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MARCO POLO FILM MUSIC CLASSICS

Arthur
Honegger

Crime et Châtiment • L'Idée • Farinet
Le Déserteur • Le Grand Barrage

Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (Bratislava)
Adriano



The Film Music of Arthur Honegger (1892 - 1955)

Arthur Honegger, one of the greatest of twentieth century composers, made an unrivalled contribution to film music during the course of some thirty years, from his scores for Abel Gance's *La Roue* in 1922 and *Napoléon* in 1926, music that he regarded as his apprentice work, to his last work of this kind in 1951, a total production of some forty film scores. Half of these were written and orchestrated by the composer himself, and the rest in collaboration with Arthur Hoérée, André Jolivet, Maurice Jaubert, Darius Milhaud, Roland-Manuel and Maurice Thiriet, this largely through pressure of time. Nevertheless Honegger's music for films is a considerable achievement for a composer of such importance. Some of his film scores like *Mermoz* and *Regain* were arranged by the composer for concert use.

Honegger, himself a film enthusiast often to be seen on the set during shooting, reveals astonishingly advanced ideas on the function of music in the cinema, his pre-eminence in the field recognised already in 1936 by Kurt London who described him as the true leader of modern film music in France. He regarded the ideal film score as a distinct component in a unified medium, despising clumsy attempts at cartoon synchronization with movement on the screen and looking forward to films that might not so much be supplied with music as inspired by it.

In Honegger's opinion, cinematic montage differs from musical composition in that, while the latter depends on continuity and logical development, the film relies on contrasts. Music and sound must, therefore, adapt themselves to strengthening and complementing the visual element, while the whole must be an artistic unity, in which the generally visual imagination of the public may be assisted to a greater understanding of the musical message.

Farinet ou L'Or dans la Montagne

In 1934 Honegger had collaborated in *Rapt*, a film by Dimitri Kirsanov, based on a novel by the Swiss writer Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz (the author of the

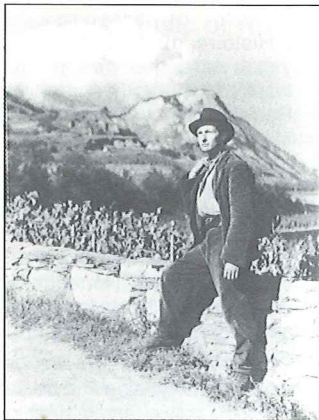


libretto of Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat*). Four years later he was to be inspired by another work of Ramuz, *Farinet ou La Fausse Monnaie*, in a screen adaptation by Max Haufler, featuring Jean-Louis Barrault in the title-rôle. As in the case of *Rapt*, the composer Arthur Hoérée collaborated on the score, to which Honegger's contribution is the music

assembled here in the form of a short suite, made up from the Main and End Titles and two further cues that immediately follow and precede.

Farinet ou L'Or dans la Montagne is set in the Swiss mountains and deals with a young man accused of forging money. While the police remain unable to arrest Farinet for lack of proof, the Mayor attempts to negotiate with him on friendlier terms, since he is attracted to the Mayor's daughter Thérèse. Joséphine, a girl in love with Farinet, in a fit of jealousy, reveals his hide-out to the police and after a dramatic chase over the rocks Farinet is wounded and dies shortly afterwards.

Honegger's music is permeated by the atmosphere of the Valais and by the reality of the characters, tormented by simple but strong passions. The Main Title is built up of a vigorous almost heroic motif of a folk-like character, developed over a moving accompaniment that suggests the wayward character of Farinet, a trait that brings about his downfall. The music then leads us into a morning mood of wind solos over the smoother rustling of the strings, music which in the film is actually counterpointed by misty panoramic landscape shots, leading to a scene containing a calm dialogue between two



early risers. The finale begins as pursuit music, with a two-part crescendo on shifting chromatic figurations, leading to a slow transitional episode, the death of Farinet, culminating in a repetition of the opening section.

Farinet is scored for an orchestra without horns and without double basses, with an additional alto saxophone and piano, so typical of Honegger. The percussion section is reduced to cymbals and bass drum.

Crime et Châtiment

In Dostoyevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov, a student, obsessed by a murder he has committed, becomes involved with a prostitute whom he wishes to save. The more Raskolnikov feels attracted to Sonia, the more he feels the need to confess his crime to the police, who already suspect him, but cannot prove his guilt.

The film by Pierre Chénal, for whose *Les Mutinés de l'Elseigneur* Honegger also wrote the music, with Pierre Blanchar in the title-rôle and stars like Harry Baur and Madeleine Ozeray, set like a tense studio-theatre production, must have inspired the composer from the very beginning. Here he returns to the sombre musical language of *Les Misérables*, in 1934, after having written *Der*

Dämon des Himalaya, a completely different kind of score, more experimental in character and expansive in scale.

While in *Les Misérables* the Ondes Martenot were not yet included, in *Crime et Châtiment*, with much the same scoring, except for the double basses, the instrument is used impressively as a solo instrument for leit-motifs, as re-inforcement of the bass-line, or as an atmospheric addition to the score.

The longest movement of the suite, which is actually intended to describe psychological development rather than physical action on the screen, is *Départ pour le crime*. Unlike the *Severs* scene of *Les Misérables*, where no real musical theme appears, this movement combines longer sections of non-thematic musical cells with *Raskolnikov's* given leit-motif. The dramatic, pulsating accompaniment of this movement is actually derived from the ascending motif of the theme of the Main Title and also recurs in the murder scene. It re-appears in the form of an incessant ostinato and canon-like counter-theme in the same movement and in *Visite nocturne*. The leitmotifs of *Sonia* and of *Raskolnikov*, as subsequently heard in the second movement, are both similarly highly lyrical, differentiated psychologically by their accompaniments. In both the *Générique* and the *Finale*, a theme of Russian flavour is brought to a climax, with very unusual, almost uncanny orchestration.



Once more we are faced with a score by one who may be considered the greatest film-composer, at least among European musicians. An incredible

spontaneity, combined with great craftsmanship and sense of the dramatic produced by minimal means, makes *Crime et Châtiment* a remarkable achievement. This spontaneity is explained by the composer as follows: "In the case of film-music, I need only to see the picture and start my work: the images are still fresh before my eyes. The closer the picture is to my memory, the easier my work is: the most important thing is to transcribe impressions that are still fresh, without delay."

The suite assembled here has some of its movements exactly as they appear in the film (*Générique, Départ pour le crime*), while the others have been adapted by combining two shorter cues (*Raskolnikov-Sonia* and *Meurtre d'Elisabeth*) or even three (as, for example, in the *Finale*) into one.

Finally, as in most film scores re-recorded in this edition, doublings of wind instruments and the increase in the number of string players have often been found appropriate. Soundtrack recording technique of the time did not allow heavy instrumental texture. Since this music is clearly conceived symphonically, it needs a larger ensemble for modern balance requirements.

Le Déserteur ou Je t'attendrai

Honegger wrote music for half a dozen French war films, examples of which include *Cessez le feu*, *Mademoiselle Docteur*, *L'Equipage*, *Marthe Richard*, *Passeurs d'hommes* and *Les Démones de l'Aube*. *Le Déserteur* is now largely consigned to the archives or to the museum of the cinema, occasionally shown late at night on French television in



programmes designed for those with a special interest in early films. Of the 23 music cues of *Le Déserteur* only seven were by Honegger. Composers like Henri Verdun and Georges Van Parys also contributed to the score, with vocal numbers from the popular domain. Honegger's score was conceived for an orchestra the size of that required for *Crime et Châtiment*, without the Ondes Martenot, but with the usual alto saxophone and piano. The present symphonic fragment is a combination of three different cues, slightly arranged to allow continuity. It is interesting to note that the composer had conceived two further cues, four to six bars in length, to be repeated ad libitum, according to the length required to match the screen image, with each designed for a separate shooting position, interior and exterior. Honegger's treatment of musical cells, often developed into motoric ostinati, as evident in the opening string accompaniment, anticipates in some measure the minimalist music of our own time. The same technique is even more apparent in the huge score written in 1935 for *Der Dämon des Himalaya*, music recorded on another compact disc in the present series.

Le Déserteur, a feature film by Léonide Moguy realised in 1939, recounts an episode in the First World War, in which a soldier, played by Jean-Pierre Aumont, deserts his troop in order to visit his parents and his fiancée.

Le Grand Barrage

Le Grand Barrage, a short, exciting symphonic picture from 1942, surviving only in a copyist's score, is something of a mystery. It is conceived for a large symphony orchestra, including three flutes, two oboes, cor anglais, three clarinets, two bassoons and double bassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, percussion, harp, celesta and strings. It continues the daring and highly chromatic style of *Der Dämon des Himalaya*, an important score completed in 1935.

If we accept the idea that this piece may have been conceived for a documentary or even a short film, the actual Barrage, a huge mountain reservoir, may be subject to dramatic events, unless this is merely excessive

celebration of the place. The first half of the music, dominated by a strong theme played by the trombones and answered in the form of a trumpet and horn fanfare, interrupted by harsh tremoli, calms us down and leads us to an almost impressionistic mood à la Respighi, in which the violins, supported subsequently by the horns and bassoons, sing out over delicate scales and murmuring accompaniment. Now the trumpets are muted and answer in echo-like fanfares. This new theme reaches a climax in a hymn, making us even more curious to know what happened to this reservoir.

It is interesting to know that in the same year, 1942, Honegger wrote some music for France-Actualités, a newsreel company, but it is doubtful whether such a complicated score as *Le Grand Barrage* could have been conceived for that purpose. A hymn by Honegger was included in André Jolivet's score for a documentary called *La Boxe en France*, showing once more how he allowed himself to be inspired by sporting and technical achievements, as evidenced in the two early works, *Skating Rink* (1921) and *Sous-Marine* (1924), culminating in the two symphonic movements *Pacific 231* (1923) and *Rugby* (1928).

L'Idée

Honegger provided music for two animated pictures, *L'Idée* (1934) and *Callisto ou la petite nymphe de Diane* (1943). The first of these is an unusual and important work, both from the point of view of the film and of the music. It also initiated a series of scores in which the Ondes Martenot were used, an instrument included in relatively few of Honegger's "classical" works and never as prominently as in his film scores. At that time, while the Theremin, a comparable instrument in sound, was used sometimes excessively in Hollywood, Honegger made admirable use of the Ondes, as did his French colleagues Jacques Ibert, Charles Koechlin and Darius Milhaud.

As we are told by the painter Jiri Mucha in his memoirs *Au seuil de la nuit*, Bertold Bartosch, the creator of *L'Idée*, was a pioneer of the animated cinema. He was very poor and crippled and had also worked as a special effects man



with Jean Renoir and other directors, using self-made, almost amateur devices. With *L'Idée* Bartosch animated a series of woodcuts by the Belgian expressionist painter and illustrator Frans Masereel (1889-1972), a life-long militant pacifist, opposed to all forms of oppression. War, man's loneliness in the modern world and social criticism are constant themes in his works. Like some of his famous anti-capitalist and anti-war works, *L'Idée* is a cartoon-like textless sequence of 83 illustrations. Bartosch, by bringing to life the more harmless sections of Masereel's original story, excluding some crude details, was able to transmit through the most primitive frame-by-frame and superimposing techniques the artist's humanitarian message, assisted by the highly effective, spontaneous yet poignant score by Honegger. More than any other film score by the composer, this contains typical devices of the film and theatre music of the Twenties and Thirties, making it sound at times like Hindemith or Kurt Weill. The "*Idea*" itself, its lyrical leitmotif stated and developed at the beginning by a solo of 39 bars for Ondes Martenot, is represented by the silhouette of an immortal, naked girl, inspiring mankind and leading revolt against all kinds of oppression.



In 1935 the choreographer Esa Darciel staged a ballet based on L'Idée in Brussels, using music by Honegger and by Eric Satie, but it is not known whether the music by Honegger was that of the Bartosch film. It is also of interest to know that in 1961 the same subject inspired the Polish composer Jadwiga Szajna-Lewendowska to music for a pantomime.

The instrumental ensemble of L'Idée is confined to some fourteen players, Ondes Martenot, piano, flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, percussion and string quartet. In the present recording the string quartet has been augmented to 6-6-4-4 in order to improve the ensemble balance, thus avoiding the use of extra microphone gimmickry.

Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (Bratislava)

The Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (Bratislava), the oldest symphonic ensemble in Slovakia, was founded in 1929 at the instance of Milos Ruppeltd and Oskar Nedbal, prominent personalities in the sphere of music. Ondrej Lenárd was appointed its conductor in 1970 and in 1977 its conductor-in-chief, succeeded recently by Robert Stankowsky. The orchestra has given successful concerts both at home and abroad, in Germany, Russia, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Spain, Italy, Great Britain, Hong Kong and Japan. For Marco Polo the orchestra has recorded works by Glazunov, Glière, Miaskovsky and other late romantic composers and film music of Honegger, Bliss, Ibert and Khachaturian as well as several volumes of the label's Johann Strauss Edition.

Naxos recordings include symphonies and ballets by Tchaikovsky, and symphonies by Berlioz and Saint-Saëns.

Jacques Tchamkerten



Jacques Tchamkerten
(Photo by Dan Oria)

instrument and besides engagements as a solo or chamber performer, is much in demand as a player in works such as Honegger's *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher*, where the Ondes also figure in the orchestral texture.

The young Swiss musician Jacques Tchamkerten specialises in the technique of a rare electronic instrument of the early 1930s, ancestor of today's synthesizer. French composers such as Milhaud, Honegger, Koechlin, Messiaen and Jolivet have written works for Ondes Martenot, an instrument on which Mme Jeanne Loriod, his former teacher, is the acknowledged expert. He lectures frequently on his

Adriano

Swiss-born Adriano began his artistic activities in the domains of the theatre and the graphic arts. In music he is largely self-taught. When he was in his twenties, he was urged by conductors such as Joseph Keilberth and Ernest Ansermet, who recognized his gifts, to embrace a conducting career. Instead he became a composer of stage, film and chamber music and also a record



Adriano (Photo by Milán Juricek, Bratislava)

at the Zürich Opera House and its International Opera Studio.

His numerous efforts to promote little known music include an old Italian translation of Telemann's opera Pimpinone, which was given its first performance in Italy in 1987. For a production of Galuppi's *Il Filosofo di campagna* at the Stuttgart Music Festival in 1988, he conceived a theatrical prologue in which he himself appeared as an actor.

Adriano is now a regular guest of the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (Bratislava), mainly contributing to a classic film music series for Marco Polo Records, in which it is planned to include recordings of more than a dozen scores by composers such as Arthur Honegger, Jacques Ibert, Arthur Bliss, Franz Waxman, Aram Khachaturian, Bernard Herrmann and others. Many of them were rediscovered, edited or reconstructed by Adriano. Beside this, he is also appearing as a conductor on three Marco Polo CD's with less-known works by Ottorino Respighi.

(from a note by David Nelson)

producer for his own gramophone label, Adriano Records. In the late 1970s he established himself as a specialist on Ottorino Respighi, organizing a comprehensive exhibition and publishing a discography. He has also orchestrated two song cycles by Respighi. For the past six years Adriano has worked as an Italian and French language coach, teacher and stage assistant



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STEREO

Arthur
HONEGGER
(1892-1955)

Jacques Tchamkerten, Ondes Martenot *
Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (Bratislava)
Adriano

Playing
Time :
58'48"

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Farinet ou L'Or dans la Montagne (Suite, 1938)

- 1** Générique - Brume du matin - Fuite et mort de Farinet - Final (6:01)

Crime et Châtiment (Suite, 1934) *

- 2** Générique (1:09)
3 Raskolnikov - Sonia (3:17)
4 Départ pour le crime (4:57)
5 Meurtre d'Elisabeth (1:50)
6 Visite nocturne - Final (3:15)
7 Le Déserteur ou Je t'attendrai (Fragment symphonique, 1939) (9:51)
8 Le Grand Barrage (Image musicale pour orchestre, 1942) (3:05)
9 L'Idée (complete score 1934) * (24:50)

Recorded at the Concert Hall of the Slovak Radio in Bratislava,
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Engineer: Hubert Geschwandtner
Music Notes: Adriano (edited by Keith Anderson)
Scores: Editions Salabert, Paris (Tracks 7 & 8).

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