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The magic of music by Newman

Concerts will be a family affair

By Rob Lowman
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Get me Newman, the Hollywood producer then replies, "Sure, chief, but his toady hesitates, grows.

His toady hesitates, grows. The confusion is understandable. For some 70 years, there have been Newmans producing music for movies. Today it's Thomas ("American Beauty," "Erin Brockovich"), brother David ("Nativity Professor") and cousin Randy ("The Natural," "Avalon").

Once upon a time, it was three brothers — Lionel, Emil and Alfred — who both composed and supervised music for films. Alfred (1900-1970) is considered by many to be one of the most important and influential composers to work in Hollywood, receiving 45 Oscar nominations and winning nine.

Among Alfred's many scores during his 40-year career in Hollywood are those for "Withering Heights," "Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing," "The Song of Bernadette," "The Robe," "How Green Was My Valley," "The Snake Pit," "Captain From Castile," "Anastasia," "How the West Was Won" and "Airport."

His music will be celebrated in two concerts today by the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony as part of the "Cinema Judaica" series, which is described as "a salute to the silver screen with scores from memorable movies



Works by composer Alfred Newman (1900-1970) will be highlighted in two concerts today by the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony.

that resonate with Jewish heritage." Noreen Green, founder and artistic director of the 7-year-old symphony, says that despite the powerful impact composers such as the Newmans have had on Hollywood, they often go unsung.

Green says she began to think about doing a concert of Alfred's music last year when the symphony took the first "Cinema Judaica" to Israel and his name kept coming up in connection with discussions she had on movie music. So she rented the video of the 1959 film "The Diary of Anne

CINEMA JUDAIKA II
What: The Los Angeles Jewish Symphony salutes Alfred Newman, the father of American movie music.
Where: Gindl Auditorium, University of Judaism, 15600 Mulholland Drive, Los Angeles.
When: 2 and 7:30 p.m. today.
Tickets: \$25 to \$45. Call (818) 753-8681.

Frank," for which Alfred did the score, and she was impressed. "The music was so beautiful," she says, "and it captured the childlike innocence of Anne Frank."
Highlights of that score, as well as of "Gentleman's Agreement" and "David and Bathsheba," will be performed at the concerts.

The choice of those three movies is in keeping with the symphony's goal to perform the works of Jewish composers, highlight Jewish performers or focus on Jewish themes. Kurt Weill and Aaron Copland, both being celebrated for their centenary year, have been featured this past year.

But Green doesn't limit concerts to just the music. She says audiences "liked the idea of learning about the music they were hearing and relating it to their Jewish heritage." For Green, this means doing research, and the USC alum learned something she hadn't known: The Trojan's fight song, "Conquest," is taken from

Alfred's score for the 1947 "Captain From Castile."

The composing family will be represented at today's concerts by "another Newman," as Marina, the youngest of Alfred's children, jokes. A composer in her own right — mostly classical, very little film — Marina was only 8 when her father died, but she remembers him well. After having been head of music at 20th Century Fox for 20 years

— he composed the brass-and-percussion fanfare that is still used at the beginning of that studio's movies — Alfred began working in his studio at home. "He was there all the time," Marina remembers, "and I was kind of inundated with his piano playing all the time as well as hearing all the wonderful musicians who would come to our home."

Marina — who is also a violinist and violist — will serve as guest concertmaster for this concert and will perform some solos. She did the arrangements on her father's works being performed today — a harder task

than you might guess, because, as Marina notes, "The Newman family does not own any of my father's music. All this music... was called a work made for hire and owned by the studios." So she has had to do the arrangements by ear.

And there will be "another Newman" there for the 7:30 p.m. performance: Randy will be conducting his own work — the score from the 1990 Barry Levinson film "Avalon," a saga about a Jewish immigrant family in Baltimore during the early 1900s.

Marina has worked with Randy, whom she calls brilliant, before — most notably as a violin soloist on his score for "James and the Giant Peach." Not surprisingly, Marina was so inundated by living up to the family name that, for quite a while, she composed in the classical genre under a pseudonym. She now goes under her own name and has even made a few forays into film composing, doing the scores for silent films for the Mary Pickford Foundation.

Though her own career is quite busy, she hopes in the future to do more arranging of her father's music. "I'm glad that, because he unfortunately died when I was so young, that I was left with this wonderful musical legacy."