

FILM SCORE

M O N T H L Y

The Compact
Disc Affair
page 2

BOND TURNS 40

David Arnold's
assignment to *Die for*
PLUS: Bond CDs
are back in action

ROSS EVERLASTING

From *Dynasty* to
Chamber of Secrets

RESTORATION MAN

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CONTENTS

FILM SCORE™
MONTHLY

NOVEMBER 2002

cover story

20 An Assignment to DIE For

While Madonna's song may very well be the worst Bond main title ever, perhaps David Arnold's score for *Die Another Day* will be more your cup of tea.

By Nick Joy

27 Deserves Another Disc

28 They Only Re-release Twice

features

15 Long Live the Good Ol' Days

Omaha's famed Orpheum Theater gets a \$10 million renovation—and shows it off with a gala screening of Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*.

By Chris Matthew Sciabarra

16 Restoration Man

On a tireless quest to uncover and preserve Hollywood treasures, Turner Entertainment's George Feltenstein has managed to turn his life-long love of movie music and classic musicals into a day job.

By Mark Griffin

18 Ross Everlasting

Having recently completed his work on *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, composer/orchestrator William Ross discusses a career that has spanned from TV's *Dynasty* to this year's feature *Tuck Everlasting*—and nearly everything in between.

By Jeff Bond

30 All I Want for Xmas Is 12 CDs

Here's a wish list for all of you music execs out there who happen to be in particularly giving moods this holiday season.

By Chris Stavrakis and John Bender

departments

2 Editorial

The Compact Disc Affair.

4 News

Big Bond News!

5 Record Label Round-up

What's on the way.

6 Now Playing

Movies and CDs in release.

8 Upcoming Film Assignments

Who's writing what for whom.

10 Concerts

Live performances around the globe.

10 Shopping List

11 Mail Bag

Stamping Out Homophony.

13 Downbeat

My Big, Fat Film Score.

32 Score

The latest CD reviews, including: *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *Frida*, *The Four Feathers*, *Rebecca* and more.

45 The Laserphile

Holiday Buyer's Guide.

10 Classified Ads

35 Marketplace



Gotta sing...gotta dance...
gotta produce!
page 16



Check out this year's model.
page 20



E.T. comes home (again).
page 45

ON THE COVER: WHAT MID-LIFE CRISIS?

Film Score Monthly (ISSN 1077-4289) is published monthly for \$36.95 per year by Vineyard Haven LLC., 8503 Washington Blvd, Culver City, CA 90232. Periodicals postage paid at Culver City, CA and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send Address changes to Film Score Monthly, 8503 Washington Blvd, Culver City, CA 90232

An old theater is reborn to the sounds of *West Side Story*.

Long Live the Good Ol' Days

By Chris Matthew Sciabarra

When 1961's Academy Award-winning musical *West Side Story* was dusted off for a November 11 big-screen showing in Omaha, Nebraska, it made its debut in a restored Orpheum Theater. The theater, which first opened in 1927 amidst Florentine drinking fountains, hand-carved gilded furniture, and an ornate gold leaf and ivory lobby, once welcomed the likes of Fanny Brice, Al Jolson, Benny Goodman, Lucille Ball, Bob Hope, Jack Benny, Tommy Dorsey, Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Lawrence Welk and W.C. Fields.

Standing on the site of a 19th-century vaudeville house, the Orpheum recently underwent a \$10 million renovation. New heating, air-conditioning, doors, carpets, and sound locks, 2,400 re-upholstered seats, more rigging space, dressing rooms and restrooms were all in place for the September 2 ribbon cutting. The official ceremony and all-day

tours drew nearly 4,000 people, "many of whom remembered it from the time of their childhood or as the scene of a first date," says Joan Squires, president of the Omaha Performing Arts Society. Squires reports that a recent performance of the Omaha Symphony Orchestra was all the more impressive because of the remarkably improved acoustics of the theater, providing a more immediate experience for audience and performers alike.

West Side Story was the first major motion picture shown on the Orpheum screen in recent memory. It is perhaps no surprise that the Robert Wise-directed movie, which garnered 10 Oscars in 1961, including Best Picture, was resurrected by film aficionado and events wizard Bruce Crawford. Crawford, 45, is the creator of two internationally acclaimed radio documentaries on film composers Bernard Herrmann and Miklós Rózsa.

His work has attracted the BBC, which invited him to be a consulting editor on the forthcoming six-part documentary *Music to the Movies*. But he has also been organizing Omaha film events for 10 years, hosting such stars as Alan Young, Janet Leigh, Patricia Neal, Billy Gray, Ann Rutherford and science-fiction writer Ray Bradbury. Equal parts film historian, documentary producer, lecturer, writer and promoter, Crawford began his gala Omaha movie celebrations in 1992 with a tribute to special-effects legend Ray Harryhausen.

The events, which have benefited such organizations as the Nebraska AIDS Project and the National Kidney Foundation—and this year, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Omaha—began as little more than combination film showings and memorabilia gatherings. They have mushroomed into Busby

(continued on page 48)



Mid-West Side Story: Bruce Crawford with Marni Nixon and Russ Tamblyn; the restored marquee; Tamblyn tickles the ivories.

run (the first of which used an unnecessary, canned laugh track) on ABC. Buena Vista's box-set contains every episode from *Sports Night*, and while there are no extras to be found, it's a gold mine of strong performances and equally fine writing that you needn't be a sports fan to enjoy.

Star Trek: The Next Generation Season 5 (Paramount, \$99)

A visit from Leonard Nimoy's Mr. Spock (in the two-part "Unification") and several memorable episodes ("The Inner Light," "The Perfect Mate") fuel this fifth box-set of TNG shows from Paramount. Featurettes in this bountiful edition include a tribute to Gene Roddenberry (who passed away during the fifth season), segments on the special effects and makeup, and a closer examination of the season cliffhanger, "Time's Arrow." There's also a bonus mini-disc containing *Star Trek: Nemesis* PC content, including screen savers, desktops and the trailer. With seasons six and seven due for release by January, the studio will reportedly turn its attention to *Deep Space Nine* for a DVD release sometime in 2003.

Felicity (Buena Vista, \$59)

J. Abrams' chronicle of a naïve freshman (Keri Russell) finding her way in the Big Apple after chasing her would-be love (Scott Speedman) to college had a solid four seasons on the teen-friendly WB network. While the program was infuriating at times in its inability to strike a consistent balance between growing-up angst, comic situations and maudlin soap opera depression, there were gems sprinkled throughout the show's run, along with amiable performances and smart writing. This first-season box-set offers selected audio commentaries by the show's creators.

Project Greenlight (Buena Vista, \$69)

Ben Affleck and Matt Damon's *Star Search* for indie filmmakers turned out to be more successful at producing an entertaining documentary series for HBO than a good big-screen feature (the resulting film from the script they selected, *Stolen Summer*, is eminently forgettable). The 12-episode series looks at the selection process and the crazy production that ensued once director Pete Jones began shooting his original, contest-winning screenplay. What results from the mayhem is a captivating look at the filmmaking process, even if the show's detractors felt that it played up the negatives far too often. Extras include the finished feature, commentary, other submitted videos, press-junket snippets, a brief conversation with Kevin Smith and more. Compulsively watchable! **FSM**

Additional columns can be found online at Andy's Aisle Seat, www.filmscoremonthly.com/aisleseat. You can reach Andy via email at dursina@att.net

Long Live the Good Ol' Days

(continued from page 15)

Berkeley-style extravaganzas, with dancers, musical performers, dramatic readings, and well-crafted speeches.

Crawford's theatrical approach was a perfect complement to both the Orpheum stage and *West Side Story*. Delighted by the Orpheum's renaissance, Crawford was ecstatic to have brought those Leonard Bernstein-Sondheim classic songs to the big screen again. On hand to celebrate was the actual singer of many of those songs: Marni Nixon, who dubbed for Natalie Wood in the film, just as she did for Audrey Hepburn in *My Fair Lady* and Deborah Kerr in *The King and I*. Nixon gave a lesson on the mechanics of film dubbing for an audience of about 1,200 people. Also appearing to whistles and cheers was Russ Tamblyn, who played the role of Riff.

Restoration Man

(continued from page 17)

and 1951 on optical nitrate film and began to transfer them to quarter-inch magnetic tape—used tape stock that had been degaussed. That's not a good method for preservation to say the least. A lot of the albums that I've done have been derived from these tapes, and that's why we have to use No Noise [a digital noise-reduction tool] to dramatically restore the sound. Even so, it often sounds like someone is coming out of a sand storm due to the added tape hiss. A lot of the paperwork for the music department was saved by Scott Perry, who worked

Ross Everlasting

(continued from page 19)

fiddle parts. If you need the orchestra, the solo players seem comfortable playing with synth mock-ups. As you work through the process, the closer you get to the final orchestra sessions, the more you're working with finished performances. It's nice to watch things evolve and take shape. In the end, it's all mixed in and around the orchestra and, hopefully, creates a seamless musical experience."

Ross's most recent assignment was conducting the score to *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* for John Williams. The score was recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra at Abbey Road Studios in London. "Working with John was truly one of the great musical experiences of my life. I have such great respect for his music, his work ethic, and the gracious and humble manner with which he treats people."

Tamblyn talked about how hard it was to rehearse all those great dance moves; he provided a virtual prologue to the Omaha Theater Ballet, which performed the opening music from the film in a spectacular homage to choreographer Jerome Robbins.

Crawford is no stranger to theater preservation; back in 1991, he contributed to an unsuccessful letter-writing campaign, enlisting the help of screen giants Charlton Heston and Kirk Douglas and movie critic Leonard Maltin, to save the Indian Hills Theater, the world's largest Cinerama. Perhaps because of this campaign's failure, Crawford has an even greater appreciation of the legendary Orpheum. He is honored to now be among those "writing a new chapter in its history" on the occasion of its 75th anniversary. **FSM**

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Bruce Crawford's website address is: www.omahafilmevent.com/bcrawford.htm.

in the MGM sound department. [Perry] saved the books and documents from the recording sessions that say, "This song was recorded on this day, by this person and this take was used." If we hadn't saved that paperwork, I would be blindly moving forward not knowing what I'm working with.

FSM: So, while we're on the subject, what is George Feltenstein's favorite musical?

GF: Oh, this is going to be really shocking 'cause it's a film you've never heard of...*Singin' in the Rain*. *Gone With the Wind* is my favorite movie of all time and *Singin' in the Rain* is my favorite musical. I know it's boring, but those movies still thrill me the same way they did when I was a kid. **FSM**

As for the future, Ross once again finds a variety of work coming his way. "I've been asked to produce and arrange some of Barbra Streisand's next album. I'm in discussions with Jay Russell about his next film. Josh Groban, a Warner Bros. artist whose first album I enjoyed working on, is planning a second album and I'm hoping to be involved in that. I really do enjoy the diversity. I feel fortunate to be able to work in a profession that I find so interesting and enjoyable." **FSM**

EDITOR'S NOTE: By now you're probably wondering why there's so little mention of Ross' work on *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Originally, there was to be a lot more. However, shortly after Jeff Bond's initial interview with him, Ross relayed to us his apprehension about any of his comments about John Williams and *Harry Potter* being misconstrued or in some way violating Williams' privacy. He requested the consent of Williams himself. Unfortunately, our deadline didn't allow for the time it would've taken for this approval—and we were committed to filling a specific editorial space—so we felt that cutting the material was our best option.