

the cutting of these situations and at times is able to create situations in a picture that, from first appearances, the film would not permit. Summing up, a thorough knowledge of film editing is perhaps the best requisite for success in almost any branch of the production end of this business, and particularly where direction is concerned. Directors who have risen from the ranks of editors are among the ace directors of the business, having found that their knowledge of editing is of untold value to them in their work.

MR. TASKER: When the film editor has finally finished his work, the next step is to prepare a musical accompaniment for the picture. This is the work of Mr. Charles Previn, who will discuss the problem of "Setting Music to Pictures."

### SETTING MUSIC TO PICTURES

CHARLES PREVIN\*

The scope of the subject of setting music to motion pictures is so broad that I hardly know where to begin. However, the picture is turned over to the music department, and we are told, "Well, here is a picture. Can you have the music all ready for it by tomorrow?"

We then go over it with the director—if he is available, or the assistant director, and others, and ask them to give us their ideas as to where music would help the scenes in the picture. Then I get an assistant cutter to time the sequences, which he does by running the film through a footage counter to measure the length of each scene to which we are required to put music. Then the length in feet is converted into seconds of time, so, as an example, we find that we have two minutes and thirtyseconds in a given sequence to set to music. We get a complete idea of the picture, what it is all about—the scenes, the dialog in different spots; and in writing the music try to catch the mood of the dialog and of the scene and plot.

Sometimes the director himself does not know exactly what is required. For example, I might be told that a certain scene was intended to be dramatic, and that I should build up the situation with dramatic music. Later, hearing the dramatic music I had put into the scene, he might say that it was too "heavy," that I had taken the scene too seriously; it was not what he wanted, but rather something

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lighter. Then I would have to start at the beginning and do the whole thing over again.

*At this point, by way of illustration, a scene from "Wings-over Honolulu" was projected upon the screen. The sequence showed the scene of a quarrel between two lovers, and was projected first with a background of dramatic music and later with a background of music in a lighter vein.*

The first music, whether you consciously recognized the fact or not, makes a very serious matter out of what is a mere lovers' quarrel. The situation was not very serious, and the picture should not give the impression that it was. When the director saw the scene with the dramatic music, he decided that it was too "heavy" and wanted us to lighten it a bit. The second score was the result, with a great improvement, as you will agree.

All the music for these pictures is originally written for the pictures, except in special instances such as in *One Hundred Men and a Girl*, for which Mr. Stokowski plays the classical masterpieces. In most of the pictures coming out of Hollywood nowadays, the music must be originally written for them. Every picture presents new problems, new thoughts, and new ideas, and the music to be written for it has, I might say, no yardstick. As I mentioned before, we measure the music by seconds, and for that reason we can not take any set music and apply it to a certain length of film. Besides, if we used the old masterpieces that have become so familiar, attention would be distracted from the picture to the music, because of familiarity with the music.

In writing the music it is very necessary to do things mechanically up to a certain point, and then to forget the mechanical element. Writing the music into a given space of time is the mechanical part, but we must get the feeling into the scene that the director means to portray.

*At this point, and for further illustration, the scene from a picture "Parole" was projected, showing the effect of the background music in heightening the dramatic intensity of the scene.*

MR. TASKER: And now at last all the essential elements of the completed picture have been prepared, and we are ready to assemble a final sound-track to accompany the action. A number of persons are involved in this final step, including music cutters, sound-effects cutters, and the dubbing crew, and in charge of all these is the dubbing mixer. This final step will be described by Mr. Edwin Wetzel, dubbing mixer.