

# Film Music for the New Season

By  
*Donald Martin*



Alan Jones as a Greek lover sings to Rosemary Lane in "The Boys from Syracuse."

**M**HSUMMER SEES an important innovation in the field of motion picture musical comedy. The film is Desanna Durbin's "Spring Parade" (Universal), and the innovation is the use of a musical comedy written especially for the screen, without previous presentation on the stage. While motion picture music has progressed in quality and value along with the improvement in camera and sound-track technics, Hollywood never has had the courage to produce an untried light opera. The films of this type that have been made—"Desert Song", "Naughty Marietta", "Rio Rita", "New Moon", and "Irene"—all were adapted for the screen from successful stage productions. "Spring Parade" pioneers a field that should be rich in promise.

Universal producer Joe Pasternak is responsible for the innovation. Miss Durbin has completed seven pictures, all built around the young star's person, with music playing an incidental rôle. Now Mr. Pasternak wanted a vehicle where music and star could share the honors. About this time, Adolf Hitler marched into Vienna and a certain Robert Stolz marched out. Mr. Stolz is responsible for the success of fifty-two foreign screen operettas, and his "Zwei Herzen in Drei Viertel Takt" ("Two Hearts in Waltz Time") took America by storm. Looking for a new home and new opportunity, Mr. Stolz found Hollywood and Mr. Pasternak; looking for new musical material, Pasternak found Stolz.

To Robert Stolz Mr. Pasternak brings the finest technical achievements the composer has ever had the good fortune to command. In a recent interview he expressed the opinion that American orchestras have the finest instrumentalists in the world; he can "hardly wait to get his hands on the baton." To Mr. Pasternak, Robert Stolz brings a solid background of distinguished musical achievement. At the age of seven Stolz was touring Europe as a concert pianist. At twenty he had won his spurs as a symphony conductor, a career which he continued when he began the composition of lighter music. He has been for many years, an annual guest conductor with the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra in London,

and in Europe he ranks, as a conductor, higher even than as composer. In addition to his fifty-two film musicals, Mr. Stolz is the composer of thirty-eight stage operettas, including the successful "Wild Violets", which ran for four hundred performances in London (and which may be seen on Broadway in the fall), twelve hundred popular songs, a sizable number of suites and orchestral works, and one grand opera, "Rosses of The Madonna."

Most of the music for "Spring Parade" was written in Paris, but the score was completed in New York. Henry Koster, who worked with Stolz in his foreign screen operettas, will direct as he has most of the Durbin films. Formation of the Durbin-Stolz-Pasternak-Koster quartette assures an auspicious debut for original screen operetta in America, and, with a composer as prolific as Mr. Stolz in the vanguard, the future of this new and interesting form of screen entertainment looks immensely encouraging. Anyone who remembers "Two Hearts in Waltz Time" (and who can forget it?) will want to give Robert Stolz a hearty American welcome.

Another, and purely American, popular musical art form reaches the screen with the presentation of "The Boys from Syracuse", Universal's screen version of the Rodgers and Hart Broadway musical hit, which is based (very lightly!) on Shakespeare's "A Comedy of Errors." Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, together with George and Ira Gershwin, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and a few others, have raised the level of popular music to the status of an American art. The Rodgers-Hart score for "The Boys from Syracuse" is considered the best of a long line of successful stage musicals, among them "Babes in Arms", "I Married An Angel", "I'd Rather Be Right", "Dearst Enemy", "The Connecticut Yankee", "Too Many Girls", and "High Society and Higher." In addition to the songs from the stage production (among them the popular "This Can't Be Love, Sing for Your Supper, Falling In Love With Love, and the comedy tune,

*He and She*), Rodgers and Hart have composed two new songs for the motion picture version. One of them, *The Greeks Have No Word For It*, is sung by Martha Raye, with a chorus and ballet in the background. The other, *Who Are You?* is sung by Alan Jones and Rosemary Lane.

Besides Alan Jones, Martha Raye, and Rosemary Lane, the cast includes Joe Penner, Irene Hervey, Charles Butterworth, Alan Mowbray, Eric Blore, and Samuel S. Hinds. The picture is directed by Edward Sutherland, with musical direction under the baton of Charles Previn.

The motion picture career of William Holden is progressing along instrumental lines. In "Golden Boy" Holden played the violin. In Wesley Ruggles' production of "Arizona" (Columbia Pictures), he lets go on the banjo; and Holden's performance on that lusty instrument will be



William Holden accompanies himself on the banjo when he serenades Jean Arthur in Columbia's new musical picture "Arizona."

no mere stage property. He has long been at work acquiring technical mastery of the twanging strings, and has taken as his own the typical pioneer song of Civil War days, *Betsy from Pike*.

According to Morris Stoloff, head of Columbia's music department, *Betsy* will, in all likelihood, lit its way through the picture as theme song, winding like a brilliant thread through all the multifarious musical material created (and unearthed) by laborious and accurate research for the film.

His work on the musical score of "Arizona" is one of the most interesting assignments Mr. Stoloff has had in his four years with Columbia, during which period (Continued on Page 369)

## MUSICAL FILMS

# Music in Film-land

By  
Donald Martin



HEIMO HAITTO

This amazing fifteen year old Finnish violinist genius, both of whose parents were lost in the Russian onslaught on Finland, is now a leading figure in "There's Magic in Music", the splendid new movie dealing with the National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan.

**S**CHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER RELEASE comes "There's Magic In Music". Paramount's gesture toward disseminating information about the famed National Music Camp for young Americans, at Interlochen, Michigan. Mr. Joseph E. Maddy, founder of the Camp and professor of radio music instruction at the University of Michigan, served as technical adviser the production, and many of its scenes were filmed directly at the Camp site. The picture has plot, of course, and stars, but its chief interest would seem to lie in the Music Camp itself.

The history of Interlochen began in 1928, when Mr. Maddy organized this unique, guild-like form providing musical instruction for some three hundred and sixty boys and girls from all parts of the country. Membership selection is competitive; each scholar comes as the "champion" of his section, and almost all are of 'teen age. For eight weeks, from mid-June to mid-August, the students live at the Camp; practice daily; receive instruction from recognized masters in vocal, instrumental, and group music; and work together for the learning and propagating of the best in music. Capable of anything from Bach to *The Peer Barrel Polka*, the youthful vocal and instrumental groups render Sunday concerts and broadcast over national airways. The work of Interlochen is a genuine contribution to American music-craft, and Paramount Studios have now devoted their vast facilities to making it better known.

## A Prodigy from Finland

The plot of the picture (which may or may not prove an unalloyed asset to the Michigan music camp) is a fast moving, adventuresome romance that the "Under Pup" type. A gifted young singer, found playing in burlesque, gets into difficulties when the show is raided, finds a sponsor who is interested in the Camp, and is paroled on condition that she go to the Music Camp to improve herself generally. Her adventures in adjusting to the new and new atmosphere form much of the action, and offer an excellent opportunity for

seeing Interlochen at work. It all turns out well in the end, to be sure, and the regenerated heroine saves the day for the Camp in a contest performance with big name professionals.

The cast includes Susanna Foster, Allan Jones, Lynne Overman, Margaret Lindsay, and a number of highly gifted child musicians chief among whom are William Chapman, seventeen year old baritone, and Heimo Haitto, a sensitive faced lad of fifteen, who ranks as Finland's greatest violinist. Now an orphan refugee in the United States, Heimo (Hay-mo) is making his film debut in the Interlochen picture. He left Finland after his father and brother were killed fighting the invading Russians, and his mother and younger sister were lost in the civilian retreat from Lake Ladoga. Finnish citizens, well acquainted with the boy's great gifts, urged him to come to the United States. He has been in Hollywood less than six months, and has learned to speak English. His filmed directing of a two hundred piece symphony orchestra is nothing novel to Heimo, who has conducted the Finnish Symphony Orchestra and similar organizations in Norway and Sweden. On the set, one day, when Producer-Director Andrew Stone was filming sequences near Mt. Wilson, a group of army bombers, on test flights, zoomed low over the company of picture players. Heimo saw the war-birds; with stark horror in his eyes, he mechanically dashed for cover.

"It was something I could not help," he explained later. The boy marvels at the peace and security of America (taken for granted by so many of us!), and dreams that he may one day hear that his mother and sister have not perished, but are well and sailing to join him here.

The professional opera troupe appearing in the film includes Irra Petina and Richard Bonelli, both of the Metropolitan. By way of novelty, two separate groups of singers and musicians perform the *Toreador Song* from "Carmen" and the *Trio* from "Faust", simultaneously. The music is counterpointed and the effect is satisfying, if somewhat amazing, harmony. Mr. Stone, in commenting on such streamlined overhauling of opera, explains that great music presented in distinctly modern form, will have wider appeal. Further, new words have been written for the arias, which are said to advance the plot of the picture. It all sounds daring, but Hollywood has never shown itself lacking in that

quality. "There's Magic in Music" should be good entertainment; beyond that, it deserves credit for focusing national attention upon the work of the Interlochen Music Camp.

## Music and Action Synchronized in "The Long Voyage Home"

In directing Eugene O'Neill's sea drama, "The Long Voyage Home" (for Argosy, at Walter Wanger Studios), John Ford has managed to combine a distinguished story, the spirit of the sea, and a novel and interesting method of musical treatment. This new sea play is an intimate drama, a group of virile social outcasts at sea, who hunger for the land, and grow impatient and fabled to handle as their confinement aboard continues month after month. Realism and simplicity sound the keynote for the picture, and its mood has been adroitly recaptured in the score. Mr. Ford has striven for tonal effects which, in their form as well as in their content, express the



ALLAN JONES and SUSANNA FOSTER  
Stars in "There's Magic in Music"

basic spirit of the action. His theory of musical obbligato is that motion pictures must avoid a mere accompaniment of sound; rather, the music must become an integral part of the action itself. All of which is sound reasoning, based on the precedent of experience and Wagnerian music drama. Frequently, explains Mr. Ford, we witness a filmed scene of struggle—war bits or street fighting—where turbulent music is required, but what happens is that the studio's symphony orchestra supplies the sound, regardless of the fact that symphonic renditions are seldom available at the moment when the fighting actually occurs, and are consequently quite out of harmony with the actuality of such a scene. Similarly, a cottage scene may show a man (Continued on Page 711)

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