Nature of Max Steiner's Music

by

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The four primary dynamics in the nature of the music of Max Steiner are:

(1) Melodic/Thematic richness
(2) "Mickey-Mousing" (catching the action approach)
(3) Frequent Arrangements of other composers' music
(4) Self-Borrowing

In late summer/early fall 2017 I completed four educational videos for private study & easy reference of these central aspects of Steiner's music:

-"Self-Borrowing in the Music of Max Steiner" (1 hour 19 minutes)
-"Mickey-Mousing in the Music of Max Steiner (1 hour 20 minutes)
-"Max Steiner's Arrangements of Other Composers' Music" (43 mins)
-"Themes & Melodies in the Music of Max Steiner" (1 hour 48 mins)

I was inspired by knowledge of the upcoming Max Steiner Symposium ("Max Steiner: Man & Myth") at Cal State University Long
Beach. The Symposium is scheduled for the final weekend of February 2018 (Sat-Sun Feb 24-25).

http://www.musicologie.org/17/max_steiner_man_and_myth.html

Of the four videos, the Self-Borrowing one is the most important in terms of both musicological & general interest since nobody else (to my knowledge) has done a comprehensive study of Steiner's self-borrowings.

Now: Let's start off with a focus on the self-borrowing facet of Steiner's music. Of course, self-borrowing is not a strange or novel feature of film music. In fact I wrote a paper titled "Self-Borrowing in the Music of Bernard Herrmann" for the Journal of Film Music that was first made available in early August 2004.


http://www.filmscorerundowns.net/herrmann/sneakpeek2.pdf

Herrmann definitely self-borrowed more than Steiner, although Max certainly practiced it rather frequently. Here is my work-in-progress Master List of Max Steiner's Self-Borrowings:

**Master List of Max Steiner's Self-Borrowings**

[work-in-progress]

compiled by

Bill Wrobel

[NOTE: Many self-borrowing from the RKO period are not listed since I did not yet substantiate them by personal hearing or primary materials study. Honorable mentions include the BIRD OF PARADISE (1932, RKO) rhythmic pattern of Native Dance similar to CASABLANCA Main Title; LITTLE WOMAN (1933, RKO) "Josephine" music used in ANNE OF GREEN GABLES (1934, RKO) and ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER (1938, Selznick) & other RKO movies; various themes in LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY (1936) such as "Dearest" and "Fauntleroy Fanfare" were recycled in ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER, etc. The
"Treasure Chest" music in ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER was most likely used in a future project or two but at this writing I cannot identify the specific locations. Selznick's SINCE YOU WENT AWAY (1944) also used themes from LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY and also, I understand, A STAR IS BORN. Note that many self-borrowings occurred with Steiner's involvement only as a Musical Director, not as an actual Composer meant for specific RKO films.

As for Warner Bros., the most frequently used self-borrowing is the famous W/B logo theme ("Signature") that actually first appeared in TOVARICH (W/B, released December 25, 1937) although Max & his orchestrators (and the W/B music department) "officially" gave that credit to the next (back-to-back) project, GOLD IS WHERE YOU FIND IT (1938, released February 12, 1938). It is conceivable that the Signature music was written originally for GIWYFI and that it was simply inserted in TOVARICH. A researcher needs to check the sketches & orchestrated score to see if TOVARICH includes the Signature (GIWYFI fully does have it). Note that the cue sheets do not list the Signature in TOVARICH; hence, this logically suggests that GIWYFI is the actual originating source of the theme.

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-THIRTEEN WOMEN (1932, RKO) The structure of the "Train" (cue sheets designation) music immediately after the Main Title was used next year as the "train" (cue sheets designation) Reel 10 music in KING KONG (1933, RKO).

-KING KONG (1933, RKO) Note: Various themes/cue excerpts were used in the latter 1933 sequel, SONG OF KONG. The Forgotten Island music was taken from "A Boat in the Fog" cue (Reel 3 pt 1A) as well as the "Forgotten Island" music of KING KONG. The "Bronte" theme was used in SON OF KONG, and so on.

-KING KONG (1933, RKO) Reel 6 pt 2 andante section in the river/raft scene (Bronto head rising) was later adapted as the Stalking Lion motif in LION & the HORSE (1952, W/B).

-KING KONG (1933, RKO) The three-note monster motif was self-borrowed in the "Jealous" Reel 5 pt 1 cue of SO BIG (1953, W/B), Bars 2-5
when young Roelf storms out of the house. Below is my YouTube presentation of this comparison:

https://youtu.be/7sCITqdo1bY

- LOST PATROL (1934, RKO) Main Title theme (Arab Theme No. 1) later used in the Main Title of CASABLANCA (1942, Warner Bros).

- LOST PATROL (1934, RKO) end of "Sanders Escapes" cue similar in structure to Reel 13 pt 1 (12/8 time agitato) of BAND OF ANGELS (1957, W/B).

- LOST PATROL (1934, RKO) "pilot" (landing on sand & then getting shot) sequence later used in the "Shorty" music of FIGHTER SQUADRON (1948, W/B).

- THE FOUNTAIN (1934, RKO) The precursor to the Reel 3 pt 2 Melanie and Ashley/Love Theme in GONE WITH THE WIND is found approximately 56-57 minutes and also an hour and four minutes into this movie. Note also that the "Dutch Train" music in the beginning of the movie after the Main Title is quite similar to the train music in THIRTEEN WOMEN and then KING KONG.

- SHE (1935, RKO) Reel 7 "The Trail" (Kino colorized dvd approx. 00:59:10 thru 00:59:52) segment later used in the Main Title of I WAS A COMMUNIST FOR THE FBI (1951, W/B)

- THREE MUSKETEERS (1935, RKO) Reels 1 & 2 "To Paris" theme was later self-borrowed in the Reel 3 pt 2-4 pt 1 cue (Allegretto grazioso) cue of MIRACLE OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA (1952, W/B).

- THREE MUSKETEERS (1935, RKO) Love/Queen Theme was later used as the Edith/Love theme (Reel 3 pt 3-4 pt 1) of KING RICHARD & THE CRUSADERS (1954).

- SUBMARINE D-1 (1937, W/B) Main Title "Submarine Division March" was later self-borrowed in the Main Title of DIVE BOMBER (1941, W/B) and then as the M.T. of FIGHTER SQUADRON (1948, W/B). It was also used in the Main Title of OPERATION PACIFIC (1951, W/B) listed in the cue sheets as "We Watch the Skyways."
http://www.tcm.com/mediaroom/video/142271/Submarine-D-1-Original-Trailer-.html

-SUBMARINE D-1 (1937, W/B) "Diver's March" used in DIVE BOMBER and also later in FIGHTER SQUADRON (00:44:58 thru 00:46:07 dvd).

-GREEN LIGHT (1937, W/B) Reel 6 New Life starting theme (Native American Indian) located 00:52:56 thru 00:53:26 dvd was later self-borrowed as the Carlisle School Entry theme (Reel 1 pt 5) of JIM THORPE, ALL AMERICAN (1951, W/B).

-GREEN LIGHT (1937, W/B) Dam/Lake music located 00:56:22 thru 00:57:38 dvd was later used as the Everglades \textit{tranquillo} music Reel 1 pt 2 of DISTANT DRUMS (1951, W/B).

-CRIME SCHOOL (1938, W/B) According to primary materials in the DESPERATE JOURNEY (1942, W/B) score, portions of Reel 8 pt 4 of CRIME SCHOOL was used in Reel 4 pt 5 of DESPERATE JOURNEY.

-AMAZING DR. CLITTERHOUSE (1938, W/B) According to the written score, Bars 1-3, 4-11 of the Main Title was used in the Main Title of I WAS A COMMUNIST FOR THE FBI (1951, W/B).

-AMAZING DR. CLITTERHOUSE (1938, W/B) According to the cue sheets, at least two times (such as the start of Reel 3) the "Dr. Clitterhouse" theme was used in CAPTAINS OF THE CLOUDS (1942, W/B).

-CRIME SCHOOL (1938, W/B) Indications are that the end section of the Main Title (actors' credits) of this score was a precursor of the Tara Theme in GONE WITH THE WIND but it is so jazzed-up that it is hardly recognizable. However, a clear precursor of the Tara Theme is given towards the end of the Main title of THEY MADE ME A CRIMINAL (1939, W/B) upon researching the written score.

-GOLD IS WHERE YOU FIND IT (1938, W/B) Reel 1 part 4 Selena theme later self-borrowed as the Margaret theme in JIM THORPE, ALL AMERICAN (1951) Reel 3 pt 1.

-GOLD IS WHERE YOU FIND IT (1938, W/B) "The Fight" & "Flood" and "Farmers" music in this movie was used the next year in end Reel 11 in
DODGE CITY (1939, W/B) during the Train/Fire fight scene. Moreover, the "Fight" music was used in the canteen brawl scene in Reel 9 (about an hour & 25 minutes into the movie) of THEY DIED WITH THEIR BOOTS ON (1941, W/B).

-OKLAHOMA KID (1939, W/B) Coach-Robbery and "the Kid" themes used in DALLAS (1950, W/B).

-OKLAHOMA KID (1939, W/B) Climb rock music located 00:04:21 thru 00:04:33 used in other movies.

-OKLAHOMA KID (1939, W/B) music located at 00:04:21 thru 00:04:33 and 00:35:37 thru 00:35:44 used in other movies.

-DARK VICTORY (1939, W/B) "Challenger" horse-riding music in Reel II was later used as the "Gallop" music (when Errol Flynn's horse jumps a fence) in Reel VIII of SILVER RIVER (1948, W/B).

-DODGE CITY (1939, W/B) "The Pals" theme located after the Main Title at 00:04:42 dvd was later self-borrowed as the herd/mesa music in LION & THE HORSE (1952, W/B) starting at 00:00:46 dvd. Note above that music from GOLD IS WHERE YOU FIND IT (1938, W/B) was used in this picture.

-DODGE CITY (1939, W/B) "Surrett" music in Reel I located starting 7:26 dvd later used in various westerns such as LION & THE HORSE (1952, W/B) during the Reel I scene when the cowboys are chasing the wild horses.

-DODGE CITY (1939, W/B) Hanging Scene four-note repeat pattern music later used in the Reel II music of LION & THE HORSE when the two cowboys find Wildfire in a hidden lair.

-THEY MADE ME A CRIMINAL (1939, W/B) end Main Title four-note theme adapted that year as the "Tara Theme" in GONE WITH THE WIND (1939, Selznick). I understand that CRIME SCHOOL (1938) had a similar theme structure but I cannot verify at this writing until I obtain a copy of the movie & primary materials.

-VIRGINIA CITY (1940, W/B) stagecoach runaway music used in various future westerns scored by Max such as SILVER RIVER (1948, W/B) such
as 29 minutes into the movie, and BOY FROM OKLAHOMA (1954, W/B). Reel 9 pt 6 Bars 1-12 was used in SPRINGFIELD RIFLE (1952, W/B).

-DIVE BOMBER (1941, W/B) The pressure suit music (Fred MacMurray) was later in various movies, including the "Submarine" submerge music in OPERATION PACIFIC (1951, W/B) and the "Storm Warning"/Halsey carrier discharge music in THE CAINE MUTINY (1954, Columbia).

-DIVE BOMBER (1941, W/B) The crash music was also used in the plane crash brief scene in CAPTAINS OF THE CLOUDS (1942, W/B). See SUBMARINE D-1 (1937, W/B) for other self-borrowings.

-THEY DIED WITH THEIR BOOTS ON (1941, W/B) "Indians" music (not the "Crazy Horse" motif that opens the movie) later used in the "Creek Indians" initial appearance music (solitary Indian rising from the bushes) Reel 1 of DISTANT DRUMS (1952, W/B).

-THEY DIED WITH THEIR BOOTS ON (1941, W/B) Civil War battle music used in various other pictures such as in Reel I of SILVER RIVER (1948, W/B). The small bridge battle music was used in SPRINGFIELD RIFLE and BOY FROM OKLAHOMA, etc. [for details, watch my Self-Borrowing Part II video]

-THEY DIED WITH THEIR BOOTS ON (1941, W/B) Reel 1 pt 2 is [quoting here from the written score]: "copy from SANTE FE TRAIL R1pt1, 1 tone higher."

-THEY DIED WITH THEIR BOOTS ON (1941, W/B) According to the written cue, portions of Reel 6 pt 5 were a "copy from VIRGINIA CITY" reel 12 pt 3.

-SERGEANT YORK (1941, W/B) Reel 3 pt 2 Gracie theme (based on "I Got A Gal At the Head of the Holler") later self-borrowed as the little girl "Jenny" theme in Reel 5 pt 2 in LION & THE HORSE (1952, W/B).

-SERGEANT YORK (1941, W/B) "Frog Went a-Courting" mailman song in Reel I later adapted for orchestra several times in PURSUED (1947, W/B).

-ARSENIC & OLD LACE (1944 W/B)--Note that this movie was in production over two years earlier--rhythmic pattern in Tribute track #12
Disc 2 later used in a D'Lorca theme in ADVENTURES OF DON JUAN (1948, W/B). This is more a "honorable mention" citation than a clear-cut self-borrowing in totality.

- MISSION TO MOSCOW (1943, W/B) phone switchboard music ("Confusion" cue) located 1:02:40 dvd was later used in SAN ANTONIO (1945, W/B) and then part of the "Lab Testing" medley of OPERATION PACIFIC (1951, W/B).

- MISSION TO MOSCOW (1943, W/B) business talk cue fragment located 1:55:02 dvd was later used in ILLEGAL (1955, W/B) Main Title located 00:1:20 dvd (expanded music structure here). Side note: An unused Tchaikovsky Romance (Opus 5) backdrop scene in this movie was later used in the ballet scene in BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS (1953, W/B).

- SARATOGA TRUNK (1945, W/B) Note that this movie was in production two years earlier. The 'hysterics' music in Reel 1 (dvd location starting at 00:05:33) was self-borrowed three years later in the Lady Diana anger scene (start of Reel 2 pt 2 cue) of ADVENTURES OF DON JUAN (1948, W/B).

- A STOLEN LIFE (1946, W/B) The 13-note core theme (evident first in the Main Title) was later used several times as the "Pine island" theme in A SUMMER PLACE (1959, W/B).

- BEAST WITH 5 FINGERS (1946, W/B) Reel 5 pt 3 misterioso cue was later self-borrowed in Reel 1 pt 4 (Bars 2-7) of SO BIG (1952, W/B).

- BEAST WITH 5 FINGERS (1946, W/B) Reel 3 pt 2 windstorm cue was later self-borrowed as the "Northern" windstorm cue Reel 14 pt 2 of TREASURE OF SIERRA MADRE (1948, W/B).

- CHEYENNE (1947, W/B) "Anne" theme first heard in Reel 1 pt 4 bath scene starting Bar 26, in Reel 4 pt 4 (etc) was later self-borrowed as the "Katie" Grazioso theme in BOY FROM OKLAHOMA (1952, W/B). Reel 5 pt 1 located at 00:38:04 especially featured the lovely Katie theme.

- CHEYENNE (1947, W/B) Reel 4 pt 1 "What Is It?" 8-note motif was later used as the Pete Martin motif in BOY FROM OKLAHOMA, first heard Reel 2 pt 4 at 00:13:14 dvd.
- **CHEYENNE (1947, W/B)** Reel 2 pt 1 rousing Stagecoach theme was later used in the Reel 2 pt 6 (and other cues) stagecoach theme in BOY FROM OKLAHOMA. Immediately below is a YouTube presentation of this music:

[https://youtu.be/32VobNm2J4M](https://youtu.be/32VobNm2J4M)

- **CHEYENNE (1947, W/B)** Reel 2 pt 2 bandits 'attack' (stagecoach holdup) music was later self-borrowed in SPRINGFIELD RIFLE (1952, W/B) and then in BOY FROM OKLAHOMA (1952, W/B).

- **CHEYENNE (1947, W/B)** Reel 6 Menace or Danger stagecoach robbery scene (secondary motif located dvd 00:57:08 thru 00:57:37) was later self-borrowed in BOY FROM OKLAHOMA (end robbery scene) and then in Reel 3 pt 2 stagecoach robbery scene of THE HANGING TREE (1959, W/B).

- **CHEYENNE (1947, W/B)** "South Fork" music in Reel 5 pt 3 was later used as the "Outlaws" music a few times in THE BOY FROM OKLAHOMA (1954, W/B).


- **FIGHTER SQUADRON (1948, W/B)** teletype machine music later adapted for the teletype sequence in the Main Title of ILLEGAL (1955).

- **SILVER RIVER (1948, W/B)** Reel 1 pt 6 was used in I believe R 11 pt 1 cue of SPRINGFIELD RIFLE (1952, W/B). See VIRGINIA CITY (1940, W/B) for more self-borrowings. This would include a battle sequence portion of a cue early in SILVER RIVER plus a chase scene 29 minutes into the movie.

- **TREASURE OF SIERRA MADRE (1948, W/B)** Reel 6 pt 2 "gila" music (solo bass clarinet featured) was later used as the structure for "The Snake" cue in Reel 8 of CHARGE AT FEATHER RIVER (1953, W/B) and then the Reel 4 snake motif in THE HANGING TREE (1959, W/B).

- **ADVENTURES OF DON JUAN (1948, W/B)** Reel 4 pt 2 Don Juan Entrance music later used in the night-time stealth scene of the Fort cue of DISTANT DRUMS (1951, W/B).
-WOMAN IN WHITE (1948, W/B) Sanitarium Key Man comic "walk" music (located an hour & 33 minutes into the movie) was later self-borrowed as the "Tangled Guards" music in FLAME & THE ARROW (1950, W/B) 16 & 17 minutes into the movie.

-LADY TAKES A SAILOR (1949, W/B) Main Title music here was self-borrowed for Reel 5 pt 2 ("The Lake") of MARJORIE MORNINGSTAR (1958, W/B)

-KISS IN THE DARK (1949, W/B) "Bott's Fall" section with dog running up to the fallen man was used next year in the "Hercules" (little bear) motif in FLAME & THE ARROW (1950, W/B).

-ROCKY MOUNTAIN (1950, W/B) "Patrol" music in Reel 9 pt 1 was later tagged at the end of the Main Title of SPRINGFIELD RIFLE (1952, W/B).

-RATON PASS (1951, W/B) Mesa cue right after the Main Title was later self-borrowed for the mesa scene also right after the Main title in LION & THE HORSE (1952, W/B). See DODGE CITY (1939) in the list above.

-RATON PASS (1951/ W/B) Of minor note, the Adios Mama Carlotta music in Reel I was later used in a dance sequence in MARJORIE MORNINGSTAR in Reel VI.

-FORCE OF ARMS (1951, W/B) Reel 8 "Convalescent" music was later adapted in the Scene before the Main Title opening of ILLEGAL (1955, W/B).


-IRON MISTRESS (1952, W/B) "Galop" theme by Sam Galop was adapted for the horse race scene in Reel VI, later used in the horse race scene in BOY FROM OKLAHOMA (1954) and then in the jalopy race scene in Reel I of McCONNELL STORY (1955, W/B).
-LION & THE HORSE (1952, W/B) Palomino fight cue used that year in SPRINGFIELD RIFLE (1952, W/B) horse abuse/fist fight music (dvd location 33:40).

-LION & THE HORSE three-note structure (Main Title) used in SO BIG (1953, W/B) Reel 7 pt 1 & the later "splendor" dialog (Nancy Olson) scene/cue.

-BY THE LIGHT OF THE SILVERY MOON (1953, W/B) "Love Nest" adaptation (music by Otto Harbach & Louis Hirsch) later used in Reel 3 pt 4 of THE FBI STORY (1959, W/B) in the "We had nice accommodations, though..." tent scene (and later in the shrimp/restaurant scene).

-ILLEGAL (1955, W/B) Reel 1 pt 3 Restaurant/Ellen music later self-borrowed in the "cafe" cue scene of CASH Mc CALL (1960, W/B) dvd location 00:20:33. Note that the cafe written music in the latter movie was missing in the folders, presumably taken directly from ILLEGAL.

-McCONNELL STORY (1955, W/B) Main Title presentation of the "While You're Away" theme was taken from MY REPUTATION (1945, W/B). Note that at least 21 separate instances of this love theme was heard in this 1955 movie.

-CASH McCALL (1960, W/B) Reel 4 pt 2 written cue (when Grant Austen talks to his daughter in the hotel lobby) is missing, a cue I suspect was self-borrowed from an earlier score (but presently I cannot identify from where at this writing). Note also that the "Tara's Theme" (cue sheet designation) in Reel IV during the party reminiscence scene actually used the TARA motif from GONE WITH THE WIND (1939, Selznick). According to documents in the Warner Archive near USC, W/B paid $100 for use of the theme orchestrated for small ensemble.

-PARRISH (1961, W/B) Re-worked "Ellen" Theme later used as tavern background music in a scene from TWO ON A GUILLOTINE (1965, W/B). Note that crossovers of popular themes in Warner Bros movies were placed (usually as radio music) in other Warner Bros. movies. For instance, in SUSAN SLADE (1961, W/B), the "Molly & Johnny" theme from A SUMMER PLACE (1959, W/B) was used as background music when Conn & Susan make out in a cruise ship lounge. The "Molly & Johnny" theme was
also used in THE CROWDED SKY (1960, W/B) that also co-starred Troy Donahue who starred in A SUMMER PLACE.


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In September 1970, Leslie Zador and Gregory Rose interviewed Bernard Herrmann at his home in North Hollywood. At one point in this highly valuable document, Zador mentioned that Herrmann wrote in his opera Wuthering Heights music was also heard in The Ghost and Mrs. Muir. Herrmann’s response was a reactionary & resentful denial, insisting that it was merely a similar style.

Interestingly, Max Steiner had the same opinion about his self-borrowings that he wrote in his autobiography, Notes To You. Here is that segment on page 201:

"Incidentally, the fans are pretty darned smart. They don't miss a thing as had been demonstrated to me by the letters I receive about the music of some of my old pictures now appearing on TV. They often write me, 'isn't that the same music that was used in such and such a picture?' Now every composer has his own style and I have mine, and sometimes things sound similar. but this is nothing to be ashamed of. The same thing happened to Beethoven, Mozart, Wagner, Victor Herbert and others--even Ravel and Debussy. I can detect the style of a particular composer in a minute. This cannot be helped. It is the individual, but sometimes a layman who hears something similar accuses the composer of using the same music over and over again." [end quote]

So both high-profile film composers denied that they ever actively self-borrowed! Both of them just waved a dismissive hand stating that the music just sounds alike, something similar. Yet, as I proved in my research, both composers most definitely self-borrowed--and not just "similar" but precisely the same music (identical notes in most cases, identical structure, etc). So the myth that Steiner & Herrmann tried to convince people about (that the music is merely similar, alike but not identical, not self-borrowed) needs to be de-bunked. That defensive claim by these two notable film composers does not stand up to actual facts. My video of Steiner's self-
borrowings would instantly dispel their rationalizing claims. It showcases about 146 examples of self-borrowing.

Now for visual examples of Max's self-borrowings in his written music. As given in the Master List, the Selena theme in Reel 1 pt 4 of *Gold Is Where You Find It* was later self-borrowed as the Margaret theme in Reel 3 pt 1 of *Jim Thorpe, All American*. Here below are research images of my hand-copies that show this. Although the key is different, the melodic structure is nonetheless precisely the same.

Next is the end section of the Main Title of *They Made Me A Criminal* was modified to become the Tara Theme in *Gone With The Wind*. Once again the notes are different (differing key) but the structure & "sound" is the noticeably the same.
Next are visual examples of the "hysteric" or "hysterical" music in *The Adventures of Don Juan* (1948) self-borrowed from *Saratoga Trunk* (1945):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEQmZH0-DSY [Saratoga Trunk]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_9l4BvC6vs [Adventures of Don Juan]
Next, the Anne Theme in *Cheyenne* (1947) was later self-borrowed as the Katie Theme in *Boy From Oklahoma* (1954). The Katie theme in Reel 2 pt 3 Contest cue/scene is played prominently by the solo trombone starting with note D--just as the "Anne" theme in the example given.

Here is a YouTube presentation I made of the "Anne" theme:

https://youtu.be/hvUSlqyG-Yg
As given earlier, "The Pals" theme located after the Main Title at 00:04:42 dvd of *Dodge City* was later self-borrowed as the herd/mesa music in *LION & THE HORSE* (1952, W/B) starting at 00:00:46 dvd.

https://s7.postimg.org/dci9llj0r/Herd_Pals_Steiner_self-borrowing.jpg

Next let's focus on the so-called "mickey mousing" (catching the action) feature that is so dominant in Max Steiner's film music. My video presents over two hundred examples of this practice. Note that "mickey-mousing," so naturally intrinsic in cartoon music, is not a unique activity just in Steiner's movies. Almost all composers utilized this method, including such notable ones as Waxman, Korngold, Rozsa, Tiomkin, Goldsmith—even predominantly "mood approach" composers such as Bernard Herrmann. An obvious example of this is the *Mysterious Island* cue "The Fire" at the end where Herrmann actually wrote on the written score "She Falls" and then "He Falls" when the two characters successively fall from the beehive
chamber down to the grotto where the Nautilus submarine is located. At each of those two falling spotting points, Herrmann wrote a traditional descending gliss of the harps. See my hand copy image below:

https://s1.postimg.org/27pxwrqvrz/The_Fire_She_Fall-He_Falls_end.jpg

Immediately below is my Film Score Rundowns YouTube link that showcases this Herrmann "mickey-mousing" in "The Fire" :

https://youtu.be/VRYdInssHLJ

However, Max Steiner utilized this Catching (or Hitting)-the-Action approach with great prevalence in his movies, especially comedies and action movies such as westerns and gangster flicks. To a lesser extent he
would mickey-mouse in his serious drama pictures. One of my favorite instances where Max really mickey-moused the action was that scene in *They Died With Their Boots On* when Libby's father enters the room where Custard (Errol Flynn) is waiting, gazing into a new master type of device. Max precisely caught each and every changing nuance of facial expression of both characters as they reacted to each other. Unerring sense of timing!

In *certain* terms, this practice made it easier & faster for Max to compose such an action-themed movie because he would automatically look for such scenes to catch with music. The scenes would in effect dictate the music generated; for example, descending harp gliss (or piano or strings, etc.) for falling or descending motions followed by, say, a cymbal crash at the end, or ascending harp gliss for jumping or a knife throw or whatever the case may be. It was a *habitual* approach in Max's music-making, and habits are powerful underlying dynamics in determining & predicting action. This practice is how he partly *organized* music (along with habitually writing melodic themes for characters, and arranging appropriate music of other composers in certain scenes). Come to think about it, arranging music of others in a specific scene is a type of close synchronization as well. For instance, Max would often insert *Die Wacht Am Rhein* ("Watch On the Rhine") music by Carl Wilhelm and Max Schneckenburger in his World War I & II movies emphasizing the Nazi or German theme. Alternately he would use *Deutschland Uber Allies* (unknown composer according to the cue sheets). More on this later when I discuss that Arrangement feature of Max's music.

The roots of Max’s “mickey-mousing” approach to film scoring most likely (and logically) stems from his theatre/vaudeville years. His somewhat "jazzy" leanings in various films also probably was sourced in the vaudeville period.

He was not only involved with such conducting (and composing) in Vienna and other areas in the Continent, but he also worked extensively in London and then finally in New York (see my paper on the astrology of Max Steiner that also gives a detailed rundown of his *Notes To You* autobiography). In New York around 1915 Max got a job conducting a forty-piece band for silents (according to his autobiography). Max discussed the emerging art form of the American Musical Comedy. He knew and/or worked with George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, and Sigmund Romberg. From 1916 to 1929 he conducted so many musical shows that he lost count.
It seems reasonable to surmise that Max many times had to “hit the mark,” so to speak, with the music to reflect the sudden events and changes on the stage. So the cueing practice became an ingrained habit that carried over into the motion picture major chapter of his career. Bernard Herrmann, on the other hand, was intimately involved with unseen radio drama, so his overall “mood approach” would fit better under the circumstances, and he carried over that habitual practice (including self-borrowing—as I already documented-- that he was in the habit of doing on radio!) into his film music medium.

A harp gliss when black bird "Jiminy" flies down from a tree to little Jenny's arm in *The Lion & the Horse* is shown in the following YouTube video I made. It also features the theme that was self-borrowed from *Sergeant York* --the Reel 3 pt 2 Gracie theme (based on "I Got A Gal At the Head of the Holler").

https://youtu.be/Oui9PzqGm4Y

At the end of this WarnerInstant video clip from *A Summer Place* (1959) you will hear Max's mickey-mousing of the thrown undergarments down to the bay surface.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3h4as6YcXY

And here is the written sketch equivalent:

https://s1.postimg.org/9a21gefje7/Reel_2_pt_2_harps.jpg
Next you will find examples of synchronizing-the-action in My Reputation (1946) in the skiing scene:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1X9sCmWRBSM

Next you will find several examples of "mickey-mousing" in this clip of Two On A Guillotine, including the opening bars of music making a descent motion as the camera descends down:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnl92hZteu4
Next is that famous "Has the war started?" scene when Scarlett throws the vase at the fireplace near where Rhett is out-of-sight resting. Max mimics that throwing action:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrhNPS4nbmQ

Next we have the Jack Rescues Ann scene in *King Kong*. Note that when they are descending, the music does also; but when Kong draws up the rope, so does the music ascend as 16 note figures:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p03u3v6GF-Y

Next in the "Final Companions" beginning of *The FBI Story* (1959), Max mimics the ticking of the clock:


https://s1.postimg.org/6ha8filt0v/Reel_1_pt_1_Time_Ticking_Bars_1-12.jpg

https://s1.postimg.org/7vnk9pri0f/Reel_1_pt_1_Plane_Explodes_Bars_37-40.jpg
When the plane explodes because of the time bomb in the suitcase, the music mimics with rapidly descending 16th note figures the plummeting sections of the plane.

By the way, for those who may object to the term “mickey-mousing,” remember that Steiner himself coined it! He wrote in a Variety issue that “I like to term my method—facetiously, of course—the “Mickey Mouse” type; that is, I permit myself to be dominated by the story and the characters, and synchronize the music to them. This theory is based on a sound psychology that underlies all my efforts; and that is that the ear must hear what the eye sees, or else it is disturbing.”

As a side note, one common "trick-of-the-trade" technique of Steiner was to use a syllable approach to his music making structure. For example, Marjorie Morningstar had a six-note structure in terms of the basic melody (Mar-Jor-ie Morn-ing-Star). Sugarfoot had a three-note structure in his Main title. The Boy from Oklahoma had a seven-note structure (The Boy-From-Ok-La-Ho-Ma). Band of Angels has that four note syllable structure (Band-of-An-gels). Apparently this was a technique that is song-based, common in his vaudeville years, etc.
Now let's focus on a third major component of the nature of Max Steiner's music; namely, musical quotation or arrangements of other composers' music to fit the nature of the scenes or situations in his movies. In fact it was extremely rare to find a Steiner score that did not incorporate other composers' music. The exceptions that I personally researched that is all Steiner's music (no outside sources or arrangements) are The Fountainhead, Helen of Troy, Fort Dobbs, and Cash McCall. I need to refresh my viewings of these movies to make sure if any tiny instance of such quotations of another composer's work is present (that I did not notice before) but certainly they are not indicated in the cue sheets. Normally I am not talking about so-called diegetic ("source" on screen) music such as a radio or band playing music as part of the action in the scene. Normally I am referring to so-called non-diegetic background instrumental music. Furthermore, there are movies where only a few quotations of other composers' works are given (such as Deep Valley); whereas there are movies where there is a wealth of such quotations (such as Confessions of a Nazi Spy and Mission To Moscow).

https://s1.postimg.org/1pammlz9bj/MISSION_TO_MOSCOW_cue_sheets_page_1.jpg

In A Summer Place, only a few quotations are noticeable in the movie. The rest of the movie is all Steiner's music.

When Davies visits POTUS at the White House in Mission To Moscow, Max uses the "Hail To the Chief" music:
When Ambassador Davies visits Paris, the French anthem "La Marseillaise" was heard. "Rule Britannia" was heard when London is featured...and so forth.
As a brief commentary, we do hear a lot of quotations (via Max’s arrangements) of other people’s music. He had real skill with this, and I applaud him. However, as mentioned earlier, realize that this is basically another form of “mickey-mousing” that he is famous for (usually attributed to matching the action on the screen with music—much like cartoon music). He was mickey-mousing or matching the genre of music (the cultures involved with their famous or identifiable folk songs or national anthems or whatever, and so forth) to fit the passing environments shown on the screen. He practiced this technique especially during the early to mid-period in his Oeuvre. I understand what Steiner was doing but sometimes I wonder if he let this technique take too much habitual control of his creativity, if he over-used this approach. He fell back conveniently on an old, ingrained habit of musical quotation, perhaps first accentuated or formed during his formative vaudeville years. Once again, Max is not unique in this practice. Waxman, Tiomkin and other Golden Age composers practiced this technique but Steiner was especially fond of using it. It was a primary association dynamic in his music-making, rather instinctive in his nature, so he couldn't help it (a habit). There is nothing wrong with it but it does characterize his approach to music for films. If he had also focused on abstract music (not involved with films or the stage) as Herrmann & Waxman & Korngold did, then there would be no need for "mickey-mousing" or quotation music.

Now: *Die Wacht am Rhein* (Watch on the Rhine) is a German patriotic song/anthem by Max Schneckenburger & Karl Wilhelm that Max utilized in at least fifteen movies, starting with *The Conquerors* (1932), and ending with *The FBI Story* (1959). It was paraphrased/arranged by Max in *Desperate Journey* (1942) at least 27 times! In terms of the most famous or popular movies, it was heard several times in *Sergeant York* (1941) and *Casablanca* (1942).

*America* (My Country, 'Tis of Thee) by Sam Smith & Henry Carey was arranged by Max for BI (Background Instrumental) purposes in at least sixteen movies, including (first) *The Conquerors, Gold Is Where You Find It, Confessions of a Nazi Spy, Old Maid, Virginia City, Sergeant York* (part of the Main Title medley) and so on. I believe *Saratoga Trunk* and *Tomorrow Is Forever* were the last usages of the tune.

Of significance to note is that Max would arrange a tune of another composer's music as the or a (medley item) major component of a Main
Title in his scores. For example, in *Sergeant York*, most of the Main Title is an arrangement of "Beulahland" by J.B. Sweney (who set to music the gospel hymn by J.R. Sweney). Of course it makes logical sense for Steiner to adopt this tune since the central focus of the movie is that York became converted to the gospel teachings after an earlier wayward, drunken life.

![Sergeant York cue sheets](https://s7.postimg.org/54o55wtmj/SERGEANT_YORK_cue_sheets_page_1.jpg)

The Main Title of *Desperate Journey* (1942) is essentially (except for the initial Warner Bros. "Signature" logo music composed by Max) just an arrangement of "Die Wacht Am Rhein."

![Desperate Journey cue and Reel sheets](https://s7.postimg.org/fvbrrhcd7/DESPERATE_JOURNEY_cue_and_Reel_sheets_page_1_DVD_timings.jpg)
Of course, once again, it would make logical sense for Steiner to utilize this German anthem associated intimately with the movie because it is largely the adventures of American comrades (led by Errol Flynn) desperately stranded in Nazi Germany during World War II.

In *Beast With 5 Fingers* (1946), Max's Main Title is based on J.S. Bach's *Chaconne*. If I may permissibly repeat---it's logical for Max to use this piece because the movie is about a one-handed eccentric pianist who plays it on his piano, and you hear it played throughout the movie.
Certainly this practice is not unique for Max Steiner. Franz Waxman, for instance, prominently utilized the "U. S. Air Force" theme in his Main Title to the movie, Air Force (1943). Obviously it made perfect sense to use the theme in a movie with that title! : )....Max also commandeered this theme by Crawford for the Air Force-themed movie, The McConnell Story (1955):
Steiner logically arranged in the Main Title of *Santa Fe Trail* (1940) the Battle Hymn of the Republic by Julia Ward Howe for this Civil War-era picture.
In scenes in this movie when the building of the railroad is showcased, Max arranged the old tune, "I've Been Working on the Railroad."

"Dixie" was heard when a conversation centered on the South:

Note that many times in the Warner Bros cue sheets, information was missing or inaccurate. For instance, "unknown" would be inserted for music that actually has verified authored sources. Deutschland Uber Alles was
labeled unknown but actually the music is credited to Joseph Haydn. *Rule Britannia* (British patriotic tune) was deemed "unknown" in the cue sheets but the music was really composed by Thomas Arne in the mid-18th century. Perhaps in such cases it would have been better to simply insert "PD" (Public Domain”).

Here below is *Deutschland Uber Alles* arranged by Max in Reel 3 pt 1 of *Desperate Journey*:

https://s7.postimg.org/mouyq6t3v/Desperate_Journey_Reel_3_pt_1_Bars_33-53_-_Copy.jpg
Now let's focus on the most important feature of the nature of Steiner's music; namely, Max the Melody Maker!

Way back in late November 2006, I started a Topic Thread on the Talking Herrmann discussion board titled "Why Do You Like Herrmann Better Than Max Steiner?"

http://talking.bernardherrmann.org/talking/view.cgi?forum=thGeneral&topic=2565

If it happened to be a Talking Steiner discussion board, then I would most likely have titled my query, "Why Do You Like Steiner Better Than Bernard Herrmann?" Anyway, if you love melodies in movies, then Max Steiner's music would be an excellent (and obvious) reason to prefer him over Herrmann. Note that my top two favorite film composers are Herrmann and Steiner, with Herrmann edging above Steiner in the #1 spot. This has nothing to do with not liking melodies! : ).....Herrmann's approach was far more lyrical than true melodic, especially in his romantic vein scores such as Ghost & Mrs. Muir, Blue Denim, Joy in the Morning, Vertigo (in part), Marnie, and so on. Although, Herrmann once quipped that Ghost & Mrs. Muir was his Max Steiner score! : )......Of course the main difference between them is that Herrmann practiced the mood-approach to music whereas Steiner largely employed the kinetic catching-the-action approach. You can read the Talking Herrmann thread (click on the blue link) for more discussion on this.
Once again, the most prominent “Steinerism” is his gift of melody. This surpasses even his other dominant Steinerism ("mickey-mousing" or tight synchronization--catching-the-action). Tchaikovsky was another master of melody. In fact, Steiner commented in a 1967 interview with Myrl A. Schreibman (published in two Film Score Monthly issues in 2005) that he leaned towards Tchaikovsky and also Rimsky Korsakov (but not Wagner).

Here below are the special Film Score Monthly articles in 2005 that featured a 1967 interview with Max Steiner:


Normally Steiner expressed this as melodic leit-motifs or themes for the principal characters of a movie. In Film Music Notes, Vol II, No. 4 (January 1943), there is a one-page article titled “Max Steiner Comments on Music Scoring.” In it, Max stated, "I create themes for the principal characters, among other things..." He then added, harkening to his synchronization approach, "... At this point I do not consider the all-important matter of timing. When the cue sheets are ready, I have the picture run again, reel by reel, to refresh my memory. After that I begin composing, according to the cue sheets, fitting my music to the many changes of scene and location that help to give the modern motion picture life and interest. That, of course, is the great problem of composing for the films—to give the score continuity, to keep the audience unconscious of any break, yet to make the music perform its function of sustaining each mood and scene."

Steiner's statements about his working methods and design are extremely important. His statements show root beliefs about how he feels scoring a movie should be approached. His “mickey-mousing” approach (synchronization to action) is one key to this approach. Whereas another valid major approach (“mood approach”) was largely accepted as the working method for composers like Bernard Herrmann especially. Steiner wanted to “hit” the action, so to speak, with incredible precision. For the mood approach, this is usually not necessary. As given earlier, Herrmann himself “mickey-moused” but relatively infrequently. Perhaps he did not want his music to sound “mechanical” as Steiner’s music was sometimes
accused of because of his reliance on such mechanical timing devices, being overly dependent of precisely what happens to the changing scenes. Steiner speaks of the need of “continuity,” yet if a character suddenly turns or falls or makes some emotional expression, then the music has to reflect that (according to Steiner’s overall beliefs about approaching film scoring). So where is the continuity in such cases of the overall musical idea or thought-form? Because of his approach, his music has a certain exciting fluidity or changeableness, but I do not think it would necessarily sound unified or exhibit continuity if heard apart from the music and put on the concert stage. I think Steiner's approach was more demanding, in certain terms, than the "mood" approach, but being the highly mercurial kind of composer he was, it suited him well!

Max Steiner wrote “Scoring The Film” as part of the 1937 book, We Make The Movies. In it he states:

“When a picture is finished and finally edited, it is turned over to me. Then I time it; not by stop watch, however, as many do, I have the film put through a special measuring machine and then a cue sheet created which gives me the exact time, to a split second, in which an action takes place, or a word is spoken…While these cue sheets are being made, I begin work on themes for the different characters and scenes, but without regard to the required timing. During this period I also digest what I have seen, and try to plan the music for this picture. There may be a scene that is played a shade too slowly which I might be able to quicken with a little animated music; or to a scene that is too fast, I may be able to give a little more feeling by using slower music. Or perhaps the music can clarify a character’s emotion, such as intense suffering, which is not demanded or fully revealed by a silent close-up, as, for instance, the scene in The Charge of the Light Brigade, where Errol Flynn forges the order sending six hundred to their death."

“After my themes are set and my timing is completed, I begin to work. I run the picture reel by reel again, to refresh my memory. Then I put my stop watch on the piano, and try to compose the music that is necessary for the picture within the limits allowed by this timing. For instance: For fifteen seconds of soldiers marching, I may write martial music lasting fifteen seconds. Then the picture might cue to a scene at a railroad track, which lasts for six seconds, when I would change my music accordingly or let it end at the cut. Once all my themes are set I am apt to discard them and compose others, because frequently, after I have worked on a picture for a
little while, my feelings towards it changes. “Having finally set my themes I begin the actual and tedious work of composing according to my cue sheets, endeavoring to help the mood and dramatic intent of the story as much as possible. The great difficulty lies in the many cuts (sections; different locations) which make up a modern motion picture. For example: The first two minutes on my imaginary cue sheet consist of the arrival of a train in some little town. I would use music that conforms with the pounding of the locomotive, a train whistle or the screeching of the brakes, and perhaps some gay music to cover the greetings of people getting on and off the train. After these two minutes, the picture cuts directly to the death of the father in a little attic in an outlying farmhouse, the scene lasting three minutes in all. I must, therefore, devise some method of modulating quickly and smoothly from the gay music in the station to the silence and tragedy in the death room. These two scenes would consume five minutes of the ten-minute reel, and at the point of the father’s death we might cut directly to a cabaret in New York where the daughter is singing, not knowing that her father is dead. Here is a transition which I would not modulate at all. Instead, it would be very effective to let a hot jazz band bang right in as soon as the cut, or short fade, to the cabaret was completed.”

“There is nothing more effective in motion-picture music than sudden of mood cleverly handled, providing, of course, they are consistent with the story. During this cabaret scene, while the jazz orchestra is playing, if the daughter is notified of her father’s death, it would be absolutely wrong to change from the hot tune in progress to music appropriate to her mood. We must consider the jazz orchestra as actual music, not as underscoring; and in order to make this sequence realistic, we should contrive to make the music as happy and noisy as possible. For, in the first place, the orchestra leader does not know what has happened, and would, therefore, have no reason to change his music; and, second, no greater counterpoint has ever been found than gay music underlying a tragic scene, or vice versa. The latter, of course, applies only if the audience is aware of tragedy taking place unknown to the players.” [END QUOTE]

Now: I have the sneaking suspicion that Max may have changed his tune regarding his points in that last paragraph because I seem to remember movies after he had written this where he did indeed reflect the sudden mood of the character. For example, the gay cabaret music would be dramatically dialed down subito and in its place (or in the foreground) is the non-diegetic music score conveying great loss and sudden grief.
If I may digress a bit more, here are some excerpts from the Aaron Copland essay “Second Thoughts On Hollywood” in *Modern Music*, Vol 17, March-April 1940. He wrote:

"He wrote in page 144: “A third device, and one very peculiar to Hollywood, is known as ‘Mickey-Mousing’ a film. In this system the music, wherever possible, is made to mimic everything that happens on the screen. An actor can’t lift an eyebrow without the music helping him do it. What is amusing when applied to a Disney fantasy becomes disastrous in its effect upon a straight or serious drama. Max Steiner has a special weakness for this device. In *Of Human Bondage* he had the unfortunate idea of making his music limp whenever the club-footed hero walked across the scene, with a very obvious and it seemed to me vulgarizing effect.” [End Quote]

Of course that is simply Copland’s opinion based of his beliefs and sensibilities he is accustomed to. His judgment about Steiner’s use of music is in the framework of a critic stating that a certain type of music is in “bad taste,” but the standard is relative. Anything overdone is understandably detrimental, but the protagonist in that story had an obvious Disability, and Steiner mimicked it musically. That’s justifiable. It’s ok, and nothing to be worried about or too critical of. Most film composers used the mimic device or matching the action to the screen—even Herrmann. Perhaps Copland is a better or more sophisticated composer than Steiner, eh??—not as "corny" as Steiner?? : )....

He continues with his “It’s pick-on-Steiner-day” mode of writing:

“Recently Mr. Steiner has shown a fondness for a new device. This is the mixing of realistic music with background music. Joe may be walking around the room quietly humming a tune to himself (realistic use of music). Watch for the moment when Joe steps out into the storm, for it is then that Mr. Steiner pounces upon Joe’s little tune and gives us the works with an orchestra of seventy. The trouble with this procedure is that it stresses not so much the dramatic moment as the ingenuity of the composer…” [END QUOTE]

Well, I’m afraid he wouldn’t have approved of many film composers, including Herrmann. Example: In *Journey To the Center of the Earth*, Herrmann composes a strings version of the “Red Red Rose” song after Pat
Boone sings it on the piano to sweet Jenny. In fact, he writes two or three variations of it in the general scene. It would be interesting to go thru Copland’s film scores and see if he totally practiced what he preached. Incidentally, he even later on criticizes Korngold for being “over-complex in the development of a musical idea.”

Enough on Copland’s criticisms. Copland was a "serious" non-Hollywood composer, and I think the underlying dynamic is simple: He appeared to be a snob. He should have taken a chill pill, and try to enjoy diversity and differences (live & let live).

In the Winter 1946 issue of Modern Music, Lawrence Morton wrote, “Notable besides the purely musical aspects of the score is its correctness for the film. In Hollywood this is a much more common virtue than real musicality. It is present, for instance, in Max Steiner’s music for San Antonio. Here, however, the virtue is attenuated by the composer’s use of musical illustration, a technique which gives us sliding-down-the-banister music, walking-across-the-plaza music, telegraph, monkey and throwing-bric-a-brac music. This is no substitute for real invention, even when heard in the spacious luxuriance of Warner Brothers’ incomparable recording.”

[END QUOTE]

It appears Morton favored other composers (such as Herrmann & Friedhofer) over the likes of Steiner and even Rozsa...

Once again, the primary root belief in his approach to scoring is to write melodies/themes, especially for the main characters & symbols (like "Tara" in Gone With The Wind). Max was predominantly a melodist, especially in the Late Romantic European vein. Leitmotif is French for a recurring theme associated with a particular personality, place or situation (e.g., villain, menace, desire, love, etc.). His synchronizing practice is important but secondary to his renown of being a melody maker. This is how he organized music-making. Melody is the Signature or Stamp of Steiner. He knew how to write a "catchy" tune (as well as "catching" the action! : ).

Tiomkin was a melodic composer too, but not as much as Steiner. Tiomkin I describe as the musical Leo, the Leonine film music composer type, where he wanted his music to shine and be bigger and larger than life, and have people notice it! His motto: More and bigger is better! He tended to go overboard a lot in his approach of unrestraint. The music tended to be
center stage in the limelight. He would “dress up” his music; make it look flashier with dramatic flourishes. Just look at the full scores with the huge 44-stave pages, and you’ll see this substantiated. And then later on he might have to cut some of it away in the recording sessions. He tended to be spontaneously notey or “too busy” many times with his music--more bombastic in style than Steiner's music. It is as if he “picked up” musical ideas all at once—various channels of inspiration pouring in all at once, simultaneously, and he struggled to try to incorporate all of them at once!

Steiner employed the “Hollywood style” as well. People have commented that Steiner's music is "Hollywood"-sounding--the "Big" sound, big themes, extroverted and "showy"--although, as just discussed, I believe Tiomkin tended to be more "over-the-top" in his approach to music than Steiner. I miss Steiner's ability to create melodies (generally absent these days!), although one must remember that a melody tends to bring attention to itself in a scene, so that was a major component of the old Hollywood/Romantic style—and, in a sense, Steiner was a Leonine composer as well. His music is certainly far more colorful and energetic than, say, Friedhofer’s music, and Raksin’s music, both of which tended to create music to capture the overall mood of the scene. Herrmann, on the other hand, overall eschewed the so-called Hollywood style, being more (then, in comparison) the so-called “modernist” in leaning, far more “atmospheric” in approach. He may have described himself as a Romantic, but certainly not in the same Late Romantic style employed by Steiner and Korngold who tended to “mickey-mouse” the scenes with music and synchronize their music to the action on the screen. And Herrmann certainly did not practice (except in rare occasions) the “melody method” of writing music (as Steiner and Korngold did). Melody was perhaps the major component of the so-called Late Romantic style. Therefore, under the circumstances, let’s call Herrmann, say, a romantic modernist!

Steiner in the late Thirties to mid Forties tended, in many cases, toward a so-called "wall-to-wall music carpet" approach. He was not known for a minimalist approach to scoring! I believe The Adventures of Mark Twain, for instance, had about a hundred minutes of intended music in it! However, he scaled down a bit more in his later career, especially in the mid-Fifties to mid-Sixties, and streamlining his instrumentation, paring down his counter-melodies. Max matured and became leaner & meaner & more direct.
If you prefer the highly pictorial type of music of a tonal European-trained composer such as Ottorino Respighi, then Max Steiner is a natural choice with film music. Max tended to be *mercurial* in his music, fast, quick, ever-changing (again, "mickey-mousing"). Max was noted for his many "runs" or sweeping glissandos. There was often a high-energy quality to his music, a volatility, an impulsiveness. Indeed a lot of his music had that admirable quality of being *childlike*--fun, innocent, spontaneous. I discussed these qualities inherent in his own personality or character in my 2006 paper, "The Astrology of Max Steiner." He expressed his character naturally or automatically in his musical expression as well.

http://www.filmscorerundowns.net/steiner/ms_astrology.pdf

Max was also quite clever with his music. An example of this is his placement of a certain musical quotation (arrangement of another composer's work) used in two movies. The first is *By the Light of the Silvery Moon* (1953). In the scene when Marjorie (played by Doris Day) is crying to her dad & mom that she and her fiancé won't marry because they just had a fight, Max cleverly adapted "The Love Nest" music by Hirsch & Harbach. Of course the relationship at that point is far from a love nest! Even more fun was the scene in *The FBI Story* (1959) when Chip & Lucy (played by James Stewart & Vera Miles) are in their honeymoon in the Great Outdoors. Chip sarcastically comments off screen that they had great accommodations ("..a semi-private room with running water"...)---actually a rain-soaked small tent on muddy ground with a young deer sharing it! This too is hardly a "love nest"! : ).....

The Steiner "sound" was definitely in a class of its own. All of the great Golden Age composers had that distinction, including Korngold, Tiomkin, Herrmann, Rozsa, probably Alfred Newman also, but Steiner (followed closely by Korngold) were the most melodic in my opinion. Steiner certainly elevated the practice of "mickey-mousing" beyond the standard cartoon venue to an art form in actual films. He still kept the integrity of the musical line in the scene and did not cartoonishly mimic actions simply for the sake of the music mimic. There was also a clever & fun psychological or emotional component he kept intact beyond the mere physical representation (like falling off a horse or the throwing of a knife). Critics (I mentioned a few of them) would, however, lament the content interruptions in the flow of music (as they saw it) to simulate the physical actions in the screen when they spontaneously appear.
Steiner had incredible dramatic instincts coupled with prestigious craft. He was also a work-horse! If he felt he needed to write a zillion notes in a long & busy action chase scene for a western, he would write it. And he would help fellow composers in a pinch. For example, he volunteered to write (un-credited) most of the underscore for Heindorf in *Up In Arms* for Sam Goldwyn.

In certain terms, the main reason for the excellence of Max's music is that it is just sheer fun to listen to! More often than not, his output works. It enhances the actions and moods on the screen. While most of it is not "mood" music per se (the so-called "Overall" approach that Herrmann & Newman employed), and hence may not quite work satisfyingly or completely well in a concert setting without the film playing, it still is very good music. Corny sometimes, yes (as in various mickey-mousing diversions), but good crafted music. Max Steiner was obviously a top-tier, A-listed film music composer (but, according to some critics, he never delved into symphonic concert works except indirectly in a few of his films (*City for Conquest* and *So Big*). Personally I feel the classic or Golden Age film composers (Korngold, Steiner, Herrmann, Rozsa, etc) really understood how to musically depict the drama on the scene. They enriched the scenes emotionally on another level, making it more powerful. These days the three monkeys of film music, instead of saying "hear no evil" (etc) say, "Hear no melody" and "hear no consonance" and "hear no thematic development."

Relatively nothing in the current crap--eh, I meant to type crop--of film music comes even close to this! : )..

In terms of chords, I noticed that Steiner Max tended to favor the Dominant tonalities in his scores, a signature feature in his music. Herrmann especially favored the half-diminished sevenths. Max seemed to favor the Dominant sevenths, in comparison.

For instance, in *Helen of Troy*, Reel 6/Part 2 [The Kiss] *Appassionato* in C time, 8 pages, 31 bars. Cue #36609. Dvd location: Chapter 14 starting at 2:19. Scene: Helen and Paris kiss passionately on the bluff. This cue seques from the previous cue. Interesting tonalities here. Steiner often favors Dominant chords in his scores, and here in Bar 1 he plays a very large-sounding E Dom 11th (E/G#/B/D/F#/A). The CB and VC II root the tonality with the E whole notes. Bar 2 appears to be the G# min 7/11th tonality (G#/B/D#/C#). In *The Caine Mutiny*, we have Reel1/E "Keith Meets Navy"
Con moto in 6/8 (and 2/4) time, 12 pages, 51 bars, 1:13. Scene: Keith kisses his possessive and overly protective mother goodbye, and then off he goes into the wild blue Pacific. He is eventually ferried to his first assignment, the Caine. The strings, bassoons, and horns play a rather sustained foundation chord on Bb Dom 7th (Bb/D/F/Ab) while the solo trumpet plays a rather neutral or mild declaratory phrase for eight bars. Incidentally, Steiner tends to favor Dominant seventh chords in many of his scores, while Herrmann favors the half-diminished sevenths. This is not to say that I can imagine Herrmann assigning here the Bb half-dim 7th (Bb/Db/Fb/Ab) as the foundation chord!

So Steiner definitely favors the Dominant chords, especially the 7ths and 9ths! That seems to be a clear Steiner signature based on my initial research on Steiner's chord structures. Herrmann was a "dominant" composer but overall he did not employ the "Dominant" chords that very much (unlike Max Steiner). He loved the minor triads and sevenths especially, and of course the half-dim 7ths, and (to a lesser extent) the minorMajor 7ths, the minor & major triads with the added ninth, fully diminished chords here & there, etc. So, while Herrmann liked the minor chords family a lot, he was by no means a "minor" composer! : )...But to play on this term once more, the use of, say, the Dominant seventh chord, in Steiner's music is still not as "dominant" in practice as the half-diminished seventh used quite extensively in Herrmann's music. Similarly, Herrmann's penchant to self-borrow was actually greater than Steiner's habit.

Now: In my educational research video of the themes & melodies of Max Steiner, I showcased over fifty themes. I started with The Adventures of Don Juan (1948) giving several examples of the Don Juan theme, King theme, D'Lorca theme, and the Queen motif. In Band of Angels I focused on the two principal themes, "Starwood" and "Hamish." In Desperate Journey I focused on the "Katie" and the "Comrades" themes. In Helen of Troy I centered on several themes such as "Paris" and "Menelaus" and "Troy" and of course "Helen." In Sins of Rachel Cade I presented clips of the "Native" motif, "Mission" motif, and of course the beautiful "Rachel" theme. In Ice Palace I showcased the "Alaska" theme, the "Bridie" theme, the "Dorothy" motif, the "Wang" (played by George Takei) theme, and of course the lovely "Christine" theme. I also presented major themes in Violent Men, Those Calloways, The FBI Story, The Hanging Tree, Battle Cry, and Cash McCall.
Below is the "King" motif from the Main Title of *The Adventures of Don Juan*:

![Main Title Image](https://s7.postimg.org/ujrq02oe3/Adventures_of_Don_Juan_King_Theme_1_Main_Title.jpg)

Here is a variation of the "King" motif in the Reel 3 pt 4 King's Portrait cue:

![Variation Image](https://s7.postimg.org/ujrq02oe3/Adventures_of_Don_Juan_King_Theme_1_Main_Title.jpg)
Here below is the famous "Don Juan" theme:

https://s7.postimg.org/7034brve3/Max_Melody_3_D_Lorca_Motif.jpg

Here below are examples of the villain theme in the movie, the "D'Lorca" motif!

https://s7.postimg.org/7034brve3/Max_Melody_3_D_Lorca_Motif.jpg
Next is the "Starrwood" theme in *Band of Angels*:

https://s7.postimg.org/gh5skob63/Band_of_Angels_Starrwood_Theme_2.jpg

And next from the same movie is the distinctive "Hamish" theme (played by Clark Gable):
(Max Melody)

Real 5pt1 [Band of Angels] "Hamish" Theme
[Clark Cable]

Max Steiner

https://s7.postimg.org/t8jyrdnkr/Band_of_Angels_Hamis_1_written.jpg
Here immediately below is the "Lory" theme (she was played by Natalie Wood) in *Cash McCall* (1960):

![Lory theme from Cash McCall](https://s7.postimg.org/k2kypymnf/Cash_Mc_Call_Lory_1_written.jpg)

Here below is the "Mission" theme in *Sins of Rachel Cade*:

![Mission theme from Sins of Rachel Cade](https://s7.postimg.org/hrrhzgw3v/Sins_of_Rachel_Cade_Mission_2_names_WRITTEN.jpg)
Below is the "Native" motif from the Main Title opening of *Sins of Rachel Cade* that I hand-copied:

https://s7.postimg.org/j6t2ohmzv/Sins_of_Rachel_Cade_Native_1_M_T_WRITTEN.jpg
Below is the Main Title version of the lovely "Rachel" theme (character played by Angie Dickinson):

https://s7.postimg.org/ar3i6r77f/Sins_of_Rachel_Cade_Rachel_1_M_TWITTEN.jpg

Here below is a solo instrument (bass clarinet) version of the "Rachel" theme occurring just before the Last Operation scene.

And then immediately following the operation scene, we find the Rachel theme played quite expressively as a prelude to the approaching love scene.

https://s7.postimg.org/9ldswt7f7/Sins_of_Rachel_Cade_Rachel_4_making_lovewritten1.jpg
Below is a photo of Max conducting a Frank Sinatra concert at Lewisohn Stadium, New York on August 3, 1943.

https://s7.postimg.org/d9ydyqzxn/Max_Sinatra.jpg
Interesting links & info on Max Steiner:

http://www.filmscorerundowns.net/steiner/index.html

https://books.google.com/books?id=ebQ1DwAAQBAJ&pg=PA343&lpg=PA343&dq=Notes+To+You,+Max+Steiner&source=bl&ots=gv5xvk57nE&sig=4JDmTCaemzmtII Bh2aqwy_shvPo&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjnj9S85bnXAhXPdSYKHXIqDPoQ6AEIXTAJ - v=onepage&q=Notes%20To%20You%2C%20Max%20Steiner&f=false

[Nathan Platte book]
http://files.lib.byu.edu/ead/XML/MSS1547.xml  [Max Steiner Collection BYU]

http://books.google.com/books?id=MyRuAwAAQBAJ&pg=PA84&lpg=PA84&dq=Notes+To+You,+Max+Steiner&source=bl&ots=wGGiPD5MA7&sig=U2Ft0pCXgRp4kql7NMTFx4CUzLI&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjjl675rnXAhUJRyYKHQ3nBq0Q6AEIQTAE - v=onepage&q=Notes%20To%20You%20C%20Max%20 [Peter Wegele book]

http://chelsearialtostudios.com/maxsteinerpages/maxsteinerpageshome.htm  [Max Steiner Pages]

http://web.archive.org/web/20020925131817/maxsteinerhomepage.tripod.com/library.htm  [Steiner Library]

http://composercredits.blogspot.com/2016/09/max-steiner.html  [ComposerCredits]

https://search.proquest.com/docview/1868419129  [preview thesis on GWTW]


https://vimeo.com/28164796  [Max Steiner Retrospective]

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC EjekLqxpGLNJ1YDwOREALQ/videos [YouTube Topic--Max Steiner]

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