

Kritzerland news

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It's a little shocking to see that I haven't updated the news section in eight months, so, on the occasion of our 100th CD release, I guess it's time to do so. The story of our 100th release is interesting, so I may as well tell it. Most of our limited edition soundtrack releases happen quickly – I license, get the materials, transfer, master, do the notes, have the packaging created, print, and press – and usually that entire process takes no more than eight weeks from start to finish. I know others take longer, but that is because they seemingly license a lot more titles than we do (one does have to pay for this stuff up front, and Kritzerland has never been in the position to license twenty titles or whatever up front – maybe someday).

When we began our relationship with Paramount, we knew in advance that their process was very different than, say, the process with MGM. We knew getting the materials would take longer, we knew the approvals process would be more arduous, and that entire process would just take what it took. Our first Paramount title was *Love With The Proper Stranger/A Girl Named Tamiko*. In actuality, it happened faster than I thought it would – it took four months, start to finish.

Summer and Smoke was the first title I wanted but I was told up front that it wasn't going to be possible because of the soundtrack LP on RCA (or any title that had had an LP release). The problems with those releases was that they just weren't going to be worth any effort, given that many of those LP issues were "in perpetuity" licenses. But that didn't stop me from inquiring from time to time.

Early this year, I got the interesting news that we might just get *Summer and Smoke* because it appeared that the RCA rights had lapsed in 1969. That was incredible news and Paramount had the contracts stating so. So, we went ahead and transferred the 35mm mag tracks. To hear that brilliant score complete was an amazing experience. There were some issues with the mag, including several tracks with wow and flutter, but I felt we could work around them as we had on other releases where that problem was prevalent. I also had the Spain CD release of the LP program, although it sounded pretty bad since it was not taken from a first generation master, and because the LP had a lot of extra reverb added to it. The majority of the mag sounded fine, and the natural reverb from the normally dry Paramount stage sounded perfect.

In the meantime, a new software became available, one which would apparently remove wow

and flutter – this has been a long time coming and will be a great new tool for those who can afford to purchase it at \$5,000, which we obviously could not. Then, Lukas Kendall, who'd been dealing with Paramount on our behalf, said to hang tight, to not move forward with sequencing or anything because Paramount was trying to get the album master back from RCA and in so doing found that RCA apparently had, in addition to the two-track album master, the original three-track tapes from which the album had been assembled. And apparently those three-track tapes contained all the cues from the film, even the ones that weren't used on the LP. That was incredible news and I held tight, even though patience is not a virtue I possess.

Actually getting the tapes took several more months – things in big corporations and companies move very slowly and they had to make sure every "T" was crossed and every "I" dotted. Finally, the tapes were sent back to Paramount. We transferred them and when I heard them it was as if the skies opened and heaven smiled. No wow, no flutter, just wonderful, clean, crisp and gorgeous stereo sound, without any of that extra reverb used on the LP master. All the cues were in order, so that made our job easier. I'd hired Neil S. Bulk to compare everything to the film to make sure we had everything and that film order would be observed. What he found was that the three-track cues that had been used for the LP had been edited – the three-track tape had actually been cut and pasted. Luckily, each and every bit that had been edited out of the LP cues were saved at the ends of reels, and so Neil did that detective work and figured out where they all went – once that was done he sent that information on to our master-engineer, James Nelson.

So, now we had everything and in perfect sound. We even had one additional album edit that hadn't actually made the album. I determined right away that we could not observe strict film order, as the Glorious Hill band music (several cues) all occurred in the film in one scene, each cue shortened and used as necessary. To lump all those cues together, one after another, made for a really tiresome listening experience within the score tracks, as they basically just function as background source music. So, I chose the best one (just as RCA had) and put that in the film sequence. There were two solo guitar tracks, also back-to-back in the film sequence, so I opted to move the one that really plays as source music, along with the rest of the band music, to the bonus section. I would not allow anything to impede the beautiful flow of the score cues.

Then we made the decision to include all the album edits as well, with the exception of the

album edit of Glorious Hill Waltz, as the edit there was minor and we had enough band music. Then James Nelson worked his usual magic and the result was, in my opinion, spectacular. So, this particular title, took over eight months to happen, but was worth every second of those eight-plus months, for the result is one of Elmer Bernstein's masterpieces finally seeing the light of day complete and in great sound. Paramount was great at every step of the way, and that included the approvals process, which, for whatever reason, happened in one day. A blessed project indeed and a perfect 100th release, as *Summer and Smoke* was a score that was very important to me when I was a teen and one that remains one of my all-time favorite film scores.

It's been a great ride so far, and I'm hoping the ride continues to be strong, secure, and great for the next 100. We've gotten to issue some of my other all-time favorite scores – *Two For The Seesaw*, *Mulholland Falls*, *The Counterfeit Traitor*, all eight of our Elmer Bernstein titles, and so many more – the music's the thing, and in that regard I'm just a fan like everyone else. Each label has their likes and dislikes and each do their own thing – for us, I think it's pretty obvious I issue what I like. I cannot think of one release where I've issued something just because I knew it would sell. Well, obviously I've issued things because I knew they would sell, but the main reason is because I like the score. I can tell you I have never issued a score I didn't like, just to get some profit, which maybe isn't the smartest way to do things, but I cannot do it any other way.

So, on to the next 100 – there is still much glorious and grand film music and show music that needs to see the light of day and we will continue as long as we are able to issue it.

— Bruce Kimmel