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Music review (translation by Poul Nilesen)

An Evening in Hollywood

Film music is the new trend among Danish symphony orchestras. The musical godfather of Hollywood made cinema and art music come together.

Classic

Danish National Symphony Orchestra [DR SymfoniOrkestret] conductor John Mauceri. Koncerthuset. Thursday. The concert will be repeated today at 4:00 PM.

Zealand's symphony orchestra detonated the wide screen melodies of *Star Wars* in April, and in our concert house there have been a whole series of concerts with film music. Even cartoon icon Bugs Bunny got his evening in Danish Radio's new hall this past summer.

Aarhus Symphony has hired Old "Bogart" Michelsen [the renowned music critic] to be the host this coming November 25 with music by, among others, John Williams and Erich Korngold, and both these film giants were on the poster when American conductor John Mauceri visited the DR Symphony Orchestra at this week's Thursday subscription concert.

Here it was all about film music from Hollywood – broadly speaking.

Mauceri is Hollywood's musical godfather. Nothing less. He is a good friend of John Williams, a personal acquaintance of the descendants of Korngold and Schoenberg, and he is the man who recreated Stokowski's old Hollywood Bowl [Symphony] Orchestra. To actually witness this man conduct just this repertory was a profound experience, one that also inspired Denmark's national orchestra, especially in the 25-minute long concert suite from Korngold's Oscar-winning score to *Robin Hood* which was not only enthusiastically received by the audience, but clearly by the musicians, too.

An important part of the fascination came from Mauceri's introductions. Armed with a microphone and a pleasing and kindly voice, he told about the insane time in the 1930s, when the Nazis forced the great Vienna composers Arnold Schoenberg and Korngold to flee to the USA where both ended up in Hollywood.

To have a rarely played piece of art music like Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony No. 2 related to the composer's antipode, Stravinsky, and to then experience how both

composers lead to and flow into Bernard Herrmann's slashing *Psycho* strings was truly interesting. One simply was enlightened by listening.

Stravinsky was not officially on the program, but Schoenberg and his chamber symphony were, as was Richard Strauss, whose radiant "Moonlight" came from his last opera, written at the same time as the Schoenberg work.

When Mauceri demonstrated how the art music tradition – one that was driven away by the Nazis to Hollywood – formed those shoulders on which John Williams strangely beautiful notes for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* not only were we entertained. We were also made wiser people. The orchestra kept up with all the technical challenges and handled nicely and reliably the many demanding pages of music.

Thomas Michelsen