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All in the Family

By JOSEF WOODARD
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

The name Newman has loomed large in Hollywood for decades. The brothers Alfred, Lionel and Emil Newman, revered composers from an earlier golden age of film music, begat such currently popular film composers as David and Thomas, whose distinctive score for "American Beauty" was an Oscar nominee last year.

Lionel's son, pop musician Randy Newman, has also composed music for film.

On the other hand, Alfred Newman's daughter, Maria Newman, is one of the wild cards in the family. She chose to pursue classical music rather than follow in the family trade. But she has been involved in numerous concerts celebrating the music of her father.

She will serve as concertmistress for a special performance by the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony on Sunday in a program titled "Cinema Judaica II." Although the program includes music by several Jewish composers—including Victor Young, Jerry Goldsmith and William Goldstein—the Newmans will very much be in the house.

Literally. Randy Newman will make a rare appearance in the evening performance (there are performances at 2 and 7:30), conducting his own music for the film "Avalon." Maria Newman will lead her Viklarbo chamber group in excerpts from various Alfred Newman works, and the concert will feature a world premiere of the live performance of music from Alfred's Newman's score for "Diary of Anne Frank" and a U.S. premiere of music from "Gentleman's Agreement."

"Great film music deserves more attention than it gets," said Maria Newman. "In the case of the composers that we're dealing with on Sunday, it's great music that deserves to be heard for itself, on its own."

The emergence of a posthumous concert life for Alfred Newman's music probably would be a pleasant shock to her father, who won nine Academy Awards for his film music and died in



MYUNG J. CHUN / Los Angeles Times

Maria Newman

1970. As Maria Newman explained, he was a child prodigy pianist who "never wanted to write music" but began doing so to support his family.

"Because my dad fell into composition as a way of earning a living for his family, he was not like Korngold or Rosza or some of the other greats," she said. "He was not one to write for the concert stage—not even one note."

Film was such an obvious path in the family that Maria Newman carefully avoided it as a fledgling musician. Instead, she studied at the Eastman School of Music and at Yale, pursuing life in the classical world.

"With my father, my uncles and then my brothers, I just thought 'I don't know if want to do this film music thing,'" she said. "Not only that, but it's very difficult, even with the Newman name, to get into that kind of a thing . . . I figured that I'd rather scratch my way in classical, contemporary music, where I felt that I had some sort of voice."

BE THERE

"Cinema Judaica II" will be performed by the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony on Sunday at 2 and 7:30 p.m. at the Gindi Auditorium, University of Judaism, 15600 Mulholland Drive, Los Angeles. \$25-\$45. (818) 753-6681.