴⁵ Idelsohn and Bernard describe the leaping fifth opening motive distinctive to *Magein Avot* and show numerous examples of prayers beginning with the motive, see: Abraham Zebi Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, 78-86. Also, Andrew Bernard, *The Sound of Sacred Time: A Basic Music Theory Textbook to Teach the Jewish Prayer Modes* (Charlotte: Andrew Bernard, 2006), 1-9.

Figure 4.6 Max Bruch, *Kol Nidrei*, Op. 47, mm. 9-12



through thirteen of the Skeffington theme with the repetition of the tonic followed by a sequential pattern of alternating and descending thirds, which is related to measures nine and ten of *Kol Nidrei*, which also contains a repeated tonic followed by a sequential pattern (first of a stepwise descent but then) down a third and then returning up a third.

Waxman's allusion has historic precedence, as since the advent of music with film, the practice of musical borrowing has been present. From cue sheets to classical masterpieces,³⁴⁶ and songs adapted into thematic materials, preexistent music adds layers of context and significant connotations to a film that is often irresistible to filmmakers.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ In the Introduction to this dissertation cue sheets were explained in connection with the materials used by a film studio's music department. There is a secondary usage of the term from the silent era. Music publishing companies produced cue sheets with specific suggestions for *types* of music in films.

³⁴⁷ The success of the usage varies with the filmmaker and is likewise *variably* appreciated by composers. For example, Max Steiner refused to even mention *Casablanca* in his memoir due to his antagonism towards the film and being forced to use the Herman Hupfeld song "As Time Goes By" as thematic material. On the other hand, some filmmakers, such as Stanley Kubrick, have become renowned for using iconic "classical" masterpieces with powerful dramatic results. See the fascinating work: Kate McQuiston, *We'll Meet Again: Musical Design in the Films of Stanley Kubrick* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). Though, composer Alex North would have had an averse response to my declaration about Kubrick's successes after the director discarded North's score for *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) in favor of a patchwork soundtrack with works by Richard Strauss, Johann Strauss, Jr., and György Ligeti, among others. North briefly describes the shock of his score being eliminated in Randall D. Larson, "Alex North and 2001: The Unused Score." *The CinemaScore and Soundtrack Archives*, July 16, 2014, accessed February 18, 2016. <http://www.runmovies.eu/?p=8718> Originally published in *Soundtrack Magazine* 10, no. 40 (1991).

Christopher Reynolds in his study of nineteenth-century musical borrowings defines an allusion as:

An intentional reference to another work made by means of a resemblance that affects the meaning conveyed to those who recognize it. Intentionality *is* an important element, however problematic it may be to determine. It matters less for what listeners hear than for how composers composed and for understanding the impact of allusions on questions of originality.³⁴⁸

It is impossible to know definitively if Waxman hoped for the “insider” audience members to hear *Kol Nidrei* when they saw Job Skeffington, or if Waxman used Bruch’s *Kol Nidrei* as a structural model for his own theme.³⁴⁹ J. Peter Burkholder cautions, “we must resist the temptation to try to explain why a borrowing is present before we fully understand the nature and depth of the relationship between the new piece and the older one, for until we know that, our interpretation is likely to be superficial or wrong.”³⁵⁰ Burkholder’s concern is warranted, but, as revealed by analysis, there is an unmistakable relationship between *Kol Nidrei* and Skeffington’s theme. Furthermore Reynolds notes, “The more famous the original, the greater was the need for concealment.”³⁵¹ With Reynolds’ observation in mind, it is fair to suppose that Waxman only partially concealed

³⁴⁸ Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion*, 6.

³⁴⁹ Waxman’s sketches for *Mr. Skeffington* are not held with his conductor books in the Franz Waxman Papers at Syracuse University or with the full orchestral score in the Warner Bros. Archives at USC. Such an insider nod to Jewish audiences was not uncommon in popular music. For example, George Gershwin melodically alludes to the chant preceding the Torah reading in the *Porgy and Bess* song, “It Ain’ Necessarily So.” The allusion occurs with the lyrics, “De, t’ings dat yo’ li’ble to read in de Bible, It Ain’t Necessarily So.” The lyrical reference with the musical allusion was a not-so-subtle reference that would have amused Jewish audiences. Gottlieb, *Funny, It Doesn’t Sound Jewish*, 218.

³⁵⁰ J. Peter Burkholder, “The Uses of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field,” *Notes* 50, no. 3 (March 1994), 864.

³⁵¹ Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion*, 41.

the allusion to *Kol Nidrei* on purpose. Bruch's haunting score was famous in the concert hall, movie houses, and of course, in the synagogue.³⁵² Reynolds clarifies his point, stating, "generally more than one aspect of the source must be present in the alluding composition."³⁵³ In the Skeffington theme, the melody, rhythm (with augmentation), orchestration, general harmony, and most importantly the context is related to Bruch's *Kol Nidrei*. Therefore, Skeffington's theme is recognized (at least by some audiences) as related to *Kol Nidrei* but not as closely as the direct quotation Max Steiner used in *Symphony of Six Million*.

Why, then, did Waxman introduce a gloss of *Kol Nidrei* in this context? Although *Kol Nidrei* came to signify intergenerational conflict in Hollywood movies, that particular context is not relevant to *Mr. Skeffington* where the allusion is less topically specific. Waxman alludes to *Kol Nidrei* for two reasons. First, to many Jews (and Gentiles for that matter), Bruch's score simply *means* Jewishness. As Cieřliński notes, the Wachsmann "family was not a particularly religious one, but it did participate in services in the synagogue."³⁵⁴ The Wachsmanns' religious observance is roughly equivalent to the contemporary American-Jewish practice of "Twice-a-year Jews." This is a colloquial phrase indicating—or possibly indicting—a Jew who only attends synagogue services two times per year, on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (known informally as the High

³⁵² Chapter Two of this dissertation discusses the importance of *Kol Nidrei* in American mass media.

³⁵³ Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion*, 32.

³⁵⁴ Cieřliński, "Upper Silesian Traces," 35.

Holidays).³⁵⁵ The culmination of their yearly visit to the synagogue climaxes with the chanting of *Kol Nidre*. In effect, *Kol Nidre* defines not just the holidays but Judaism itself. The second reason for the allusion is the historical place of Bruch's setting of *Kol Nidrei* in American film. By the time of Waxman's *Mr. Skeffington* score, Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* was known to Hollywood audiences. Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* had assumed the status of a cultural icon symbolizing Jewish identity to Jews and Gentiles alike. It was performed frequently in movies and as part of the concert hall repertoire. For some audiences, Bruch's setting became the most recognizable *Kol Nidrei*. The relationship is akin to concert music lovers who think of Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Greensleeves* (1934) instead of the traditional English song that inspired the orchestral fantasia. Waxman's explicit portrayal of Jewishness resonated with his Hollywood colleagues, as the next example shares a marked resemblance with the Job Skeffington theme.

Alfred Newman's *David and Bathsheba*

Alfred Newman is one of the preeminent figures in film music during the Golden Age of Hollywood and, with Aaron Copland (1900-1990), is one of the first major film composer born in the United States.³⁵⁶ Newman was born on March 17, 1900 and was the eldest of ten siblings in an impoverished Ukrainian-Jewish immigrant family living in

³⁵⁵ For many contemporary American Jews, the High Holidays are their only annual synagogue experience, as Hanukkah and Passover are often only celebrated around the *hanukiah* (Hanukkah menorah) and family dining table.

³⁵⁶ The Newman's Ukrainian surname had been Nemorofsky but it is unclear when or who Anglicized the name.

New Haven, Connecticut.³⁵⁷ Despite ongoing financial problems, Alfred's mother, Luba, appreciated her son's precocious musical talents and found him the appropriate teachers. Newman quickly turned into a fine pianist and superb conductor. His adeptness with the baton led the teenaged Newman to conducting musical theatre in New York City before eventually landing in Hollywood—his background in theater closely parallels that of Max Steiner's.³⁵⁸ Alfred, like many of his colleagues, studied with Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) when the Viennese master arrived in Los Angeles.³⁵⁹ Newman's talents were multivalent: he was a superb conductor, composer, and pianist. He was music director

³⁵⁷ Many reputable film music scholars mistakenly give Newman's birth year as 1901, see: Palmer, *The Composer in Hollywood*, 80. This confusion is widespread and is compounded by its appearance on Newman's grave marker commissioned by his wife Martha Montgomery Newman. Newman is buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California in the Great Mausoleum, Sanctuary of Eternal Prayer. However, referring to the June 1900 Federal Census confirms Alfred was born in March of 1900. United States Federal Census, Twelfth Census, Schedule No. 1, New Haven Township, Connecticut, June 4, 1900, District 26, Enumeration 354, Sheet 5.

³⁵⁸ Newman's success on Broadway led Irving Berlin to invite him to Hollywood to be the musical director on his movie adaptation of *Reaching for the Moon* (1931). Cooke, *A History of Film Music*, 103. Newman's fine skills as a conductor also influenced his film scoring preparation technique. Unlike Max Steiner, who developed and often used click tracks, Newman preferred free timing with the assistance of punches and streamers for reference, which resulted in a freer musical performance. A flutter punch is created by punching a hole in the film creating a flash of light from the projector as the frame passed by, while a streamer is a long line cut (or drawn) across several frames of film in preparation of the punch. A detailed description with a three-page sketch illustrating Newman's preparation system is found in: Milton Lustig, *Music Editing for Motion Pictures* (New York: Hastings House, 1980), 107-14.

³⁵⁹ Newman financed the first recording of Schoenberg's four String Quartets as an homage to his teacher. Louis Kaufman and Annette Kaufman, *A Fiddler's Tale: How Hollywood and Vivaldi Discovered Me* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 123. Though, as Darby and Du Bois correctly demonstrate, despite studying with Schoenberg, Newman "remained loyal to the influence of Richard Strauss in his own compositions, with emphasis on melodic strings, leitmotifs, and counter melodies throughout his work." William Darby and Jack Du Bois, *American Film Music*, 77.

first at United Artists and then for twenty years at Twentieth Century-Fox.³⁶⁰ Newman also had a sharp eye for talent and helped further many film composers' careers including, Jerry Goldsmith, Bernard Herrmann, Alex North, and David Raksin to name but a few.³⁶¹ Fred Steiner opines that Newman's influence on the Hollywood sound as greater than even Max Steiner or Erich Wolfgang Korngold:

Alfred Newman's career differed from the others of the Triumvirate...in that he also was a studio executive ...Thus Newman's influence on the style and sound of America's movie music was very significant, not only because of his large output of scores for films of major stature, but also because of his position of almost supreme power at TCF, and his consequent prestige as a ranking member of the Hollywood film community.³⁶²

With such an exceptional combination of musical gifts, Newman composed scores for a wide array of films including westerns, musicals, and swashbuckling adventures, but his scores in one genre stand above the rest. As Jon Burlingame notes, "His sole Oscar for original dramatic score was for 1943's 'The Song of Bernadette,' one of several religious pictures for which Newman (though a non-practicing Jew) had a remarkable affinity."³⁶³ Newman composed scores for numerous religious pictures

³⁶⁰ Due to his multiple roles and the former standard of music directors receiving credit for all scores a given studio produced, Newman was awarded a remarkable nine Academy Awards and nominated forty-five times.

³⁶¹ See Gary Marmorstein, *Hollywood Rhapsody: Movie Music and Its Makers, 1900 to 1975* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997), 223-25. Marmorstein briefly tells the story of David Raksin's ascent from staff orchestrator to credited composer on Preminger's *Laura* (1944) and Newman's guidance over the score.

³⁶² F. Steiner, "The Making of an American Film Composer," 17.

³⁶³ Jon Burlingame, "L.A. Music's First Family," *Variety*, July 15, 1997, 35-36.

including *The Robe* (1953) and *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965). His colleague

David Raksin observed:

So successful was Newman's evocation of this ecstatic religious milieu that producers with religious themes came to him for music. After a while, Al was heard to complain that when he was dressing for work his collar automatically went on backwards, like that of a cleric.³⁶⁴

Musicologist Christopher Palmer discerns a special meaning to Newman's successful work with religious music: "The strength of these scores suggests that Newman may have sought an outlet in his music for a spirituality he suppressed in everyday life."³⁶⁵ Despite Newman's remarkable work in this film genre, he was not a particularly devout person, as can be surmised from Palmer's insight. Ken Darby, who worked with Newman for many years at Twentieth Century-Fox, mentions that Alfred's mother Luba Newman (née Koskoff) was the daughter of a cantor and she would sing her first-born son Russian folk songs.³⁶⁶

In 1951, Newman composed the score for the biblical epic *David and Bathsheba*.³⁶⁷ The film is directed by Henry King and produced by Darryl F. Zanuck. The story is a dramatization of the life of the biblical King David, portrayed here by Gregory

³⁶⁴ Raksin, *David Raksin Remembers His Colleagues*, 13.

³⁶⁵ Palmer, *The Composer in Hollywood*, 80.

³⁶⁶ Ken Darby, "Alfred Newman Biography and Filmography," in *Elmer Bernstein's Film Music Notebook: A Complete Collection of the Quarterly Journal, 1974-1978* (Sherman Oaks: The Film Music Society, 2004), 219. In a 1994 retrospective interview, Darby fondly reflected upon his long partnership with Newman that started in 1948 at Twentieth Century-Fox and ended with Alfred's passing in 1970. Scott Dawes and Rich Upton, "Ken Darby," 30-32.

³⁶⁷ Edward Powell orchestrated the score and Ken Darby arranged vocal materials.

Peck. The film opened to mostly positive reviews.³⁶⁸ The screenplay came in for withering criticism, however. Lawrence Epstein called the dialogue “stilted” and decried that the story was reduced from the “profound message of the Biblical text...to a tale of lust.”³⁶⁹ Despite the indifferent writing and a wooden performance from Peck, who was clearly uncomfortable in the part of David, audiences flocked to see it.

Whatever the other shortcomings of *David and Bathsheba*, Newman created a superb score the model for which was clearly Strauss’ *Salome*.³⁷⁰ The two exceptions to this equivocal model are the cues using strings that were heavy on the *schmaltz* and the “Nathan, the Prophet” Theme (fig. 4.7), hereafter called the “Nathan theme,” a richly dramatic theme for Nathan that is also associated with Jewish ceremonial rites throughout the film.

³⁶⁸ The *New York Times* reviewer was wowed by the Technicolor production and Peck’s performance. “Having been mounted artistically, an age-old tale now takes on colorful dimensions. For all of its verbosity and occasional slickness and sensuality, ‘David and Bathsheba’ makes its point with feeling and respect.” “The Screen: A Biblical Tale is Unfolded,” *New York Times*, August 15, 1951, accessed January 21, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9F07E4DE113BE433A25756C1A96E9C946092D6CF&pagewanted=print>

³⁶⁹ Epstein, *American Jewish Films*, 177.

³⁷⁰ As William Rosar notes *Salome* “had gotten into his musical bloodstream with *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, where Russell Bennett imitated in some of the cues he ghosted for Alfred on that score.” William H. Rosar, email to the author, June 3, 2015. Fred Steiner also sees this connection noting, “In the score for *David and Bathsheba* (1951), there are strong hints of another more famous pseudo-Biblical work: Strauss’s *Salome*. F. Steiner, *The Making of an American Film Composer*, 236. In particular, Bathsheba’s theme is reminiscent of the famous Dance of the Seven Veils.

Figure 4.7 Newman, *David and Bathsheba*, “Nathan, the Prophet” Theme



Nathan, played by Raymond Massey, has a charge from God to chastise the people of Israel. Often, he must admonish David for straying from his ordained path. The theme is heard first when Nathan declares God has no need for the temple David plans to build. The quiet cue, aptly named “Nathan the Prophet” (fig. 4.8), is scored with the “Nathan theme” in the lower register of the violas and celli and gently accented by sustaining chords in the low brass and woodwinds. Newman evokes numerous markers of what can be justly dubbed the “Hollywood biblical sound.” These characteristics are meant to specifically portray the biblical land of Israel, not Jewishness generally. Newman’s atavistic style is characterized by a constricted melody and modal harmonic movement mainly related by thirds. The melody’s noble opening leap of a fourth—adorned with *schmaltzy* portamento—is followed by a short, melodic fragment leading back to the tonic that is immediately restated conveying some importance. The repetition also adds a concluding stepwise descent from $\hat{1}$ to $\hat{b}7$. The repetitive character of the melody is reminiscent of the hypnotic repetitions found in Jewish prayer (especially that of the

Figure 4.8 Newman, *David and Bathsheba*, “Nathan the Prophet,” Reel 1-Part 3, mm. 1-12, transcribed from the original conductor book. Alfred Newman Collection (hereafter abbreviated as ANC), USC.

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

- System 1 (Measures 1-4):**
 - Top staff: **VIOLE** and **CELLI**. Tempo: **POCO ANDANTE (CALMATO)**. Dynamics: **p ESPRESSIVO**.
 - Bottom staff: Empty.
 - Measures are numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- System 2 (Measures 5-8):**
 - Top staff: **ADD BS. CLAR.** and **CELLI + BASSI**.
 - Bottom staff: **HRNS**, **BSSNS**, **TRBS.**, and **TUBA**. Dynamics: **p**.
 - Measures are numbered 5, 6, 7, and 8.
- System 3 (Measures 9-12):**
 - Top staff: Continuation of the melodic line.
 - Bottom staff: Continuation of the harmonic accompaniment.
 - Measures are numbered 9, 10, 11, and 12.
 - Measure 12 ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

ecstatic Chassidim).³⁷¹ Of course, this type of *davening* (Yinglish, literally “praying”) would have been familiar to an eastern European-Jewish immigrant like those in Newman’s family even if dissimilar to actual biblical prayer traditions. Nevertheless, the prayer-like theme is exquisitely suited for the character of Nathan.

³⁷¹ Cantor Andrew Bernard explains the practical reason for the repetition of notes is to “accommodate a greater number of words and still maintain the simple *davening* style.” He labels this a “recitation tone.” Bernard, *The Sound of Sacred Time*, 3.

Measure four begins with three repeated A $\flat$'s serving two simultaneous functions: 1) continuing the repetitive chant of prayer-like quality of the them; 2) acting as a bridge for a common-tone modulation to the parallel minor key of A $\flat$. The solemn chords of the low brass and winds (starting in measure five) are a representative harmonic progression indicative of Newman's biblical sound world. The melody briefly moves towards A Mixolydian with the stepwise ascent from C to C $\sharp$ on the downbeat of measure six. The sustaining chords below are densely orchestrated root position F major, A major, then C minor triads. The harmonic relation of a third is meant to evoke a sense of the spiritual in Newman's writing. Measure eight through eleven sees a restatement of measures one through three now in C Aeolian, though there is presently a chordal accompaniment of a C minor to E $\flat$ major progression—yet another third relationship. The cue ends in measures eleven and twelve with a restatement of measure four and five down a perfect fourth. These repetitions create a simple ternary form (ABA) with the contrasting B section truncated to two measures. The cue concludes with a hopeful G minor (v) to C major (I) cadence—a Picardy third. Musicologist Stephen Meyer, in his study of music in biblical films ascribes particular importance to Newman's harmonic progressions as exemplified in *David and Bathsheba*:

Although it is dangerous (and potentially misleading) to make generalizations about the semantics of these kinds of harmonic relationships, they are often linked with a sense of propulsion and/or transformation. The abrupt modulation to the median in the prophet theme, I would like to suggest, carries a similar adumbration of transformation, a sense, perhaps, that the rigors of the law are mitigated or enriched by grace.³⁷²

³⁷² Meyer, *Epic Sound*, 62.

Meyer's caution is warranted but there is significant evidence in other Newman scores of similar usages of these harmonic relationships to delineate similar spiritual dramatic situations, as will be mentioned later.

For the End Titles of *David and Bathsheba*, Newman morphs the Nathan theme into a choral setting of the King James Version of "The Twenty-Third Psalm" (fig. 4.9). Newman composed the cue, while Ken Darby developed and arranged the vocals and Edward Powell orchestrated.³⁷³ The Twenty-third Psalm is of Old Testament derivation (it is attributed to the youthful shepherd David) and resonates deeply with Christians and Jews. The Psalm is often recited at Christian funerals, and serves a similar memorializing function in Jewish services along with the *Kaddish* and *El Malei Rachamim*. The repetitive chant figure found in measure four of the "Nathan theme" now appears in measure one on the words, "Lord is my shepherd." In this setting, the figure briefly takes on the character of Newman's conception of Hebrew monody.

³⁷³ Most of Newman's scores are credited as, "composed by Alfred Newman" but a small percentage read, as in this case, "developed by" Newman or another composer indicating that someone else was the composer of the material. Newman stood out among his peers by crediting his collaborative colleagues. Ken Darby relates how on *Carousel* (1956) Newman surprised him with associate billing instead of his usual "vocal arranger" or "choral director" credit. This billing was unheard of in Hollywood and would soon deliver Darby (1956) his three Academy Awards for *The King and I* (1956) and *Camelot* (1967) with Newman and *Porgy and Bess* (1959) with Andre Previn. Scott Dawes and Rich Upton, "Ken Darby," 31.

Figure 4.9 Newman, *David and Bathsheba*, “The Twenty-Third Psalm” End Title Arrangement, Reel 13-Part 3, mm. A-7

ANDANTE RELIGIOSO

Sop. (20 WOMEN)

Alto

Ten. (20 MEN) SOLO

Bass

The Lord is my shep-herd I shall not want He mak-eth me to lie

down in green pas-tures He lead-eth me be-side the still wat-ers. He re-

SOLO DOLCE CALMATO

Newman’s modal chords, so reminiscent of Arthur Honegger’s (1892-1955) popular oratorio *Le roi David* (1921), do not appear in Waxman’s tonal theme for Skeffington, but there are melodic similarities. Both the motifs and the cadential formulae

of “Skeffington’s theme” and “Nathan’s theme” are virtually identical.³⁷⁴ The third and fourth measures of “Skeffington’s theme” (again see fig. 4.5) and Nathan’s measures one through three (again see fig. 4.7) contain the same last four pitches – $\flat\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\flat\hat{7}-\hat{1}$. Both themes arrive at the $\flat\hat{3}$ from the $\hat{1}$ with Waxman’s theme adding an ascending passing tone ($\hat{2}$). Does this melodic resemblance mean Newman’s “Nathan theme” was modeled after Waxman’s “Skeffington theme?” There are similarities, yes, but why would Newman associate Waxman’s theme based on Bruch’s *Kol Nidrei* for a wartime drama with his theme for a prophet in a biblical epic? Are the character’s *similar* noble Jewishness close enough that Newman made an imaginative leap from a twentieth-century businessman to Nathan the Prophet? Most importantly, steeped as he was in film music history, might this allusion to Mr. Skeffington have been unconscious on Newman’s part? As there is no letter or sketch of Newman’s that points in this direction, the evident similarities between the themes composed by Waxman and Newman constitute the best—indeed the only—evidence. However, these similarities are hardly coincidental, conscious or not. For the time being, it is most instructive to move forward another decade to the most famous musical evocation of Jewishness in the 1960s and consider another memorable theme with considerable melodic similarities to *Mr. Skeffington* and *David and Bathsheba*.

³⁷⁴ The figure appears at the beginning of the Nathan theme (though it is repeated) and is therefore less cadential in quality than in Skeffington’s theme.

Ernest Gold's *Exodus*

Ernest Gold (born Goldner) was born on July 13, 1921. As a child, Gold dreamed of becoming an opera composer, as the works of Verdi, Wagner, and Puccini enchanted him.³⁷⁵ However, Gold's living musical idol was another composer of Viennese-Jewish heritage—Max Steiner. Beyond music, Gold's link to Jewishness parallels Steiner's in several ways. Gold's father was an agnostic Jew while his mother was a non-practicing Lutheran. Gold's psychiatrist daughter, Martha, describes her father's childhood religious experience stating, "They raised him in the Protestant church, but they didn't take it seriously."³⁷⁶ Gold followed in Steiner's footsteps and left Vienna, but for markedly different reasons. In a 1989 interview, Gold was asked about the impetus for his family's move to America, Gold responded that as the *Anschluss* occurred:

We heard marches and an announcement that the population was not to offer any resistance to the German troops coming across the border. The next day, my father went down to the American consulate and got things going. My sister was fourteen-and-a-half, and I was seventeen. My father said, 'We've got to put an ocean between the kids and what's happening now.'³⁷⁷

Fortunately, the Gold family's escape was still possible and they were saved from the Holocaust in the nick of time. Once in Hollywood, Gold studied with George Antheil (1900-1959), which led to Gold orchestrating, arranging, and conducting eleven of the

³⁷⁵ Gold's family were enthusiastic musical amateurs and his parents encouraged his precocious musical development. As a young child, Gold "used to amuse his relatives by playing Wagnerian selections on the phonograph and 'conducting' his imaginary orchestra, never missing a cue." "Biography of Ernest Gold," *Film Music Notes* 5, no. 3, (November, 1945): 23.

³⁷⁶ Vivien Goldman, *The Book of Exodus: The Making and Meaning of Bob Marley and Wailers' Album of the Century* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006), 155.

³⁷⁷ William Rosar, Leslie Zador, and Vincent Jacquet-Francillon, "Interview with Ernest Gold," *The Cue Sheet* 7, no. 1 (January 1990), 7.

film scores written by the erstwhile “Bad Boy of Music.”³⁷⁸ Several of Antheil’s last film projects with Gold were working for director-producer Stanley Kramer. When Antheil retired, Gold received the nod from Kramer and took Antheil’s place as his favored composer. The collaboration between Gold and Kramer was remarkable and varied, producing some of their most memorable work, including such films as *On the Beach* (1959), *Inherit the Wind* (1960), *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961), *It’s a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963), and *Ship of Fools* (1965). Darby and Du Bois recognized Gold’s penchant for creating scores particularly connected with the locales of Kramer’s movies, from the German tunes in *Ship of Fools* and *Nuremberg* to the arrangement of “Waltzing Matilda” in *On the Beach*, and the “satirically Italian-flavored *The Secret of Santa Vittoria* (1969).”³⁷⁹

While many film composers are preoccupied with understanding the underlying drama or psychological subtext, Gold’s approach to scoring involved immersing himself in the physical world of the film, which resulted in the type of locale-based scoring Darby and Du Bois describe above. But it goes even further, as Gold’s strategy is akin to the method acting philosophy of Lee Strasberg.³⁸⁰ As Gold himself noted:

I try to generate the emotion of the locale or the reality of that moment. Once, I had to score a scene depicting a Nazi take-over. To prepare for the composition, I

³⁷⁸ Gold first orchestrated for Antheil on *Plainsman and the Lady* (1946) and remained a trusted collaborator (along with Arthur Morton and R. Dale Butts) through *The Pride and the Passion* (1957). One of the few scores Gold did not orchestrate for Antheil during this period was on *The Juggler* (1953), which is detailed at the end of this chapter.

³⁷⁹ Darby and Du Bois, *American Film Music*, 372-73.

³⁸⁰ Method acting was developed by Constantin Stanislavski but made famous in America by Strasberg at the Actor’s Studio.

strutted around my studio, barking German commands, working myself up to recapture [*sic*] what I had experienced when I was still living in Austria. But I had to generate it myself, to feel how the Nazis felt. When I had finished the cue, Stanley Kramer, for whom I was scoring it, came over, put his arm around me, and said, ‘Ernest, the Fuhrer would be proud!’ Then, I knew I had really hit that note right! In very simple words: live the picture. Then the score will work.³⁸¹

This compositional method for approaching Kramer’s *Judgment at Nuremberg* is used again for the next case study, albeit in a less dramatic fashion than goose-stepping and shouting in German in a studio that was doubtless filled with Jews.

Gold’s most renowned film music contribution is for Otto Preminger’s *Exodus* (1960), based on Leon Uris’s bestselling novel about the founding of the State of Israel. Hyperbole and exaggeration are unnecessary when describing the immense popularity and importance of *Exodus* to American Jews.³⁸² The film’s impact on the general American public was equally momentous: this film shaped the response of the American public to Israel for the next thirty years.³⁸³ *Exodus* is an epic film with a monumental goal; to win the hearts of Americans for Israel.³⁸⁴ In the aftermath of the Holocaust,

³⁸¹ Allan Ulrich, *The Art of Film Music: A Tribute to California’s Film Composers, The Oakland Museum, March 12, 13 & 14, 1976* (Oakland: The Museum, 1976), 16.

³⁸² Historian Stephen Whitfield goes so far as to say, “By strengthening ethnic pride in America, *Exodus* helped to perpetuate the Diaspora.” Stephen J. Whitfield, “Declarations of Independence: American Jewish Culture in the Twentieth Century,” in *Cultures of the Jews, Volume 3: Modern Encounters*, ed. David Biale (New York: Schocken Books, 2000), 413.

³⁸³ Whitfield notes, “In the decade that began in the year of the film’s release, a shift in American public culture could be detected. The respect paid to the ideal of diversity permitted not only an empathy with Jewish nationalism but also the right to champion the interests of Israel vigorously.” Whitfield, “Declarations of Independence,” 414.

³⁸⁴ Clearly, all Hollywood studio films are made with the first goal to make money, however that does not discount political and social agendas. The main title sequence for *Exodus* foreshadows this goal, as a solitary flame flickers as the title cards progress, until eventually the entire screen is engulfed in flames. Symbolically *Exodus* (and Israel) is seen born out of the inferno of the Holocaust.

Americans felt significant guilt for abandoning Europe's Jews to their fate. Consequently Americans were finally prepared to accept Jews into the fabric of life in the United States and support the new State of Israel. As Lawrence Epstein points out, the *Exodus* filmmakers played on these emotions, saying,

They take the already primed emotions that audiences have and ratchet them up with a love story, a rescue story, a story of heroism and war, filled with enemies, both external and internal. *Exodus* found a perfect storytelling recipe. And those of us in the audience are willing, even eager, to be shaped by the film's emotions.³⁸⁵

One of the ways *Exodus* attempts to mold American opinion is through the portrayal of the Jewish protagonist. In contrast to the old Jewish stereotypes, such as those encountered in *Mr. Skeffington*, the Jews of Israel represented in *Exodus* are virile and heroic. Typified by Ari Ben Canaan, played by Paul Newman—whose “light hair and blue eyes help create the myth of the ‘new Jew’”³⁸⁶—we find an attractive yet powerful Jewish hero. *Exodus* is a melodrama with obvious protagonists and antagonists—clearly the Israelis are cast as the “good guys.”

For his work on *Exodus*, Gold won the Academy Award for best score and later two Grammy Awards for best soundtrack album. Otto Preminger (1905-1986), a Viennese refugee to America, hired Gold during the pre-production process, which was—and still is—a rare luxury for a film composer. Gold notes that originally the studio

³⁸⁵ Epstein, *American Jewish Films*, 158.

³⁸⁶ Rachel Weissbrod, “‘Exodus’ as a Zionist Melodrama,” *Israel Studies* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1999), 137.

wanted Preminger to use Israeli folk songs for the soundtrack to *Exodus*.³⁸⁷ In preparation for composing his score for *Exodus*, Gold conducted three to four months of “ethnomusicological” research in Israel. Gold details the research in a 1982 interview with Randall Larson:

I knew nothing about Israeli music, so when I got to Israel, a man was engaged and took me around to concerts, folk music, nightclubs, rehearsal of the Imbal dancers, for Yemenite music. I studied Arabic music, I made copious notes on the instruments, the harmonic and melodic procedures, and I went to recording sessions of native music. I really steeped myself in it, and it paid off. I had a folder, at the end, and it must have been at least an inch and a half or two inches thick—I think I could have used it for a doctoral dissertation.³⁸⁸

The current whereabouts of this folder are a mystery, but, as was his habitual practice, Gold immersed himself in a culture to more fully understand the characters he musically portrayed.³⁸⁹ When asked about using traditional Israeli and Arab musical materials in *Exodus* Gold explained:

I used no material that was native, except for the chant of the Muezzin up in the Minneret [*sic*]. What I did do was take a great deal of care in the designing of the

³⁸⁷ Ulrich, *The Art of Film Music*, 14. Preminger, too, hoped to provide *Exodus* with an aura of authenticity. Gold’s daughter made the amusing comment about her father’s heritage in relation to the film: “My father used to joke that if I ever told Otto Preminger that his mother wasn’t actually Jewish, he’d kill me!” V. Goldman, *The Book of Exodus*, 155. “Authentic” or not the theme was popular in America, Israel, and internationally. In fact, it sold well in Beirut, Lebanon, as it was smuggled by the censors, labeled as “Spaghetti” by French singer Edith Piaf. Eventually the police caught on and the album was banned for being produced by Jews. “Exodus Song Killed,” *The Kansas City Times*, November 23, 1961, 110.

³⁸⁸ Randall D. Larson, “Ernest Gold,” *The CinemaScore and Soundtrack Archives*, June 28, 2013, accessed February 18, 2016. <http://www.runmovies.eu/?p=1683>. Originally published as Randall D. Larson “A Conversation with Ernest Gold by Randall D. Larson,” *CinemaScore* #10, 1982.

³⁸⁹ Gold intended to write music influenced by current trends in Israeli folk music that would also work dramatically. His intention contrasts mightily with Preminger’s attempt to create an epic Israeli story that speaks to a broad American audience. Much has been written about the film’s alteration of historical incidents to persuade American non-Jewish audiences to view Israel in an American light, this view is put most succinctly in: Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 248-61.

themes to use the scales, the rhythmic bits, the form of articulation, even orchestral sounds which I had to approximate...but the score itself was entirely original.³⁹⁰

Gold stresses that he composed “entirely original” material either due to his pride or the common fear Hollywood composers shared of copyright lawsuits for musical plagiarism.³⁹¹ Even if one believes Gold’s claim of originality, he spent an unusually large amount of time researching the local music to influence the original themes. Ernest’s son songwriter Andrew Gold recalls, “I remember Elmer Bernstein and Dad talking about musical authenticity. They did a lot of research figuring out what Egyptian music was like and basically had to make it up.”³⁹² Gold is certainly referring to Bernstein’s research for his score to *The Ten Commandments* (1956) that is discussed near the end of this chapter. Gold completed the sketch for *Exodus* in approximately four weeks. Gerard Schurmann then orchestrated the full score.³⁹³ Gold preferred to

³⁹⁰ R. Larson, “Ernest Gold.”

³⁹¹ While Gold was never sued for copyright infringement over his *Exodus* score, in 1976 Leon Pober’s and his publisher Granite Music sued Gold and United Artists over the cue “Hiding the Wine” from Gold’s score to *The Secret of Santa Vittoria*. The plaintiffs claimed Gold copied the melody from Prober’s “Tiny Bubbles” a song made famous by Don Ho. The court ruled in Gold’s favor even though the first four notes were the same in both Prober’s song and Gold’s cue but the rhythms were significantly different. Gold’s defense team provided numerous examples of public domain works with similar thematic materials demonstrating that Prober had no ownership of basic musical elements. *Granite Music v. United Artists* 532 F.2d 718 (9th Circuit 1976).

³⁹² Goldman, *The Book of Exodus*, 154.

³⁹³ Schurmann is mainly a concert composer who also worked in Hollywood as a composer and orchestrator. The year after working with Gold on *Exodus*, Schurmann wrote the score for the science fiction horror romp *Konga* (1961). The Main Title features a secondary theme that contains the first four notes of the *Exodus* theme. It is stated twice in a major key but when heard in minor for the third time it is difficult not to recall the famous score Schurmann had recently orchestrated. As there is no narrative relationship between the films, this slight resemblance is likely nothing more than an unconscious borrowing.

orchestrate his own scores but due to time constraints occasionally delegated his orchestrations to Schurmann and veteran orchestrator Eddie Powell.

In a 1983 interview, Gold expressed his aggravation with the popularity of the *Exodus* theme. As Nancy Anderson recounts, “For reasons he can’t explain, Gold didn’t think much of his ‘Exodus’ theme. In fact, it impressed him so poorly that, when Mike Wallace visited the film location and asked to hear the score, Gold omitted that passage from the presentation.”³⁹⁴ His displeasure is confounding when contrasted to the reminiscences of his son, Andrew:

When he was doing the music for *Exodus*, I think he really felt a surge of pride and anguish that had been hidden when he came to Hollywood. He connected with the joy and pain of being Jewish, the horror of the Holocaust, and the pride in setting up Israel as a state.³⁹⁵

Despite Gold’s secular upbringing, many of Gold’s strongest scores relate to Jewish themes or anti-Semitism.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁴ Nancy Anderson, “Hollywood Hotline: ‘Exodus’ Theme Didn’t Impress Composer,” *The Evening News*, April 10, 1983, 2E. The real reason behind Gold’s frustration with *Exodus* was due to the song based on his theme with lyrics by Pat Boone. While most film scores do not sell many albums and produce serious income for the composers or studios, *Exodus* was an exceptional case. In his highly-detailed study of the financial side of Hollywood film music Jeff Smith indicates Otto Preminger, “received \$250,000 and guarantees of a big promotional push from RCA Victor in exchange for the rights to the *Exodus* track. Jeff Smith, *The Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 46. The theme was “covered” by many artists, but most successfully by Ferrante and Teicher and Montovani. By 1962, Gold’s theme had been recorded 121 times. Bob Scott, “Exodus Theme Most Recorded,” *Los Angeles Times*, Dec 16, 1962, A11.

³⁹⁵ Goldman, *The Book of Exodus*, 155.

³⁹⁶ Darryl Lyman, *Great Jews in Music* (Middle Village: J. David Publishers, 1986), 267. Lyman mentions *Exodus*, *Judgment at Nuremberg*, *Pressure Point* (1962), *Ship of Fools* (1965), and *Wallenberg: A Hero’s Story* (1985).

Figure 4.10 Gold, *Exodus*, “Exodus Theme”



The opening two-measure phrase (fig. 4.10) of the *Exodus* theme opens triumphantly with a perfect fourth and two perfect fifths followed by a now familiar cadential figure: $\hat{5}-\hat{1}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{1}-\flat\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{2}-\flat\hat{7}-\hat{1}$. The consequent phrase (in mm. 3-4) presents a dominant variation of the motive ($\hat{1}-\flat\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\flat\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{2}-\flat\hat{7}-\hat{1}$). Once again, the $\flat\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\flat\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ motive assumes a cadential function as it did in Waxman’s “Skeffington’s theme.” Gold explains how he composed the main theme for *Exodus*:

I wrote thirty-three themes. Any character in the picture, any situation I could think of. I just kept writing and writing and writing, and the purpose of this was to really inside this thing because I knew I wasn’t going to have too much time once the score was demanded for real. So by the time I got through, as I said, I had thirty-three themes, of which I actually used in the picture only six. By way of a funny postscript, the thirty-third theme, which I wrote simply because I had more time and nothing to do, turned out to be the *Exodus* theme! It was an afterthought, and it partially consists of some small motives found in other themes—it’s a synthesis, in a sense, of the essence of the thematic material that I had created. I decided to make that into my main theme.³⁹⁷

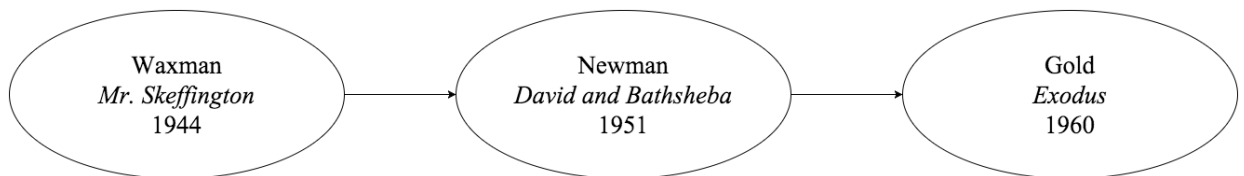
Gold’s process for composing the *Exodus* theme amounts to creating a mixture of the other thirty-two themes he wrote for the score. Or, to take it a step farther, Gold realized a musical equivalent to a “composite portrait”³⁹⁸ like the type the eugenicist Sir Francis

³⁹⁷ R. Larson, “Ernest Gold.”

³⁹⁸ Galton created composite photographs or a “generalised picture” by placing, “faint images of the several portraits, in succession, upon the same sensitised photographic plate.” Francis Galton, “Composite Portraits, Made by Combining Those of Many Different Persons Into a Single Resultant Figure,” *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 8 (1879), 132. The implications and effects of Galton’s work will be discussed in the next section.

Galton created in the late 1870s. If, however, the *Exodus* theme resembles the themes assigned by Newman and Waxman for Nathan and Skeffington respectively, is there another theme that is the root of all three of these themes? Is there a mystical known-but-unknown-Jewish theme analogous to Edward Elgar’s putative “dark saying” within the *Enigma Variations*?³⁹⁹ The meaning and significance—if there was one beyond the composer’s narcissism—was left unidentified by Elgar. There are however, those who believe in an unheard theme that weaves its way through the score, rather like some people believe in the Loch Ness monster. So too, it seems as if many Jewish composers in Hollywood knew a Jewish theme that was never stated explicitly and either alluded to it or wrote a variation on it for Jewish-related films. Unlike the “unheard” theme that supposedly lurks in the pages of Elgar’s masterpiece, there may well have been such a theme. Necessarily with this proposition more questions will be asked than answered – that is the nature of an enigma. To pose the question directly: Is there a continuous flow of influence (see fig. 4.11) from the themes from *Mr. Skeffington* to *David and Bathsheba* and onward to *Exodus*?

Figure 4.11 Thematic Diagram of Influence



³⁹⁹ See Byron Adams, “The ‘Dark Saying’ of the Enigma: Homoeroticism and the Elgarian Paradox,” *19th-Century Music* 23, no. 3 (Spring 2000) 218-35.

Alternative Streams of Influence

In the words of John Landis in his home video release of *Clue* (1985): “That’s how it could have happened...But here’s what really happened.”⁴⁰⁰ The perfectly wrapped account of Waxman’s theme from *Mr. Skeffington* influencing Newman’s “Nathan theme” from *David and Bathsheba* and in turn Gold’s *Exodus* theme is simply too flawless. In all likelihood, there is a far more complicated and engaging explanation. These three Jewish themes demonstrate remarkable similarities. As three Jewish composers of Hollywood’s Golden Age composed them, it will prove useful to borrow the cognitive metaphor of “family resemblance” from Ludwig Wittgenstein. As these themes share melodic, cadential, modally harmonic, and stylistic features it is reasonable to rely on Wittgenstein’s metaphor, as he states:

I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than ‘family resemblances’; for the various resemblances between members of a family—build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, and so on and so forth—overlap and criss-cross in the same way.⁴⁰¹

Wittgenstein’s metaphor is related to Galton’s composite portraits that created a “generalised picture; one that represents no man in particular but portrays an imaginary

⁴⁰⁰ *Clue*. Directed by Jonathan Lynn. 1985. Los Angeles, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2009. DVD. For those unfamiliar with the cult hit, with a screenplay written by John Landis, the home video release showed audiences two possible ending before revealing a “true” ending. In the theatrical release audiences only saw one of the three potential endings. Here I have provided a conceivable connection between the three film scores but will now reveal a more elaborate (and likely) explanation.

⁴⁰¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 36e.

figure possessing the average features of any given group.”⁴⁰² So too, until direct evidence links these three musical themes, we will look to find the metaphorical family resemblances to better understand them and find if there exists a continuous line of influence that can be drawn between them.

The following investigation will demonstrate transparently connections between possible source materials for the themes by the three Hollywood composers. The musical relationships will fluctuate from definitive proofs to possibilities. Newman’s personal library provides revealing documents. Gold’s vanished research folder likely holds the key to unwrapping the true sources of the *Exodus* riddle; therefore we must be satisfied with a reconstruction of the musical landscape Gold likely encountered during his research trip to Israel. A two-pronged approach to searching for Gold’s sources must include locating examples of materials with similar musical motifs that he might have copied and general stylistic features that likely influenced him. Waxman’s theme appeared first chronologically and is the most challenging to connect to any physical

⁴⁰² Galton, “Composite Portraits,” 132-33. Here I must issue an uncomfortable disclaimer regarding Galton’s composite portraits. Galton’s idea is a useful metaphor for these similar themes, but there are two serious concerns especially in a study with a Jewish topic. First, Galton attached *value* to the composites of humans, noting, “It will be observed that the features of the composite are much better looking than those of the components.” Ibid., 135. Second, he hoped to *act* on improving these composites. As Carlo Ginzburg warns, “Galton’s composite portraits of criminals, individuals affected by phthisis and Jews cannot be dissociated from his strong campaign for ‘stern compulsion’ – that is sterilization – of ‘less suitable’ races and strains of blood.” Carlo Ginzburg, “Family Resemblances and Family Trees: Two Cognitive Metaphors,” *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 3 (Spring 2004), 545. Through his development of the pseudo-science of eugenics, Galton unwittingly laid the foundation of the racial policies that would lead to the Holocaust. While I am not holding Galton ethically responsible for Nazi eugenics policies, his ideas have gained a deservedly negative association due to their eventual horrific outcome in the Holocaust.

sources. In his case, there may only be assumptions. Therefore, it is more useful to begin with the straightforward case of Newman's "Nathan's theme."

Fred Steiner, who wrote his landmark dissertation on Newman and understood his music as well as anyone, heard a distinct musical vocabulary in his biblical scores, as he stated:

In the Biblical pictures—*David and Bathsheba* (cAugust 1951) and *The Robe* (cSeptember 1953)—we perceive the composer exploring new ground, consciously attempting to devise a different musical language one suitable for cinematic stories of antiquity. The result is a distinct kind of musical expression, different from anything previous in the Newman catalog. It is based on his investigations of Hebrew and Oriental scales, and—often in imitation of primitive music—is simple, open, and linear in texture.⁴⁰³

Likewise, Jon Burlingame describes The Twenty-third Psalm theme, (which, as noted above, derives from "Nathan's theme,") as possessing a "definite Hebraic character and, in its complete version, is marked *andante religioso* (flowingly, in a devotional manner)."⁴⁰⁴ The first clue to unraveling this mysterious theme is realizing the "Hebraic character" is drawn directly from a scholarly Jewish music source. Newman possessed a copy of Abraham Z. Idelsohn's (1882-1938) seminal work *Jewish Music: Its Historical Development* in his personal library.⁴⁰⁵ Newman filled the flyleaf page of Idelsohn's book

⁴⁰³ F. Steiner, "The Making of an American Film Composer," 349.

⁴⁰⁴ Jon Burlingame, Liner Notes, *David and Bathsheba*, 20th Century Fox Orchestra, cond. Alfred Newman, Intrada Special Collection Volume ISC 22, 2005, compact disc, 9.

⁴⁰⁵ Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*. To put Idelsohn's work in perspective, Jewish musicologist Eliyahu Schleifer views the tome as having "created the field" of Jewish music itself. Eliyahu Arie Schleifer, "Idelsohn's Scholarly and Literary Publications: An Annotated Bibliography," in *Yuval – The Abraham Zvi Idelsohn Memorial Volume 5*, ed. Eliyahu Arie Schleifer et al. (Jerusalem: Magnes, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1986), 146. In addition to Newman's personal library he had access to Twentieth Century Fox's Library of Jewish Books (there are accordingly Irish, Oriental, and other libraries from which composers could draw from ethnic source

with annotations reminding himself of important pages and their import. One of the inscriptions reads, “54 – Lamentation.” This page has three examples of lamentations: Babylonian, Portuguese, and Ashkenazic. The Portuguese example (fig. 4.12) displays melodic similarities to the opening gesture of “Nathan’s theme.” The Lamentation melody concludes both verses with $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\flat\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{2}-\flat\hat{7}-\hat{1}$, while Newman’s Nathan theme begins $\hat{1}-\flat\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\flat\hat{7}-\hat{1}$. Newman’s melody is a truncated version of the Lamentation cadence (omitting the second and fourth pitch of the melody): the Lamentation begins with a repeated note (A’s) also appearing in measures two, six, and seven. This contour clearly influenced Newman’s repeated figure that begins measure four of “Nathan’s theme.” The two melodies share enough similarities on their own to merit investigation, but with the addition of Newman’s annotations in his copy of Idelsohn’s *Jewish Music*, the correlation is conclusive based on this evidence.

Figure 4.12 Portuguese Lamentation 3: 55-57 transcribed from Abraham Z. Idelsohn’s *Jewish Music: Its Historical Development*, 54, Table 8, Ex. 2



materials). This relatively small collection of books contained mainly Jewish and Yiddish folk song collections but a few scholarly works as well, such as Irma A. Cohon, *An Introduction to Jewish Music in Eight Illustrated Lectures* (New York: Bloch, 1923). The collection is now housed in the Alfred Newman Collection at JoAnn Kane Music Service. Unfortunately none of these works contain any annotations from Newman or his staff.

While some later scholars of Jewish musicology, such as Eric Werner, have cast doubt upon Idelsohn's scholarship, for the purpose of this study such scruples are inconsequential.⁴⁰⁶ What is important is how Newman and other Jewish composers in Hollywood regarded his work.⁴⁰⁷ Idelsohn's research placed Jewish music in a modern context as a link to the biblical past. Judah Cohen notes, "Idelsohn attempted to give Jews in America a clear sonic heritage and epistemology, with its own continuous and durable musical tradition."⁴⁰⁸ Idelsohn's scholarship would naturally have had great interest for films composers such as Newman when scoring biblical epics, just as it did for Israeli composers of concert music.⁴⁰⁹ The flyleaf of Newmans' copy of Idelsohn's volume also

⁴⁰⁶ Werner lambasts Idelsohn and his work insisting the elder scholar was "not really made to be a historian, neither by training nor temperament. He never knew how to distinguish between primary sources and their secondary—or even tertiary—interpretations. His historical perspective was narrow and naïve and it was this lack of perspective that marred his entire book on liturgy and wide parts of his book on the history of Jewish Music." Eric Werner, "Prolegomenon," in *Contributions to a Historical Study of Jewish Music*, ed. Eric Werner (New York: Ktav Pub. House, 1976), 17.

⁴⁰⁷ Miklós Rózsa recalls being influenced by the scholarship of Idelsohn while working creating "early 'Christian' music" for *Quo Vadis* (1951). Miklós Rózsa, *Double Life: A Spellbinding Autobiography of Success and Survival in the Golden Age of Hollywood* (New York: Wynwood Press, 1989), 164.

⁴⁰⁸ Judah M. Cohen, "Rewriting the Grand Narrative of Jewish Music: Abraham Z. Idelsohn in the United States," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 100, no. 3 (Summer 2010), 419.

⁴⁰⁹ Idelsohn's *Jewish Music* and ten-volume *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies* became the wellspring for many Israeli art composers hoping to compose "authentic" Jewish music. Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1973). For example, Joseph Tal's First Symphony (1952) is based upon a Persian Jewish lament found in Idelsohn's *Thesaurus*. Alexander L. Ringer, "Musical Composition in Modern Israel," *The Musical Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (January 1965), 288. Additionally, Idelsohn's American scholarship influenced the musical conventions of Reform Judaism, as his "arrangements leaned heavily on adherence to what he deemed 'Jewish traditional religious folksong' and the 'traditional modes' of the synagogue." Cohen "Rewriting the Grand Narrative of Jewish Music," 435. Idelsohn's influence over Reform synagogue music would have been felt by anyone attending Los Angeles synagogues such as Wilshire Boulevard Temple or Temple Israel of Hollywood (both strongly populated by the Hollywood crowd).

has notes for “Ken.” This most likely refers to Ken Darby who, as noted previously, arranged the vocal materials for *David and Bathsheba*. The two pages written next to “Ken” are 60 and 72, which explain the music of the biblical Psalms of David and the accompanying modes. Newman wanted Darby to be influenced directly by Idelsohn’s ideas regarding psalms when arranging his own setting of “The Twenty-Third Psalm” that is performed during the End Title of *David and Bathsheba*. Page 60 contains the section “The Modes of the Psalms.”⁴¹⁰ Idelsohn expounds upon the importance of the Psalms to Christian and Jewish worshippers over the centuries and then explains, “The musical intonations or modes used for the chanting of the Psalms are based on the Dorian, the Gregorian or Hypophrygian, and on the Lydian scale.”⁴¹¹ While page 72 contains Idelsohn’s delineation of the five modes of Jewish prayer: Adonoy-Moloch, Selicha, Vidui, Mogen-Ovos, and Ahavoh-Rabboh.⁴¹²

The Portuguese lamentation found in Idelsohn is unique to the Portuguese liturgical tradition. The cadence is not found in Idelsohn’s ten-volume *Hebraisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz* (“Thesaurus of Hebrew-Oriental Melodies,” hereafter referred to as Idelsohn’s *Thesaurus*).⁴¹³ Such a unique and solitary instance is virtually unheard of within Jewish liturgy, as most musical traditions incorporated materials from other traditions over the centuries. However, a similar *Eikha* (Lamentation) (fig. 4.13) is

⁴¹⁰ Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, 60. Newman’s Nathan theme modulated between Aeolian and Mixolydian.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 60-61.

⁴¹² Ibid., 72-91.

⁴¹³ Idelsohn, *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies*.

Figure 4.13 Eikha – Book of Lamentation 2:1-5 Amsterdam/Western Sephardi Tradition: transcription of recording of Hazzan-Rabbi Rohde



found on the Milken Archive recording *Jewish Voices in the New World: Chants and Prayers from the Amsterdam-London Sephardi Tradition* (2003)⁴¹⁴. The *Eikha* is performed with consistent rubato when sung by Hazzan (Hebrew equivalent of cantor) Rohde of congregation Shearith Israel, New York's Spanish and Portuguese synagogue. When approached about the similarities, Rohde explained that the *Eikha* was orally transmitted, but is from a closely related tradition to that of the Portuguese Lamentation found in Idelsohn's *Jewish Music*.⁴¹⁵ The *Eikha*'s final cadence (unsurprisingly) is $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-$

⁴¹⁴ *Jewish Voices in the New World: Chants and Prayers from the Amsterdam-London Sephardi Tradition*. Ira Rohde, Milken Archive of Jewish Music, 2003. Mp3 Accessed March 13, 2016. <http://www.milkenarchive.org/albums/view/10/Jewish+Voices+in+the+New+World#/albums/credits/10/Jewish+Voices+in+the+New+World>.

⁴¹⁵ Hazzan-Rabbi Ira Rohde, email to the author, March 14, 2016. When I first contacted Rohde, not wanting to influence his response, I intentionally only mentioned that I heard a connection between the *Eikah* and a film music theme. He responded, "I know exactly what you are referring to, though, I think... You are referring to the theme from the motion picture 'Exodus.'" Of course he was correct. In our next correspondence, Rohde admitted "I cannot be certain that it [*Exodus*] didn't influence me. Does that mean that I wasn't strictly faithful to the oral tradition I was taught? Well, I think I was faithful, although my interpretation may have been slightly influenced." Hazzan-Rabbi Ira Rohde, email to the author, March 15, 2016. My interpretation is the *Eikah* and *Exodus* theme are melodically similar and Hazzan Rohde accentuated the *Exodus* cadence in his performance.

♭3-4-2-♭7-1. Once again the melodic pattern is reminiscent to the themes that characterize Skeffington, Nathan, and the new nation of Israel in *Exodus*.

The connection between the two Lamentations and *Exodus* extends beyond the obvious motivic similarities. The idea of mourning and redemption are deeply tied together in Jewish theology. During the fast day *Tisha B'Av* (the ninth of Av) the entire book of Lamentations is recited and this cadence is chanted over and over. Hazzan Rohde notes that Lamentations “became a rallying cry for Zionists during the 1920’s and 1930’s and has since remained so. The candle-lit...service is almost always packed, and there are lines in the street waiting to get in beforehand.”⁴¹⁶ The story of *Exodus* neatly parallels this journey from destruction to redemption; starting with Holocaust survivors stranded in a Cypriot internment camp and victoriously concluding with the birth of the State of Israel. Clearly if Gold knew this powerful theme, the attached spiritual meaning would have been congruent with the emotions he wanted to represent in the film. The final cadence of the *Eikha* occurs on the symbolically important words, “*eretz ti’feret Yisrael*,” (“Earth the beauty of Israel”).

The two Lamentations provide a direct link to Newman’s “Nathan theme,” but a connection to “Skeffington’s theme” and *Exodus* is less overt. In his insightful study tracing Jewish musical materials in American secular music, Jack Gottlieb discerns a connection between the themes for *Mr. Skeffington* and *Exodus* by noting the similar use of Jewish prayer mode Magein Avot stating:

⁴¹⁶ Hazzan-Rabbi Ira Rohde, email to the author, March 15, 2016.

The *MA* pattern weaves its way into songs about the Jewish experience: a 1927 Tin Pan Alley curio by Jules Kerwin Stein (later known as Jule Styne); of the holocaust, Franz Waxman's theme for a Jewish concentration camp victim in the 1944 film *Mr. Skeffington*; and of the founding of the State of Israel, Ernest Gold's title song for the 1960 movie *Exodus*.⁴¹⁷

The “pattern” mentioned has a similarity to the Aeolian mode in Western music and an opening ascent to the fifth scale degree. Gottlieb continues by noting a marked resemblance between the Israeli song, “L’moledet Imah” (“To the Motherland,” see fig. 4.14), and Gold’s *Exodus* theme. The melodic contour and rhythm of the Israeli song are exceedingly similar to the *Exodus* theme, with “L’moledet Imah” possessing the exact same melodic phrase (1̂-5̂-4̂-1̂-3̂-4̂-2̂-7̂-1̂). The text and context also deserve particular attention, as these would have resonated with Gold. “L’moledet Imah” was written in 1948 in commemoration of the Israeli War of Independence. The lyrics reflect the duality of Israeli life; hoping for peace and preparing for war: “Peace, peace, let us go forward. March forth, meet the next battle.” Gold must have encountered the popular “L’moledet Imah” during his “ethnomusicological” research trip to Israel and found its contextual meaning relevant to the story of *Exodus*. But the next kibbutz anthem provides multiple possible influences for Gold’s famous melody.

Figure 4.14 “L’moledet Imah” (trans. “To the Motherland”) Music by Moshe Bik and words by Zina Winchell, 1948.



⁴¹⁷ Gottlieb, *Funny, It Doesn't Sound Jewish*, 134.

“Shir HaEmek”

In a noted scene from *Exodus*, Ari Ben Canaan shows Kitty, his American love interest, who is not Jewish, a beautiful vista and discusses Jewish identity:

Ari: Every time I come home I stop here and just look for a minute. Do you want to look with me?

Kitty: Beautiful.

[Ari and Kitty hike up a mountain to see the extraordinary view]

Kitty: Sure.

Ari: The Valley of Jezreel. If you dug straight down far enough, then you'd find the ruins of Megiddo. You'd find the very same paving stones that Joshua walked on when he conquered it. That's Abu Yesha—It's an Arab village. To the left is Gan Dafna. Do you know your Bible?

Kitty: In a Presbyterian sort of way.

Ari: That's Mt. Tabor.

Kitty: I remember. When Deborah gathered her armies...

Ari: I just wanted you to know I'm a Jew. This is my country.

Kitty: I do know. I understand.

Ari: Sometimes it's not that easy.

Kitty: It's the easiest thing in the world. All these differences between people are made up. People are the same no matter what they're called.

Ari: Don't ever believe it. People are different. They have a right to be different. They like to be different. It's no good pretending that differences don't exist.

They do. They have to be recognized and respected.⁴¹⁸

The characters' dialogue contrasts the American and Hollywood ideal of the “melting pot” with the Zionist nationalism philosophy.⁴¹⁹ The Valley of Jezreel,⁴²⁰ as described by

⁴¹⁸ *Exodus*, directed by Otto Preminger (1960; Santa Monica, CA: MGM Home Entertainment, 2002), DVD, 01:52:31.

⁴¹⁹ Unless one supposes it is an early appreciation of multiculturalism.

⁴²⁰ In a strange historical coincidence, the first attempt to purchase the Valley of Jezreel was brokered by Ze'ev Tiomkin, one of the founders of the modern State of Israel, and uncle to film composer Dimitri Tiomkin. Vladimir Ze'ev Tiomkin an engineer educated in St. Petersburg was an early Zionist leader. The settlement Ramat Tiomkin in central Israel and a street in Hadera (near Haifa) are named after the Russian-born activist. See Dr. Arthur Rupp, “Buying the Emek (Jezreel Valley),” *Jewish Virtual Library*, accessed March 10, 2016. http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/Ruppin_Emek.html. Originally published as Dr. Arthur Rupp, “Buying the Emek,” *The New Palestine*, May 1929.

Ben Canaan in the above dialogue and beautifully framed by Preminger, was also the topic of a famous early-Israeli song, “Shir HaEmek,” (sometimes referred to by its first line “Ba’a M’Nucha”) composed by Daniel Sambursky⁴²¹ with words by poet Nathan Alterman for the Zionist film *The Land of Promise* (1935).⁴²² The presentation of the song in the film has a quintessentially epic quality.⁴²³ Through the film, “Shir HaEmek”

⁴²¹ Beyond his famous song, the German-born Sambursky contributed to modern Jewish folk music in three ways: 1) leading community singing meeting on Friday nights at the Brennerhouse in Tel-Aviv from 1935 to 1950; 2) collecting and editing (with Mosheh Bronzaft) the three-volume folk music anthology *Sefer Shirim Umanginot*; 3) lead music instructor at a Tel Aviv teachers’ seminary. Bathja Bayer, “Daniel Sambursky” *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2nd ed. Fred Skolnik (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2007), 745.

⁴²² *The Land of Promise* (like *The Jazz Singer* in America) was billed as “the first Palestine sound picture.” It is a part-documentary/part-propaganda vehicle that was even screened in Nazi Germany and “only shown to Jews in order to encourage them to leave the country and immigrate to Palestine.” “The Land of Promise: The First Sound Picture,” <http://www.aretz.com/NEW/landofpromisetest.shtml>. Three songs (including “Shir HaEmek”) by Sambursky were commissioned for the film. The titles state “music score by” Boris Morros (music director at Paramount Pictures) and even more vague credit of “music compiled by” Gerard Carbonara (longtime staff composer at Paramount). It seems likely with these connections, the score was recorded at Paramount. Originally the film’s executives approached Paramount to handle production of the movie, but that did not materialize and the financiers created their own production company (The Urim Palestine Film Company Limited). Israel-film scholar Hillel Tryster notes that a separate “company was formed to take charge of exploiting the film in the USA.” The honorary chairman was Albert Einstein while George Gershwin and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise also served on the sponsorship committee. Hillel Tryster, “‘The Land of Promise’ (1935): A Case Study in Zionist Film Propaganda,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 15, no. 2 (2006): 206.

⁴²³ The scene begins simply enough with Sambursky playing an upright piano and singing “Shir HaEmek” in a kibbutz dining hall (as he often did). The song transfixes the diners. With the second verse the room full of settlers join Sambursky in song, wrapping arms around each other. The third verse shows camera cuts between varying daily settler activities (woman peeling vegetables, man shaving, woman doing laundry, and a farmer milking a cow) being accomplished while stridently singing *a cappella*. A farmer cutting crops with his scythe (and all that that tool implies on a kibbutz – read: utopian society) sings the final verse *sotto voce* accompanied by an organ and harp. By the end of the scene, “Shir HaEmek” has come to represent Israel itself. The song was “sung quietly and slowly around countless campfires” in the following decades as a pastoral nationalist hymn. Shai Burstyn, email to the author, February 28, 2016. Likely Gold would have been informed about the importance of this song and scene in Israeli cultural history.

became iconic and grew in popularity and significance over the years. There is no doubt Gold would have heard this song numerous times during his research trip, as it came to define Israel's nationalistic musical character.⁴²⁴ One even wonders if Gold met the Israeli composer who was still alive and composing in his new homeland.

“Shir HaEmek” (fig. 4.15) opens with a familiar motive ($\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\flat\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}-\flat\hat{7}-\hat{1}-\hat{1}$), which is then repeated with a variation on the fifth scale degree. Then the whole phrase is quickly repeated (in mm. 5-6) as if confirming to our ears the similarity to Gold's *Exodus* cadence. Measures thirteen through sixteen of “Shir HaEmek” also provide the $\hat{1}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}$ motivic figure that opens Gold's *Exodus* theme. While that motive has already been identified as associated with the opening of the *Magein Avot* synagogue mode, Israeli

⁴²⁴ Like much of European musical nationalism of the mid-to-late nineteenth century, Zionist musical nationalism was rooted in folk song and dance.

Figure 4.15 “Shir Ha’Emek” (trans. “Song of the Valley”) Music by Daniel Sambursky and lyrics by Nathan Alterman, 1935

Allegretto moderato

Ba' ah m'nu-cha la - ya - ge - ya U - mar-go - a le' - a - mel.

5 Lay - la chi-ver mis - ta - re - ya al sdot e - mek Yiz - r' - el.

9 Tal mile - ma - tah ul' - va-nah me' - al, mi - beit al - fa ad na - ha - lal.

13 Mah, mah lay - la mi - leil? D'ma - mah be - yiz - r' - el.

17 Nu - mah e - mek, e - retz tif' - e - ret a - nu l' - cha mish - me - ret.

musicologist Shai Burstyn makes the connection more specific, stating, the opening of notes of “*Exodus* are D-A-G...they are the essence of *Pashta*, a central cantillation motive.”⁴²⁵ While it seems unlikely that the non-observant Gold would have been aware of this deeper significance, Burstyn’s point is still valid: observant Jews in Israel heard the synagogue motive within “Shir HaEmek” and subsequently in *Exodus*. “Shir

⁴²⁵ Shai Burstyn, email to the author, February 27, 2016. The author wishes to thank Dr. Burstyn for sharing his thoughts on the connection between *Exodus* and early Israeli songs. His insights are particularly keen as a scholar of Israeli song and as an Israeli musician who lived through this era.

HaEmek” not only influences Gold’s theme it also briefly appears in the film.⁴²⁶ In a scene of Jewish children walking through the valley, they ever so quietly hum Sambursky’s song.⁴²⁷ The moment is easily lost below the sound effects and lasts fewer than twenty seconds. Furthermore the song is not given credit in the film but it is perceptible and its importance to the investigation is obvious. Gold’s hidden melodic source exists in plain sight in *Exodus* itself. As Preminger hired Gold early in the production process, it is possible Gold (or his Israeli music research assistant) advised Preminger on source music selections.⁴²⁸ Regardless, this on-screen moment confirms that Gold knew “Shir HaEmek.” His current awareness of the early Israel song meant that his title theme for *Exodus* was clearly influenced by it, whether intentionally or not. While not as well-known as the Israeli national anthem, “Hatikvah,” Jews inside and outside of Israel knew “Shir HaEmek” well. Referring to Sambursky’s song had the same effect that Gold achieved by quoting “Waltzing Matilda” for *On the Beach*—“Shir HaEmek” is a musical signifier for “Israel.”⁴²⁹

⁴²⁶ While “L’moledet Imah” is even closer melodically to *Exodus* than “Shir HaEmek,” the fact that Gold necessarily knew the latter song makes it more influential.

⁴²⁷ “Shir HaEmek” appears briefly here as source music: *Exodus*, DVD, 03:17:20-17:40.

⁴²⁸ In addition to “Shir HaEmek” five other famous patriotic Israeli songs make brief appearances on the soundtrack, including: “Rad Halayla” (after “Hava Nagila” it is the most famous *hora* tune) had lyrics adapted to a traditional hassidic *niggun* by Ya’akov Orland. “Chizbat” with music by Moshe Wilensky and words by Chaim Hefer. “Shir HaPalmach” the anthem of the Palmach (special forces of the *Haganah*) with music by David Zehavi and lyrics by Gilad Zerubavel. “Hagdudanim” music by M. Zeira and words by Ya’akov Orland and Effi Netzer. “Nivne Artzenu” has music by Moshe Bik and lyrics by Abraham Levinson.

⁴²⁹ When teaching a class on Jewish music in film at a senior center attached to a synagogue, I encountered the popularity of “Shir HaEmek.” I showed the class the *Exodus* theme followed by Sambursky performing his song in *The Land of Promise*. First, several of the gentleman in their seventies loudly began to sing along to “Shir HaEmek.” Second, they asked me to play the

In addition to Israeli folk songs that can be directly linked to *Exodus*, it is crucial to demonstrate general stylistic features of the Israeli songs that Gold was likely introduced to by his research assistant. “Ez Vacheves” (“Goat and Sheep,”—fig. 4.16) a popular dance tune with music and pastoral lyrics written by Matetyahu Shelem in 1953 contains the defining cadence of Gold’s theme. In this case, Shelem’s cadence is $\hat{1}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$, while Gold’s “variation” simply reorder the second and third notes of the cadence: $\hat{1}-\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{2}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$. Notice the melodic outlining of the VII triad (in m. 2) of “Ez Vacheves,” a typical feature of many Israeli songs of this era. This gesture also occurs at the end of the first phrase of *Exodus*. With the prevalence of this figure in Israeli music of the time, including those songs appearing in the soundtrack to *Exodus*, ringing in Gold’s ears, how could he not adopt it for his own theme?

Figure 4.16 “Ez Vacheves” (trans. as “Goat and Sheep”) Music and lyrics by Matetyahu Shelem, 1953, mm. 1-2



Another example of an Israeli folk song with similar features is Trio Aravah’s “Shir HaBokrim” (usually translated as “The Cowboy’s Song, though sometimes using the alternate title “Aravah, Aravah”) composed in 1953 but made famous in 1957 on the

Exodus theme again to compare with the song they remembered from their adolescence. In their mind, there was no question that “Shir HaEmek” influenced Gold.

group's "Black Record."⁴³⁰ The lyrics describe both the harshness of the Israeli desert and the toughness of the settlers who are like the rough cowboys of the American plains. A noted scholar of Jewish literature, Janet Burstein, makes the connection between the spirit of the American West and the Israeli settler: "Neatly dividing humanity into good guys and bad guys, *Exodus* transplanted the heroic possibilities of G.I. Joe and the American cowboy to a land as photogenic as Montana—but saturated with a biblical past."⁴³¹ As noted above, Gold's aesthetic of film composition emphasized a musical rendering of "the land," so a popular song such as "Shir HaBokrim" (fig. 4.17) that represents that land would have been well worth emulating stylistically. The song's cadential melody (♭3̂-4̂-5̂-♭3̂-1̂-♭7̂-1̂) (in mm. 13-15) is vaguely related to Gold's *Exodus* cadence. More significantly, the modal harmonic languages are similar with "HaBokrim" in A Dorian and *Exodus* in E Dorian. The VII-i (G Major – A minor) progression is repeated throughout the song (along with the ♭7̂). Shai Burstyn addresses the importance of the flattened seventh scale degree to Israeli folk songs:

⁴³⁰ While hugely popular in Israel, "Shir HaBokrim" also reached American audiences through the recording efforts of two folk artists. First, Theodore Bikel released the song in 1956 (a year before Trio Aravah) on the album *Theodore Bikel Sings Songs of Israel*. Then, the Limelites released an English and Hebrew version of "Aravah, Aravah" on the album *The Slightly Fabulous Limelites* (1961). Trio Aravah's song of Israel was reaching American and Israeli audiences. As mentioned earlier, Preminger and the studio wanted popular Israeli songs in the soundtrack and Gold obliged them both literally and by deriving his material from Israeli models.

In a curious (and distant) connection between *Exodus* and "Shir HaBokrim," "Borkei Lachish," another song from Trio Aravah's 1957 album was recorded by Shelly Manne on his 1963 album *My Son the Jazz Drummer!* (the album was rereleased on CD in 2004 with the much less funny and world music-inspired *Steps to the Desert*), which featured modern jazz versions of favorite Jewish and Israeli songs. In addition to the typical fare of "Hava Nagila," "My Yiddishe Mama," and "Bei Mir Bistu Shein," Manne included "Borkei Lachish" and Gold's *Exodus* theme.

⁴³¹ Janet Burstein, "Through an American Lens: Dreaming Utopia in Early Israeli Cinema," *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 29 (2010): 26-27.

Neutralizing the hegemony of the major and minor scales was a most effective and therefore a most prevalent means of attaining the new Hebrew melos. Practically all contemporary musicians who had addressed the issue agreed that the single most important move in this regards should be the liberation from the ‘dictatorship of the old tonal system’ and above all from the leading tone. In what amounted to a reversal of historical evolution from the modes to the dual major-minor system, flattening the 7th degree in major and minor led back to the frequent employment of Mixolydian rather than major and Dorian and Aeolian rather than minor.⁴³²

The flattened seventh scale degree (and modal harmony) is similarly prominent in the themes created for Job Skeffington, Nathan the Prophet, and *Exodus*. These features are rare in Jewish music outside of traditional Portuguese lamentations and new Israeli folk songs—and Golden Age Hollywood portrayals of Jewish identity.

Figure 4.17 “Shir HaBokrim” (trans. as “The Cowboy’s Song”) Music by Mordecai Olri-Nozik and Lyrics by Yaacov Orland, 1953, mm. 1-16

Am D Am Am

A - ra - va a - ra - va ein ketz, ein ha' - bok -

6 Em C E Am D Am

rim ta - ra Lo ar' - ar lo dar - dar lo eitz

13 C G Am G Am

ru' - ach shav ha' - mid - ba - ra

Returning to Sambursky’s “Shir HaEmek,” the influence on Gold’s *Exodus* theme is obvious. Is there any way to connect the Israeli song to Waxman’s “Skeffington

⁴³² Shai Burstyn, “Inventing Musical Tradition: The Case of the Hebrew (Folk) song,” *Orbis Musicae* XIII (June 1999): 131.

theme”? As there are melodic similarities between the *Exodus* and “Skeffington” themes, one should be able to discern connections between Skeffington and “Shir HaEmek” as well. However, there is no reason to believe Waxman studied early Israeli songs—or indeed—in preparation for scoring of *Mr. Skeffington* as Gold did for *Exodus*. The resemblance between themes is either serendipitous or Waxman knew of “Shir HaEmek” from another source. A possible source may exist in the form of musical postcards.

As mentioned earlier, the Zionist movement successfully connected the new Israel to what was and is perceived as an ancient tradition rooted in both Jewish and Christian scripture.⁴³³ Israel was simultaneously new and old. Just like the modern Hebrew language revival project that occurred with the influx of European-born Jews to the State of Israel, Zionists, who, like Herzl, were heirs to the era of Romantic nationalism, hoped to fashion a characteristically Israeli national music.⁴³⁴ One of the musical projects that exemplifies this policy was forged by German-born musicologist Hans Nathan (1910-1989). In the 1920s and 1930s, the Jewish National Fund (or *Keren Kayemeth L'Yisrael*, hereafter abbreviated as JNF) issued a set of postcards decorated with early Israeli songs, which were thought to have been composed by kibbutz settlers, instead of the typical pastoral images of the countryside.⁴³⁵ The JNF viewed these cards as an idealistic

⁴³³ This comment should not be construed as a political statement but as a commentary about Zionist goals to manufacture a tradition. Clearly Jews (and Muslims) have lived in the area of Palestine/Israel for many centuries. I have no intention of debating Jewish or Muslim claims of authenticity or land “ownership” in this musicological study.

⁴³⁴ For a background on the transformation of Hebrew from a mainly religious language used for liturgical purposes to the secular, modern language of Israel, see: Benjamin Harshav, *Language in Time of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 81-86.

⁴³⁵ The JNF was founded in 1901 to purchase land in Palestine for Jewish settlements.

marketing campaign to boost emigration to Palestine in response to the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe. These songs quickly became musical representations of the Promised Land. Once Nathan became aware of the postcards in 1933, he contacted an array of famous European and American art music composers to arrange these Zionist songs for piano and voice. Unlike the American-based *Genesis Suite* that brought together film composers and art music composers, the collaborators on Nathan's project were mainly composers of art music who occasionally worked in cinema; this list included a sprinkling of European-born composers that included some émigrés. Nathan's list included such luminaries as Aaron Copland, Paul Dessau, Arthur Honegger, Frederick Jacobi (1891-1952), Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), Menashe Rabinowitz (1883-1969), Lazare Saminsky (1882-1959), Erich Walter Sternberg (1891-1974), Ernst Toch (1887-1964), Kurt Weill (1900-1950), and Stefan Wolpe (1902-1972)—Arnold Schoenberg also accepted Nathan's invitation but as with many of his Jewish-themed projects, his arrangement was left unfinished.⁴³⁶ That so many renowned composers accepted Nathan's invitation during a time of world upheaval is astonishing, as Philip Bohlman figured the idea grew out of "idealism or desperation."⁴³⁷ As anticipated, the composers included in the project varied stylistically and politically but all supported the

⁴³⁶ Klára Móricz notes that before Schoenberg withdrew from the project, he asked Nathan for more melodies, "at least ten or fifteen from which to select, for, as he wrote to Nathan, he wanted to arrange at least six, all for inclusion in Nathan's series." Móricz, *Jewish Identities*, 238.

⁴³⁷ Philip V. Bohlman, *Israeli Folk Music: Songs of the Early Pioneers*, ed. Hans Nathan (Madison: A-R Editions, 1994), x.

formation of the Jewish State.⁴³⁸ The postcards and songs served a dual transformative purpose; turning British Mandatory Palestine into *Eretz Yisrael*, the State of Israel, and Zionist “folk songs” into art songs.⁴³⁹ As Hans Nathan asserted, “The songs in this volume represent a basically new idiom. Among their features are new scale patterns and, along with them a melodic style marked by stepwise motion; larger intervals rarely have harmonic implications.”⁴⁴⁰ This new “Israeli sound” was made up of new and old elements, just like the new nation itself. As Shai Burstyn elucidates:

Where did Eretz-Israeli inventors of tradition turn for these substitutes? Naturally to the Bible, which they did not reject as part of the recent debilitating past, but rather adopted as a national document replete with historical and emotional overtones.⁴⁴¹

This is strongly reminiscent of A.Z. Idelsohn’s scholarship as well as the connection between old and new in Jewish music. Bohlman makes this connection explicit: “This new historical dialectic would eventually provide the fundamental backdrop for the

⁴³⁸ Howard Pollack expresses surprise that many leftist composers supported the Zionist movement, but points out, “With the emergence of the national-friendly Popular Front in 1935, even the American Communist Party adopted, in a volte-face, a pro-Zionist policy.” Howard Pollack, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man* (New York: Henry Holt, 1999), 328. Not surprisingly, the lyrics of these songs were uniformly secular in nature, as the early State of Israel was firmly socialist in its planning stages and first fifty years. American socialists adored the idea of the kibbutz as a kind of “collective farm.”

⁴³⁹ Hans Nathan was not alone in his vision for a national Jewish music. German (and later American) musicologist Anneliese Landau believed that a “national Jewish music can only be created by a free Jewish nation living on Jewish soil, a nation which daily imbibes the breath, smell, light and the hidden melody of its own country.” Anneliese Landau, *The Contribution of Jewish Composers to the Music of the Modern World* (New York: National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, 1966), 47.

⁴⁴⁰ Bohlman, *Israeli Folk Music*, xi.

⁴⁴¹ Burstyn, “Inventing Musical Tradition,” 129.

exchange of songs and compositions that Nathan has compiled.”⁴⁴² Therefore it is obvious why Hollywood film composers depicting biblical or Israeli stories would be drawn to these songs for inspiration—they were an unambiguous confluence of the new land of Israel and ancient Jewish heritage.

Between 1938 and 1939, Hans Nathan published *Folk Songs of the New Palestine* in six volumes through a publisher focused on American-Zionist youth publications.⁴⁴³ Nathan intended to release all thirty of the arrangements in a continuing series but the project was discontinued with the outbreak of war.⁴⁴⁴ Each volume possessed a general theme related to the creation of a new Israel: there were dances, shepherd songs, songs of builders, summer time, guardians of the night, and children’s songs. The volumes contained at least two arrangements of songs from Palestine that were harbingers of the Israel to come. These are the postcard project arrangements in published form. Volume Five holds Kurt Weill’s arrangement of Sambursky’s “Ba’a m’nucha” (the alternate title for “Shir HaEmek”).⁴⁴⁵ Weill’s pensive setting contrasts with Sambursky’s original folk rendition especially in the dissonant third verse with an intentionally disjointed

⁴⁴² Bohlman, *Israeli Folk Music*, 46.

⁴⁴³ Masada, the publisher, was managed by the Youth Zionist Organization of American and Hechalutz Organization of America. Masada was formed by Zionist youth groups in New York, Cleveland, and Minneapolis. Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Masada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 123.

⁴⁴⁴ The fifteen songs released by Nathan were republished in Bohlman, *Israeli Folk Music*.

⁴⁴⁵ Weill published these songs separately from the postcard project as well calling them “Two Folksongs of the New Palestine” for voice and piano. The second folk song Weill arranged was “Havu L’Venim” (Bring the Bricks) with music by Mordechai Zaira and words by Alexander Penn.

contrapuntal left-hand piano part. Volume Two of Nathan's series contains "Hinne achal'la bachalili" (Lo, I Play Upon My Flute) and "Ale giva" (Atop a Hill in Galilee) both arranged by Paul Dessau—the same Dessau who contributed additional music to Waxman's score for *Mr. Skeffington*.⁴⁴⁶ With several of Waxman's friends and colleagues contributing to Nathan's postcard project, it is likely Waxman was at least aware of the arrangements even if he never perused Nathan's publications. Furthermore, Neumeyer and Platte opine that Waxman's varied compositional style was attributable in part to his impressive score collection that included both standards of the repertoire and contemporary works.⁴⁴⁷ Waxman had an insatiable interest for all music but the composer

⁴⁴⁶ Dessau contributed six arrangements to the JFM postcard project. The four unpublished arrangements are: "V'ulai" (Perhaps), "Ali b'er" (Ascend, My Well), "Al s'fat yam kinneret" (On the banks of the Kinneret), and "Gamal, gamali" (Camel, My Camel). Dessau's grandfather, Moses Dessau, was a cantor with the Hamburg synagogue, which was the first Reform synagogue in Germany. Musicologist Fritz Hennenberg sees his family's connection to the synagogue as influencing the young Paul Dessau, which manifested itself in his proclivity for writing sacred and Jewish-influenced music including his dramatic oratorio *Hagadah* (1936). Fritz Hennenberg, "Paul Dessau," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root. Accessed April 11, 2016. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/music/07650>.

Dessau spent the last five years (1943-48) of his fifteen years exiled from Germany in Hollywood. The socialist composer returned to East Germany in 1948. While in America, Dessau participated in Jewish musical life in many ways. He wrote an analytical article on Schoenberg's *Kol Nidre*, served on the board of the Jewish Music Forum, and composed and arranged much Jewish-inspired music. Neil W. Levin, "Paul Dessau," *Milken Archive of Jewish Music*. Accessed April 12, 2016. <http://www.milkenarchive.org/people/view/all/566/Dessau,+Paul#/people/view/all/566/Paul+Dessau/full>.

Kurt London refers to Dessau's important contributions to silent and early-sound film music multiple times in London's *Film Music*. In particular, London sees his technique of orchestration as representing the "symphonic tradition" in film music. Kurt London, *Film Music: A Summary of the Characteristic Features of Its History, Aesthetics, Technique, and Possible Developments*, trans. Eric S. Bensinger (London: Faber & Faber Ltd, 1936), 228.

⁴⁴⁷ Neumeyer and Platte, *Franz Waxman's Rebecca*, 20. The authors also view Waxman's collection shaping his eclectically programmed Los Angeles Music Festival that had very few repeat performances over the years.

of *Joshua* and *The Song of Terezin* must have heard of and been intrigued by Nathan's project. While Waxman's acquaintance with Dessau does not provide a documented connection, akin to finding Newman's copy of Idelsohn's *Jewish Music*, this instance is convincing circumstantial evidence that suggests Waxman could have known of "Shir HaEmek" before composing "Skeffington's theme." Did Waxman use "Shir HaEmek" as a structural model for his theme in the same manner that Gold created the theme for *Exodus*? While it is easy to indulge in a complacent skepticism concerning Waxman's borrowings in this context, it has been noted above that the composer alludes to *Kol Nidrei* melodies in "Skeffington's theme" (see mm. 5-13 of "Skeffington"). To borrow and transform was at the base of Waxman's practice; therefore the likelihood of his borrowing from "Shir HaEmek" is in line with the very process by which he composed. Considering this composer's habits, it is inconceivable that Waxman simply jotted down a four wholly original measures and then decide to tack on nine measures of *Kol Nidrei* for the next nine measures. It was far more consistent with his compositional approach to take liberally from multiple Jewish musical antecedents in his representation of Job Skeffington.

In his ambitious study of musical influence, the erudite music critic Irving Kolodin, posited seven useful axioms, two of which are relevant to this inquiry. In Axiom IV, Kolodin asserts, "The obvious source is not always the true source."⁴⁴⁸ It seems

⁴⁴⁸ Irving Kolodin, *The Continuity of Music: A History of Influence* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1969), 43. Kolodin's Seven Axiom's of Influence are found in the Appendix. Steven Smith in his biography of Bernard Herrmann mentions Kolodin was a "longtime acquaintance" of Herrmann's. Steven C. Smith, *A Heart at Fire's Center* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991), 215.

“obvious” that Gold was influenced by Waxman’s “Skeffington’s theme” when composing his score to *Exodus*. However, the answer more likely lies in Kolodin’s Axiom V: “Two well-known manifestations of a similar impulse may be related not to each other, but to a common source.”⁴⁴⁹ As Kolodin’s axioms are self-evident, it is more than reasonable to hypothesize that Waxman and Gold were influenced by the same “true” source: “Shir Ha’Emek.”

Hollywood Portrayals of Israel

In describing the role of Israel in American films, Lawrence Epstein says, “Israel becomes the catalyst for developing a Jewish identity.”⁴⁵⁰ So too, Israeli songs written in the style of folk song became an influential force for Jewish-American composers seeking to conjure up a “biblical” sound world. Additional insights into American-Jewish representations of Israeli folk music can be gained by looking at the score and compositional approach to *The Juggler* (1953) by George Antheil. Edward Dmytryk’s (1908-1999) post-World War Two drama shows the struggles of concentration camp survivor Hans Müller, played by Kirk Douglas (born Issur Danielovitch in 1916), adjusting to life in the new State of Israel.⁴⁵¹ Like *Exodus* will do later, *The Juggler*

⁴⁴⁹ Kolodin, *The Continuity of Music*, 44.

⁴⁵⁰ Epstein, *American Jewish Films*, 160.

⁴⁵¹ Edward Dmytryk was a non-Jewish Canadian-born left-wing director who was blacklisted in Hollywood after refusing to answer questions by the House Committee on Un-American Activities regarding his alleged membership in the Communist Party. Dmytryk’s Hollywood work often engaged in broad social messages. Furthermore, like Darryl F. Zanuck who produced *The Jazz Singer*, *The House of Rothschild*, *Gentleman’s Agreement*, and *David and Bathsheba*, Dmytryk approached Jewish-themed films with far more comfort than many Jewish filmmakers.

directly connects the Holocaust and Israel while introducing Americans to the strong, new Jews of Israel. Lawrence Epstein insightfully explains, “Juggling is an original and interesting metaphor in the film for Jewish identity. The Jew must keep a lot of objects flying around simultaneously and not drop any.”⁴⁵² Antheil’s score, too, mirrors this balancing act by juggling modernism and folk influences. Antheil admits the peculiarly modern yet traditional folk music he composes for *The Juggler*:

I did not want to make it an out and out Jewish score. Particularly of the kind of Jewish music which, through-out the centuries, in Europe and elsewhere, the world now supposes Jewish music to be. For in the first place, the music of present-day Palestine is not like that: for the most part it is gay, different, because the new people of Palestine do not, particularly, want to remember the past, and Europe particularly. So, in the interim, they have almost created a new folksong, folksong based on the past, but with optimistic coloring.⁴⁵³

It seems Antheil is aware of the “new folksong” of Israel but he does not offer any specific example. Similar to Gold’s research model, Antheil describes his immersion into Israeli music before composing his score:

For THE JUGGLER I listened to a tremendous amount of Israelite folksongs, and studied many more, soaked in their peculiar quality. Then I invented, from this atmosphere, a series of my own; and used them as basic material myself. Thus, I

In 1947, he produced the critically acclaimed *Crossfire* that dealt with American anti-Semitism. Then, again, after *The Juggler* in 1958 Dmytryk produced *The Young Lions* that concludes with a depiction of an American liberation of a concentration camp—one of the first dramatizations of such an event in a Hollywood film. Eric A. Goldman reveals how, “Dmytryk had developed a clear understanding of the Jewish condition. Almost all of his friends were Jewish, and his own daughter flirted with converting to Judaism. He would bring this sensitivity to his work.” Dmytryk’s stance was strongly pro-Israel: “When Hitler came in, I didn’t see any hope for Jews except a place where they could at least stand and die fighting and I’m afraid that may be what’s going to happen. But at least you have the honor of having a place to defend and taking a lot of people with you when you go, and so that’s why I’m for Israel.” E. Goldman, *The American Jewish Story Through Cinema*, 107, 109.

⁴⁵² Epstein, *American Jewish Films*, 150.

⁴⁵³ George Antheil, “The Juggler,” *Film Music Notes* 12, no. 5, (May-June 1953): 10.

believe, I secured the atmosphere of the country without handcuffing myself, symphonically, or introducing material which, later, I should have to butcher into pieces, the murder being apparent—and unpleasant—at each step.⁴⁵⁴

Like Gold, Antheil immersed himself in Israeli folk songs and then created “original” music.⁴⁵⁵ *The Juggler* is often cited for its topical relationship to the Holocaust and the birth of the State of Israel. As well as Antheil’s research approach, which predates Gold’s score to *Exodus* by seven years. During the interim period between the two films Gold orchestrated three more films⁴⁵⁶ for Antheil, allowing for the possibility that the two composers discussed Antheil’s score and research.

Three years after *The Juggler*, Cecil B. DeMille (1881-1959) made his last film, a Technicolor remake of *The Ten Commandments*.⁴⁵⁷ The film is a dramatic retelling of the biblical exodus of the tribes of Israel, led by Moses, from Egypt. The blockbuster film was to be scored by Victor Young who had composed the music for *Samson and Delilah* (1949) another DeMille biblical epic. A young Elmer Bernstein, who was still relatively new in Hollywood and mainly known for his jazz-inflected score to *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955), was hired to compose source music for dance scenes (see fig. 4.18)

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid. Antheil’s strange usage of the term “Israelite” (a biblical term for the Jews) folksongs implies ancient Jewish music but he clarifies that he is thinking of “present-day Palestine.”

⁴⁵⁵ Like Gold, Antheil stresses the originality of his themes. In Antheil’s *Film Music Notes* article he labels one theme “Original Israelite theme, (invented by myself,) for ‘love interest, Yael” and then annotates the theme parenthetically: “All of the above materials original, and not copied from Palestinian folk music.” Antheil, “The Juggler,” 13. Doth thou protest too much?

⁴⁵⁶ The three scores were for *Dementia* (1955), *Not as a Stranger* (1955), and *The Pride and the Passion* (1957).

⁴⁵⁷ DeMille’s mother, Matilda Beatrice, was Jewish but her son publicly downplayed his heritage. Carol Easton, *No Intermissions: The Life of Agnes de Mille* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1996), 6.

Figure 4.18 Elmer Bernstein conducting the ancient Egyptians in *The Ten Commandments*, 1956.



for *The Ten Commandments*.⁴⁵⁸ When Young became ill and could not finish the project, Bernstein was hired to compose the entire score.⁴⁵⁹ Bernstein worked on this huge undertaking for nearly eighteen months. DeMille carefully monitored Bernstein's work. Years later Bernstein reflected, "This score is in many ways the least characteristic of my works as it was written while working under the close supervision of the producer, Cecil

⁴⁵⁸ Katherine Orrison, *Written in Stone: Making Cecil B. DeMille's Epic The Ten Commandments* (Lanham: Vestal Press, 1999), 161.

⁴⁵⁹ In an interoffice memo to DeMille from Paramount music director Roy Fjastad, the latter advocated upon Bernstein's behalf to score the film. However, he also provides other well-qualified options in the form of Dimitri Tiomkin, Max Steiner, and Franz Waxman. He notes, "Waxman is possibly the best qualified since he has conducted, in concert, some of the world's great religious works, and having been educated in Germany (pre-Hitler) I am sure that he is also somewhat of a bible student." Interoffice Communication from Roy Fjastad to Cecil B. DeMille, July 27, 1955. Elmer Bernstein Collection (hereafter abbreviated as EBC), USC, Ten Commandments Production Folder.

B. DeMille.”⁴⁶⁰ The filmmaker’s influence was manifested in Bernstein’s music by the use of Wagnerian leitmotifs for most of the film’s characters and ideas.⁴⁶¹

Bernstein describes his approach to creating Jewish—or, as he calls it, “Hebrew”—music for *The Ten Commandments*:

I was most anxious to avoid the time-worn augmented seconds that seem to represent the easy way to say Hebrew in music. I turned rather to more modern modes of more recent Hebrew music and so we find the Moses theme loosely based on the dorian [*sic*] mode, whose major sixth in midst of the minor feeling appears to be somewhat characteristic of a more vigorous side of Hebrew music. Do not assume anything clinical or scholarly in this approach, however, as our main goal was the immediate communication of story and emotion rather than a scholarly recreation of Hebrew music.⁴⁶²

While Bernstein denies taking a scholarly approach to “Hebrew” music, his description is strikingly similar to Idelsohn’s. The Jewish music scholar declares that the “Mode of the Prophets” is the same as the Gregorian Hypodorian mode, stating “This is the standard scale in Jewish music, not only in Synagogue song but also in folk-song. Nearly eighty

⁴⁶⁰ James Eugene Wierzbicki, Nathan Platte, and Colin Roust, *The Routledge Film Music Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 180. Originally published in *High Fidelity*, July 1972, 55-58.

⁴⁶¹ Fjastad opens his memo to DeMille discussing this issue: “During our short discussion on the set today, you asked whether Bernstein could compose music like Wagner, and I answered you that he could. By that I meant only that he could write in the style that Wagner composed and orchestrated, but I did not infer that he possessed the genius of Wagner.” Interoffice Communication from Roy Fjastad to Cecil B. DeMille, July 27, 1955. USC, EBC.

DeMille’s consistent Wagnerian approach harkens back to his silent-era films. In the biblical epic *The King of Kings* (1927), DeMille had music director and composer Hugo Riesenfeld compile a score consisting mainly of Wagner (*Tannhauser*, *Parsifal*, and *Lohengrin*) and Mendelsohn excerpts, and Riesenfeld’s original music. Cue sheet *The King of Kings*, January 1, 1928, RCA Photophone, Inc. The author thanks William Rosar for sharing a digital copy of the cue sheet.

⁴⁶² Elmer Bernstein, “The Ten Commandments,” *Film and TV Music* 16, no. 2, (Winter 1956): 5.

per cent [*sic*] of all Jewish folk song is based upon it.”⁴⁶³ Was Bernstein aware of Idelsohn’s scholarship or any early Israeli songs? There is at present no evidence that proves that Bernstein knew anything about Israeli music of any kind. However it is tempting to speculate if Bernstein’s description of the “vigorous side of Hebrew music,” is a veiled reference to Israeli music. With the creation of the State of Israel the old image of the timorous Jew was supplanted by that of the *sabra*, a “new Jew” born in Israel and with a tough or “vigorous” exterior.⁴⁶⁴ Instead of definitive answers, Bernstein’s vague explanation of his Jewish music must suffice for now. As he stated simply, “I have attempted to ‘flavor’ what is essentially a familiar idiom with certain modal elements which at times impact a feeling of antiquity.”⁴⁶⁵

Figure 4.19 Bernstein, *The Ten Commandments*, Moses-Sephora Theme



Bernstein’s “Moses-Sephora theme” (fig. 4.19) in *The Ten Commandments* has noticeable melodic similarities to Gold’s *Exodus* theme. In his survey of scores to biblical movies, musicologist Stephen Meyer discusses these similarities.⁴⁶⁶ He observes a “new,

⁴⁶³ Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, 50.

⁴⁶⁴ My characterization of a *sabra* is too general, of course, but suits the purposes of this investigation; for a more nuanced look at the history of the term and its journey in Israeli literature see: Yael Zerubavel, “The ‘Mythological Sabra’ and the Jewish Past: Trauma, Memory, and Contested Identities,” *Israel Studies* 7, no. 2 (Summer 2002), 115-144.

⁴⁶⁵ Bernstein, “The Ten Commandments,” 14.

⁴⁶⁶ Meyer, *Epic Sound*.

specifically postwar cluster of musical signifiers for a certain kind of Jewishness, a cluster that I call ‘epic Judaica.’”⁴⁶⁷ Furthermore Meyer continues:

In place of augmented fourths and seconds, Gold uses a different cluster of melodic gestures for his archetypical Jewish music. Foremost among these are the $\hat{1}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}$ and the $\hat{1}-\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{2}-\flat\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ melodic cells that he uses to construct the first phrase of the theme...Its similarity to the first phrase of the Moses/Sephora theme is striking.⁴⁶⁸

Meyer clearly identifies the melodic gesture that appears in *Exodus* and a similar version in the Moses-Sephora theme ($\hat{1}-\hat{4}-\flat\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\flat\hat{7}-\hat{6}-\hat{1}$). It can be argued that an appreciation of the “resonance between ancient and modern Jewish history became especially important during the postwar period.”⁴⁶⁹ However, Meyer does not explain the precise musical antecedents, such as Idelsohn and early Israeli song, that influenced Gold’s *Exodus* theme. Meyer says the “gesture” is “archetypical Jewish music”⁴⁷⁰ but it is actually only “archetypical” of the narrowly circumscribed area covered in this study. Recall that Ernest Gold’s son, Andrew stated, “I remember Elmer Bernstein and Dad talking about musical authenticity.”⁴⁷¹ From this testimony, it becomes more likely that Hollywood

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 131. Meyer explains “Epic Judaica” as music of the biblical epic films connected to the “special relationship that developed between Israel and the United States during the period between the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and the 1967 Six Day War.” Ibid. Similarly, in Israeli cinema this period is referred to as the “heroic-nationalist genre.” Burstein, “Through an American Lens,” 33.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 133. Dorian harmony in both theme is the other signifier Meyer specifically mentions within this “cluster of melodic gestures.”

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 132.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 133.

⁴⁷¹ Goldman, *The Book of Exodus*, 154.

film composers such as Gold and Bernstein understood and discussed in depth these explicitly Jewish musical signifiers.

Meyer also recognizes a similarity between both the *Exodus* theme and the “Moses-Sephora theme” and Miklós Rózsa’s (1907-1995) “Esther theme” (fig. 4.20) from *Ben-Hur* (1959). Meyer notes the two share the “ $\hat{1}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}$ opening gesture and the $\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{2}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ closing figure.”⁴⁷² The “Esther theme” is not quite as obviously similar as it is found in the “medium-range level of what we might call melodic ambitus.”⁴⁷³ Meaning the first gesture is found in measure one and two, while the closing figure is not heard until measures twelve and thirteen. Lastly, Meyer opines:

No one—at least to my knowledge—has claimed that Ernest Gold used either *The Ten Commandments* or *Ben-Hur* as a source for his *Exodus* theme, and I make no such claim here. It is more accurate to understand Gold, Rózsa, Bernstein, and other composers drawing from and contributing to a musico-dramatic topos whose contours were continually changing.⁴⁷⁴

This study will not make that claim either. However, the preponderance of possible sources that relate to Gold’s *Exodus* theme cannot be ignored. As musicologist Roger Hickman points out, “Although not a title theme, Esther’s theme from *Ben-Hur* fills the function of a popular lyric melody, and some would consider it to be Rózsa’s most beautiful instrumental theme of the decade.”⁴⁷⁵ Coming one year before *Exodus*, Gold

⁴⁷² Meyer, *Epic Sound*, 134.

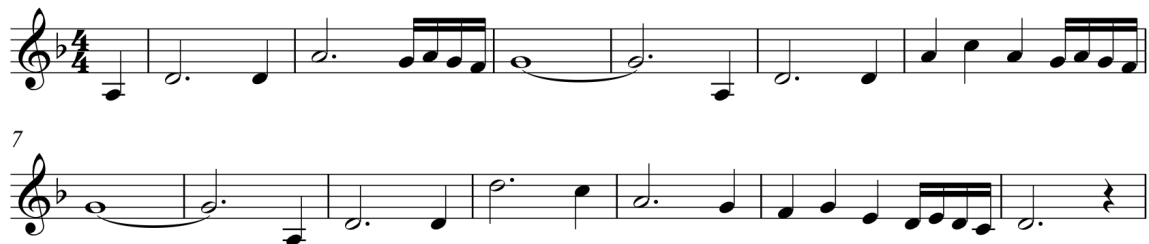
⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., 135.

⁴⁷⁵ Roger Hickman, *Miklós Rózsa’s Ben-Hur: A Film Score Guide* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 45. Hickman sees the theme as “Jewish in its ornamental melodic style, prominent melodic fifth, and rich string timbres.” Ibid., 91.

would certainly have been aware of Rózsa's musical representation of Jewishness.

Figure 4.20 Rózsa, *Ben-Hur*, Esther Theme



In addition to all of the sources that influenced his *Exodus* theme, Gold's score shaped the American musical portrayal of the early Israeli landscape, musical and otherwise.⁴⁷⁶ Sol Kaplan (1919-1990), an American-born Jewish composer who wrote the score to *Judith* (1966) a now-forgotten story set before the founding of Israel.⁴⁷⁷

Somewhat incongruously, *Judith* starred Sophia Loren as Judith Auerbach Schiller, a Jewish concentration camp survivor and ex-wife of a Nazi commander who escaped to

⁴⁷⁶ Surprisingly Elmer Bernstein, who approached *The Ten Commandments* with a similar stylistic approach to Newman's *David and Bathsheba* and Gold's *Exodus*, wrote a dissimilar style of score for the *Cast a Giant Shadow* (1966), which also occurs in pre-State Palestine. Bernstein's main theme is an upbeat *freilach*, connecting the Jewish settlers to their Eastern-European roots. While a secondary theme is highly reminiscent of Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* (1942) and eventually morphs into a mysterious Dorian-mode melody.

⁴⁷⁷ Kaplan was by this time a veteran Hollywood composer but *Judith* was a rare big-budget film for him after being blacklisted for refusing to testify after being subpoenaed by HUAC. Kaplan was subsequently fired by Twentieth Century Fox for his refusal to speak to the committee. Kaplan wrote several explicitly Jewish-themed concert and theater works as his Hollywood career stumbled. "Unser Dorf" a musical "folk memory" of the Jewish in the old country was widely performed, even having three performances at New York's Madison Square Garden. Biography and information on "Unser Dorf" supplied by Kaplan to Clifford McCarty for his book *Film Composers in America*. Kaplan Letter to McCarty, July 28, 1977, CMC, Herrick.

Kaplan also wrote the book and score to an aborted theater production entitled *The World of Sholem Aleichem*. The production materials are held in the Sol Kaplan Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, (hereafter abbreviated as SKP, AHCUW), Box 6. His style for the music is highly derivative of the much more famous Aleichem-based musical *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964) by Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick."

Syria after the war. Kaplan's main theme (fig. 4.21) opens with a heroic upward-leaping perfect fourth (implying a dominant to tonic harmonic progression) just as Gold begins his *Exodus* theme. After three more horn calls, Kaplan concludes the opening phrase with a similar phrase ($\hat{5}-\hat{1}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$) to the *Exodus* cadence. With the plot of a protagonist escaping to the Middle East, a similar theme, and modal harmonic treatment, the opening of *Judith* is particularly reminiscent of Gold's now iconic theme to *Exodus*.

Figure 4.21 Kaplan, *Judith*, "Main Title," mm. 1-5, transcribed from the original sketch. SKP, AHC UW, Box 30.

Adagio
Vlns unis.
E.H., 2 Horns

add 3rd tpt.

ff

timp. round mallets

SN. DR.

f

p

tbns, tuba, Bsn

lower strgs *f*

fp

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

While it seems most reasonable these three related themes are influenced from an Israeli "folk song" or Jewish source, it is possible that there is an early film music precedent. Returning once again to Waxman's "Skeffington's theme," this melody recalls the main theme from one of his earlier MGM score for *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1941)

Figure 4.22 Waxman, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1941), “Main Title”



(see fig. 4.22).⁴⁷⁸ The previous theme opens with $\hat{1}-\hat{4}-\hat{1}-\hat{b}\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{b}\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ and is followed (in mm. 3-4) with $\hat{1}-\hat{4}-\hat{1}-\hat{4}-\hat{b}\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{b}\hat{7}-\hat{1}$. The melodic similarity to “Skeffington’s theme” ($\hat{1}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{4}-\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{b}\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{b}\hat{7}-\hat{1}$) is startling. Additionally, the score begins with a throbbing timpani part, which is reminiscent of a similar timpani figure in the cue “Skeffington Arrives” (again see fig. 4.4). In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Waxman segues directly from the Main Title theme into an original choral setting of the first verse of the Twenty-Third Psalm.⁴⁷⁹ As the choir comes to rest on the final word of the verse (“want”) the scene begins with a long shot of a church steeple and this appropriately religious music. After appearing in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the main theme and end credits were placed in MGM’s Tracking Music collection in the Religioso folder, most likely due to the four-measure

⁴⁷⁸ Waxman became so interested in the *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* story that he worked on an opera of the same name for many years that remained incomplete at the time of his death. Crawford, *A Windfall of Musicians*, 174.

⁴⁷⁹ The “Main Title” conductor score for *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (cue 9214, May 17, 1941) includes two versions of the last five measures of the cue. Version one appears in the film containing the first line of the Twenty-Third Psalm, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” While version two is a horn, string, and harp setting that removes the choir and psalm verse.

setting of the Twenty-Third Psalm.⁴⁸⁰ William Darby and Jack Du Bois observe the *Dr.*

Jekyll and Mr. Hyde theme's "initial upward leaps of a fourth and a fifth create an aspiring nature so that the remainder of the motive suggests a certain nobility."⁴⁸¹

Undoubtedly, the theme is for Dr. Jekyll and not his evil alter ego, Mr. Hyde. One might reasonably ask, why did Waxman return to this thematic material for *Mr. Skeffington*? As similar melodies are not found in Waxman's *oeuvre*, the connection might suggest a symbolic relationship. Of course, musical symbolism is a complex and interpretive area that lends itself at times to unwonted flights of fancy. However, a film's narrative is attached to a melody just as a vocal text is attached to a choral composition. To make the most obvious example, Beethoven's setting of Schiller's poem "An die Freude" ("Ode to Joy") in the final movement of his Symphony No. 9 is inextricably linked to the melody. If the theme is stated in a new context (whether affirming or contrasting the original's meaning), there will be an inherent association with the original text. Therefore an avid film goer might well recognize the melodic similarity between the themes for Jekyll and Skeffington and make assumptions about the meaning. If this theme indeed denotes transformation of Jekyll to Hyde, Waxman might have seen a subtle transformation of Job Skeffington's character from "stage Jew" to a perfect American businessman who

⁴⁸⁰ Box M-5B. MGM Tracking Music Collection, Religioso folder. USC Cinematic. The majority of the works in this folder were Christmas carols and psalm settings arranged by staff composers and orchestrators, such as William Axt and Herbert Stothart. To explain this further, there are numerous definitions of the term "tracking," as pointed out by Milton Lustig in his chapter on the subject, ranging from temp-tracks, to tracks used solely for editing purposes, to tracks reused in new films. Lustig, *Music Editing for Motion Pictures*, 136-39. In this case the cues and recordings were placed in the Religioso folder where they could be used in any of the above-mentioned ways.

⁴⁸¹ Darby and Du Bois, *American Film Music*, 130.

displays no overtly Jewish traits. At the very least, the Skeffington and Dr. Jekyll motives possess a family resemblance. This motif might well have had a “spiritual” meaning for Waxman.

A Surprising Connection to Puccini

After much investigation of Jewish sources, a question that can legitimately be posed is one that asks if the Urtheme is a common musical figure outside of Jewish music? Generally, the answer is no.⁴⁸² But there are exceptions, and there is one in particular that is especially relevant to Gold’s musical interests. On the surface, Giacomo Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* (1904) would seem to be far removed from the materials and concerns that form the foundation of this investigation into Jewish film composers. There is no Jewish context whatsoever in the Italian composer’s operas. Much is made of Wagner’s influence on film composers, especially regarding the use of leitmotives in Hollywood scores. However, Puccini was also a potent stylistic force, blending the lyrical melodies of Verdi and the harmonic sophistication and leitmotif techniques of Wagner into an approachable sound that film composers could emulate.⁴⁸³ For example, Korngold declared, “*Tosca* is the best film score ever written.”⁴⁸⁴ Korngold’s Hollywood career (1934-1947) corresponds with the pinnacle of Golden Age scoring. This is no accident.

⁴⁸² Celtic folk music has some similar cadences (which are thought to be of Eastern origin) but there is no reasonable link between them and the Jewish-film-music examples.

⁴⁸³ For a wide-ranging coverage of Wagner’s influence on film music see: Joengwon Joe and Sander L. Gilman, *Wagner and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

⁴⁸⁴ Thomas, *Music for the Movies*, 175.

As Christopher Palmer explained, “the most fantastic flights of melodic, harmonic and orchestral imagination equipped Korngold superbly for the medium of the film score. In truth, Korngold was writing Warner Bros. music long before he set foot in Burbank.”⁴⁸⁵ In this light, recall Gold’s youthful fantasies of becoming an opera composer. His personal library (now held at Brigham Young University)⁴⁸⁶ is filled with opera scores. Beyond his career as a film composer, Gold also took opportunities to write prose about music. His favored topic was opera; as such he contributed to *Opera News* on many occasions.⁴⁸⁷

Numerous scholars have identified the Japanese songs Puccini borrowed and assimilated in his score.⁴⁸⁸ With that borrowing in mind, a tenable argument can be made that other traditional themes were appropriated by Puccini that are yet undiscovered. In “Butterfly’s Farewell” (figs. 4.23 and 4.24) Butterfly states a motif quite similar in intervallic contour and rhythm to Gold’s *Exodus* theme. The context is consequential; here Butterfly sings her final words to this motif relinquishing her son to Pinkerton and committing ritual suicide. What could be more “lamentable” than losing a child and taking your own life? Does this mean that Puccini was aware of the Sephardic

⁴⁸⁵ Palmer, *The Composer in Hollywood*, 52.

⁴⁸⁶ Ernest Gold Papers; Arts and Communications Archives; L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

⁴⁸⁷ For one example, see Ernest Gold, “Wagner: Alchemist of Folklore,” *Opera News*, January 24, 1955, 4-6.

⁴⁸⁸ Julian Budden, “Madama Butterfly,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root. Accessed March 16, 2016.
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O903144?q=madama+butterfly>

Lamentation tradition? Probably not. As unlikely as it seems, some Sephardic Jews (i.e. those from Portugal and Spain) settled in Italy after the expulsion from Portugal in 1496 and many more after 1536 with the Portuguese Inquisition.⁴⁸⁹ Musicologist Edwin Seroussi explains that the Portuguese “*conversos* carried with them a fine sensibility for Baroque music in both its artistic and more popular forms especially for the Italian style.”⁴⁹⁰ The flow of musical thought came both from Jewish and secular musics. In particular, Seroussi continues, the “melodies transmitted to the conversos...acquired with time and aura of sacrality....especially those belonging to the repertoire of sacred occasions such as the High Holidays and Tish‘a be-Av.”⁴⁹¹ Therefore Puccini, who dabbled in musical appropriation and exotic portrayals, might have been aware of this important Jewish motif and its connotations. Though for our purposes we certainly cannot directly connect Puccini to Gold (fig. 4.25).

⁴⁸⁹ Robert Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 61.

⁴⁹⁰ Edwin Seroussi, “The Ancient Modernity of the Liturgical Music of the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam,” in *Jewish Studies and the European Academic World*, ed. Albert van der Heide and Irene E. Zweip, (Paris: Peeters, 2002), 23.

⁴⁹¹ Seroussi, “The Ancient Modernity,” 25.

Figure 4.23 Puccini, *Madama Butterfly*, Act III, mm. 790-793

55 Butterfly: ♩ = 50 (con esaltazione)

do - no. Oa me, sce — so dal

55 ♩ = 50

f *meno f* *p*

sostenendo

tro - no del-l'al - to Pa - ra - di - so, guar - da ben fi - so,

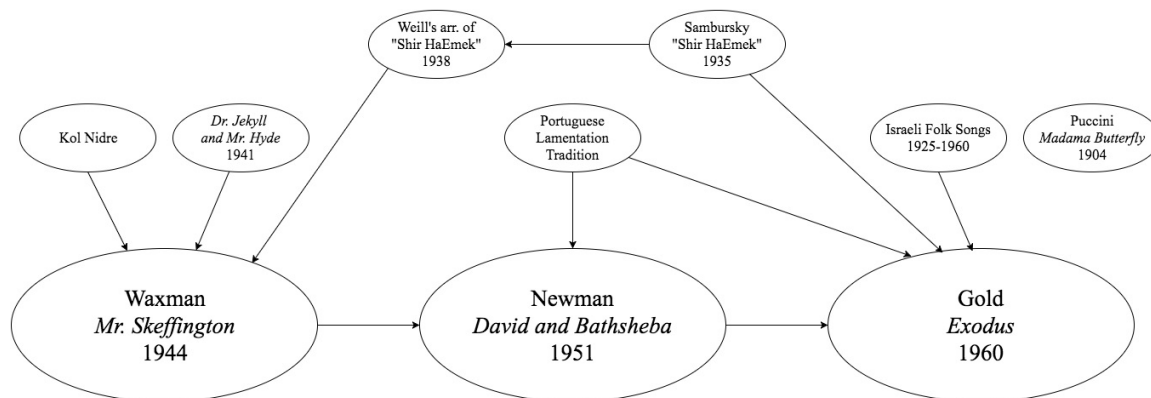
p *pp* *p* *col canto*

Figure 4.24 Puccini *Madama Butterfly*, Act III, mm. 797-799

ben!..... A -more, ad - di - o! ad-di - o! picco-lo a - mor!_ Va. Gi-oca,

ff *p* *pp* *rit. col canto* *rall.* *tristamente* *m.d.*

Figure 4.25 Diagram of Influence, Version 2



Conclusions

About Gold's music, Hugo Friedhofer once quipped, "All that Gold is not Ernest."⁴⁹² Friedhofer is obviously implying that Gold would mine the work of the masters for inspiration. Many commentators get wrapped up in the idea of autonomous authorship, musical inspiration, and the transcendence of "genius." However, some degree of musical borrowing is always going to be a part of any musical composition. The goal of this chapter was to determine if Newman and Gold deliberately drew upon Waxman's "Skeffington's theme" for *David and Bathsheba* and *Exodus*, or if they were unintentionally reminiscent of each other. This exercise has not been an elaborate scholarly whodunit, but a demonstration of musical borrowings in a specific film music genre that traces a continuity of thought by Jewish composers in Hollywood. Clearly, the themes share family resemblances. Of course, the three composers under discussion here drew from many of the same non-film music sources for inspiration as well. These three themes are all a "variation" of an unknown theme that is never stated explicitly in any one film score. Again, this is similar to the idea of Elgar's unheard theme from the *Enigma* Variations. To eschew mere analogies, perhaps this investigation is akin to Goethe's Italian search for the primordial plant—the *Urpflanze*—a plant from which all others plants grew.⁴⁹³ Eventually Goethe realized this was not biologically possible but

⁴⁹² William H. Rosar, email to the author, June 18, 2015.

⁴⁹³ Historian James Larson retells the well-known story of Goethe's search for the *Urpflanze* here: James L. Larson, "Goethe and Linnaeus," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 28, No. 4 (Oct-Dec 1967), 593. Larson also cites Goethe's original German found here: Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, Sophie, and Gustav von Loeper, *Goethes Werke: herausgegeben im Auftrage der Grossherzogin Sophie von Sachsen*, vol. 30 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1887).

the metaphor still proved powerful in its suggestiveness. So too, searching for the Urtheme from which all of these other themes descends may be impossible. It may or may not exist. Perhaps, Sambursky's "Shir HaEmek" is the Urtheme for the Hollywood film scores. However, the search itself is enlightening even if there is no definitive conclusion, especially if such research aids one to better understand Jewish musical signifiers in Hollywood film scores. In all scholarship, detailed analysis and speculation go together. The study of minutiae is crucial. However, if a return to the larger picture is desired, it might be recalled that if all of these elements and precursors led to Gold's *Exodus* theme, which is the most famous Jewish movie theme of all time, then such scrutiny is warranted to better understand its honored and unique place in film-music history.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

In 2004, I was a student in the University of Southern California's Scoring for Motion Pictures and Television program. One of the guest faculty members was composer Joe Harnell (1924-2005).⁴⁹⁴ After recording my first cue at Paramount Stage M, Harnell followed me off the podium and into the green room. He said some kind words about my music and asked my name. After my reply, he bellowed, "Landsman!" He then inquired if I spoke Yiddish. My negative response would not deter Harnell as he started speaking and singing to me in the *mamaloshen* for the next several minutes. We had a warm relationship that always included Yiddish song for the next year and a half until his death at the age of 80. I include this anecdote to illustrate the long-standing connection between Jews and Hollywood music that is now and always has been simmering just below the surface.

This study demonstrates the need for more scholarship on the influence of Jewish composers on Hollywood film music. Several prominent composers and landmark scores have been thoroughly investigated, but a more comprehensive study is needed. Korngold, Toch, Castelnovo-Tedesco, and many other composers are given scant treatment here but could form interesting case studies. Korngold was an Austrian Jewish émigré whose

⁴⁹⁴ Harnell studied with Nadia Boulanger, William Walton, Aaron Copland, and Leonard Bernstein. He is best remembered for his bossa nova arrangement of "Fly Me to the Moon" and for the television scores to *The Bionic Woman* and *The Incredible Hulk*.

life, and the lives of whose immediate family, was saved by Jack Warner from certain death by the Nazis. He admitted, “We thought of ourselves as Viennese; Hitler made us Jewish.”⁴⁹⁵ In the middle of his illustrious American career as a film composer, he composed the *Passover Psalm*, Op. 30, which is a hymn for solo voice, chorus and orchestra (1941). Similarly, while Toch’s music was being burned in Nazi Europe, he composed the concert work *Cantata for Bitter Herbs*, Op. 65. (1938) based on the Passover haggadah and serving as a powerful response to the Viennese composer’s traumatic personal exile in Hollywood.⁴⁹⁶ Toch and Castelnuovo-Tedesco never found the kind of success in Hollywood that Korngold enjoyed and were forced to accept ghostwriting assignments to make ends meet.⁴⁹⁷ For his concert music written in the United States, Castelnuovo-Tedesco chose Jewish topics for concert works including his cantata *Naomi and Ruth*, Op. 27 for soprano, women’s choir, and orchestra (1947) and *Sacred Service for the Sabbath Eve*, Op. 122 (1943) for tenor, baritone, speaker, organ, and orchestra.

This study has presented an array of projections of musical Jewishness by a select group of composers in Hollywood. Max Steiner’s name is synonymous with Golden Age

⁴⁹⁵ Catherine Portuges, “Jewish Immigrant Directors and Their Impact on Hollywood,” in *Hollywood’s Chosen People: The Jewish Experience in American Cinema*, ed. Daniel Bernardi, Murray Pomerance and Hava Tirosh-Samuelson (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013). 48.

⁴⁹⁶ Toch served as a mentor to Alex North and many other Hollywood composers that were not already studying with Schoenberg or Castelnuovo-Tedesco.

⁴⁹⁷ Toch ghostwrote several cues on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, of which the “Alleluia” was the only one used by Alfred Newman. Toch’s sketches for *Hunchback* reside in the Newman Collection at USC. Castelnuovo-Tedesco often ghostwrote for Herbert Stothart at MGM. Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s sketches reside in the MGM Collection at USC.

film music. However, his ambiguous sense of Jewish identity has received only minor attention. Steiner was uneasy about his Jewish heritage but gradually he came to accept his Jewishness in the context of Hollywood. More crucial to this study is Steiner's representations of Jewishness in his seminal score to *Symphony of Six Million*. He effectively balanced traditional Jewish melodies that characterized Jewishness to moviegoers with era-defining original scoring.

In contrast to the biographical focus of the Steiner chapter, Alfred Newman is examined through his music. Newman's success scoring biblical epics has led many scholars to suspect that there was a certain spiritual quality to the man that remained in the shadows. Unlike the ebullient Steiner, Newman was undemonstrative about his inner life, so that there are few clues to the nature of such religious convictions that he may have possessed. Newman was just as successful with Westerns, adventures, and period dramas as he was with "sword-and-sandal" epics, but several commentators assign special significance to his scores for films dealing with religious topics. A keener perception *is* needed to trace Newman's path of musical borrowings in a manner that provides attentive audience members with greater insight into this protean composer. His themes are not specific to any religion, but evoke a numinous quality that connects characters across his films.

Finally, this study began with Ernest Gold being presented the Academy Award for his score to *Exodus*. The famous theme that Gold created for this modern epic of Israel's founding bears a strong resemblance to Franz Waxman's theme for Job Skeffington from *Mr. Skeffington* and Newman's "Nathan theme" from *David and*

Bathsheba. Comparing shared gestures while teasing out their differences reveals the possibility of common source materials. The most instructive way to discuss their similarities was to reconstruct as far as possible the compositional processes of these three composers. Aby Warburg's oft-quoted citation of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's observation, "God is in the details," was extended by his student Gertrud Bing who explained, "It is possible to make human voices speak even from documents of seemingly small importance."⁴⁹⁸ With this in mind, it is unsurprising that a unique five-note cadential figure can illuminate the insular Jewish world of Hollywood film scoring. The presence of this cadence in several Jewish themes is a meaningful gesture that contributes to their particular character and thereby unifies them. The composers latched on to a theme with what they assumed had biblical—or at least Zionist—origins and shaped it to serve a variety of dramatic goals in Jewish topic films.

By considering the impact of movies on American society one realizes that these film scores take on another level of meaning and influence. Hollywood films have always had didactic intentions and certain films most assuredly shaped the identity of Jews in America. Furthermore, to this day, the impressions of Jews entertained by those who are not themselves Jewish are influenced by what they see and hear in the movie theater. There are carefully curated Jewish museums and brilliant American-Jewish history books, but over the course of the twentieth century, a far greater percentage of the American public sat in a darkened movie theater and avidly watched *The Jazz Singer*,

⁴⁹⁸ Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 19.

Exodus, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *Schindler's List*, listening to the musical scores accompanying them. These cinematic representations of the Jewish life and identity shaped what Judaism meant to generations of Americans. In 1960, how many Americans living in the Midwest, for example, knew anything directly of Jewish culture? One suspects very few. However, many of these Midwesterners saw *Exodus* and felt, kindled within their hearts, a kinship with Israeli Jews. Such emotion affected their feelings about Jews in general. Equally powerful, yet more abstract, is the effect composers have on creating projections of Jewishness.

These film scores are texts that can be read and understood. This music sheds light on the composers who created this music. Their shared social world in Hollywood is brought into sharper focus; we learn how they sought to depict Jewishness through music to the world beyond the confines of Hollywood, Burbank, and Culver City. The details of how they created their scores—the methods of borrowing as well as allusions to famous melodies—enlightens us about their familiarity with Jewish music traditions and scholarship. It is to be hoped that this study represents a new point of reference for discussions about the complicated connection between Hollywood and the creation of a Jewish sound in American cinema.

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Appendix

Irving Kolodin's Axioms of Influence

- Axiom I – When a composer produces an atypical effect or mode of expression, one may say that he *anticipates*.
- Axiom II – In extending such an atypical trend of Beethoven's thought, in giving new meaning and an *added dimension* to it through the addition of his own resources, Brahms is participating in a century-spanning sequence of continuity.
- Axiom III – When a composer *DUPLICATES* a typical vein of a predecessor without adding anything substantial to it from his own resources, he is indulging only in imitation. If it is volitional, it then, of course, becomes plagiarism.
- Axiom IV – The obvious source is not always the true source.
- Axiom V – Two well-known manifestations of a similar impulse may be related not to each other, but to a common source.
- Axiom VI – The range of music can accommodate values exactly opposite but no less valid.
- Axiom VII – The range of music is greater than any single individual's comprehension of its component parts.

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