

Music for ALFRED HITCHCOCK

BERNARD HERRMANN

1 ***The Man Who Knew Too Much: Concert Overture*** (1956; ed. Mauceri)* 1:57

FRANZ WAXMAN

2 ***Rebecca: Suite*** (1940; ed. Mauceri) 8:22

Rear Window: Suite (1954; ed. Mauceri) 9:20

3 I Prelude 2:14

4 II Lisa – Intermezzo 3:10

5 III Ballet 1:46

6 IV Lisa – Finale 2:10

DIMITRI TIOMKIN

7 ***Strangers on a Train: Suite*** (1951; ed. Mauceri)* 8:39

8 ***Dial M for Murder: Suite*** (1954; ed. Mauceri)* 7:47

BERNARD HERRMANN

Vertigo (1958) 9:32

9 Prelude 2:58

10 *Scène d'Amour* 6:46

11 ***North by Northwest: main titles*** (1959) 2:47

12 ***Psycho: A Narrative for String Orchestra*** (1960/1968; restored and ed. Mauceri)* 15:42

ARTHUR BENJAMIN

13 ***The Man Who Knew Too Much: The Storm Clouds – Cantata*** (1934; arr. Herrmann, 1956) 9:33

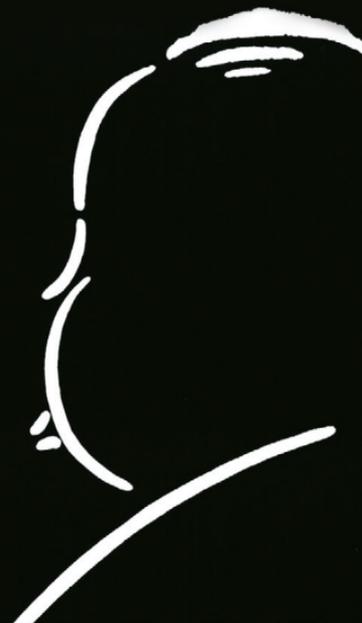
DANNY ELFMAN

14 ***Hitchcock: Music from the End Credits*** (2012) 4:50

*FIRST RECORDINGS



Music for Alfred HITCHCOCK



HERRMANN *Psycho ~ Vertigo*
The Man Who Knew Too Much
North by Northwest

WAXMAN
Rebecca ~ Rear Window

TIOMKIN
Strangers on a Train
Dial M for Murder

BENJAMIN
Storm Clouds Cantata

ELFMAN *Hitchcock*

Danish National Symphony Orchestra
John Mauceri, conductor

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

THE MUSIC OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK

by John Mauceri

Directors don't write music, of course. They hire composers. They collaborate with composers. They make demands on composers. And they can fire composers. Alfred Hitchcock was not a composer, and yet because of his intense understanding of the crucial partnership between the cinematic image and the aura created by music, he was the enabling partner of the composers who created hundreds of hours of important orchestral music that remain a major legacy of the twentieth century. His profound importance as a film-maker is bound to the musical world that informs his films. He knew that cinema and music create an alchemy of experience and that each story requires a unique music to tell that story. It is therefore not surprising that this CD should include music of many styles, and all of it representative of the most important composers who worked in the medium. The music here is romantic, grotesque, humorous, terrifying, glamorous, atonal, jazzy, Baroque, epic and intimate, tender and violent.

Several of Hitchcock's composers were men who escaped the horrors of war and revolution in Europe and Russia, came to America and triumphed in the burgeoning world of cinema music, and died as American citizens.

Rebecca [2] required a darkly romantic score and Franz Waxman, trained in Germany's major conservatories, was exactly the right composer to create that aural world. Waxman was also a jazz musician and played in a Jewish jazz-band in Berlin. So he also provided the pop/jazz score for *Rear Window* [3]-[6], one of Hitchcock's most revolutionary films – because all the music is meant to emanate from the windows of New York apartments and thus represents art-music disguised as the music of everyday Americans in the 1950s.

The two scores by the Russian-born Dimitri Tiomkin juxtapose styles in a way that perfectly matches the requirements of the stories. *Strangers on a Train* [7] tells a tale of a professional tennis-player and a psychotic fan. The score includes Gershwin-like jazz (Tiomkin had played the solo part in the European premiere of Gershwin's *Concerto in F* at the Paris Opéra in 1928), predatory evil, passionate romanticism and fugal writing in the style of Bach. Tiomkin's personal training and experience made this range of styles natural to him. He knew the Russian masters well and had been a student of Glazunov in St Petersburg. He loved American ragtime music, which he first encountered as a student. He studied in Berlin with the futurist composer-teacher Ferruccio Busoni. Busoni is famous for his Bach transcriptions, and so it is natural that Tiomkin saw the fugue, which is a problem-solving musical process, as a perfect way to underscore the solving of a mystery.



Live recording made on 23 and 24 November 2012 in DR Koncerthuset, The Concert Hall, Copenhagen
Recording producer: Bernhard Güttler
Recording engineer: Jan Oldrup
Editing and mastering: Bernhard Güttler
Musical assistant to John Mauceri: Michael Dwinell, with Chris Heckman, Mark Haas and Aaron Shows
Orchestral producer: Curt Kollavik Jensen
Co-ordination for DNSO: Hans Sørensen

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The strong, straightforward musical personality of the DNSO has its roots in its close links with Danish and other Nordic music. The Orchestra is the leading Carl Nielsen orchestra in the world, and often takes Nielsen's music on tours abroad. The leading contemporary Scandinavian symphonist, Per Nørgård, has had most of his symphonies premiered by the DNSO. Nørgård is, moreover, the only 'honorary member' of the Orchestra.

The DNSO tours both at home and abroad. In recent years it has performed in China and Korea and played in Europe's finest concert halls – the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Musikverein and Konzerthaus in Vienna, the Philharmonia in Berlin and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris – and has appeared at festivals like the Proms, the Salzburg Festival and Prague Spring. It has recorded innumerable CDs for such labels as Dacapo, Decca, Chandos and EMI, receiving awards for its recordings from all over the world.

The Danish National Symphony Orchestra gives 70 concerts per year. The weekly Thursday Concerts are a unique concert series that has taken place since 1932. Every week these concerts are broadcast live by Danish Radio and many of them are transmitted on TV as well.

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This stylistic generosity becomes even more important in his score to *Dial M for Murder* [8]. Like Waxman, who created the beautiful 'Lisa' theme as a metaphor for Grace Kelly in *Rear Window*, Tiomkin gives Miss Kelly an elegant and beautiful waltz, but surrounds that music with a Russian monumentality and a truly terrifying expansion of Mussorgsky's musical depiction of murder and guilt in the opera *Boris Godunov*. Once again, the solving of the crime is accompanied by a hardworking fugue and brings the story to a stirring conclusion.

Only Steven Spielberg's partnership with John Williams and that of Tim Burton with Danny Elfman equal Hitchcock's relationship with Bernard Herrmann, whose *Vertigo* remains the longest score to any Hitchcock film. The opening music [9] is a rondo that alternates between circles of competing harmonies in contrary motion, punctuated with unpredictable and roaring brass notes that make one feel as if the floor has just dropped, and a descending motif that crashes like a tidal wave of obsession, which is the energy that fuels the story. This obsession theme becomes the *Scène d'Amour* [10] sequence. Based on the Wagnerian DNA of *Liebestod*, its repeated call-and-answer perfectly expresses the trap of compulsive-obsessive behaviour.

Psycho is scored only for string instruments and makes use of every technique in playing those instruments – *arco*, *pizzicato*, muted, *tremolo*, harmonics, *col legno battuta*, etc. – to create a world of black-and-white terror. It is perhaps Herrmann's major achievement because it is so controlled and so inventive. Although the score was completed in 1960, Herrmann revisited this music while living in London, and created from it a single orchestral work, *A Narrative for String Orchestra* [12], in 1968. It had to wait until 1999, the Hitchcock centenary year, for its first concert performance, which took place in Los Angeles with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra.

The Man Who Knew Too Much is a rare example of Hitchcock remaking a movie, and so it simultaneously represents his early, London, period (1934) and embraces his Hollywood years. Herrmann composed the score to this later (1956) version but chose to keep the original 1934 cantata, composed by Arthur Benjamin, and expand it for the big-screen colour version that starred James Stewart and Doris Day. Benjamin's score is very much of the school of Vaughan Williams and with the Herrmann expansion it becomes even more epic than in its much shorter original [13].

Danny Elfman's score to Sacha Gervasi's 2012 biopic *Hitchcock*, based on the filming of *Psycho*, brings this disc into the 21st century. Elfman has often said that it was the music of Bernard Herrmann that first inspired him to become a composer for the cinema. In these excerpts from his score to *Hitchcock* [14], one feels the subtle control of harmonies and colours as well as the distension of melodic materials of a Herrmann score, translated through the prism of Elfman's unique expression of sadness and longing.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK AND HIS COMPOSERS

by John Riley

For some film-makers the arrival of synchronised sound was a traumatic experience. Of course, 'silent' films had been accompanied by musicians, and various systems of synchronised pre-recorded sound had had different degrees of success before 1927, when the release of the talking (and singing) Al Jolson film *The Jazz Singer* heralded that seismic change – as much an economic and marketing triumph as an artistic or technical one. But though film-makers (well, actually the studios) were now in control of the fixed and permanent soundscape of a film, there were hurdles to overcome and some found that the new medium cramped their style, leading to static scenes full of the wrong sort of tension.

Nevertheless sound was incredibly popular with audiences and in most countries those studios that could do so quickly began to re-equip themselves. By 1930, after a brief transitional period when both silent and sound films were made, the USA and the major film-producing European countries had moved almost completely over to sound.

In Britain Alfred Hitchcock was completing his ninth feature, *Blackmail*, when sound arrived in 1929. British International Pictures (BIP) decided to complete it before embarking on a sound version. Hitchcock removed and added footage, re-edited it all, and added a soundtrack that, for a first-timer, has some astonishingly audacious sonic effects. The most famous is the 'knife' scene, where the subjective sound buries the listener in the murderess' feelings of guilt as a conversation about knives sinks into a blur apart from the one recurring clear word: 'KNIFE!'

The silent/sound period was paralleled by multilingual versions using the same sets and, occasionally, casts. So, for instance, a Spanish version of *Dracula* was shot after Bela Lugosi had retired for the night. BIP had made a number of such films and in 1930 Hitchcock adapted *Enter Sir John*, Clemence Dane's and Helen Simpson's novel, which they had already turned into a play, to create *Mary* and the German-language *Mord – Sir John Greift ein!*, released the following year.

Hitchcock took to sound-cinema with amazing speed and facility, and from the beginning used the new medium with a natural flair and creativity. In a way, he never stopped making silent films: some of his most striking sequences are the 'pure cinema' of image and sound, rather than wordy 'radio with pictures', and he was sometimes content to leave entire reels devoid of speech. His visuals often imply music or sound, in, for instance, his frequent theatrical settings, often as a blackly comic counterpoint to murder.

Many directors develop close working relationships with particular colleagues, whether actors, cinematographers or editors. Hitchcock worked with numerous composers. In Hollywood (on which

edited, supervised and conducted numerous Bernstein works throughout the world, many of them premieres, at the invitation of the composer.

For sixteen seasons at the Hollywood Bowl, Mr Mauceri broke all records by leading over 300 performances before a collective audience of four million people with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, which was created for him by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association. During this time, and in conjunction with the award-winning recording series on London/Decca centered in Berlin ('Entartete Musik'), he became a proponent of the music banned by the Third Reich and especially its relationship with the music of Hollywood. He has restored, edited and performed hundreds of hours of music from this generally untapped source and has brought this music to the world through his performances and recordings. Toccata Classics recently released his recording of Erich Korngold's complete incidental music to *Much Ado about Nothing* (TOCC 0160), to an enthusiastic response in the specialist and general press alike.

The **Danish National Symphony Orchestra** was founded as a radio orchestra in 1925 in connection with the launch of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR), and consists today of 99 musicians.

The Orchestra is based in DR Koncerthuset, The Concert Hall, one of Europe's most spectacular concert halls, which was inaugurated in 2009. It was designed by the French architect Jean Nouvel and its acoustics were designed by Yasuhisa Toyota. Since September 2012 the chief conductor of the DNSO has been Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos. Previous chief conductors have included Gerd Albrecht, Ulf Schirmer, Leif Segerstam and Lamberto Gardelli. The two honorary conductors of the Orchestra are Thomas Dausgaard (chief conductor 2004–11) and Herbert Blomstedt (chief conductor 1967–77). The principal guest conductors have included Yuri Temirkanov, Michael Schönwandt and Dmitri Kitajenko.

Two legendary conductors built the Orchestra up in the early years: Fritz Busch and Nicolai Malko, whom the Orchestra honours every three years with the international Malko Competition for Young Conductors. The Orchestra has performed under many of the finest conductors of the day, including Sergiu Celibidache, Christoph Eschenbach, Kyrrill Kondrashin, Rafael Kubelík, Eugene Ormandy, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Kurt Sanderling, Leopold Stokowski, Yevgeny Svetlanov and Bruno Walter. It has also collaborated with major composers as soloists and conductors, among them Boulez, Henze, Hindemith, Lutosławski, Prokofiev, Stravinsky and Stockhausen. Other conductors with whom the DNSO has worked regularly over the past years are Gary Bertini, Sylvain Cambreling, John Eliot Gardiner, Christopher Hogwood, Marek Janowski, Ton Koopman, Fabio Luisi and Giuseppe Sinopoli.

Klaudia Kidon studied singing at the Music Academy in Katowice in Poland and then began at the soloist class at the Royal Danish Music Academy, where she made her concert debut in 1995. Since May 1997 she has been a regular member of the DR Vocal Ensemble. As a soloist her focus is on lieder, oratorio repertoire and contemporary music.



The extraordinary career of **John Mauceri** has brought him to the world's most important opera companies and orchestras and to the musical stages of Broadway and Hollywood as well as the most prestigious halls of academia. His mentors included Leopold Stokowski, Leonard Bernstein and Carlo Maria Giulini. One of the world's most accomplished recording artists, he is the recipient of Grammy, Tony, Olivier, Billboard, Drama Desk, Edison Klassiek, three Emmy, two Diapasons d'Or and four Deutsche Schallplattenkritik awards, among other prestigious recognitions.

A graduate of Yale University, where he taught for fifteen years, he served for seven years (2006–13) as chancellor of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, a unique stand-alone public university of conservatories in music, dance, drama, film-making, and design and production.

John Mauceri is the former music director of four opera companies: the Washington (National) Opera (Washington, DC), Pittsburgh Opera, the Teatro Regio (in Turin) and Scottish Opera, and is the first American to have held the post of music director of opera companies in Italy and the UK. He was the first music director of the American Symphony Orchestra in Carnegie Hall, after its founding director, Leopold Stokowski.

Mauceri began an eighteen-year association with Leonard Bernstein in 1972 when he was invited to be Bernstein's assistant for a new production of *Carmen* at the Metropolitan Opera. He

this recording concentrates) there were such outstanding composers such as Dimitri Tiomkin, Franz Waxman, Miklós Rózsa, Hugo Friedhofer and John Williams and, in his British days, Arthur Benjamin, Hubert Bath, Jack Beaver and the ubiquitous composer/music-director Louis Levy, as well as lesser-known figures such as John Reynders, John Greenwood and Adolph Hallis. But his best and best-known musical collaborator was Bernard Herrmann – cinema's most important such partnership.

By 1940 Hitchcock had made two dozen films in Britain, including the classics *Blackmail* (1929), *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934) and *The 39 Steps* (1935). His signature themes were clear: innocent men falsely accused of a crime, guilt and the search for atonement, voyeurism, transgressive sex, mother-fixation, doublings, homosexuality, the (probably hopeless) search for an ideal woman, and the tension between males and females, all laced with macabre humour.

Franz Waxman

In 1940, after two years of negotiations, Hitchcock moved to Hollywood, to make a film about the Titanic for David O. Selznick. But when the apparently indefatigable producer of *Gone with the Wind* failed in his bid to buy the rusting SS Leviathan to use as a set, they turned to Daphne Du Maurier's gothic romance *Rebecca*. Ironically Hitchcock had wanted to make it when he was in England but the rights had proved too expensive, despite his knowing the author's father.

Franz Waxman (born Wachsmann in Silesia in 1906) worked in the German film industry (orchestrating the score of the Marlene Dietrich vehicle *Der blaue Engel* in 1930) before, in 1934, a beating by a group of Nazi thugs decided him to emigrate to the USA. He would make four films with Hitchcock: *Rebecca* (1940), *Suspicion* (1941), *The Paradine Case* (1947) and *Rear Window* (1954).

Rebecca is a typically expansive 'Hollywood' score such as Hitchcock had rarely used in his sound films up to that point, and the music ran almost continuously. But both director and composer chafed against the forceful and interventionist Selznick. He demanded that Waxman complete the score even before the film had been finished but, knowing that his work would be wasted as the film changed shape, the composer procrastinated. Hitchcock also was used to more autonomy but was stymied when, even before the film was finally edited, he was loaned out to rival producer Walter Wanger to make *Foreign Correspondent*, leaving Selznick and Waxman to oversee post-production. Typically, the producer decided to oversee some re-shoots, so that Waxman had to return to the studio to re-synchronise the music. Even then, Selznick was not content and called in Max Steiner to give a couple of sequences a final polish.

Running continuously, the five-part part suite from *Rebecca* [2] roughly follows the film's narrative, including the Prelude (dominated by the titular theme of Maxim de Winter's dead wife), 'After the Ball' (at

which the second Mrs de Winter (we never learn her first name) commits a faux pas by wearing a dress reminiscent of one of her predecessor's), 'Mrs Danvers' (the domineering housekeeper with an unrequited love for Maxim's first wife), 'Confession Scene' and 'Manderley in Flames', showing the heartbroken Mrs Danvers' response to learning the truth about her wished-for lover's death.

Rear Window is Hitchcock's most voyeuristic film and one of his essays in limited locations: *Lifeboat* (1943), *Rope* (1948) and *Dial M for Murder* (1954) all take place almost entirely on single sets. The audience spends most of *Rear Window* in, or looking out of, the apartment of Jeff, a photographer with



James Stewart, Grace Kelly and Hitchcock on the set of *Rear Window*

efforts for the rest of the score are sometimes overshadowed by the cantata and Doris Day's singing of Jay Livingstone's and Ray Evans' *Que sera, sera*. Herrmann was not a song-composer, but at least on this occasion there is some narrative justification for it

Danny Elfman

When Gus van Sant remade *Psycho* in 1998, a weird project, more conceptual artwork than cinema, Danny Elfman, a long-time Herrmann fan, adapted the original score. Fifteen years later Sacha Gervasi's *Hitchcock* semi-fictionally charts the making of the film as the 60-year-old director, fearing that he is coming to the end of his career, attempts to re-invent himself through a venture so risky that no studio would take it on but which, the film claims, was his last triumph.

There is not a single frame of the original *Psycho*, and though the famous shower music is heard, Elfman's score is no mere regurgitation of Herrmann, whose character appears on screen for but a few seconds to argue the case for scoring the scene.

The final credits begin with Gounod's *Funeral March for a Marionette*, which famously introduced Hitchcock's television series, before segueing into Elfman's multi-section end titles. They bring together various themes from the score including, in the parts recorded here [14], very Herrmanesque ostinati, some oddly *Vertigo*-like oscillations and a gypsyish violin. Herrmann's friend David Raksin joked that the church in *Vertigo* was dedicated to 'Our Lady of Perpetual Sequences' and Elfman isn't averse to a few himself.

John Riley is a writer and producer. He has worked with orchestras including the BBC Philharmonic, the CBSO, the Chicago Symphony, the Philharmonia and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. As a producer he has worked with many cinemas as well as the BBC Proms and, for the Barbican, curated the UK's largest-ever season of films scored by Shostakovich: it comprised thirteen films, including eight UK premieres. He initiated Naxos' premiere recording of Shostakovich's complete score for The Girlfriends and has written notes for other CD labels. For the South Bank Centre he wrote Shostakovich: My Life at the Movies, which followed the composer's film career, using clips accompanied by the CBSO, with Simon Russell Beale as Shostakovich; it was then produced at the Komische Oper, Berlin, with Ulrich Matthes.

Herrmann extracted concert suites from some of his film scores and in 1966 began to record them as well as some of his concert works and favourite pieces by other composers. Some of the suites were relatively short but *Psycho: A Narrative for String Orchestra* [12] is a sizable work, encompassing nine of the most famous moments of the score, though sometimes topped and tailed differently from the film. Thus one hears the jerky Prelude that accompanied Saul Bass' fractured credit-sequence, Marion Crane's preparations for a shower and the horror of the attack, and the car sinking into the swamp behind the motel.

Although Hitchcock endlessly returned to the theme of the wrongly accused man having to prove his own innocence, there is only one explicit remake. *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934) is a descendent of a Bulldog Drummond story, and nothing to do with G. K. Chesterton's book (to which Hitchcock happened to own the rights). The original draws together influences which include the Lindbergh kidnapping and the Sidney Street Siege, but both climax with a set-piece assassination in the Royal Albert Hall, with the fatal gunshot masked by the clash of cymbals in Arthur Benjamin's *Storm Clouds Cantata*, which was written for the film. The tension of the situation – and perhaps the power of the music – visibly overwhelms both Doris Day and her 1934 counterpart Edna Best.

In 1934 Hitchcock cut between the hall and the plotters listening to the concert on the radio. At the crucial moment, the camera is on the plotters and, unaware that the attempt has failed, one of them says: 'Sounds as if it went off alright'. The remake leaves the performance – and then briefly – only when James Stewart arrives and desperately runs around the Royal Albert Hall's corridors, trying to find the assassin. Hitchcock later dismissed the earlier version as the work of a 'talented amateur', compared to the 1955 remake.

The music of the remake was overseen by Herrmann, who also appeared as the conductor of the concert with the London Symphony Orchestra, both prominently advertised on a poster outside the hall.

The 1956 credit-sequence pre-echoes the assassination, focusing on the percussion section (presumably rehearsing) and with a slow zoom into the cymbal-player as he prepares for his big moment, and the Main Title Herrmann-ises the opening rhythm of the cantata [1]. For Hitchcock it was a less flamboyant version of the shot in *Young and Innocent* (1937) that travels the entire length of a dance hall to reveal the killer's twitching eye, but for Herrmann it was a chance to both pay homage to Benjamin and create something distinctively his own, in contrast with Benjamin's 1934 prelude, which was merely an extended orchestral fanfare.

As well as appearing in the film Herrmann re-orchestrated and extended the cantata [12] for the remake, so that the search for the assassin takes an entire reel, without a word of dialogue. But Herrmann's



James Stewart in *Rear Window*

a broken leg (James Stewart) who entertains himself by watching his Greenwich Village neighbours. Gradually he becomes convinced that one of them is a Crippen-like murderer and his suspicions infect his would-be girlfriend Lisa (Grace Kelly), and his nurse (Thelma Ritter). 'Sure, he's a snooper', observed Hitchcock, 'but aren't we all?'¹

The soundscape is equally experimental. The film starts by scanning the neighbours' flats with a Prelude [3], the jazzy, Bernstein-ish, opening of which gives way to something almost Ivesian in its rapid alternations of material. That in turn becomes a seamless montage of music from neighbours' radios, etc., including several popular songs and a bit of Waxman's own score to *A Place in the Sun*, with its uncanny pre-echo of Shostakovich's Eleventh Symphony, written three years later.

¹ François Truffaut (with the collaboration of Helen G. Scott), *Hitchcock*, Touchstone, New York, 1985, p. 216.

Hitchcock hoped to show ‘how a popular song [‘Lisa’ 4] is composed by gradually developing it through the film’² – it’s written by a composer among the neighbours – but was disappointed that it actually comes almost instantaneously.

Among Jeff’s other neighbours are the scantily clad ‘Miss Torso’ who dances around her kitchen to a Gershwin-esque Ballet [5], a newly married couple (whose blinds are usually shut) and the bickering couple who become the focus of Stewart’s suspicions.

In spite of bearing the heroine’s name, ‘Lisa’ plays a more important role in the life of the neighbour, Lisa’s tragic counterpart, ‘Miss Lonelyheart’. After being assaulted by a man she had invited back to her apartment (an uncomfortable moment that reminds the audience that they, like the characters, are voyeurs), she considers ending her loveless life. But hearing the song changes her mind and ends the film in the composer’s apartment to a full orchestral statement of the song [6] that for once moves out of the diegesis into score.

Dimitri Tiomkin

Dimitri Tiomkin (born in Kremenchuk, Ukraine, in 1894³) had supported himself by playing piano in Petrograd cinemas, and worked on the mass public spectacles that celebrated the Revolution. In America from 1925 he wrote music for his new wife, the ballerina Albertina Rasch, which led to Hollywood. He scored many westerns, winning Oscars for song and score of *Shane*, and when asked how a Russian (although, of course, he was Ukrainian) could do such a good job on the quintessentially American genre, he laconically replied: ‘The steppe is the steppe is the steppe...’⁴ He worked on four Hitchcock films: *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943 – the director’s own favourite), *Strangers on a Train* (1951), *I Confess* (1953) and *Dial M for Murder* (1954).

In Patricia Highsmith’s novel *Strangers on a Train* Bruno, a fey fantasist-psychopath mother’s-boy (Robert Walker) manipulates Guy, a tennis star (Farley Granger) into a ‘crisscross’: Bruno will dispose of Granger’s shrewish wife Miriam so that he can marry his new love, if Guy will dispatch his overbearing father. They would both benefit and as strangers there would be nothing to connect them to the crimes. Perfect.

Tiomkin underlines every aspect the story, from the gothic to the romantic [7]. The lumbering waltz of the main title previews the fairground scenes which include several popular songs: Bruno kills

² *Ibid.*

³ So, too, was Leo Ornstein, only a year earlier.

⁴ Quoted in Tony Thomas, *Music for the Movies*, Silman James Press, Los Angeles, 1997, p. 85.

fashioned’ films but preferring something more shocking. For all the success of *North by Northwest* Hitchcock may have felt that he was being left behind and took on *Psycho*, a novel by Robert Bloch based on the horrific recent case of the serial killer Ed Gein (later to inspire other films, including *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* and *The Silence of the Lambs*).

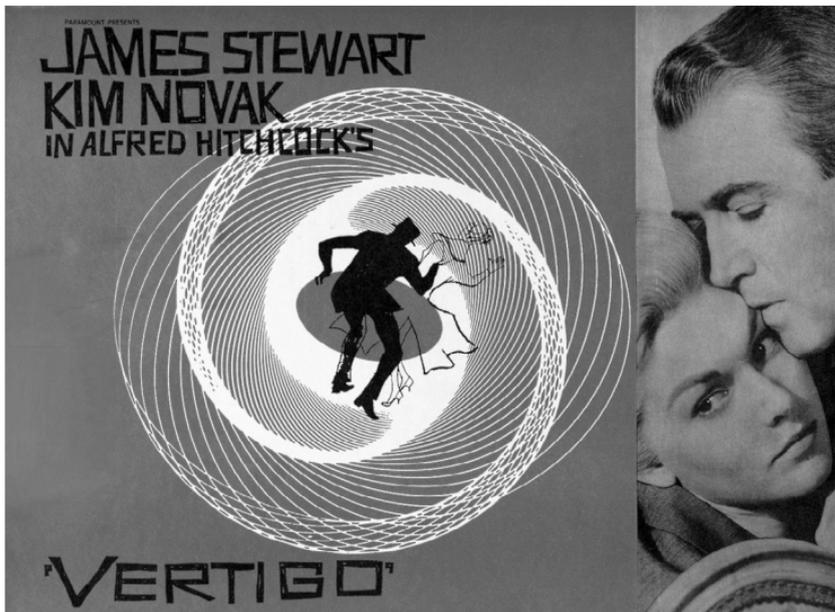
Psycho is scored, like the film, in black and white – for strings alone – though part of the reason, which Herrmann grew to resent, was financial. He drew on an earlier concert work, his *Sinfonietta* of 1936, using some motifs and even larger sections, though much of it was rethought for the cinema.

Even more than *Vertigo*, the effect of *Psycho* relies on the music: both films have extensive ‘driving’ sequences where nothing much seems to happen – except that the music seems to take the audience into the minds of the main characters. In spite of the horrors on show (or, more accurately, implied), the music is largely tonal – or at least comprises relatively ‘normal’ chords, but with some strange progressions. The most dissonant section is the infamous shower scene, though Hitchcock originally envisaged it with just natural sounds and was persuaded only when he heard Herrmann’s music. ‘Improper suggestion, my boy, improper suggestion’, he conceded.⁸ Six years later, in *Torn Curtain*, the film that would shatter his relationship with Herrmann, he moved in the opposite direction, removing the music from a grim murder, leaving a harrowing scene that shows just how difficult and essentially unexciting it is to kill someone.



Publicity shot of Cary Grant in *North by Northwest*

⁸ Quoted in Evan William Cameron (ed.), *Sound and the Cinema*, Redgrave Publishing, Pleasantville, NY, 1980, p. 133.



her predecessor and now awaits her return from the hair salon. But when she arrives the look is wrong. Scottie frantically tells Judy to change it though she protests and when she emerges from the bathroom, identical to Madeleine but cast in the sickly green light of the hotel neon sign, the music horrifyingly coalesces into Wagner's *Tristan* chord.

Hitchcock's next project was more successful commercially. *North by Northwest* returned to his classic formula of a man accused of a crime he did not commit, on the run and trying to prove his innocence. It's almost a secret remake of one of his most successful British films, *The 39 Steps* (1935). The brief, driving main title [1] is a manic fandango switching between 3/4 and 6/8 as Saul Bass' grid pattern, like a formalised spider's web, slowly dissolves into the glass-curtain wall of a Fifth Avenue skyscraper.

During the late 1950s the rise of the teenager brought a new audience without much time for 'old-



Miriam to the accompaniment of *And the Band Played On*, which becomes the film's leitmotif of murder, just as *Shadow of a Doubt* had been accompanied by variations on *The Merry Widow Waltz*. *Strangers on a Train* opens with a montage of the heroes' stylish shoes – Guy wears spats – and Tiomkin's jazzy Americana. Bruno's home-life brings something more expressionistic, climaxing with an orchestral scream at the revelation of his mother's Schoenbergian portrait of 'St Anthony'. The film ends with a frenzy of crosscutting echoed by the music. First the action follows Guy's tennis match and Bruno's attempt to recover the lost lighter that will incriminate his 'partner'. As Guy desperately tries to head him off, there is a lurching fugue which, when Bruno arrives at the fairground, is repeatedly interrupted by songs.

Hitchcock's adaptations from novels are more usually successful than those from plays (wordiness sometimes hindered his visual sense), though he repeatedly took such properties on. In 1954, when a long-worked-on project fell through, Hitchcock, 'running for cover',⁵ turned to Frederick Knott's play *Dial M for Murder*. As usual when he worked on plays, he tried as far as possible not to 'open it up' and it largely takes place in the living room where former tennis-player Tony (Ray Milland) engineers the murder of his wife Margo (Grace Kelly). With the stars in place, Hitchcock further hedged his bets by casting the two other main roles with the actors from the successful Broadway run. But, just as Hitchcock's other later stage-derived films often compensate for limited *mises-en-scènes*, there is a technical flourish, and *Dial M for Murder* is his only foray into 3-D film-making.

Tiomkin begins [8] by underlining the elegance of Tony's life with a series of light waltzes with no murderous intent. But the plot is dependent on to-the-minute timing and goes awry when Tony's watch stops, a failure ironically underlined by Mussorgskian bells, which become increasingly prominent through the rest of the film.

Tiomkin was equally interested in writing for the concert hall as for film, and declared himself 'a classicist by nature and if you examine my scores you will find fugues, rondos and passacaglias'.⁶ And so, just as the serial killer in *Shadow of a Doubt* is followed by a set of variations, and the intrigues of *Strangers on a Train* led Tiomkin to write a fugue, *Dial M for Murder* has a passacaglia, a Baroque symbol of fate that may hint that 'crime never pays'.

⁵ Truffaut, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

⁶ Quoted in Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

Bernard Herrmann (and Arthur Benjamin)

The most important of Hitchcock's musical collaborators was Bernard Herrmann (born in New York in 1911). He began by scoring radio dramas with very limited ensembles, and when Orson Welles' panic-inducing *War of the Worlds* led to the RKO studios and *Citizen Kane* (1941), the director took his Mercury Players and Herrmann with him. *Kane* and, in the same year, *The Devil and Daniel Webster* earned the composer his first two Oscar nominations, with *Daniel* delivering the statuette.

From 1955 to 1964 Herrmann made seven films with Hitchcock, and seventeen episodes of the TV series *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*, and also got a credit for *The Birds*, though his involvement was minimal: the sounds were created by Oscar Sala on the trauntonium. They eventually fell out over *Torn Curtain* (1966), for which he was replaced by John Addison.

But, though hailed today, some of Hitchcock's films from that time received mixed reviews and didn't make much money. Most surprisingly *Vertigo* (1958), which recently topped *Sight and Sound's* decennial 'greatest film' poll, just about broke even and many critics saw it as average.

Hitchcock's most perverse masterpiece stars James Stewart as Scottie Ferguson, a policeman suffering from vertigo after he slipped during a rooftop chase and the officer trying to help fell to his own death. A friend asks Scottie to follow his wife Madeleine (Kim Novak) who has been behaving oddly, but when she also falls to her death the phobia completely overwhelms Scottie. Months later, he sees Judy, who reminds him of Madeleine and he begins to try to 'recreate' the dead woman, pushing the film into the realms of necrophilia.

Hitchcock gave Herrmann immense freedom on the film. He wrote a detailed memo to the sound department explaining his thoughts on the rooftop chase and then airily signed off: 'All this will naturally depend upon what music Mr Herrmann puts over this sequence'.⁷

Doomed and misguided love was one of Herrmann's favourite themes and for *Vertigo* he drew on the harmonic world of Wagner's *Tristan* – probably unaware that John Reynders had used the Prelude in his compilation score for Hitchcock's *Murder* in 1930.

The Prelude [9] reflects Saul Bass' swirling spirographic credit-sequence with two cycles of rising and falling triplets in contrary motion, giving an audible effect of vertigo. Irmin Roberts, one of the cameramen on the film, devised a parallel visual effect by physically moving the camera one way while zooming the lens the other, giving the eye-twisting perspective effect of the foreground staying static while the background moves back and forth.

The score's Wagnerianism comes to a head in the *Scène d'Amour* [10], the climax of Scottie's attempt to transform Judy into Madeleine. He has bought Madeleine-ish clothes and had her made-up to look like

⁷ Hitchcock production notes, quoted in Steven C. Smith, *A Heart at Fire's Center*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1991, p. 220.