



NAXOS

FILM MUSIC CLASSICS

REBECCA



The 1940 Film Score by **Franz Waxman**
Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra • Adriano

Franz Waxman (1906-1967)

Rebecca Film Score, 1940

When asked which of the 144 films he scored in Hollywood was his favourite, Franz Waxman always replied *Rebecca*. It was a challenging and rewarding assignment for the composer and his second film for producer David O. Selznick. As with his first film for Selznick, *The Young in Heart* (1938), for which Waxman received his first two Academy Award nominations, he was 'on loan' to Selznick International by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, to whom he was under contract from 1936 to 1943.

Rebecca (1940) was the second of three films that Waxman would score for Selznick (Alfred Hitchcock's *The Paradine Case* would follow in 1947) and the first of four collaborations with the director (Waxman would again be 'on loan' the following year to RKO for *Suspicion*, Joan Fontaine's next vehicle, and finally for *Rear Window* in 1954).

Waxman's score for *Rebecca* was a milestone. Its impact on his musical style was so profound that throughout the rest of his 26-year career in Hollywood he would compose the music for at least half-a-dozen films of similar Gothic background, from *Suspicion* to *Elephant Walk* as well as *My Cousin Rachel* (based on another Daphne du Maurier bestseller).

At the request of the Standard Symphony (a forerunner of the popular Bell Telephone Hour radio series) Waxman arranged his score from *Rebecca* into a concert suite. The radio broadcast was one of the first opportunities composers and producers had to exploit the music from a film to publicise a motion picture. This was the first of dozens of concert arrangements that Waxman completed of his music from films. The *Rebecca Suite* has achieved a world-wide concert-hall

following during the past half-century.

When Adriano first approached me regarding this project I thought how fortunate it was that the original scores and parts had been preserved as part of the Franz Waxman Collection in the George Arents Research Library at Syracuse University New York, and the David O. Selznick Collection in the Harry Ramson Humanities Research Center of the University of Texas at Austin. Through the magic of the copying machine, the same scores and parts that were used on 8-10 March 1940 in Culver City, California to record the original soundtrack were again on music stands on 8-11 November 1990 and 30 January to 7 February 1991 in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Rebecca's running time is 2 hours and 12 minutes and the film contains 71 musical 'cues' (pieces of music). Owing to time limitations only 72 of the 124 minutes of music have been newly recorded. Where producer Selznick inserted music by other composers, such as Max Steiner's *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, those cues have not been included. However where Selznick re-recorded Waxman's music from previous Waxman scores it is represented here. Reel 4 Part 2 **Mrs Danvers** is the best example. Scores and parts did not exist for this cue, only notes in the original score that the music was taken in part from Waxman's scores for *The Young in Heart*, "George Ann"; *Trouble For Two* (1936), "He Goes to Court", and *On Borrowed Time* (1939), "Brink is Back". Since this is such a key scene in the film Steven R. Bernstein reconstructed the score from the original soundtrack and the composer's notes. Adriano transcribed the parts from his computer.

Conversely, the music for **Beatrice**, Reel 5 Part 3 on the film's soundtrack, is not by Waxman; Selznick sub-

stituted music by Steiner, but for this recording Adriano has recorded the cue exactly as composed by Waxman.

The orchestrations are by Leonid Raab, Joseph Nussbaum and Waxman.

In his book *The Composer in Hollywood*, Christopher Palmer discusses Rebecca:

She is never seen, for she is dead: only malign influence can be felt, and the music helps us to feel it. We are enveloped from the moment the main title opens – an ominous tread in the bass over a repeated note, string and woodwind figurations writhing in quasi-impressionistic mists, an imperious horn summons. Then, as the credits come up over a series of dissolves from one dream-like distorted view of the Manderley estate to another, the ‘Rebecca’ theme is heard for the first time. Joan Fontaine’s opening narration begins, ‘Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again’. Romantic-impressionist music creates a dream-like aura as the camera tracks forward up the deserted, overgrown drive on which ‘Nature had encroached in her stealthy insidious way with long tenacious fingers.’ This passage is based not on the ‘Rebecca’ theme but on another shorter but pregnant motif associated with Manderley alone and not with Rebecca.

For the ‘Rebecca’ problem does not really arise until a third of the picture is over, and Joan Fontaine is installed in Manderley as second wife to Max de Winter (Laurence Olivier). How to suggest the potency of the past, of the evil and ghostly presence of the dead Rebecca? Waxman’s solution is the use of the novachord, an electronic keyboard instrument with a sound not unlike that of a Hammond organ. Now in disuse, it enjoyed huge popularity in the Golden Age. Employed in a certain way its sound had supernatural overtones. Every time Rebecca’s name is mentioned, or her presence is invoked – almost invariably by the

frightening Mrs Danvers (Judith Anderson) – the ‘Rebecca’ theme sounds on the novachord, its peculiarly spooky sonority pointing us ever in the direction of the world beyond the veil. (**Mrs Danvers**)

When Joan Fontaine first stumbles across the deserted beach house, the ‘Rebecca’ theme – as it were a musical monogram – overwhelms, telling us straight-away that everything here is a relic of the dead woman, all preserved as it was at the time of her death. And because the malevolent spirit of the drowned Rebecca lives on in Mrs Danvers, the novachord comes to stand as a musical symbol for the latter also; its sinister purr seems to deepen the undercurrent of lesbianism and necrophilia through which the past contrives to poison the present. It is a wonderful moment when the new Mrs de Winter first penetrates the (implicitly forbidden) west wing of the mansion. This is Rebecca’s wing where, again, everything has been left as she left it. There the second Mrs de Winter encounters Mrs Danvers, who tells her of Rebecca’s bedroom, ‘the most beautiful room in the house’ with its windows looking down across lawns to the sea. We focus on the large double doors leading into Rebecca’s quarters, and lying there in front of them is Jasper, her pet spaniel. Over a soft timpani pedal soft unmuted trombones (in the manner almost of a low growl) and novachord sound the ‘Rebecca’ theme, and the effect is one of *sotto voce* triumph: gloating, sadistic, sweet as honey.

Quite different is the transformation this same theme undergoes in the finale. As de Winter and Crawley are driving home after establishing the real cause of Rebecca’s death, they see a glow in the sky that they quickly surmise must be Manderley ablaze. We close in on the burning building. The de Winters’ love theme pulses through the orchestra as Max searches for his wife, reaching a climactically triumphant A major (one of the brightest of keys) as he finds her with

Jasper on a lead. Then we see Mrs Danvers still inside the blazing west wing, darting wildly from one room to another; as she does so the orchestra picks up the 'Rebecca' theme and races ahead with it in the manner of a mad waltz. But there is no escape for Mrs Danvers; and as she resigns herself, like Brunnhilde, to follow her mistress in death, the low brass in octaves proclaim the 'Rebecca' theme *tutta forza* in broad augmentation. The camera closes in for a final shot of the pillow slip with the embroidered 'R', and a massive chordal treatment of the musical 'R' has the last word.

[From: Christopher Palmer, *The Composer in Hollywood*, Marion Boyars, New York and London, 1990. Reprinted by permission]

In their book *Inside Oscar*, Mason Wiley and Damien Bona noted:

After Ronald Colman hemmed and hawed about playing the brooding leading man, Max de Winter, and William Powell was unavailable, Selznick cast Laurence Olivier, the heart-throb from *Wuthering Heights* ... Scarlett O'Hara herself had been in the running, but Selznick felt Vivien Leigh's screen test was 'terrible', so Laurence Olivier would not be acting opposite his fiancée. Others under consideration included Loretta Young, Margaret Sullivan, Olivia de Havilland and an unknown named Anne Baxter. But in the end, the producer decided that Olivia's sister, Joan Fontaine, had the vulnerability he was looking for ... Selznick's big casting coup, however, was in signing Alfred Hitchcock (for his first American film). The director, who was used to having free rein over his movies, was totally unprepared for Selznick's notorious memos, which came to him incessantly. More than two decades later Hitchcock commented, 'When I came to America to direct *Rebecca*, David Selznick sent me a memo ... I've just finished reading it ... I think I may

turn it into a motion picture ... I plan to call it the Longest Story Ever Told.' ... *The Los Angeles Times* called *Rebecca* a 'worthy successor to *Gone With The Wind*'. Olivier's status as a dashing romantic lead was solidified, Joan Fontaine was declared a star, and it was clear that Hitchcock's rotund figure was going to be part of Hollywood for a long time ... For the second year in a row, a David O. Selznick movie had the most Academy Award nominations; *Rebecca* led the pack with eleven, including nods for Laurence Olivier, Joan Fontaine, Judith Anderson, Alfred Hitchcock ... (and Franz Waxman).

[From: Mason Wiles & Damien Bona, *Inside Oscar: The Unofficial History of the Academy Awards*, Ballantine, New York, 1985 & 1987. Reprinted by permission]

Waxman thought that he would win his first Oscar. When the head of Paramount B.G. DeSylva was about to announce the Best Original Score award he looked directly at Waxman (he thought) and Waxman began to rise from the dinner table, only to turn around and see Leigh Harline, Paul J. Smith and Ned Washington rise directly behind him having been called up for *Pinocchio*. The picture to beat in most categories was John Ford's *The Grapes of Wrath* with seven nominations. The only Oscars that *Rebecca* received were for Cinematography (George Barnes) and Best Picture. Producer Selznick won for the second year in a row – a record that stands today.

In many ways the present recording has been a collaborative effort. Without the diligence, support and insight of the following individuals it would not have been possible.

Thanks, therefore, to Dr. Charles Bell, Steven R. Bernstein, Steve Danenberg, Ray Daum, Arnold Freed, Louis and Annette Kaufman, Debbie Leonard, Ron Magliozzi, Mary McGillen, Marcella Rabwin, Ron

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the Museum of Modern Art New York, Harry Ramson Humanities Research Center University of Texas at Austin, Wedo's Music Writing Service. Bravo to Adriano and Don Tharp.

John W. Waxman

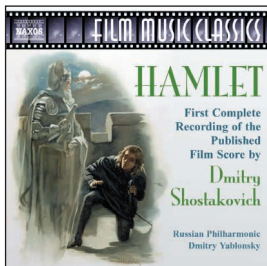
Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra

The Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1929 as the first professional musical ensemble fulfilling the needs of radio broadcasting in Slovakia. From the start there was a particular emphasis on contemporary Slovak music, resulting in a close connection with leading Slovak composers, including Alexander Moyzes, Eugen Suchoň, Ján Cikker and others. The original ensemble was gradually enlarged and from 1942, thanks to Alexander Moyzes, the then Director of Music in Slovak Radio, regular symphony concerts were given, broadcast live by Slovak Radio. From 1943 to 1946 the Yugoslavian Kresimir Baranovic was the chief conductor of the orchestra. His successors were Ľudovít Rajter, Ladislav Slovák, Otakar Trhlik, Bystrík Režucha and Ondrej Lenárd, whose successful performances and recordings from 1977 to 1990 helped the orchestra to establish itself as an internationally known concert ensemble. His successor Róbert Stankovsky continued this work, until his unexpected death at the age of 36. His place was taken in 2001 by Charles Olivieri-Munroe. There are regular concert performances at the Slovak Radio concert hall in Bratislava, while through its broadcasts and recordings the orchestra has also become a part of concert life abroad, with successful tours to Austria, Italy, Germany, The Netherlands, France, Bulgaria, Spain, Japan and Malta.

Adriano

The conductor-composer Adriano was born in Switzerland and lives in Zürich. As a musician he is mostly self-taught. In the late 1970s he established himself as a specialist on Ottorino Respighi and he has conducted many recordings of obscure or neglected symphonic repertoire. Adriano has created and directed a series of classical music videos and, for Naxos/Marco Polo he has initiated and recorded a series of fifteen CDs mainly of European film music composers. All of Adriano's 36 recording projects for various labels (including in most cases year-long research and elaborate score preparation or editing) have found wide recognition and his commitment is known to be fanatical and uncompromising. In his opinion, music history should be revised to show that it is not just the story of the so-called great composers, and that it should not be neatly classified into traditions and categories. Much more good music has been written than certain musicologists and critics would care to admit. Adriano has composed songs, orchestral, chamber and incidental pieces. His most recent works are a *Concertino for Celesta and Strings*, *Concertino for Piano, Strings and Percussion* and an *Abysmal Saraband* for organ, timpani and strings. His instrumental adaptations include song-cycles or songs by Johannes Brahms, Modest Mussorgsky, Hugo Wolf, Ottorino Respighi, Othmar Schoeck, Jacques Ibert and Johann Strauss II.

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FILM MUSIC CLASSICS

 Playing
Time
72:32

FRANZ WAXMAN (1906-1967)

Rebecca Film Score, 1940

 Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra • Adriano
Viktor Šimčisko, solo violin

| | | |
|-----------|---|------|
| 1 | Selznick International Trademark (by Alfred Newman)— Introduction—Foreword—Opening Scene | 4:33 |
| 2 | Hotel Lobby (Waltz) | 3:45 |
| 3 | Terrace Scene—Tennis Montage I—Tennis Montage II | 7:52 |
| 4 | Proposal Scene—Marriage—Arrival at Manderley | 5:16 |
| 5 | Entrance Hall—Mrs Danvers | 3:58 |
| 6 | Morning Room | 2:46 |
| 7 | Beatrice | 1:45 |
| 8 | Bridge Sequence—Walk to the Beach—The Boathouse— Coming Back from the Boathouse | 7:15 |
| 9 | The New Dress | 1:20 |
| 10 | Rebecca's Room—The New Mrs de Winter | 8:20 |
| 11 | Sketching Scene | 2:26 |
| 12 | Manderley Ball | 3:24 |
| 13 | After the Ball—The Rockets—At Dawn | 6:59 |
| 14 | Confession Scene—Telephone Rings | 6:49 |
| 15 | Fireplace Tableau—The Fire—Epilogue | 5:28 |

 Recorded at the Concert Hall of the Slovak Radio in Bratislava
from 8th to 11th November 1990 and from 30th January to 7th February 1991

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