

## Reading Questions - MU 324 – *Reel Music*

**Free Advice:** Begin by reading the "Important Terms" at the end of each chapter; then read each chapter *without* the questions at hand. *Next*, read each question and begin to reread the chapter, jotting down your answers as you find the information you need. Also, bring your answers to class, since we often will check them as time permits.

**More Free Advice:** WRITE DOWN the answers! Several students whose grades improved on later tests have told me that at first they did not keep a written record of their answers as they read the chapters—and then they couldn't remember the information for the first midterm. When they began to write down their responses, and reviewed those answers before the next exam, their test grades improved a lot.

### **Chapter 1 – Wagner's Prelude**

1. Who wrote the first extended score in the sound era, and what was the film?
2. Why wasn't Richard Wagner a film composer?
3. What is "Gesamtkunstwerk," and how is it achieved?
4. How do we divide the arts, and how do the categories differ?
5. The hall grows quiet, the lights go down—whose idea was this, and why?
6. What is an *auteur*? A *regisseur*? What do these people *do*?
7. Why do drama and music often find it hard to co-exist?
8. What techniques of Wagner's are used in the "classical" film score?

### **Chapter 2 – Drama and Film**

1. What are five basic elements frequently associated with drama?
2. How many sections appear in a causal plot, and what are they?
3. How is an episodic plot usually structured?
4. What kinds of characters are often used in film?
5. What two meanings does the term "setting" have?
6. How do "theme" and "mood" differ?
7. What visual aspects comprise the *mise-en-scène*?
8. What are the two cinematographic points of view, and how do they differ?
9. What kinds of decisions must a film editor make, and when does he make them?

### **Chapter 3 – Elements of Music**

1. What does "pitch" mean, and how do we illustrate it visually?
2. What are music's five basic elements?
3. What distinguishes conjunct and disjunct melodies?
4. How does a vocal-style melody differ from an instrumental approach?
5. What three main textures appear in film music?
6. What harmonic tools can a composer use to indicate conflict and resolution?

7. What type of scale/key is most used in film music, and what is the less common type often used for?
8. What does an orchestrator do?
9. How many symphonic families or groups are there, and what are they?
10. What kinds of electronic instruments have been heard in films?

#### **Chapter 4 – Listening to Film Music**

1. When we turn down the volume while watching a film, what do we NOT hear?
2. Opening credit music can play five roles; what are these?
3. If characters in the film would be able to hear music, how is that music described?
4. If the characters would *not* be able to hear the music the audience hears, what is the music called?
5. What's the difference between arrangement and adaptation, and what did the silent era call the latter?
6. Name the five basic styles of film music.
7. Is "Mickey Mousing" an admired technique? Why or why not?
8. What distinguishes a leitmotif from a theme?

#### **Chapter 5 – Birth of an Art Form, 1895–1907**

1. What does a Kinetophone do, and who invented it (and when)?
2. How much did it cost Stanford to prove that a horse lifts all feet off the ground in a gallop, and how did he prove it?
3. Why was it a good thing that Muybridge suffered a stagecoach accident?
4. Although Edison's achievements in inventions are impressive, what was less admirable about him?
5. How do a Kinetoscope and Kinetophone differ?
6. What did the Cinématographe achieve that earlier cameras had not?
7. Why are November 1 and December 28 important dates in 1895, and why does the second get more attention?
8. Who created *A Trip to the Moon*, and why was it a landmark work?
9. What is the significance of *The Great Train Robbery*, and whose film was it?
10. What are the three issues concerning music in the earliest days of film?

#### **Chapter 6 – The Foundations of Modern Film, 1908–1919**

1. How long is a typical reel of film?
2. Why was the west favored by early filmmakers?
3. How much experience (and what type) did D. W. Griffith have before making *The Birth of a Nation*?
4. What were Griffith's contributions to the craft of movie-making?
5. How did United Artists get its name?
6. What 5 trends characterize early movie music?

7. How big were the biggest theater orchestras?
8. In what three ways did silent film get its music?
9. What were the advantages of a compilation score?
10. What's the difference between a cue sheet and an anthology?
11. In terms of film, what was the significance of Saint-Saëns, Breil, and Herbert?

### **Chapter 7 – The Birth of a Nation**

1. What is a dichotomy, and how does *The Birth of a Nation* represent one?
2. Is *The Birth of a Nation* historically accurate? Why or why not?
3. How did Breil incorporate quotations of classical music?
4. Besides adaptations of classical pieces, what other types of music does Breil include in his score?
5. What is significant about "The Perfect Song"?

### **Chapter 8 – The Golden Age of Silent Film, 1920–1928**

1. What did most musicians employed by movie theaters play?
2. Percentage-wise, what did movie theaters use to provide music?
3. What was significant about the Roxy Theatre, and what were some of its special features?
4. What do Axt, Rapée, and Riesenfeld have in common?
5. For each producer or director listed in the Close-Up, name a fact about him that you find interesting.
6. What is the premise of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, and what is the term for the POV used through most of the film?
7. Who was the Soviet Union's leading composer, and how many films did he score?
8. Who were France's leading film composers in the 1920s?

### **Chapter 9 – The Transition to Sound, 1926–1928**

1. Why would certain films with sound still be called "silent"?
2. How does the Vitaphone system work?
3. If your younger brother hates on-screen kisses, how many times would he hide his eyes in *Don Juan*?
4. What's the historical significance of *The Jazz Singer*?
5. Compared to Vitaphone, what was better about Movietone?
6. What "academy" has given awards since 1928, who founded it, and why?
7. What were the two last great silent films?

### **Chapter 10 – The Early Years of Sound, 1928–1933**

1. Why was there not much music in many early sound films?
2. Why does *Blackmail* have silent scenes *and* scenes with sound, and how do they differ?
3. What was the first musical to win "Best Picture," and when did the next musical win that award?

4. What was significant about *Steamboat Willie*?
5. How did the cartoon musician Carl Stalling benefit the sound movie industry?
6. Why would Max Steiner be grateful to the newspaper industry?
7. What impact did Steiner's music have on the audience's view of the giant ape in *King Kong*?
8. Who are the members of the Big Five?
9. Who are the members of the Little Three?

### **Chapter 11 – Entering a New Golden Age, 1934–1938**

1. What are the seven features of the classical film score?
2. Historically, what was significant about the film *Mutiny on the Bounty*?
3. What factors might have contributed to Steiner's Oscar win for *The Informer*?
4. Why, perhaps, does the Bride in *Bride of Frankenstein* have such a lovely theme?
5. How do critics view the music for *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, and who wrote the score?
6. What five musical elements characterize fight scenes in *Robin Hood*?
7. What surprising record did Disney set in 1937, and with what film?
8. What surprising record did Disney set in the 1940s, and with what films?

### **Chapter 12 - Hollywood's Greatest Year, 1939**

1. What is "The Hollywood Sound"?
2. Why did the Academy Awards present both "Best Score" and "Best Original Score" Oscars?
3. Why did Dimitri Tiomkin write relatively little music for *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*?
4. What "western" cliché did Richard Hageman use in *Stagecoach*, and how were his efforts rewarded?
5. How many films competed for 1939's Best Original Score Oscar, and who scored a third of them?
6. In *The Wizard of Oz*, Kansas is black-and-white, while Oz is in color. How is the music for these settings distinguished?
7. What record did *Gone with the Wind* set, and who broke the record (and when)?
8. What was the Hays Code, and what has replaced it?

### **Chapter 13 – Modern Voices, 1936–1944**

1. What was the mid-century relationship between American concert music and film music (and their composers)?
2. Why were modern compositional techniques and styles first found in international films?
3. Who were the leading early Soviet film composers?
4. What three styles made their first appearance in the early 1940s?
5. What challenge did Bernard Hermann face in the 1941 Academy Awards, and what was an interesting musical feature of the winning film?
6. How did *Citizen Kane* parallel William Randolph Hearst's life? (Name 4 ways)

7. What musical techniques did Hermann use to reflect *Citizen Kane*'s dark and somber mood?

### **Chapter 15 – Postwar Trends, 1944–1949**

1. What made 1948 a dark year for Hollywood?
2. How do movies of 1945–1950 differ from earlier films, and how does their music differ as well?
3. What are the characteristics of film noir as a filmmaking style?
4. What does the musical score for a film noir usually contain?
5. What did Preminger want for *Laura*'s theme song, and how long did the composer have to create an alternative?
6. What ambiguous question is never answered in *Laura*?
7. What were Rózsa's film noir scores, and what unusual instruments did he use in them?
8. What "American nationalist" musical elements did Friedhofer borrow from Copland?
9. Why did Copland reject his only Oscar?
10. In terms of producers and directors, who were the "great names of the 1940s"?
11. What was the historical significance of Olivier's *Hamlet*?

### **Chapter 17 – Expanding Modern Styles, 1950–1956**

1. What musical tools does Waxman use to portray Norma's mental instability in *Sunset Blvd*?
2. What was the HUAC, and what was its purpose?
3. How did Leonard Bernstein diverge from Copland's lead?
4. What was different about being 15 years old in 1900 and in 1950, and what films addressed this issue?
5. What was unusual about the music of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *Forbidden Planet*?
6. How does the music of Kurosawa's *Rashômon* compare with *Seven Samurai*?

### **Chapter 18 – The Close of the Decade, 1956–1959**

1. How did Hollywood combat the threat of television?
2. What's the difference between Cinerama and CinemaScope, and which sparked rivals?
3. What three 1956 films gave rise to a new cinematic nickname, and what is the nickname?
4. What might have surprised filmgoers at the start of *Around the World in 80 Days*?
5. What was bittersweet about Victor Young's only Oscar?
6. Why did it take a long time for color films to become the norm?
7. How do *Some Like It Hot*, *Anatomy of a Murder*, and *Touch of Evil* incorporate popular music?
8. What was significant about the music of *The Big Country*?

### **Chapter 21 – Declining Traditions, 1960–1967**

1. What characterizes an epic?
2. What was the difference between epics of the 1960s and earlier epics?
3. What films of the early 1960s had effective instrumental themes?
4. What factors should the composer of a film song consider?
5. What style of music characterizes the James Bond films, and how effective has it been?

### **Chapter 22 – The Emerging New Era 1960–1967**

1. What New Wave characteristics could be found in films in the early 1960s?
2. When do the New Wave films of the early 1960s tend to use music?
3. What unusual approaches are used in *The Hustler*, *The Pawnbroker*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
4. In terms of producers and directors, who were the "great names of the 1950s and 1960s"?
5. What evidence is there for a British influence on Hollywood in the 1960s?

### **Chapter 25 – Star Wars and Postmodernism, 1977–1984**

1. What three principles govern the movement known as postmodernism?
2. What are some examples of Hollywood's love of sequels?
3. What features of the classical film score are found in *Star Wars*?
4. How was *The Empire Strikes Back* an improvement on *Star Wars*?
5. What are the three principal developments in sound enhancements post-1950?
6. How many times does John Williams' name appear in Table 25.1, and why is this significant?
7. How did Jerry Goldsmith and James Horner each approach the *Star Trek* movies?

### **Chapter 29 – New Box-Office Kings, 1984–1988**

1. What genre of films began to reign in the mid-80s, and what are its characteristics?
2. What kinds of music are heard in the three box office leaders of the mid-80s?
3. What rock styles dominated in the 1960s?
4. What three styles does Silvestri use in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, and what characterizes the first of them?
5. How are the two heroes of *Lethal Weapon* distinguished musically?
6. What is unusual about the music in the climactic minutes of *Hoosiers*?
7. What do the Best Score Oscar winners of 1986 and 1987 have in common?
8. What is the one connective musical element in *Rain Man*?

### **Chapter 30 – Symphonic Scores, 1989–1996**

1. What new technologies affected movie-viewing between the 1970s and the present?
2. What fantasies "set the stage" for the blockbusters of the 1990s?

3. What major films in these years had historical settings, and what films were especially graphic?
4. What genre counterbalances graphic realism, and what are some examples?

### **Chapter 31 – Popular Music, Animation, and Realism, 1989–1996**

1. What trends of the 80s came to an end with the success of *The Little Mermaid*?
2. What characterizes a classic Disney animated film?
3. What (and when) was the first animated feature to be nominated for Best Picture?
4. What characterizes cinematic realism?
5. After the 1960s, what two trends characterize the "black experience" in films?
6. In the 1990s, how did realism find its way into films, and what are some examples?

### **Chapter 32 – The Sinking Titanic, 1997–2000**

1. In what ways was *The Titanic* big (besides being a big boat)?
2. What do *Shakespeare in Love* and *American Beauty* have in common?
3. What are some of the musical "colors and styles" of films in recent years?
4. Into what categories can most independent films be grouped?
5. Recently, who have been the most notable symphonic score composers, and what are some of their products?

### **Chapter 34 – The New Millenium, 2001–2004**

1. What is ironic about the international success of some Hollywood films?
2. What impact did 9/11 have on the film industry?
3. Historically speaking, what was significant about *Moulin Rouge* and *Chicago*?
4. What genre has been especially successful (and creative) in the 2000s, and what are some examples?
5. What escapist films have been most successful in recent years?