

David Newman: Preserving the Past

The composer conducts his third and final concert in “The Goldsmith Project.”

By Justin Craig



David Newman, rehearsing with the American Youth Symphony.

Not too long ago, classical music sprouted into a powerful new medium—recorded sound for moving pictures. When Max Steiner composed his legendary score to *King Kong* in 1933, the mentality was that the music would only live within the film, its preservation only existing within the recorded soundtrack. Composers did not look at future possible uses of their film scores. It didn't cross Alfred Newman's mind to preserve his written manuscripts for his films like *Captain From Castile* to later be performed in a concert hall. Why would he? It was written for a film and it was already recorded, so why save it?

Today, there are specialty labels preserving previously recorded scores to beloved Golden and Silver-aged films. There are even labels like Tadlow and Tribute Film Classics reconstructing lost scores from the composer's available sketches or manuscripts, creating brand new state-of-the-art recordings. However, the number of preservationists like James Fitzpatrick, William Stromberg and John Morgan are few.

While there is a boom in the preservation of recordings, there is still a major void when it comes to the preservation of original sketches and manuscripts to be performed in concert. One champion of preserving written scores from those bygone eras is composer and conductor David Newman. With ears firmly fixed in the past and eyes on the future, Newman and his wife Krystyna launched “The Goldsmith Project” two years ago with the hope of saving the work of Jerry Goldsmith while spreading awareness of the craft to a new and younger audience.

March 13th, at the beautiful Royce Hall on UCLA's campus, marked the rousing

finale to “The Goldsmith Project,” the final installment of a “three-year multidisciplinary project exploring the work of one of the most respected composers in Hollywood history.” Aided by film music historian Jon Burlingame, Newman set off on an exploration through almost six decades of Goldsmith’s music. Performing the selected works was The American Youth Symphony, a pre-professional orchestra founded 47 years ago.

Newman, who also performed in the orchestra in his youth, chose Goldsmith as his inaugural composer for a variety of reasons. First he wanted to focus on a Los Angeles-based composer and “hit on Jerry’s stuff because there’s a lot of it and it sounds great live in concert. [But] a lot of his work needs engraving and music prep work.”

In addition, Newman refers to Goldsmith as “the 20th century master of film music,” and believes Goldsmith’s developmental style of scoring influenced every film composer that has come since, “particularly his action style. He had a very particular action style that was visceral, full of body and intellectual.” As a member of the Board of the AYS, Newman began raising money to start the project.

Recalling Goldsmith

With Goldsmith’s career spanning half a century and featuring hundreds of credits, Newman parsed the project in a reasonable way. Focusing on as many important scores as he could, he broke down the three concerts into Goldsmith’s early, middle and later careers. The most important aspect of the concerts, keeping in sync with the goal of preservation, was to premiere as many of Jerry’s works as possible. And “on each concert we did something that was brand new that no one had any parts or scores.”

In the first installment of “The Goldsmith Project” in 2009, Newman and the AYS performed *A Patch of Blue*. The parts were long gone and Newman reconstructed the score to be performed. Additionally, he was able to secure Tommy Morgan, the original harmonica player for the score, to perform.



The same year, Newman also conducted Jerry’s music to the *Twilight Zone* episode “The Invaders.” David had to copy the parts from Jerry’s originals, which now

belong to Varèse Sarabande's Robert Townson.

Last year, Newman conducted Goldsmith's original end title to *Alien* as well as the cue "In the Shaft." Both pieces needed heavy reconstruction and restoration to be in any condition to be performed live.

For the final year, Newman took the daunting task of tackling the last two decades of Goldsmith's career. The 1980s—Goldsmith's "electronic" years—were especially difficult for Newman to assemble, particularly in recreating that early "Goldsmithian" synth sound. The synthesizer was showcased in a few pieces; the first being the inaugural concert performance of *Under Fire*. The suite featured the love theme and "Bajo Fuego," a *tour de force* written for the album presentation of the score that agent Richard Kraft said Jerry could have "written on a Thursday afternoon." *Under Fire* was expertly played by the AYS with a sensational guitar solo by Paul Nelson. Never infringing on the music, the electronics blended smoothly with the orchestra.

The second suite to feature Goldsmith's early electronics was easily one of the highlights of the concert—*Legend*. Most film music fans know the story of Goldsmith's involvement in the Ridley Scott fantasy. Goldsmith's epic masterpiece was tossed out by the studio and replaced by music from the electronic rock band Tangerine Dream. The AYS and chorus performed a lengthy selection from the film in which Princess Lily, lost and running through the Dark Lord's palace, discovers some jewels that begin her temptation to the dark side. The piece led into Goldsmith's brilliantly deranged "Dress Waltz."



There were many factors fighting against *Legend* being preserved. Goldsmith was furious over the treatment and rejection of his score that he never wanted to speak about it to anyone, so there was no information regarding parts, markings, orchestrations, etc. Also, the score was recorded in Europe and over the years the parts were all but lost. It wasn't until recently that Newman found copies of the sketches at a prep house in Los Angeles that did copying for Goldsmith over the years. However, finding the copies wasn't enough. "They weren't really great copies; they were reduced. There was a lot of work done on it, too. At least we had the sketches with which to do it."



Undoing the Studio's Bad Taste: David Newman rehearsing the “Dress Waltz” scene from *Legend*.

The outcome was nothing short of awe-inspiring. Newman incorporated a section of music into the piece that Goldsmith had originally written for the scene but that Scott dialed out. Apart from the original recording sessions, the AYS's performance of *Legend* was the first time anyone has ever heard the complete “Dress Waltz” sequence as the composer originally intended.

Every piece performed during the concert, from the hair-raising *Twilight Zone: The Movie* overture to the indelible action cue “Roxie Loses” from *Basic Instinct*, from the eerie waterphone utilized in *Poltergeist* to the complete finale from *Rudy*, showcased Goldsmith's brilliance as well as the utmost importance of having film music performed live.

Saving the Past for Future Generations

As the sun eventually set on the studio system, composers, producers and studio heads alike neglected the preservation of the art form. Full scores, sketches and parts were either lost or trashed. “I don't think anyone could have imagined, in Jerry's era or my father's era particularly, that this stuff would be played as much as it is played now,” says Newman. “That just wasn't on their radar. It's a recorded medium so no one really took care of traditionally publishing the music: fixing it, editing it, fixing the parts, making sure the mistakes are corrected, making errata lists.” Another goal of Newman's is to mimic the preservation of classical music by cataloging film scores with errata lists—lists of corrections or mistakes in scores that enable orchestras to perform the best possible version of a work—into a database so that orchestras around the world can add film music to their seasonal repertoires.



Newman is confident that orchestras around the world have an eager desire to perform film music. However, it is just too hard at the moment. “It’s hard enough for us who live in Los Angeles and have connections to all the studios and all the copyists. It’s hard enough for us to get it done. I can’t imagine someone in Europe calling and say they want to do something from my father’s *Captain From Castile*. It’s impossible. They could do maybe one piece from this or that but they can’t do whatever they want to do. It’s expensive and the orchestrations are sometimes difficult and there’s nobody there to hold their hand and take them through it and explain ways in which they can do things; all things that a music publisher can help with.”

There is hope, though. Newman is in the unique position of being in Hollywood surrounded by the prep and copy houses that can help salvage those lost scores for future performances. But, like everything else, it costs money. Newman, his wife Krystyna, The Film Music Society and the AYS are focused on gaining as much support as possible to preserve film music for future generations.

The musicians of the American Youth Symphony are growing up in a very different period and style of film music than even a decade ago as Jerry was composing his final scores. Newman has watched the young ensemble grow with Goldsmith’s music over the past three years to a grand and full appreciation. “They love it! It’s funny because at the end of every rehearsal, I don’t want to play through *Star Trek* because I know they know how to play it, but they always insist on playing it before we finish the rehearsal. So I think that says something about the whole thing. Most of them are having a blast and are very involved in it. It’s fun to play and it’s really good music.”

The preservation and education of film music has been a tremendous success for Newman and the American Youth Symphony. While staying tight-lipped about possible composers, Newman is already in the planning stages for future concerts. Later in the year, though, Newman will be back on the podium in Los Angeles, New York and Chicago with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the New York

Philharmonic and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, respectively, conducting the full score of *West Side Story* to picture, spreading film music appreciation and preservation from coast to coast.

—FSMO

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