

Review: The Cleveland Orchestra- Hollywood Under the Stars

By Guytano Parks



A near-capacity crowd filled the pavilion and lawn at Blossom Music Center on Sunday evening when The Cleveland Orchestra presented *Hollywood Under The Stars*. Conducted by Richard Kaufman, in his 24th year as principal pops conductor with Orange County's Pacific Symphony, the concert included music by some of the most respected and revered film composers of our time.

“Hooray for Hollywood” appropriately opened the program in an invigorating and colorful arrangement by John Williams. Kaufman's direct, no-nonsense conducting served this syncopated and accented score well, for toe-tapping and hum-along music. Next came a dynamic and propulsive reading

of “Parade of Charioteers” from *Ben Hur* by Miklos Rozsa. Kaufman's enlightening commentary throughout the concert set the scenes, providing interesting historical facts about the films and composers.

John Barry's “Flying Over Africa” from *Out of Africa* shifted the mood to one of repose and expansiveness. The strings echoed the brass's sustained low phrases, which flowed and swelled with sweet sentiment as the harp entered. Nino Rota's familiar strains from *The Godfather* were beautifully delivered. “The Godfather Waltz” unfolded simply after the trumpet's plaintive introduction, and the “Love Theme” had a restrained passion. The addition of mandolin and accordion made for an authentic Italian sound.

Maurice Jarre's exotic and distinctively Middle-Eastern sounding music from *Lawrence of Arabia* excited with its heavy battery of percussion. Lush violins and resonant cellos soared while the ever-present percussion interjected and bridged sections throughout.

The Suite from *The Natural* opened weightlessly with strings and harp creating a sense of awe and wonder. The rest of the orchestra filled out the sound in a great fanfare before everything dissipated once again into weightlessness.

James Newton Howard's "End Credits" from *Dave*, a series of jaunty themes, marches, waltzes and syncopated excursions of varied moods and feelings, was handled splendidly by conductor and orchestra. Randy Newman's childlike, innocent "Feather Theme" from *Forrest Gump* followed, before rousing brass and percussion led the way in Music from *Siverado* by Bruce Broughton, which featured American folk dance rhythms.

After intermission came Ennio Morricone's Suite from *The Untouchables*. Driving and rhythmic, it provided a great contrast to Max Steiner's "Tara: A Short Poem for Orchestra" from *Gone With the Wind*. Arranged by Campbell and Watson, "Tara's Theme" (also known as the song "My Own True Love") was played with tenderness without being overly sentimental.

Cleveland Orchestra principal trumpet Michael Sachs was featured as trumpet soloist in "With Malice Towards None" from *Lincoln* by John Williams. Sachs, who performed the world premiere of Williams's *Concerto for Trumpet* with The Cleveland Orchestra, played with wonderful, clear expressiveness over the lush and resonant strings. His articulation and phrasing was sensitively nuanced, full of dynamic variety and tonal coloration.

After describing the exciting final scene depicting Charles Lindbergh's 33-hour transatlantic flight in the film *The Spirit of St. Louis*, Kaufman led a performance of Franz Waxman's score that teemed with nervous energy, full of optimism and anticipation. Elmer Bernstein's humorous Suite from *Airplane* began with the menacing theme from *Jaws*. A medley of melodramatic themes then ensued, with a build-up to a slow motion, full-orchestral deflation which picked up into a rousing concluding march.

Another exuberant march as well as a polonaise was heard in the Finale from *The Right Stuff* by Bill Conte, before Elmer Bernstein's Suite from *The Magnificent Seven*. The iconic main theme (used in Marlboro cigarette commercials) from *The Magnificent Seven* combines a powerful rhythmic beat with a broad, soaring melody. This exciting performance evoked images of riding off into the sunset on horseback.

The appreciative audience was treated to Harry Warren's Theme from *An Affair to Remember* as an encore. Kaufman and orchestra captured the nostalgic feeling and sound of a bygone era as the swooning strings were enhanced by concertmaster Peter Otto's dolce violin solos.

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