

THE NEW YORK POPS

SKITCH HENDERSON FOUNDER

Notes on the Program

by Rob Fisher

Friday, March 24, 2006, 8:00PM, Carnegie Hall

Cinema Soundtracks

It doesn't take long to realize the importance of music in film. What's your first thought at the mention of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*? I'll bet it's the screech of strings as Janet Leigh takes her last shower. With *Jaws* – the sound of those famous two notes written by John Williams.

The first movies, of course, had no sound, but were instead accompanied by a live improvisational pianist or a full-fledged orchestra. Eventually scores were written expressly for specific movies. When writers flocked to Hollywood, classically trained composers were not far behind. Soundtrack albums, made up of original orchestral scores, defined "music" to many people who knew nothing of symphonies. At the time, the definition of a true intellectual was someone who could listen to Rossini's *William Tell Overture* without thinking of the Lone Ranger.

Soundtracks have become so important that some of Hollywood's most successful directors really want to be composers. Steven Spielberg spends an inordinate amount of time with his frequent collaborator John Williams preparing the scoring of their most famous films. Indeed, it was Spielberg himself who came up with the haunting five-note theme of the alien mother ship in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

It's important to remember that Hollywood is merely state of mind. Movie music doesn't necessarily emanate solely from the smog-soaked studios in California. A lot of the music comes from right here in New York, often recorded by members of the New York Pops. Soundtracks to movies as diverse as Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, the Coen Brothers' *The Hudsucker Proxy*, de Palma's *Dressed to Kill*, and even a movie called *Doc Hollywood* were recorded in this very city and feature musicians onstage tonight.

Many of our most beloved songs were introduced in a film. Our guests tonight include Ann Hampton Callaway and Liz Callaway, two extraordinarily fine singers and ladies of the theater who will sing some of these songs. Yes they are sisters, but we'll get to that in Act II. Also on the program is the Five Towns College Choir from Long Island, a group whose sound caught Skitch's ear in a way that he wanted to share with you.

I'm sure you all have your own favorite themes, favorite composers, and favorite movies. Hopefully we agree on some and have piqued your curiosity with the rest.

Enjoy!

Rob Fisher