

Music Notes for Sunday 3/9/25

Music and film are so intricately intertwined that it was hard to choose just three examples. It is almost unimaginable watching movies without the background melodies that emphasize and add depth to the storyline. Each of us could probably name several “favorites”.

“The Sound of Music” was chosen for the quickening anticipation evoked in the first notes of the score. If you have seen this film, you can picture the opening scene with the camera circling in exhilaration high above Julie Andrews in an alpine meadow. Richard Rodgers’ music is so uplifting it seems incredible that it took nine ‘takes’ to capture that scene as the downdraft from the helicopter holding the camera kept hurling Andrews to the ground! In her memoir, she recounts being dirty, disheveled and bruised after that shoot.

The "Adagio for Strings" was written in 1936, by American composer Samuel Barber when he was in his 20s. This piece with its haunting melody has been used in many movies (*The Elephant Man*, *Lorenzo's Oil*, *Amélie*, *El Norte*, and *Sicko*) but the one I recall most vividly was about the brutality and de-humanization of war. The final scenes in *Platoon* are seared in my memory nearly 40 years after first watching due to the quiet power of this music. You can feel the music most fully if you listen to the original scoring for stringed instruments.

“The Snowman’s Music Box Dance” may not be the best-known work from this nearly wordless animation, *The Snowman* - that would be “Walking in the Air”. But even if you have not seen the movie, it is easy to imagine this ungainly creature trying to dance in a room filled with furniture and scattered toys.

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