

Music of the 'Silents'

'ALLEGRO VIGOROSO' - a prelude to violence

The Sam Fox Music Publishing Company has given us permission to present an *agitato* by one of the most prolific writers of silent film music, J. S. Zamecnik. It was a rare movie *cue sheet* which didn't list at least one tune by this master of mood music. His descriptive pieces run into the hundreds and most of them were published for use in film accompaniments during the great decade of the silent era. "J.S." also managed to turn out a number of "hits", too, *Indian Dawn* and *Neopolitan Nights* to name those which come to mind easily. There were others, but descriptive music was the Zamecnik forte.

Allegro Vigoroso will probably be easier to play for *duffer-class* organists than was our initial tune in this series, *Dirty Work at the Crossroads*, mainly because the melody here is where one might expect it -- comfortably in the right hand part. Note that our guide for the series, organist Harry Jenkins, has included chord symbols. That's a generous gesture toward the *duffers* but for a tune with only four chords, it's hardly necessary. Most *danger music* was written in the minor, mainly because the minor mode seems more sinister and sad to most occidental ears (an unexplained phenomenon which doesn't hold true for the Orient nor even for most Slavic countries where happy songs may be written in the minor).

As for registration, the melody line calls for a big bold and brassy combination with lots of 16'foot sound on the solo manual. The accompaniment can be much lighter with emphasis on strings, a combination with enough *edge* to make the *chopping* chords heard through the solo. The title suggests the tempo. Minimum trem, if any.

The theme has a sinister boldness which suggests villainy ("Aha, my proud beauty -- what will you give

me for this mortgage?"), a gathering storm, a mutinous mood aboard the HMS Bounty or perhaps a smouldering volcano with evil intentions -- whatever the imagination conjures on hearing it.

Of course, this is only a fragment of the fully developed theme, but it is much more than the *cue sheet* normally provided as a guide to the film accompanist. So, after learning the basic theme, use it as the basis of a

development, an improvisation. It provides a fine springboard.

One other thing; if the theme seems vaguely familiar there's a reason. Besides being an arranger, Harry Jenkins is also a tune detective. He traced this theme to Dvorak's *New World* Symphony, from which Zamecnik apparently excerpted and adapted it.

Now, ready for a prelude to violence -- *Allegro Vigoroso*.

No. 2 in a series

Allegro Vigoroso

A CLASSIC 'HURRY'

J. S. Zamecnik
Arranged by
Harry J. Jenkins

1919

Solo

Acc.

Pedal

Am

Dm⁶

E⁷

Dm⁷

Am

E⁷

Am

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