

'And Incidentally, the Score is Quite Beautiful'

– *Work conceptual reflections on the phonographic remediations of Max Steiner's symphonic film score for 'Gone with the Wind' (1939) as soundtrack album*

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In 1954 RCA Victory released a 10" vinyl album entitled *The complete film music from 'Gone with the Wind'*, the first substantial phonographic release of music from Max Steiner's landmark score for David O. Selznick's film version of Margaret Mitchell's epic novel. When Max Steiner (1888–1971) had scored the movie in 1939 the hundreds of scores of predominantly symphonic underscoring produced annually by contract composers within the music departments of the Hollywood studio system were not considered a potential source of income away from the screen and were therefore only rarely recorded for commercial release. Thus before the beginning of the end of the studio system in the late 1940s, short selections from less than twenty re-recorded¹ scores were released as separate score albums, and only in 1949 the first American album with actual music track recordings from the original recording sessions for Miklos Rozsa's score for MGM's *Madame Bovary* was issued by the recently founded MGM Records.²

- 1 Throughout this article the terms 're-recorded' or 're-recording' refer to later studio re-recordings, and not the initial process of recording music tracks for film use, also known as 're-recording' or 'dubbing'.
- 2 However, as *Gone with the Wind* was the most anticipated American film of the year, shortly before its premiere in December 1939 producer David O. Selznick approached Williams S. Paley, president of CBS, which included Columbia Records and other labels: 'The thought occurs to me that you might like to have one of your record companies get out one or more records of the musical score of *Gone with the Wind*. I know that under ordinary circumstances the musical score of a picture couldn't be expected to sell records, but everything in connection with *Gone with the Wind* is apparently attracting such unprecedented attention that this may be the exception. And incidentally, the score is quite beautiful'; quoted from Rudy Behlmer, 'The Saga of *Gone with the Wind*' [sleeve-note essay], *Original Motion Picture Soundtrack 'Gone with the Wind'* (TCM/Rhino R2 72269, 1996), 32. But nothing came of the suggestion. Four years later Max Steiner commented on the film producers' to him incomprehensible lack of interest in recording and publishing film music in the early film music periodical *Film Music Notes*: 'Conservatively speaking, at least one half of all the movie-goers in the country are musical minded. I get between two and three hundred letters a week from fans. And immediately a picture is released the studio gets requests from all over the country asking where recordings or the sheet music can be purchased. Yet neither the studios nor the exhibitors are doing much to take advantage of the fans' interests'; quoted from Bill Wrobel, *Film Score Blogs*, <http://www.filmscorerundowns.net/blogs/32.html>, accessed on 18 February 2008. Apart from a few recordings of popular arrangements of the Tara theme issued in the late 40s and early 50s (cf. Table 1), the *Gone with the Wind* score went unrecorded until 1954.

However, in the wake of the phenomenal popularity of Dmitri Tiomkin's folk-style ballad 'Do not forsake me, oh my darling' written for *High Noon* in 1952, one of the early consequences of the radical and financially challenging re-structuring of the American film industry in the 50s was a producer-led demand for scores with a prominent title theme or song that had obvious promotional and commercial potential. At the same time a new generation of often free-lance film composers better attuned to and more sympathetic towards new developments within popular music and jazz (or even contemporary art music) caused an explosion in the stylistic diversification of film scoring that brought an end to the so-called golden age of symphonic film scoring while adding to the profitability of film music as a phonographic product. 'Good old-fashioned' symphonic scores would still be part of the stylistic palette, in particular lending grandeur to the prestigious wide-screen epic dramas (usually biblical or historical) with which the major studios tried to counter the invading success of television throughout the 50s and well into the 60s. By the mid-50s the new extended and long playing formats (EP and LP) introduced by Columbia in 1948 were becoming more regular vehicles for film scores to serve as a promotional tool for the latest studio productions.

The 1954 *Gone with the Wind* album was emblematic of this development. Although an anomaly, dedicated as it was to a fifteen-year old film score, the album was produced to coincide with another theatrical re-release of the still phenomenally successful film in June 1954, and thus fit the bill as a topical soundtrack album, reflecting the birth of a new phonographic album genre: the soundtrack album.

In this article I want to explore this coming together of the traditional American symphonic background score and the phonographic album format, primarily to discuss the work-conceptual themes at play in the various strategies of remediation that inform the re-conceptualizations of the symphonic film score as a phonographic product from the early formation of the soundtrack album in the 1950s and onward. I shall focus on soundtrack albums devoted to only one score to highlight how the initial 'fit' between the newly introduced LP formats (later the CD) and the film score became and has remained a key work representation for an essentially unpublished musical genre. To serve as an exemplary but also somewhat unique illustration throughout the article I have chosen the numerous phonographic mediations of Max Steiner's monumental three-hour score for *Gone with the Wind* released as albums between 1954 and 1996 (cf. Table 1, pp. 54-55); it is through this recurring prism that I pursue the historically evolving character of this soundtrack sub-genre.³

3 For a general outline of the history of soundtrack recordings, see Jon Burlington, *Sound and Vision. Sixty Years of Motion Picture Soundtracks* (New York, 2000), 1-32. An elaborate treatment of the classical Hollywood film score can be found in Kathryn Kalinak, *Settling the Score. Music and the Classical Hollywood Film* (Madison, 1992) and in Royal S. Brown, *Overtones and Undertones. Reading Film Music* (Berkeley, 1994).

BRIEF REMARKS ON THE WORK AS CONCEPTUAL CONSTRUCT, THE FILM SCORE AND THE PHONOGRAPH RECORD

Within Western musical culture the conceptual construct of the musical work is primarily associated with the tradition of so-called art music and has been extensively theorized in relation to that empirical framework.⁴ To conjure up some of the most common notions associated with the idea of 'the work' and thus provide a theoretical frame of reference for my reflections on the work-conceptual re-conceptualization of the symphonic film score, I turn to David Horn's article 'Some Thoughts on the Work in Popular Music'. Before discussing the concept in relation to popular music, he outlines nine interrelated senses or shades of meaning attached to the term in Western aesthetic discourse. The following quotation amounts to a somewhat condensed version of Horn's listing:

1. The **PIECE** of music: the discrete, identifiable musical object.
2. A piece of music with its own **IDENTITY**, or ... 'character'.
3. An **ACHIEVEMENT**, the outcome of endeavour.
4. The endeavour is that of an identifiable **AUTHOR**, or of a collaboration between authors. ... The author has shown **CREATIVITY**, and the result of that creativity lends **AUTHORITY** to both the piece and its author.
5. As the end product of an often individual-centred creative process with its own identity, the work can be said to have **ORIGINALITY**.
6. Originality in its turn bequeaths two things. The first is the potential to obtain **STATUS** or rank. ... One feature of the ranking system is the practice of **CANONIZATION**.
7. The second gift of being considered original is that works ... may be thought ... to exude a hard-to-define sense of artistic sanctity, the phenomenon that Walter Benjamin termed the **AURA**.
8. At the same time, in the everyday world where music is a means of making a living, a work is a piece of **PROPERTY**.
9. In order to ensure that the individuality of the musical work, both as a property and as artistic expression, can always be recognised, the work's existence incorporates some form of **BLUEPRINT** or template for performance.⁵

Although hardly exhaustive, as Horn himself is careful to point out, this pragmatic mosaic does suggest a wealth of themes and debates to be pursued when exploring

4 For a key contribution to an exploration of the historical genesis of the musical work-concept, see Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford, 1992). In a more recent symposium anthology, Michael Talbot (ed.), *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?* (Liverpool, 2000), the work-concept is the subject of various thematic approaches in relation to a variety of also contemporary empirical contexts.

5 David Horn, 'Some Thoughts on the Work in Popular Music', in Talbot (ed.), *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?*, 18–19. Emphasized words are retained from the original.

Table 1. Chronological listing of major commercial soundtrack albums of Max Steiner's score for *Gone with the Wind*.

YEAR	FILM	ORIGINAL MGM MUSIC TRACK RECORDINGS (*) AND VARIOUS RE-RECORDINGS
1939	US premiere 15 December	
1947	US theatrical re-release 21 August	<i>Gone with the Wind</i> , Themes [side A only] Al Goodman and His Orchestra Victor 28-0419, 12" Recorded 30 September. Side B: 'Fantasia Mexicana' from MGM film <i>Fiesta</i> based on Copland's <i>El Salon Mexico</i> . Tracks re-released in 1951 as part of album <i>Theme Music from Great Motion Pictures</i> (RCA Victor LPT 1008).
1952		<i>Love Themes from the Motion Pictures</i> Victor Young and His Orchestra Decca DL-5413, 10" LP album Album includes track 'Theme from MGM Picture <i>Gone with the Wind</i> '. Another popular arrangement of the Tara theme.
1954	US theatrical re-release 3 June	<i>The Complete Film Music from 'Gone with the Wind'</i> <i>Composed and conducted by Max Steiner with Symphonic Orchestra under the direction of the composer</i> Max Steiner/studio orchestra RCA Victor LPM-3227, 10" LP album Obviously not the complete score, but a symphonic suite arrangement conceived by the composer in 1943 for a New York concert at Lewisohn Stadium. Recorded in June 1954.
1959		<i>Music from 'Gone with the Wind'</i> <i>Commemorates 20th anniversary of the world's most popular motion picture</i> Muir Mathieson/Sinfonia of London Warner Bros. WS-1322, LP album First stereo recording of music from <i>Gone with the Wind</i> based on Steiner's published 1943 symphonic suite.
1961	US theatrical re-release 10 March	<i>Music from the Soundtrack of the Warner Bros. Motion Picture Parrish</i> <i>Composed and conducted by Max Steiner with the Warner Bros. Orchestra</i> Max Steiner/Warner Bros. Orchestra Warner Bros. WS-1413, LP album Album includes track 'Tara's Theme', a popular arrangement with pianist George Greeley as soloist.
		* <i>The Music from the MGM Motion Picture Release 'Gone with the Wind'</i> <i>Commemorating the Civil War Centennial</i> Cyril Ornadel and Starlight Symphony MGM SE-3954, LP album This is the first MGM album with music from <i>Gone with the Wind</i> is a typical 'themes' album with new arrangements and orchestrations.
		<i>'Gone with the Wind' The Authentic Original Score Recording</i> <i>Composed and authorized by Max Steiner</i> <i>The Only Official Centennial Full Range Recording</i> Muir Mathieson/Sinfonia of London Warner Bros. WS-1322, LP album Re-release of the 1959 album with identical catalogue number. Usually referred to as first release.

1967	US theatrical re-release ('widescreen') 10 October	<i>A Spectacular New Recording [of] Max Steiner's Complete Original Score 'Gone with the Wind'</i> Walter Stott/London Symphonia Orchestra Pickwick SPC-3087 (UK release), LP album Another recording of Steiner's 1943 symphonic suite.
		* <i>'Gone with the Wind'. The Original Sound Track Album</i> <i>Music composed and conducted by Max Steiner</i> Max Steiner/MGM Studio Orchestra MGM SiE-10, LP album First release of selection of original MGM music track recordings recorded November and December 1939. Electronically re-channelled for stereo effect.
1974	US theatrical re-release 18 September	<i>Max Steiner's Classic Film Score 'Gone with the Wind'</i> <i>New Expanded Version Authorized by the Composer which includes music never before recorded</i> Charles Gerhardt/National Philharmonic Orchestra RCA Victor ARL1-0452, LP album A revised and expanded version of Steiner's 1943 symphonic suite arranged in consultation with the composer. This version includes several at the time 'unreleased' original music cues. Gerhardt had already recorded a shortened and re-sequenced version of Steiner's suite in the late 1960s with the National Philharmonic Orchestra released as part of Reader's Digest 4 LP box-set <i>Great Music from the Movies</i> . The only album in RCA's influential <i>Classic Film Scores</i> album series dedicated exclusively to one score.
1976	US network television debut on NBC, 7–8 November	
1983		* <i>'Gone with the Wind'. Music from the Original Motion Picture Soundtrack As Monophonically Recorded in 1939</i> <i>Music composed and conducted by Max Steiner</i> Max Steiner/MGM Studio Orchestra Polydor 817 116-2, CD First official mono release of (expanded) selection of MGM music track recordings.
1989	US theatrical re-release 3 February	
1990		* <i>'Gone with the Wind' Original MGM Soundtrack</i> Max Steiner/MGM Studio Orchestra CBS Special Product AK 45438, CD This expanded album includes three 'scenes' drawn from the composite soundtrack, thus including dialogue and sound effects: 'Scarlett returns to Tara', 'Melanie's death' and 'Finale'. Only album to include 'Overture' and 'Exit music'.
1996		* <i>Original Motion Picture Soundtrack 'Gone with the Wind'</i> <i>Music composed and conducted by Max Steiner</i> Max Steiner/MGM Studio Orchestra TCM/Rhino R2 72269, 2CD First close to complete release of the original MGM music track recordings, including a selection of extended versions and other recorded cues not used in the final film.
1998	Latest US theatrical re-release, 26 June	

the status and/or effect of the work-concept in other musico-cultural contexts than that of art music. In his discussion of its apparently much more ambiguous and debatable presence in popular music culture, Horn nevertheless singles out the phonograph record as a musical artefact that can be associated with most of the work-conceptual aspects outlined above, even if it is to be regarded not itself a piece, but the bearer of one. Thus it can

- possess identity
- be seen as a completed achievement
- become part of a canon
- acquire auratic qualities; and
- certainly, be exploited as property.⁶

Unlike the record the symphonic film score in its ‘original’ form is traditionally viewed as a poor contender for appreciation as a discrete object, the most fundamental work-conceptual requirement, for at least two reasons:

1. The music is basically conceived as a functional adjunct, and at that the very last element to be added to a film.
2. The intermittent nature of the score lends it a fragmentary on–off character. In addition to a functional musical framing of the film (main title and end title),⁷ the score is made up from a series of separate elements, discrete music cues preventing an overall structural coherence and integrity.⁸

These work-conceptual ‘defects’ may partially account for the general exclusion of film music within traditional musicology despite the fact that the practice of symphonic underscoring can be viewed as a direct outgrowth of the post-Romantic tradition of Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler. Given the Viennese origins of early Hollywood film composers like Max Steiner and Erich Wolfgang Korngold and the European backgrounds of Franz Waxman, Dmitri Tiomkin and Miklos Rozsa it only makes good sense that it was through American film production and distribution that the late-tonal musical idiom would achieve its widest dissemination and remain a vital and popular musical style throughout the twentieth century.

It is the historical fusion in the soundtrack album of the problematic (i.e. integrated and fragmented) symphonic film score with the work-conceptually alluring

6 Ibid. 33.

7 Especially in connection with more prestigious productions, the traditional film score may even include a meta-framing of the film in the form of an overture and exit music, plus intermission and entr’acte music in the case of double-length films.

8 The employment of an overall tonal design, which is not unknown in traditional film scoring, may be viewed as an attempt to secure a structural score coherence, symbolic rather than functional in nature. For a discussion and exemplification of this topic, see David Neumeyer and James Buhler, ‘Analytical and Interpretive Approaches to Film Music (I): Analysing the Music’, in K.J. Donnelly (ed.), *Film Music. Critical Approaches* (Edinburgh, 2001), 26–36.

artefact of the new long-playing phonograph record that provide the starting point for the following exploration of the various strategies of remediation that have affected our view of the film score as a musical work for more than half a century.

TOWARDS A PHONOGRAPHIC AUTONOMIZATION OF THE FILM SCORE: THE RE-RECORDED SOUNDTRACK ALBUM

In a 1943 interview for the early film music periodical *Film Music Notes*, Max Steiner touched upon the potential of film music scores as concert music, here paraphrased by the interviewer:

Mr. Steiner believes that much of the music being written for background scores could, if it had the opportunity to do so, 'stand alone' — in other words, that it has merit as 'pure' music. Eventually, he hopes that music publishers will recognize this, and make the best of it available for concert hall performance.⁹

That same year Steiner arranged a concert suite from the *Gone with the Wind* score for a New York concert. According to film historian Rudy Behlmer,¹⁰ it is this 30-minute concert suite that Max Steiner recorded when given the opportunity by RCA Victor in 1954 in conjunction with the first theatrical re-release of the film since the introduction of the LP format. Thus this initial attempt to elevate this particular film score from its integrated and subordinate position in the soundtrack hierarchy through phonographic remediation and thereby liberate it from its formal and narrative functions within an audio-visual whole — its original *raison d'être* — was no more than the reproduction of a score re-conceptualization already realized for the concert hall, neatly fitted to the LP format by dividing the suite into two parts of equal length.

Considering the classical background of this Austrian-born composer the use of the concert suite as a formal template was of course an obvious choice. This pragmatic form had become a conventional vehicle for the recycling and autonomization of other primarily stage-related music genres like ballet, incidental music, and even opera, and had also already been used by other Western (film) composers, like Florent Schmitt (*Trois Suites d'Orchestres*, op. 76 (1925) based on his *Salammbô* score), Hanns Eisler (several orchestral suites, including *Suite Nr. 3*, op. 26 (1932) culled from *Kuhle Wampe*) and Erich Wolfgang Korngold (*The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), based on the score for the Errol Flynn swashbuckler).

As raw material for his concert suite Steiner selected a number of individual music cues that only necessitated minimal re-arrangement to combine them into an almost unbroken flow of music, not unlike a symphonic poem. This strategy fitted his extremely flexible and fluent composition style — the result of his early formal training at the Imperial Academy of Music in Vienna — that he exploited in his overall approach

9 Quoted from Wrobel, *Film Score Blogs* (accessed on 18 Feb. 2008). The name of the interviewer is not given.

10 Rudy Behlmer, untitled sleeve-note essay, *Max Steiner's Classic Film Score 'Gone with the Wind'* (RCA Victor GD80452, 1990), 11.

to film scoring characterized by close synchronization (so-called ‘mickey-mousing’).¹¹ At the same time he was obviously careful to give prominence to more ‘static’ mood cues that dwelled on key leitmotifs, whether for characters (Melanie, Belle Watling), love relationships (Ashley and Melanie, Ashley and Scarlett) or places (Tara). Considering his approach to the scoring process, which he always initiated by composing leitmotifs and other thematic material on which to base the temporally constricted ‘close-scoring’ of single cues, it is likely that he regarded the leitmotivic ‘raw material’ as such (and not its actual cue setting) as key work-defining elements conceived in an atmosphere of relative creative freedom and therefore of particular importance when ‘distilling’ the score. In this light the rather ludicrous title given the LP album, *The complete film music from ‘Gone with the Wind’*, could almost begin to make sense.

Viewed as a formal whole the sequencing of cues can be read as a balancing act between two different objectives: on the one hand the suite seems conceived as an autonomous musical work entity with a structural integrity of its own that conforms to the well-established suite convention of inter-movement variety; and on the other the selection and sequencing of cues act as a reflection of the overall narrative progression of the film. However, as the criss-crossing of lines in Table 2 shows, Steiner’s construction of a musical narrative is not necessarily dictated by the original placement of individual cues within the filmic context. By sometimes using ‘just’ their thematic content or general character as a guideline for assembling the musical narrative,¹² Steiner was more free to work out a ‘meaningful’ musical combination of single cues. The cues selected were renamed to provide an additional discursive anchoring of the unfolding story, although these titles are actually quite difficult to match exactly to individual cues in the mostly unbroken flow of music.¹³ Apart from referring to characters, locations, events, and actions, two of the titles refer directly to the leitmotivic character of the music itself (‘Melanie’s Theme’ and ‘Bonnie’s Theme’).¹⁴ The overall framing of the suite by the fanfarish overture character of

11 For a contemporary and richly detailed account of his approach to film scoring in the early days of Hollywood sound film production, see Steiner’s own description written a year before his work on *Gone with the Wind*, in Max Steiner, ‘Scoring the Film’, in Nancy Naumburg (ed.), *We Make the Movies* (London, 1938), 216–38.

12 For instance, the use of a musical cue for ‘Bonnie’s Death’ originally written to underscore Scarlett’s discovery of her mother’s death on her return to Tara during the Civil War. This cue was actually discarded and not used in the film, and thus essentially an ‘unheard’ cue.

13 The two sides of the 1954 album is not divided into single tracks corresponding to the cue titles given (perhaps retained from the original concert suite). However, a pairing of titles and timings is attempted in Table 2. In the expanded 1974 recording of the suite the original music cue titles are used according to Rude Behlmer’s notes. However, a comparison to the music cue titles given by the same writer in the complete 1996 soundtrack album results in only a partial match, which only adds to the confusion. The present author has not had the opportunity to check the music cue titles against Max Steiner’s original manuscripts.

14 The widespread use of the term ‘theme’ (e.g. ‘Tara’s Theme’ or ‘Love Theme’) in track titles on film music albums is an early genre convention. Compilations of popular arrangements of film themes was undoubtedly the most popular type of film music album throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Cyril Ornadel’s *Gone with the Wind* album from 1961, the first official MGM release of music from the film, is a heavily re-arranged theme album, cf. Table 1.

1954 SUITE ALBUM
[1974 additions]

1996 COMPLETE MUSIC TRACK ALBUM

1967 MUSIC TRACK ALBUM

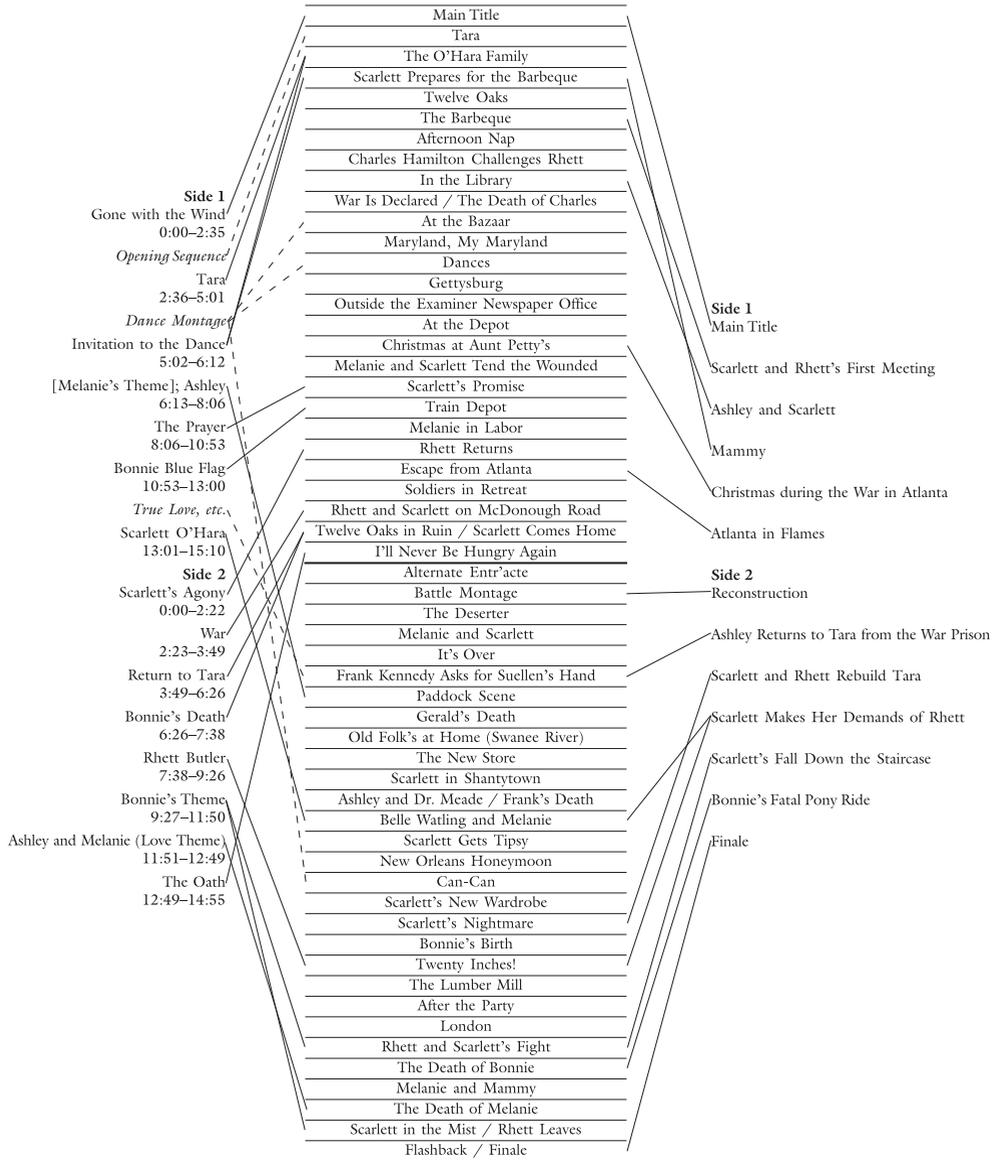


Table 2. A comparison of cue selection and programming between two key *Gone with the Wind* soundtrack albums, the 1954 suite album and the 1967 music track album. For want of a complete music cue sheet, the strictly chronologically programmed track titles of the close to complete 1996 music track album is used as a convenient frame of reference. The three track titles in italics indicate the additions to the suite on the 1974 album.

the opening main title cue ('Gone with the Wind') and the finale character of the concluding grandiose cue ('The Oath') that ends the first part of the film, works as a conventional structural and narrative device and thus satisfies both objectives.

In its phonographic version the linking of the suite to the film was stressed by the use of back cover notes and a promotional film still of Scarlett and Rhett on the album front cover, no doubt dictated by the commercial interests of the producers (perhaps shared by the composer) in making this tie-in product an even more attractive souvenir of the film experience. But viewed as a separate work representation this marriage of the LP album format to an at least semi-autonomously conceived distillation of a single film score also resulted in a work-conceptual 'enhancement' that fulfilled the composer's desire to see his music stand on its own as 'pure' music. Over the next twenty years this suite would be re-recorded several times by various conductors and orchestras, often coinciding with the regular and always successful theatrical re-releases of the film, only adding to its status as an authoritative work representation.

Apart from the suite being arranged by the composer himself, another factor lent authority to this phonographic re-recording. To quote the strangely tautologically phrased cover announcement: 'Composed and conducted by Max Steiner with Symphonic Orchestra under the direction of the composer'. To a far higher degree than the cult of the composer-conductor within art music culture – Igor Stravinsky and Benjamin Britten are revered examples – the composer-conductor bestowing interpretational authority on his or her own work on the recording stage is a pivotal figure in American film music, a practice convention going back to the pioneering years of sound film scoring within the studio system and including most of the later canonized film composers of the golden age like Max Steiner, Alfred Newman, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Dmitri Tiomkin, Franz Waxman, Miklos Rozsa and Bernhard Herrmann.¹⁵

Later re-recordings by other conductors can buy into this in the course of time still stronger aura of authenticity by adhering to original arrangements and join the ranks of canonized recordings by achieving the seal of approval from the (supervising) composer as announced on two of the later re-recordings of the *Gone with the Wind* suite (cf. Table 1): the first album is the first stereo recording of Steiner's suite from 1959 conducted by Muir Mathieson, an absolute key figure within British film music. When re-issued in 1961 the title read: '*Gone with the Wind? The Authentic Original Score Recording. Composed and authorized by Max Steiner*' and the back sleeve-notes read in part: 'According to no less critical an authority than Steiner himself, Mathieson gave the *Gone with the Wind* score a reading such as Steiner never dreamed possible. "It was a completely beautiful performance", says Steiner. "The Sinfonia orchestra is just fantastic. It's magic!"'¹⁶ The second album is a seminal 1974 record-

15 Quite unlike the mostly unsung orchestrators, of which no less than five worked on *Gone with the Wind*: Hugo Friedhofer, Maurice de Packh, Bernhard Kaun, Adolph Deutsch, and Reginald Bassett. According to Rudy Behlmer, because of time pressure, Hugo Friedhofer, Adolph Deutsch, and Heinz Roemheld actually contributed a small amount of material composed in the manner of Max Steiner; Behlmer, 'The Saga of *Gone with the Wind*', 29.

16 Max Steiner, '*Gone with the Wind? The Authentic Original Score Recording*' (Warner Bros. WS-1322, 1961).

ing of the suite in a 'New Expanded Version Authorized by the Composer'.¹⁷ Before Steiner's death in December 1971 conductor Charles Gerhardt had met with the composer on three occasions to discuss the concept of a new recording. In the words of Rudy Behlmer from the original sleeve-note essay:

At their last two meetings on *Gone with the Wind* Gerhardt proposed another dream: a new expanded version [of the 1943 suite], which would include all of the themes [the composer] wrote for the picture. Recording the entire score Steiner felt would be totally impractical and unmusical because some of the melodies occur in incomplete or rearranged ways – sometimes as often as 20 times during the picture – and he saw no need for this repetition. The new version eventually worked out with Mr. Steiner contains, in the composer's preferred settings, all of the major thematic material he wrote for the film and it is performed by the same size orchestra as that used for the film rather than the somewhat reduced orchestra used in earlier recordings. The objective was to offer a longer, more inclusive and permanent memento of the original film that would stand on its own and to present a substantial work in the form of a one-movement symphony or symphonic poem based on the music from *Gone with the Wind*.¹⁸

In this paraphrase all the work-conceptual themes outlined above are obviously rehearsed: the album would offer a phonographic score distillation ('contains ... all of the major thematic material') cast in a classical mould ('a substantial work in the form of a one-movement symphony or symphonic poem') adhering to the composer's authoritative arrangements ('in the composer's preferred settings') and using the same size orchestra as the original MGM Studio Orchestra, which would amount to an autonomous work with souvenir potential ('[a] permanent memento of the original film that would stand on its own'). And it would seem that Steiner's insistence on theme prominence (e.g. anchoring the suite on themes given in their 'original' complete form) may have ruled out a perhaps more 'radical' re-conceptualization of the score. Apart from three additional cue-blocks inserted into the first part of the original suite (cf. Table 2), the 1974 album basically adheres to Steiner's original design and thus adds to its canonization as *the* work representation best suited to strengthen the work-conceptual character of the score.

Although it is hardly possible to give a single exhaustive definition of the work-conceptual nature of the early soundtrack album devoted to the symphonic film score, Steiner's 1954 album is in many ways typical of the most prominent type: a re-recording matching the LP format. The phonographic re-mediation was conceived as a work entity with formal integrity, and the suite format was quickly established as a still operative genre convention that secured the re-mediated score a work character of its own. But unlike the unbroken flow of the Steiner suite, many suites were based on an autonomization of single re-arranged cues presented as well-formed character pieces, to draw on another classical analogy, unlike the filmic cue that typically trails off or falls silent when it had served its narrative purpose. The sequencing of single cues/tracks would be an overall reflection of the progression of the film

¹⁷ Max Steiner, *Max Steiner's Classic Film Score 'Gone with the Wind'* (RCA Victor ARLI-0452, 1974).

¹⁸ Behlmer, untitled sleeve-note essay, 12.

framed by a prelude or main title and a finale or end title, depending on terminological preferences, but would also conform to the well-established audio cultural convention of the concert hall that carefully planned programme variety provides the best listening experience. In the phonographic distillation of the score this was secured through careful selection and sequencing of cues playing mood, location, character, and/or action.

But while the overall enhancement of the work-conceptual character of the film score in its new phonographic presentation did potentially embody most of the shades of meaning listed by David Horn, it was not until the late 1960s and onward that the symphonic film score would be associated with (or recognized for) the characteristics most commonly conjuring up the art work: originality, status, canonization, and aura.

RECYCLING THE ORIGINAL MUSIC TRACK RECORDINGS: THE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK ALBUM

Contrary to popular belief the classic soundtrack album was not typically drawn from edited original optical music track recordings, the recordings made for the film, but as outlined above based on re-recordings of a selection of cues in amended arrangements and orchestrations. The release of original music track recording in the first half of the 1950s was at best sporadic. The most prominent example is three 10" albums issued between 1951 and 1953 by MGM Records with selections from scores by Miklos Rozsa for MGM's epic historical dramas: *Quo Vadis* (MGM E-103, 1951),¹⁹ *Ivanhoe & Plymouth Adventure* (MGM 179, 1952), and *Julius Caesar* (MGM E-3033, 1953, with dialogue and narration).²⁰ By 1956 the release of instrumental soundtrack albums devoted to one score was becoming more regular, but due to poor annotation it can be difficult to determine the source of the content. Thus the conventional and strangely alluring sleeve announcement 'original soundtrack' or 'original soundtrack recording' should never be taken at its face value by researchers. Although one of the most successful MGM soundtrack albums when released in 1960, an original music track album of Miklos Rozsa's epic *Ben-Hur* score would not be released until 1996, perhaps because Rozsa as a commercially shrewd composer-conductor would keep feeding the market with his own re-recordings of score suites on different record labels.

The first official release of *Gone with the Wind* music tracks from the original recording sessions in November and December 1939 did not occur until 1967 coinciding with the perhaps most spectacular theatrical re-release of the film in an 'updated' widescreen format and in six-track stereo. By then developments in recording and sound technology reflected in the 'state of the art' re-recordings of the suite had rendered the old optical music track recordings, which had been rediscovered in

19 Also issued as a two 10" album with dialogue (MGM E-134, 1951).

20 It lies outside the scope of this article to address the work-conceptual questions raised by the early production of soundtrack albums that included spoken dialogue as a major or even the major sound component.

1965, hopelessly outdated, hence so-called stereo 'enhancement' was applied in a rather futile attempt to overcome what was now viewed as technical limitations.

Compared to the re-recorded suite album, the work-conceptual nature of the music track album produced by Jesse Kaye is strikingly similar: its suite-like programming framed by 'Main Title' and 'Finale' is based on a comparable selection and combination of music cues (cf. Table 2 for a comparison) retaining less than 20 percent of the complete music track recordings and adding up to a total length close to that of the suite.²¹ Unlike the 1954 album the programme is divided into thirteen separate tracks (most, as must be expected, with typical musically unmotivated cue endings simply trailing off or even fading) and with only two exceptions, the sequencing of the chosen cues follow the chronology of the film, which is reflected in the chosen track titles that read like a story outline. Compared to the extensive re-sequencing and free re-naming of cues in Steiner's own suite version, the 1967 album producer hardly deviates from the original underscoring function of each cue, perhaps out of respect for the composer or loyalty to the film fan.

This album was a major success spending 36 weeks in the Billboard album charts peaking at number 24, easily outselling other contemporary recordings. Apart from the obvious 'souvenir' value of this album (containing the music actually heard in the cinema) at least part of its success must be ascribed to the special aura associated with original music track recordings, in particular by film music lovers and enthusiasts, linked to the already mentioned art cultural notion of the composer-conductor bestowing interpretational authority on his or her work on the recording stage in an almost symbiotic relationship with the studio orchestra.²² It is this very moment of the score's first realization, comparable to the highly symbolic first performance of new works within contemporary art music culture, that is heard captured in the music track recordings, and subsequently celebrated in the 'true' original soundtrack album. In the case of the *Gone with the Wind* album this sense of aura was only compounded by the 28-year gap between the by then historical date of recording and the 'belated' release allowing nostalgia for a bygone era to become an important part of the equation.

However this album dedicated to a historical score was an exception at the time owing its existence primarily to the unique longevity of this particular film. Still, it can be viewed as a precursor of the coming rise of the historical soundtrack album.

21 I have not been able to ascertain whether the composer was in any way involved in the production of the album. The fact that special thanks are extended to the film's assistant musical director Lou Forbes on the album's back sleeve, but not to Steiner himself, may indicate that he was not involved.

22 The symbiotic relationship between certain free-lance film composer-conductors and their orchestras created a uniquely distinct sound impossible to 'imitate'. In the words of film score restorer John Morgan: 'There is a great deal of wonderful film music from the '60s and later that I think is among the best written, but it is so "player" dependent, or dependent on technology, it would be impossible to do it justice. Henry Mancini wrote some fine scores, but so much of his work – whether original tracks or album re-recordings done at the time – are so unique that they would be impossible to match ... unless you "concertized" them'; John Morgan, 'Memo to "FSM" – Re: Re-recordings', *Film Score Monthly*, 9/6 (2004), 29.

FILM MUSIC ARCHAEOLOGY: 'RESTORING' THE ORIGINAL FILM SCORE

When Charles Gerhardt recorded the expanded suite six years later in September 1973, it was as part of an RCA Victor series of film music albums begun in November 1972 called *Classic Film Scores* celebrating the golden age of symphonic film scoring. Until the series was cancelled in 1978 a total of 13 albums, all produced by Georg Korngold, was dedicated to the mostly unavailable and even forgotten symphonic film music of composers like Erich Wolfgang Korngold (father of the producer), Max Steiner, Alfred Newman, Bernard Herrmann, Franz Waxman, Miklos Rozsa and Dmitri Tiomkin. This pioneering and both commercially and critically successful effort would prove instrumental in generating renewed interest in the legacy of symphonic film scoring that would eventually change the phonographic mediation of this historical repertoire.

However, viewed as an album concept the series broke with the score concept of the traditional soundtrack album, with the *Gone with the Wind* album as the sole exception. Each album was thematic, dedicated to the music of a single composer or the music of films associated with major actors/actresses (like Bette Davis and Humphrey Bogart), and consisted of short suites and single cues from a variety of scores, a compilation concept that was not new but as always popular. More significant in regard to a score oriented concept, but much less prominent, was a subscription series, *The Film Music Collection*, begun in 1974 by Elmer Bernstein, a stylistically eclectic film composer-conductor with symphonic inclinations. Each of the resulting fourteen albums²³ was dedicated to one or two unrecorded scores from the 40s and 50s written by largely the same film composer-conductors anthologized in the Gerhardt–Korngold series, and only original arrangements and orchestrations were used for re-recording a substantial selection of music cues. The Bernstein series was clearly aimed at film-music enthusiasts with elaborate sleeve-notes that signalled artistic dedication to a neglected cultural heritage and an almost scholarly approach to the existing score material. Also, a quarterly film music journal, *Film Music Notebook*, containing composer interviews and scholarly articles was published in conjunction with the albums.²⁴ In hindsight this private and basically non-profit enterprise, which 'stayed in business' until 1979, can be seen as part of a then burgeoning rescue operation focused on the preservation of the totally neglected film music material still existing in studio archives and private collections, coinciding with the establishment of what today is known as *The Film Music Society*.²⁵

This new era of film music archaeology, preservation, historization, and canonization accelerated a process towards the recognition and institutionalization of film

23 The series was re-issued in 2006 as a CD-boxset entitled *Elmer Bernstein's Film Music Collection* (FSM BOX 01).

24 A complete edition of this journal was published by *The Film Music Society* in 2004 under the title *Elmer Bernstein's Film Music Notebook. A Complete Collection of the Quarterly Journal, 1974–1978* (Sherman Oaks, 2004).

25 For information on this still active society, see <http://www.filmmusicsociety.org>.

music as art,²⁶ and also had a profound effect on the album concept within the commercial production of soundtrack albums dedicated to historical scores as small independent record companies like Varese Sarabande sprang up to cater to a growing specialist's or collector's market devoted to historical film music.²⁷ As to the score album two distinct types would prevail: one represents an attempt to roll back time by creating the original soundtrack albums that never were, using unearthed original music track recordings made commercially presentable by means of digital audio restoration. The most recent effort in this category is a considerable and ongoing series by the American film and TV music periodical *Film Score Monthly* called 'Golden Age Classics' begun in 1998. The other type brings the historical scores into the present by way of new state-of-the-art re-recordings, as exemplified by the ambitious classic film music series by Varese Sarabande and Marco Polo. All efforts are dedicated to present the composer's score in what is considered its most pure, authentic and complete state. As Marco Polo's score restorer John Morgan put it in 2004:

First, my loyalty is always with the composer's music, not with what ends up in the film. In all of our re-recordings, I have returned to primary sources: the composer's original sketches. Ideally, I would only refer to these sketches, the original orchestrations, the original parts, the original conductor parts and a music-only track. Unfortunately, this is usually not the case. For more than 50 percent of the music we choose to record, no full scores survive; we must orchestrate the music from original sketches or conductor-piano scores. When a composer writes music to a timing sheet, this reflects the cut or edit of the film at that time. By the time the music was ready for orchestration, more often than not, editing changes had occurred within the film that forced the composer to cut bars or add repeats. This re-editing of film often continues after the orchestrations are prepared and even after the score is recorded, which further changes the composer's original music. With very few exceptions, I find the music that the

26 This renewed 'academic' interest in the classic symphonic film score is also seen as a major incentive behind the post-modern revival of symphonic film scoring, usually attributed to John Williams' 'archaeological' approach to the scoring of the first *Star Wars* trilogy, a compositional tribute to the adventure scores of Erich Wolfgang Korngold if you will, released between 1977 and 1983. (In fact Charles Gerhardt dedicated what would be the last album in his *Classic Film Scores* series to two John Williams-scores, *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.) The unprecedented commercial success of the three original soundtrack albums, with the first album spending a whole year in the Billboard album charts peaking at number two, helped pave the way for a producer-sanctioned renaissance of more or less 'old-fashioned' symphonic scoring taken up by a new generation of film composers including names like James Horner and Danny Elfman, and on British ground Patrick Doyle, all three born in 1953. Thus since the late 1970s the phonographic revival of the classic film scores has run parallel to a renewed blooming of the symphonic scoring tradition.

27 Jay Alan Quantrill has suggested that this repertoire of symphonic film music appealed especially to classical music aficionados who were disappointed in the radical experimentation embraced by modern composers; Jay Alan Quantrill, 'The Archeology of Film Music', sleeve-note essay for *Elmer Bernstein's Film Music Collection* (FSM BOX 01, 2006). David Horn concludes that 'in the case of film music, authorship is important within the film-making industry and within academic writing, but, with a very few exceptions, is almost entirely absent from the language of the audience'; Horn, 'Some Thoughts on the Work in Popular Music', 23. The album production and consumption dedicated to a canonized selection of first generation sound film composer-conductors is indeed such an exception.

composer originally wrote to be the best and most interesting presentation of the music. At least 80 percent of the music we have recorded would not fit the film's final timings. These additional edits are made strictly for filmic reasons at the expense of the music. Often entire cues are dropped because a scene was cut or the producer or director just didn't think the music was right. Well, when we re-record, if the music feels 'right' as music, we'll do it.²⁸

The dedication to 'Werktreue' expressed here obviously entertains the notion of a creative 'purity' in the early stages of the scoring process, where the composer realizes the full potential of his or her creative 'genius' in isolation before the outcome of 'pure' music ('music [that] feels "right" as music') is compromised in the collaborative machinery of film production. The parallel to the art cultural cult of the isolated composer genius is of course striking. And although presented as acts of preservation and necessary re-construction, the archaeological quest for the composer's so-called original artistic intentions and their realization in a complete phonographic presentation entail no less work construction than that found in the classic suite-based soundtrack albums of the 1950s and 1960s.

So far no attempt has been made to re-record the mammoth score of *Gone with the Wind* in its 'original and complete form'.²⁹ In fact Gerhardt's expanded suite album of 1974 still constitutes the latest substantial re-recording. But a series of no less than three distinct official original music track albums issued between 1983 and 1996 illustrate how the era of film music preservation has affected the commercial phonographic mediation of Steiner's score, with each instalment in this ongoing serial raising new and different issues.

In 1983 an expanded version of the 1967 music track album, adding four 'unreleased' music cues plus the Selznick International music trademark³⁰ preceding the main title, marked the first release of a selection of the original music track recordings in original mono sound (cf. Table 1). In his sleeve-note, album supervisor Ron Eyre points out that 'all of the selections heard on this album were taken directly from the original optical music track as recorded by the orchestra.' However, 'in order to maintain the exact sequence of this magnificent score as heard in the picture and to keep "Tara's Theme" intact', the source for two tracks are 'less than optimum sound quality taken directly from a print of the film'. Thus ultimately this remediation of the selected music tracks aims at being true to the film experience (i.e. the album as faithful and exact souvenir),³¹ which is also reflected in Eyre's conclusion: 'It was felt that you, the buyer ..., would prefer to have the original, albeit with poor sound, rather than any substitutions'. Still, there is no mistaking the overall

28 Morgan, 'Memo to "FSM"', 27–28.

29 According to Rudy Behlmer, Max Steiner composed 99 separate music cues for the film based on his own 11 primary leitmotifs and 16 additional melodies and adaptations of folk and patriotic material; Behlmer, untitled sleeve-note essay, 10.

30 This music trademark was written by Alfred Newman in 1937.

31 Also, the two-part structure of the film is retained on the original LP. Thus side two opens with the previously unreleased 'Intermission Music'.

discursive wrapping of the project as an act of restoration and preservation when Eyre sums up: 'We have attempted to create, from those elements still available, the best possible authentic reproduction of the original soundtrack'.³²

Only seven years later an expanded music track album approaching a full hour in length was issued in the CBS Special Products series, with album supervisor and annotator Bruce Eder proclaiming:

For fans of *Gone with the Wind*, this specially expanded and restored soundtrack represents a chance they've never previously had – to hear the screen's most legendary film score properly for the very first time.³³

Apart from expounding the sound technical clean-up of the sound material in a process 'usually regarded as "impossible" in music engineering circles'³⁴ allowing unheard musical details to surface, Eder is referring to the album programming: included for the first time is the conventional musical meta-framing of this epic movie (overture, entr'acte music and exit music) plus music cues from Scarlett's oath scene at the end of part one (used as a finale in Steiner's suite) and Melanie's death followed by Rhett's departure towards the end of the film. For these three additional cues/tracks only, Eder decided to use the composite soundtrack including dialogue and sound effects. Thus almost halfway through the album spoken dialogue in the form of Scarlett's passionate oath suddenly invades the 'abstract' sound world of music with rather startling effect. When experiencing the film, the score will 'naturally' blend in with the other sound elements in a complex sonic collage, but a key work-conceptual strategy in the autonomization of the film score is to extract and isolate the sound of music from its noisy environment and present it as (a) pure sound undisturbed by so-called extra-musical or worldly noises.³⁵ Still, Eder's decision is far from pointless, as he argues: 'Since Steiner wrote this music to fit the dialogue, it was felt that listeners would appreciate a crisp, clean recording of the entire sequence'.³⁶ In other words, this particular music underscores another 'superior' sound element, the dialogue, and is less suited to stand on its own, an important factor to consider when rescuing the score from the mire of functionality to extoll it as art in its isolated glory. Scarlett's famous oath scene in the fields of war-ravaged Tara can serve as a useful illustration.

Scarlett's spoken lines occur towards the end of the scene and are framed by the Tara theme. But between these two thematic statements the composer sets up the protagonist's spoken statement, mirroring her determined effort to get her worn-

32 Ron Eyre, untitled sleeve-note, *Gone with the Wind* (Polydor 817 116-2, 1983), no page numbers.

33 Bruce Eder, untitled sleeve-note essay, *Gone with the Wind. Original MGM Soundtrack* (CBS Special Product AK 45438, 1990), no page numbers.

34 Ibid.

35 For a discussion of the artistic practice of separating musical sound from sound as such even within 20th century avant-garde music, see Douglas Kahn, 'The Sound of Music', in Michael Bull and Les Back (eds.), *The Auditory Culture Reader* (Oxford, 2003), 77–90.

36 Eder, untitled sleeve-note essay, no page numbers.

out body off of the ground in a sequence of rising violins before announcing her oath with two fanfarish orchestral chords. As Scarlett speaks ('As God is my witness ... I'll never be hungry again!') the music duly recedes into the background, although Steiner does suspend the moment musically by sustaining a discreet violin line that eventually leads to the almost apotheotic return of the Tara theme ending the first part of the movie.³⁷ When recycling this music cue as the grandiose finale of his symphonic suite, Steiner was obviously well aware of the anti-climactic audio void left by the 'missing' dialogue, and simply resolved the problem by recasting the music itself as protagonist: by intensifying both tempo and dynamics and 'dramatizing' the arrangement the background violins are brought centre stage singing out almost as passionately as had the now silenced Scarlett. This, of course, is not an option when limited to the original music track recordings. However, Eder's momentary breach of the longstanding convention of separating music from all other sound elements in the remediation of film music as soundtrack album can hardly be considered a convincing solution to this apparent dilemma. On the contrary, it could be argued that the defilement of the musical soundspace with the entrance of the word undermines the work-conceptual enhancement of the score that the rest of the album seems to procure. It may be no coincidence that this inconsistent mixing strategy has remained an anomaly in the remediation of the *Gone with the Wind* score.

The latest chapter in the ongoing history of *Gone with the Wind* soundtrack albums was added in 1996 when Turner Entertainments, as part of an ongoing series of historical MGM soundtrack albums, released a close to complete two-CD music track album (cf. Table 1) containing almost 150 minutes of original music cue recordings. The cues are programmed in strict chronological order and sometimes stitched together two or three at a time to generate musical flow. Again the two-part division of the overall programme mirrors that of the film, but curiously neither overture nor intermission and exit music is included, contrary to several extended cues written by the composer but not included in their entirety in the final film. Yet, this album is representative of the still prevalent completist trend to excavate all surviving music track recordings and issue them in more or less unedited form. Thus for the first time the film music lover is invited to engage with the entire film score as an uninterrupted and purely musical listening experience, the only way to truly experience and appreciate musical works worth our time, as art culture conventions will have it. But rather than simply unveiling the 'true' score in its most original and authentic state through what is usually perceived as an act of re-construction, this phonographic representation is a very recent work construct appealing primarily to completists and musical purists.³⁸ Ironically, this the undoubtedly most venerating work conceptual strategy presents the score in a manner that the composer being honoured felt would be 'totally impractical and unmusical'.³⁹

37 For Steiner's own advice on the scoring of dialogue, see Baumburg (ed.), *We Make the Movies*, 225–26.

38 A single CD version with 'highlight' selections was issued in 1997 to cater for a broader market segment (TCM/Rhino/Warner 8122 72822-2, 1997).

39 Behlmer, untitled sleeve-note essay, 12.

IN CONCLUSION

It has been the primary objective of this article to discuss the soundtrack album as a both artistically, commercially, and even academically convenient work-conceptual vehicle for the symphonic film score to stand on its own. Although creators, proprietors, and later advocates may have had partly conflicting interests and goals in re-launching the classic film score as a phonographic album (as a work of 'pure' music, as a film promotional tool, or as an act of cultural heritage preservation), the commercial longevity of this specific album genre has no doubt had a profound effect on our perception of film music not just as a commodity but as a music worth engaging with away from the dark of the cinema.⁴⁰ Today the soundtrack album remains the primary outlet for the symphonic film score, both old and new, as a distinct work object in various guises.

SUMMARY

The article discusses key work-conceptual themes at play in the various re-mediations of the classic American symphonic film score as a phonographic product from the early formation of the soundtrack album in the 1950s and onward. Released between 1954 and 1996, the numerous soundtrack albums dedicated to film composer Max Steiner's canonic score for David O. Selznick's *Gone with the Wind* (1939), based on either the original optical music track recordings or later studio re-recordings, serve as an exemplary but also somewhat unique illustration throughout, as the historically evolving character of this phonographic sub-genre is pursued.

⁴⁰ The same is true of phonographic album genres related to music drama. For a discussion of the formation of the 'original Broadway cast' album, see Steen Kaargaard Nielsen, 'A change of scene. On the phonographic reconceptualization of the Broadway musical in the 1940s as reflected in commercial Kurt Weill cast recordings', in Alf Björnberg et al. (eds.), *Frispel. Festskrift till Olle Edström* (Göteborg, 2005), 581–95.