

# Heritage

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## The Jewish Arts

### Music of the movies sets tune for Jewish Symphony concert

Reviewed by Cantor Samuel Fordis

No other U.S. city can boast of a professional Jewish symphony that performs music exclusively of Jewish content. Noreen Green, its founder and conductor of the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony, provided a stimulating and significant program of cinema music on March 6, 7 and 9 at the University of Judaism's Gindi Auditorium.

It is a given that motion pictures without background music are as man and woman separated; there is no marriage. We know that the composer for a film can enhance the drama, expressing every emotion from joy to tears. In some cases, a movie score has been employed for what is known as serious music. Composer Wolfgang Korngold used themes from his movie scores to produce an enticing, virile violin concerto that was featured at the Gindi concerts.

The music for Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* was composed by the then-young Elmer Bernstein. In his *Ten Commandments Suite*, also performed at the Gindi, Bernstein produced a commanding, majestic setting for the drama of Jewish slavery and subsequent freedom from Egypt.

Who can forget the music for *Schindler's List*, composed by the ubiquitous John Williams. The famous violin solos were performed by the orchestra's substitute concertmaster, Rene Mandel. Mandel's

manifold tonal expressions added immeasurably to the poignant beauty of the three sections — "Theme," "Jewish Town" and "Remembrances." His playing was of top quality.

Paul Cohen, the orchestra's principal cellist, gave an arching and definitive performance of Ernest Gold's *Exodus* rhapsody. Cohen's individuality and daunting expressiveness were memorable.

Composer Charles Fox, of Israeli parents, turned pianist in his *Victory at Entebbe Suite*. He is best-known for his television scores for "Love Boat," "Happy Days" and "Laverne and Shirley" — only a few of his commercial successes. His arrangement of the music from the movie score for *Victory at Entebbe* for piano and orchestra was dramatic and exciting.

The concluding motion picture score was *Ruth: A Symphonic Poem* by one of the major movie composers, Franz Waxman. In its U.S. premiere, the work called for two narrators, veteran actor Than Wyenn and actress-singer Ilysia Pierce, whose dramatic readings gave the music greater clarity. As with all of Waxman's music, this work demonstrated his musical prowess and orchestral grasp.

The evening's fulfilling performance was conducted energetically by Noreen Green, who was in full control over the orchestra.