

Retrograde FSM-80127-2

The Omega Man 2.0—Unlimited

Liner Notes

Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| The Last Man on Earth | 1 |
| Engineering the soundtrack... | 2 |
| Making a chilling sound... | 3 |
| It's a Family Affair | 3 |
| A CD Is Legend | 4 |
| Jeff Bond's <i>Omega Man</i> Memories... | 6 |
| Swingin' at Neville's | 8 |

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The Last Man on Earth

Following the smash success of *Planet of the Apes* in 1968, actor Charlton Heston entered a brief phase as a science fiction hero. It was a logical development for a man who had played some of the greatest historical figures ever depicted and who had made an effective spokesman for humanity in two of the *Apes* movies as well as the subsequent *Soylent Green* (1973). Heston's bearing was such that the only type of role he seemed unequipped to play was that of a regular guy.

The Omega Man was a loose adaptation of Richard Matheson's novel *I Am Legend*, which concerned the last man on Earth and his struggle with a race of deadly vampires. In 1964 Roger Corman had made a low-budget version in Italy starring Vincent Price (under the title *The Last Man on Earth*). John and Joyce Corrington's script for *The Omega Man* updated the tale as a science fiction narrative about the aftermath of a genocidal bacteriological war. Heston portrayed Robert Neville, a military scientist who had developed an experimental vaccine just in time to spare himself from the onslaught of the plague.

Unfortunately for Neville, the last man on Earth is not alone. At each sunset a vicious tribe of Luddite barbarians—the "Family"—emerges from the shadows to loot and burn. They are led by Matthias (Anthony Zerbe), a former news commentator determined to reverse the terrible effects of humanity's stewardship of planet Earth. "We mean to cancel out the world you civilized people made," he says. "We shall simply erase history from the moment where science and technology threatened more than they offered."

Ensnared in an apartment house compound laden with security devices, Neville is the last remaining symbol of the world Matthias and his diseased followers mean to destroy. Every night Neville fights off hordes of zombies while doggedly attempting to track down their secret nest. Eventually Neville discovers an additional group of human survivors led by Lisa (Rosalind Cash) and Dutch (Robert Koslo): people who live in hiding from both Neville and the Family, and who have not succumbed to the plague—yet.

The Omega Man ranges from action to social commentary, and is quite effective when it deals with Neville's loneliness, his sad attempt to keep the rituals and habits of his old life alive, and his desperate battles with Matthias's creatures of the night. At its best it is a highly enjoyable comic book adventure, with Charlton Heston an incredibly manly action hero and Anthony Zerbe a deliciously arch super-villain who wrings the juice out of each line he delivers.

Heston got the production going after reading Matheson's novel during a plane trip. "The most in-

teresting element of the story from an actor's point of view is the last man on Earth is a fantasy idea that almost everyone thinks about," the actor says today. "The idea of never having to have your clothes laundered because when your shirt gets dirty you just toss it away and go in the store and pick up a couple more... the idea of being the last man on Earth is kind of a staggering, almost God-like identity. We had a lot of interesting ideas like he talks to himself a lot, which you do when you're alone, and if you're always alone you would do it more. He plays chess with himself with his military cap on the bust of Caesar, and I think that's all very good stuff."

The economical production took advantage of early Sunday mornings in downtown Los Angeles to depict the sprawling city as a barren ghost town in which Neville jogs, drives and shops at his leisure during the day. A box-office success upon its release, the film was received indifferently by critics but has since gained a heady reputation as a cult experience. Even in 1971 the political overtones of the story were evident, with Heston's character, a product of the conservative military, struggling against the antiestablishment, counterculture forces of Matthias's Family. For Heston, the political elements were a natural outgrowth of the story. "I've been a conservative all my life, and in my view a conservative does just that: he tries to conserve civilization," the actor says. "And that's what Neville is trying to do." The film was also groundbreaking in another way. "That was the first film in which a black actress played opposite a white leading man, and I'm very proud of that," Heston continues. "I thought Rosalind Cash was great and that we should use her." Although it is unclear if the movie was the first film historically to feature such casting, *The Omega Man* was certainly one of the earliest high-profile motion pictures to do so, and Cash's streetwise commentary on Heston's character is a highlight of the film.

In the three-plus decades that have passed since *The Omega Man* was made, composer Ron Grainer's tuneful, pop-flavored score has gained a reputation equal to that of the film in its cult appeal. Eschewing the hard-edged, dissonant sound that dominated sci-fi movies of the period, Grainer's work is melodic and catchy, with a beautifully somber, Baroque-style title theme that firmly places the story in an elegiac perspective. It is a strange hybrid of conventional film score, wordless rock opera and highly dramatic cocktail music.

According to producer Walter Seltzer, a longtime friend and associate of Heston's who made seven films with the actor, Grainer produced exactly what the film-

makers had in mind. “We didn’t want to go too way out,” the producer recalls. “The temptation was to make it kind of weird. We wanted a certain element of exotic sound but we didn’t want it to sound like a futuristic party, and he got the idea very quickly. It’s melodic and not atonal, which is always a temptation. That was all by design; that’s the way we wanted it.”

Grainer wrote distinctive melodies not only for Neville and his opponents in the Family, but also lyrical material for Neville’s romantic relationship with Lisa, a theme for the community of children she and Dutch shepherd, and lovely, thoughtful music for one youth’s recovery from the plague and his pivotal intervention in the conflict between Neville and Matthias. The score essays a light pop vibe in keeping with the music of the period while remaining highly dramatic and effective: Grainer’s strategy was to keep the acoustic forces of the orchestra tonal and accessible, while assigning the score’s more unusual sounds to two early Yamaha synthesizer organs—the EX-42 and YC-30—and a unique instrument called a waterchime. Eschewing trumpets and tuba, Grainer’s brass forces feature four French horns and as many as eight trombones, even in the quieter passages, to give the score a mellow, masculine feeling. To this end, cues involving the “Omega Man” theme (the main title) feature horns, while those with Neville’s theme and the Family theme feature trombones—no cue has both. Likewise the string section focuses on the lower shades of viola, cello and bass, with violins added only to some of the largest passages (such as “Zachary Makes His Move”). The beefed-up percussion section features timpani, cymbal, marimba, xylophone, tabla and African drums as well as the aforementioned waterchime. For the pop-styled cues, a rock drum kit joins piano, guitar and electric

Engineering the soundtrack...

The Omega Man is a classic movie score recording: big and full when it needs to be (“The Omega Man,” “Richie on the Roof”) but never losing focus of its component colors. The individual instruments, some of them highly unusual, retain their presence to the point where you feel them being played in front of you. The man at the mixing board? Dan Wallin, who has recorded over 350 scores since the 1960s.

“I was at Warner Bros. for 18 years,” Wallin recalls. “I did *Dirty Harry*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Cool Hand Luke*, *Camelot*, *Finian’s Rainbow*, *The Wild Bunch*, *Billy the Kid*—you name it.” Over the course of his career Wallin has recorded everybody from Jerry Goldsmith to John Williams to Lalo Schifrin, and is presently [in the year 2000] the mixer of choice for Elmer Bernstein.

bass to act as a rhythm section.

Although the score features at most 49 players, many cues eschew strings entirely for a complement of “only” 17—for example, the motorcycle getaway that is the back half of “On the Tumbrel.” The mysterious “Neville creeping around” sequences feature five players (two on organ and three on percussion); the cue that concludes “Neville Crashes Through” is a simple duet for organs.

The stellar sound of *The Omega Man* can be attributed to Grainer’s orchestrations and a carefully close-miked recording by longtime Warner Bros. engineer Dan Wallin, which give the work a high-gloss sheen that belies its budgetary limitations. Wallin recorded the orchestra on three tracks, left-center-right, and the synthesizers on a fourth track that was later dubbed with the orchestra. This album was mastered from a ½” multitrack tape of the orchestra synchronized with a mono ¼” recording of the organs, as retained by the Warner vaults in superb condition.

The Omega Man was a unique effort for Australian-born Ron Grainer, who had made a name for himself fashioning catchy television themes for British programs like *Man in a Suitcase*, *Steptoe and Son*, *Doctor Who* and *The Prisoner*, the project for which he was best known by American audiences. Although he scored movies like *The Assassination Bureau* and *To Sir, With Love*, *The Omega Man* gave the composer an unprecedented opportunity to display his skill at scoring drama, action and suspense. Suffering from failing eyesight, Grainer scored only a handful of films (several made for television) after *The Omega Man* and had largely retired by the end of the ’70s. He died of spinal cancer in 1981 in Sussex, England at the age of 59.

—Jeff Bond

The Omega Man benefits from Wallin’s technique of close-miking the individual instruments. “I generally mike everything the same,” he explains. “I don’t rely on the Decca Tree like most people do. Most people do the room and they use microphones for the first chairs. I go the opposite way: I mike the sections, and then I fill-in with the room. I think a scoring mixer should be able to produce all the sounds, not just an orchestra scoring sound.”

The Decca Tree is one of the original techniques for recording stereo sound, dating from the 1950s, in which the orchestra is captured mainly by a triangle of three microphones suspended above the conductor. Wallin’s philosophy is much more appropriate to film work, where the clarity of the instruments is more important than a facsimile of a concert recording. This

is especially true for such bizarre scores as *The Omega Man*, where pop percussion and organs are side by side with traditional instruments. “I just don’t like the Decca sound,” Wallin explains. “It’s too blurred, too

Making a chilling sound...

The decaying bell-like punctuation featured repeatedly in *The Omega Man* was created by the waterchime, an instrument invented by renowned percussionist Emil Richards. Its ring is so organic because it is literally caused by dipping a bell into water.

“I was into microtonal music at the time and to find out something I could do to make a tone microtonal was very interesting to me,” Richards remembers. “I was looking in antique shops for ethnic instruments, and I came across these four disks about ten inches round all the way up to 14 or 18 inches for the largest ones—they had come out of a huge grandfather clock and they rang G, C, D, E. So I went to a guy working at the drum shop by the name of Howie Oliver, and I asked him if there was some way he could put a trough with some pulleys on these discs, with a pedal so that my hands were free to play the instrument and drop them in water. There was a counterweight to balance it, and four discs on the trough with

It’s a Family Affair

The Omega Man has been one of the those passionately desired but frustratingly unavailable soundtracks since the film’s release in 1971. Ron Grainer’s music is so memorable and catchy, particularly the melancholy main title theme with its unforgettable mélange of styles capped by major chords built on a minor scale.

The whole score seeps with melody, despite the seemingly disparate elements of pop, orchestral, jazz and avant-garde effects. It is deeply accessible and solidly tonal, yet sounds nothing like a film score by the titans who otherwise chronicled the Silver Age of sci-fi cinema. The only possible comparison could be to the early jazz-based scores of John Barry, as both Grainer and Barry were recently graduated from British pop arranging, and wrote with melodic cells at the fore of their thinking—but on anything other than a structural level, the musicians were worlds apart.

How was it possible that this music has never been available on an album? *The Omega Man* was not a mammoth-sized production—one reason why the producers sought out Grainer for one of his few forays in American cinema—and no LP was planned at the time of its release. A 45rpm single was either planned or pressed (featuring the two cues combined as track 2 of this CD) but certainly never distributed. We extend our

muddy and too distant. If you mike in sections like I do, all those things will just happen naturally—all the soloists will come out.”

—Jeff Bond

a faucet to let the water out. I carried a hose with me so I could go to any faucet in the room and fill up the trough.”

The waterchime became a staple of sci-fi scoring of the late ‘60s and early ‘70s, also appearing in Jerry Goldsmith’s *The Illustrated Man* and Michel Colombier’s *Colossus: The Forbin Project*, as well as David Shire’s more earthbound *Farewell, My Lovely*. Richards does not think he handled it personally on *The Omega Man* (he often loaned it to other performers), but does remember a humorous anecdote from the instrument’s early days: “I did a picture with Jerry Goldsmith. The drummer Shelly Manne was on it, and on the second day of the movie he brought goldfish and dropped them into the trough. When you dropped the discs into the water after hitting them, the water would vibrate and these fish would just stop in their tracks when the sound was happening.”

—Jeff Bond

deep gratitude to Warner Bros. for authorizing this premiere CD release and for keeping their music masters in such pristine condition.

It is always sad to work on an album for which the composer is no longer with us. In the case of Ron Grainer and *The Omega Man*, we were unable to uncover even a single instance of him discussing the score in print. Danny Gould, a veteran of the Warner Bros. music department, started at the studio shortly before *The Omega Man* score was recorded and recalls that Grainer was a kind gentleman who made adventurous use of the Yamaha EX-42—a large white organ that sat in the middle of the scoring stage like a prop from a sci-fi film. The star and producer of this film, Charlton Heston and Walter Seltzer, recollect with fondness Grainer’s contribution to their work, and we thank them for their insights.

While producing this album, we did uncover something unexpected yet recognizable. If you journey past the end of the last track you’ll find it—a peek into the world of Ron Grainer and *The Omega Man*. [Note: This refers to a bonus track, exclusive to the out-of-print first edition, of Grainer conducting a children’s chorus in source music that is heard late in the film.]

—Lukas Kendall

A CD Is Legend

Most record labels have an artist or title that defines their brand. For us it's *The Omega Man*. It fits exactly into the soundtrack niche we wanted to fill at the outset of our series: a tuneful blend of avant-garde and pop from the peak of the Silver Age that was a Holy Grail to its followers—but still culty and little known by the general public. It was a natural choice for us to release because we were huge fans ourselves—we, personally, were desperate to hear the music away from the film. And it was an utter delight to spring upon soundtrack collectors in the early months of 2000—the kind of lovingly packaged soundtrack treasure we wanted to give the world.

The Omega Man has been a defining title for us behind the scenes as well: it was our first license with Warner Bros. and began a longstanding relationship that has continued for the majority of our catalog—film scores from the Warner Bros., historical M-G-M and RKO libraries. It's safe to say that 70% of the groundwork of this initial release. We're lucky ducks and we know it.

I usually avoid first-person writing in our liner notes but will break that tradition because of the exceptional and personal nature of this project. *The Omega Man* was one of my first-ever titles as primary CD producer and I worked hard to forge the relationship with Warner Bros. on several fronts: music licensing, artwork licensing, music research, master procurement and manufacturing. We have undertaken this historic (for us) second edition for sound business reasons—it will sell well—but also creative ones: I was never entirely satisfied with the original release. This may come as a surprise, because I was smart enough to keep my mouth shut, but the 2000 release was missing some organ overlays and I was always disappointed that a few tracks were not what they should be—and it was my fault in not communicating with the studio in order to find all of the elements.

In 1971 Warner Bros. was in its last days of recording film scores to dual sets of three-track stereo masters: one on 35mm magnetic film and a “backup” on ½” tape. The 35mm units were used (physically cut up) to make the finished film soundtrack, and the ½” units were kept as a safety copy. (Soon thereafter, the studio began to record film scores on 2” 16-track multitrack tape; the 35mm and ½” units were also made as a live mix, but the multitracks were kept as an ultimate backup in case a cue needed to be remixed—but this only happened after *The Omega Man*.) From around 1964 to 1972, if a cue had a special solo that was best recorded on its own channel distinct from the orchestra—a “fourth channel” like a vocal, guitar (as

in *The Wild Bunch*) or synthesizer organ (you see where this is going)—it was often recorded on its own monaural ¼” tape, synched with the 35mm and ½” units.

As a result, most of *The Omega Man* score has two sets of music masters with identical slate numbers. The main title, for example, is slated 7537-2, but actually exists as two pieces of tape: M705-7537-2, the three-track ½” stereo left-center-right orchestra, and M778-7537-2, the monaural ¼” master of the YC-30 and EX-42 organs. To get the “complete” master of all the instruments, you need to transfer both the ½” and ¼” tapes and synch them—best done nowadays on a computer using ProTools.

When we produced the 2000 CD of *The Omega Man*, I didn't know any of this—I called Dan Wallin, the brilliant recording engineer, who kindly explained it, as did some longtime employees at Warner Bros. who recalled The Ancient Ways when presented with the physical evidence. (Among them were Jeff Harris, the studio's music archivist, whose father, Don Harris, was the music editor on hundreds of Warner Bros. movies from this period.) So after a false start or two, the Warner Bros. sound department transferred the ½” and the ¼” tapes for *The Omega Man*—but one ¼” tape was not available, containing the organ channel for three cues: 2M3 (“Needling Neville”), 6M2 (“Bad Medicine for Richie”) and 7M3/8M1 (“Zachary Makes His Move”). Maybe some of you noticed.

I'm getting upset just thinking about it again. Anyway, we put the CD out—and it sold like crazy. I don't remember how long it took, but in a few years it sold out entirely. Good—except not so much for the people who still wanted a copy. This, I knew, was not a good situation: it may be flattering to have your product sell on eBay for hundreds of dollars, but that was money out of our pocket, not into it. The way I saw it, every time someone bought a used copy of *The Omega Man* for \$100, that was \$100 that did not go toward the purchase of other, lesser-known FSM CDs directly from us.

In addition, I personally had to listen to the voices of (and read the e-mails from) the nice people who practically begged for a copy. And—there are people out there who can attest to this—I literally gave away loose discs (without the packaging) that I had lying around. Eventually, I found some loose booklets and tray cards at the printers and packaged a box of copies and gave them away; we called it a “warehouse find” and asked customers to buy \$200 in other FSM CDs in order to get the “free” *Omega Man* CD. Maybe we were exploiting a gray area (at the time, the license had technically expired), but I'll tell you one thing: nobody complained. In fact, they ate it up.

Years pass—it is now 2007. I am no longer the ignorant 25-year-old who produced the first edition of *The Omega Man* missing some organ overlays. Indeed, I am now an ignorant 33-year-old, but I have learned a lot about producing film score CDs over the course of 150+ titles and two box sets. In particular, I've learned many of the tricks of the trade (and invented a few myself) in order to get around lost or damaged elements. Some of my hijinks include using acetates to restore the missing center channel in *Some Came Running* and exploiting the "pitch-and-time" function in ProTools to correct a number of scores that were digitally recorded at the wrong speed. (This is to say nothing of our CD of *The Satan Bug*: half stereo music and half mono music-and-effects, but again—nobody complained.) If only I could have another crack at *The Omega Man*, I thought, I could fix the nagging mistakes...maybe the "lost tape" really was lost, but I could get the organ part through some magic technique, like off of a monaural dubbing stem.

There was just one problem: I'd be making a liar of—myself. For years I had sworn we could not repress the *Omega Man* CD because our rights had expired. This was true. We do not make most of our CDs limited editions out of some diabolical plan to scare up sales (although it does help in that regard). Most of the scores we release—all of the ones recorded in Los Angeles (and this goes for other labels too)—were performed by American Federation of Musicians players and we have to pay the union "re-use fees" in order to issue the recordings on CD. In recent years the union has become highly cooperative in making discounted archival rates for vintage scores—but there is a cap on the number of units you can make: 3,000. Why 3,000? Because when this deal was hashed out in the early 1990s—essentially facilitating the last 15 years of film score CDs, and almost everything we have of vintage titles in our collections—the participants (who included Fox's Nick Redman and the AFM's Sue Collins) estimated that 3,000 was the generally accepted number of soundtrack collectors in the world.

So this was a real (as opposed to fake) impediment to reissuing *The Omega Man*. What did I do? I remembered the advice of several people in college: if you eventually, one day, ever want to go on a date with a woman, you have to ask. So I called my contact at the AFM: I asked if we could do a second run of 3,000, or maybe 2,000. They started to work up a quote but it was new territory and would involve running things up the flagpole. How long this might take, nobody knew.

Then I had a brainstorm. I knew the *Omega Man* orchestra was not particularly large: I asked what it would cost if I just paid the reuse as if I was a "real"

record company—not using the archival rate, but paying the full price (actually, a percentage thereof, as the union's standard rates have gone down in recent years). And what do you know? It wasn't that much more money than what a "second archival pressing" (which doesn't yet exist) would have cost. Those folks in college were right.

So I picked up the phone (er, e-mail) and made another call: I asked Warner Bros. if I could renew our license. They said yes. (We love Warner Bros.) I asked the archivists at Warner Bros. if they could find the missing organ tapes. The answer was maybe. The studio did find the correct organ solos that overlaid onto "Surprise Party" and "After the Ball" (track 3)—this was not even the fourth channel but a separate "fifth channel" overlay added a week later in 1971. (I don't even want to explain what we used on the 2000 CD. Get me drunk at a party and I'll tell you.)

Now, the missing tape. To make a long story short—they found it. Where was it? Probably in the archives all along. But the only finger I have to point is at myself—for not knowing who and how to ask. It can be easy to grouse about missing masters but one of the archivists at Warner Bros. put it in perspective to me once on the phone: you are asking, he said, for a piece of tape from a movie made decades ago, owned by a multinational corporation with thousands of employees, one of the largest media companies in the world, that has gone through numerous changes in ownership and management. And almost all of the time, when you ask for a piece of tape, someone looks in a computer, goes "there it is," and you have it a few days later. So, if once in a while something can't be found right away—or even at all—consider yourself way ahead of the game.

He was right. Honestly, in your own life—do you know where everything is? What lurks in the attic or basement? If someone asked me for my high school diploma, I have no idea where it is. I remember I got one. Anyway... we got the missing *Omega Man* reel, we redid the master completely, and eight years later, this "2.0—Unlimited" version of *The Omega Man* is exactly as it should be. Is it gratifying? YES!

One wildcard remains: what will people think when we ask them to buy *The Omega Man* all over again? Actually I know the first thing they'll ask, and it will have nothing to do with *The Omega Man*: they'll ask when we will reissue our other out-of-print titles like *The Towering Inferno* and *The Poseidon Adventure*. The answer is, not anytime soon. Those scores involve much larger orchestras and studio relationships that are no longer active for us.

In order to maintain the collectability of the original edition of *The Omega Man* I wanted to package the

second edition without our exhaustive liner notes—instead printing them here, online. That way everybody can read them, yet the first edition remains special. (The first edition is also the only place you can find the bonus track of the children singing, conducted by Grainer.) I also thought it would be cool, for a change, to package the second edition almost like a rock record and not an archival soundtrack, with minimal packaging... like the old days when soundtrack packages had almost nothing in them and yet you were grateful just to have them. As always Joe Sikoryak, our fearless art director, obliged. You be the judge whether or not it's a worthwhile exercise in nostalgia.

The lessons of *The Omega Man* are many. One that hardly needs repeating is that this is the incredibly cool music. Who knows where Ron Grainer got this particular collection of melodies for an apocalyptic sci-fi Charlton Heston film—it sounds like the best-ever version of this era of British jazz-rock mood music—but it's like he stumbled onto the mother lode of melodic kernels of that time and that place. To be able to extract this music from the film and put it on a CD for the

Jeff Bond's *Omega Man* Memories...

One of the most thrilling aspects of working for Lukas Kendall and Film Score Monthly has been the chance to be involved in putting out some of my "dream soundtracks," favorite scores that I fell in love with as a teenager. I would watch movies like *Fantastic Voyage*, *Logan's Run*, *The Satan Bug*, *The Illustrated Man* and *The Omega Man* every time they ran on television and I was enough of a nutcase (in a time of prehistoric technology) that I would sit with a cassette recorder and microphone and tape the sound coming out of one tinny, four-inch speaker on the front of my family's living room TV set so I could go back and listen to the scores (and dialogue). Because, of course, there were no LPs, cassettes, CDs or any other release of most of these scores at the time.

I don't want to rank those scores, but there was always something special about *The Omega Man* for me. I found it a thrilling little midnight movie as a 13- or 14-year-old, and despite what some would say is the bastardization of Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend* novel, I still find this by far the most involving treatment of the story. Somehow Anthony Zerbe leading a bunch of white-faced zombies in what Charlton Heston's Robert Neville dismissively describes as "Halloween costumes" is far scarier than what today's Hollywood delivered with a budget two hundred times what was available in 1971—I always believed Heston's Neville, despite the actor's superhuman presence, was in danger, and when Rosalind Cash unravels

world to enjoy feels like capturing lightning in a bottle.

For me, personally, *The Omega Man* is a lesson in perseverance, creativity and hard work—it just won't die. The mistakes of the 2000 CD haunted me for several years, but it offered a chance for redemption. It's a lot like life in that way: it keeps going, whether you want it to or not, and you can either roll over and sulk or you can rise to the challenge, fix your mistakes and stay on top of it. And when the problems are too big for you to manage yourself, you can reach out and ask your fellow man (I'd say women too, but this is a film music site) for help. Privately, I asked the folks at Warner Bros. and the AFM, and publicly, I ask you, our loyal listeners, to understand the story behind the two editions. I wish I had produced the CD better in the first place, and I wish it had been continually available, but better late than never. At least I hope, after reading this essay, you appreciate the journey that got us to this point. But whether you are confused, intrigued, satisfied or whatever: listen to the music, you'll feel better.

—Lukas Kendall

her tie-died '70s shawl to reveal that she has become a zombie too, the knowledge of her upcoming betrayal put my heart squarely in my throat.

Ron Grainer's score is gorgeously melodic, thrilling—and the pop elements, something my easily embarrassed teenage ears would have normally rejected, this time only added to the excitement. When I began collecting scores the inaccessibility of *The Omega Man* became particularly poignant because I began to recognize that while there was an obvious market for Jerry Goldsmith scores—meaning that more and more of them would likely be released—it became obvious that *The Omega Man* was too obscure and maybe just too outside of what "soundtrack collectors" seemed to want released.

As we began doing Film Score Monthly CD releases in earnest with Twentieth Century-Fox and the possibilities of getting into other studios began to become real, we talked about the scores we wanted to do and *The Omega Man* came up, especially when Lukas found a contact at Warner Bros. I remember being on the Warners lot at the dedication of the Clint Eastwood scoring stage, with Clint standing just a few feet away from us while Lukas and I broached the idea of doing *The Omega Man* to the studio's longtime music executive Danny Gould, a guy who seemed genuinely excited about this kind of music preservation—enough that he told us about jumping into a dumpster at Warner Bros. after he'd seen a pile of music

manuscripts and records trashed during some office clean-outs.

I remember my growing excitement as the deal moved forward, still wondering if the music even existed in listenable form at Warners—and I remember the unbelievable day the newly transferred DA-88s were delivered to the office, and the incredibly frustrating wait to hear them. (Damn it, why didn't we just have a DA-88 player in the office?) Best of all was the day we actually heard the music and found out that not only was it all there and listenable, but thanks to recording engineer Dan Wallin it actually sounded great.

Now there was just one final element to which I could actually contribute something useful: liner notes. We had a contact for producer Walter Seltzer, who proved very helpful with his recollections, and he recommended we contact Charlton Heston's office, particularly since in those days we had to get photo approvals from some of the actors who appeared in the films whose scores we released.

I phoned Heston's secretary, expecting someone autocratic and aloof, but she proved to be easygoing and helpful as we sorted through the issues of photo approval and such. By this time I had mostly finished my liner notes with never a thought about including any comments from the star of *The Omega Man*. But since I had his secretary on the phone, I nervously asked if it might be possible to get Heston to agree to a short interview about his experience on the film. "Well, let me ask him," she said, putting me on hold.

About 30 seconds later the familiar voice of Moses said, "Hello?" WHAT?!? This had to be some mistake—it couldn't be this easy! Plus I hadn't actually prepared to do an interview...but Heston was agreeable, gracious and helpful, and when I wrapped things up by asking if it bothered him that people talked about his politics a lot, he said not at all and gave me a great quote that tied his Robert Neville character into his conservative philosophy.

At that point I was just thrilled to have talked to Charlton Heston on the phone. When I got his secretary back on the line, however, there was a problem: the photos I'd faxed her for approval weren't readable. "You can either mail them to us or drop them by the house, I suppose," she suggested.

Somehow I managed to make it sound like I wouldn't really mind dropping by Charlton Heston's house all that much despite the enormous inconvenience it would cause me. I got the directions, grabbed the photos and leaped into my beat-up Toyota, the CD

master of *The Omega Man* blasting on my car stereo, and headed up Coldwater Canyon.

I eyed the houses as I ascended the hills above Beverly Hills (maybe they actually were the Beverly Hills). They looked impressive, no doubt—because you know that any house in this area with more than one floor has to cost several million dollars. But as I neared the top, it seemed like the homes weren't all that glorious—not what I expected Moses, Andrew Jackson and Leonardo da Vinci, let alone Robert Neville, to reside in. And I kept missing his street address—where the hell was this place? Finally I noted a side drive off the driveway to one decent-sized mansion and saw the correct address there. I took the driveway down a few yards around a corner and suddenly encountered this enormous...edifice. It was a gate that looked capable of holding off the Mongol hordes, or keeping the chosen ones inside Egypt's walls where they belonged. I was buzzed in and the enormous gate drew aside...I took the road, which now curved along a massive cliff face with a view of the hills below lit by late afternoon sun.

Finally I was face to face with Heston's Xanadu (I think he always just referred to it as "Coldwater" in his memoirs)—an elegantly impressive compound with half a dozen cars and a horse head statue from *Ben-Hur* in the courtyard.

Heston's secretary met me at the door and pointed to her right, where the man's office lay. Yes, my heart was in my throat but this was just another human being after all—he couldn't possibly measure up to all this build-up in person.

The secretary opened the actor's office door and Heston sat before me at his desk. Behind him the wall was one huge picture window and the afternoon sun, gleaming off the mountains below, bathed his still impressive shoulders and that unmistakable, granite-hewn face in a golden, heavenly light, nearly blinding me in the process. Heston was as genial in person as he was over the phone, flashing that Jaws-like smile (he's always sported the most impressive set of teeth in Hollywood) and crunching my weak hand in his mighty paw. He seemed very much as he always had—the only thing missing was that lanky, angular Heston stride, now reduced to a gentle old man's hobble. But I'm convinced that he found the location for his house, and had the resulting mansion constructed around it precisely so he could provide that Zeus-like first impression to anyone walking up to the door to his office. Heston was nothing if not a showman.

—Jeff Bond

Swingin' at Neville's

Ron Grainer recorded almost all of his score to *The Omega Man* over three days in May 1971. The dates and orchestral groupings were as follows:

May 17, 1971, morning: The first session consisted of the five-player "C" orchestra: Yamaha EX-42, YC-30, and 3 percussion. This was for the smallest organ-based cues.

May 17, 1971, afternoon: The "A" orchestra began recording in the afternoon of the first day, with 45 players at most: 5 woodwinds (four flutes and one bass clarinet, with two of the flutists doubling on alto flute), 4 French horns, harp, EX-42, YC-30, guitar, fender bass, 3 percussion, 12 violas, 12 cellos and 4 basses. The main title kicked off this session. (This is referred to as the "A-1" orchestra below.)

May 18, 1971, morning: The "A" orchestra concluded the next morning but with a different configuration: 4 trombones, piano, EX-42, YC-30, guitar, fender bass, 4 percussion (one always on drum kit), 16 violins, 8 violins, 8 cellos and 4 basses. This was the largest orchestra, totaling 49 players, and performing the large-scale cues (like "Neville Crashes Through") requiring trombones and violins. (This is referred to as the "A-2" orchestra below.)

May 18, 1971, afternoon: The "B" orchestra (totaling 17 players) doubled the trombones but omitted strings for action cues such as "The Getaway": 8 trombones, piano, EX-42, YC-30, guitar, bass guitar, 4 percussion (one always on drum kit). Percussion and organ overlays were recorded at the end of this session.

May 19, 1971: Four jazz source cues were recorded on the final day with 5 players: saxophone, vibraphone, drums, bass and piano. Concluding the session was another piece of source music, "Old McDonald Had a Farm" sung by children's choir (which can be found only on the out-of-print 2000 FSM CD). (This is referred to below as the "S" orchestra, for "source"—so designated by FSM, not the Warner Bros. paperwork.)

May 25, 1971: The next week Grainer recorded the additional organ overlays that appear over "Surprise Party" and "After the Ball" (track 3).

1. A Summer Place (1M1, "S") As Robert Neville (Charlton Heston) tools around an abandoned Los Angeles in his convertible, he pops in an 8-track tape to soothe his nerves: Max Steiner's popular theme music to the soapy 1959 drama *A Summer Place*. In the finished film, the music stops abruptly as Neville fires a few rounds of automatic ammo at a shadowy figure he spies inside a building.

2. The Omega Man (1M2, "A-1") After a pause, Neville resumes his drive to the tune of Ron Grainer's

beautifully elegiac pop title music. Although it is the best-remembered music in the score, Grainer is sparing in his use of this long-form melody: it serves as an overview of the story and as a baroque and somber headstone for humanity, playing mainly in reflective moments in which Neville is allowed to think back on his former life.

Where Have All the People Gone (1M3, "B") Neville crashes his automobile as the title music ends, and Grainer's theme for Neville is introduced as the ostensible last remnant of humanity "shops" for a new car at a corpse-littered auto dealership. The "B" section of this melody (a three-note fanfare followed by a dark resolution) is played first in a ghostly passage for organ and trombones as Neville eyes a calendar page that inadvertently marks the final days of civilization. The primary theme for Neville is introduced in a morose treatment for trombone, emphasizing the man's solitude and loneliness while playing ironically off Charlton Heston's masculinity. The repeating five-note phrase that dominates the theme plays through many of the film's action sequences in various guises, providing Heston's character a dogged, indomitable accompaniment as he struggles against impossible odds.

3. Surprise Party (2M1, "B") A bluesy treatment for guitar introduces Grainer's theme for the Family as Neville returns home and is ambushed by waiting zombies. The rock-based, syncopated Family theme (reminiscent of Grainer's title music to *The Prisoner*) cleverly points to the counterculture roots of the clan; the intervening, five-note "B" theme is often associated with the conflict between Matthias (the Family's leader) and Neville, adding a fateful quality to Matthias's venomous oratory about his opponent and earmarking several pivotal moments in the film.

After the Ball (2M2, "B") The main Family theme returns in a sneakier mode, with jazzy counterpoint from organ, as Neville activates the compound lights and the skulking Family members scurry away.

4. Needling Neville (2M3, "A-2") Neville responds to heckling from the Family by exploding in anger, and the Family theme plays full-force over scenes of the members burning and pillaging, then with quiet resolve underneath a conversation between Family leader Matthias (Anthony Zerbe) and disciple Zachary (Lincoln Kilpatrick). Neville's theme returns in the same lonely treatment for trombone heard earlier as Neville fixes himself dinner in a pathetic effort to maintain the rituals of a normal life; organ chords and an underlying rock beat hammer home the constant presence of the Family.

The Family Wait (3M1, "A-1") After a flashback

(recalling the plague destroying the world, and how Neville survived thanks to an experimental vaccine), the Family theme resumes over Matthias speaking to the Family how they will “cleanse the world” through fire. (In the flashback, Matthias is seen in his earlier life as a television news anchor.)

5. Swinging at Neville’s (3M2, “S”) To accompany his dinner, Neville turns on some mood music: this jazz composition written by Grainer, which later becomes the suspense music just before Neville encounters Lisa.

Swinging at Neville’s (3M3, “B”) This is the only score cue not included on FSM’s previous release of *The Omega Man*: an underscore variant of “Swinging at Neville’s” that was meant to segue out of the source cue as Neville responds to the Family’s fire-catapult attack by shooting back with a sniper-like machine gun. It was not used in the finished film, and left off the earlier FSM CD for that reason.

6. Another Night—Another Day (3M4, “A-1”) The “Omega Man” theme plays over a transition from night into early morning.

The Spirits Still Linger (3M5/4M1, “C”) An electronic groaning sounds over echoing keyboard tones as Neville scrounges for supplies in an abandoned department store; Neville’s theme returns for a moment in a child-like arrangement as he samples clothing and aftershave. The eerie groaning and chilling organ chords are capped by a shrill blast of synthesizer noise as Neville uncovers two cadavers; tabla rolls and building percussion underscore his subsequent discovery of a dead Family member. Although Grainer’s suspense music provides the score with its most discordant material, even this largely percussive passage exhibits a pleasing tonal quality.

7. Shopping Made Easy (4M2, “C”) The jazz melody from “Swinging at Neville’s” returns in an eerie treatment for keyboard as Neville wanders through a clothing store, perversely tempted by scantily clad female mannequins. Heavy percussion erupts as Neville hears a dropped coat hanger and whirls to focus on a mannequin that looks strangely out of place.

Where Did Lisa Go? (4M3, “A-1”) Glassy synth effects sound as Neville sees the “mannequin” begin to move, revealing Lisa (Rosalind Cash). Grainer segues to a bizarre pop version of the “Omega Man” theme as Neville chases Lisa outside; glissandi and harsh synth chords combine in a strained synthetic version of the title music, adding a hallucinatory effect as Neville questions his own shaky perceptions of reality.

8. Round Midnight (4M4, “S”) Neville heads to an abandoned bar to relax. He listens to a cassette tape featuring this jazz standard by Cootie Williams and Thelonious Monk, arranged by Grainer for saxophone,

vibes, drums, bass and piano.

9. Jumped by the Family (4M5, “C”) The groan of a Yamaha organ returns over glassy synth chords and timpani as Neville explores the recesses of a wine cellar, only to be jumped by zombies.

The Trial (5M1, “C”) Bach-like organ riffs sound in Matthias’s courtroom antechamber as the Family leader has his “brothers” show the captured Neville the “marks”—their ghostly all-white eyes, greeted with dramatic organ chords and shifting tones from the waterchime.

10. On the Tumbrel (5M2, “A-1”) The Bach-influenced organ licks return to launch one of the score’s set pieces as Neville is dragged to his own funeral pyre in the center of Dodger Stadium. The “Omega Man” theme is played full force, with stabbing accents from the string section and full-blooded horn performances. The Family’s “B” theme resolves the ceremony as Matthias calls the conflagration to order—until the stadium lights come on, immobilizing the photo-sensitive clan. Grainer’s rock-oriented action music launches in time with the stadium lights, the Family theme rocking out in protest as a mysterious figure rescues Neville.

The Getaway (5M3/6M1, “B”) Grainer begins his characterization of Lisa by switching the Neville motive to piano, the instrument that will be associated with her throughout much of the film: here it plays as romantic sparks fly between Neville and Lisa during their first, heated conversation. They make their getaway on motorcycle while fighting off hordes of robed Family members, all to the tune of an aggressive trombone take on Neville’s masculine theme and unsettling contrapuntal organ effects.

11. Bad Medicine for Richie (6M2, “A-1”) A mellow theme for guitar and strings underscores the treatment of Richie (Eric Laneuville), Lisa’s younger brother, who is slowly “turning” into one of the photo-sensitive zombies until Neville administers an experimental serum.

Richie on the Turn (7M1, “A-1”) As the treatment continues, Grainer adds more disturbing synth effects.

12. All Through the Night (7M2, “S”) As Neville and Lisa relax for a romantic dinner, Lisa sets the tone with a recording of this Cole Porter classic.

13. Zachary Makes His Move (7M3/8M1, “A-2”) Neville’s action motive sounds an alarm over shrill strings as the Family cuts the power to Neville’s compound. A repeating rhythm of piano and synth effects begins a long sequence in which Neville’s manly theme (played by low strings) contrasts with the delicate piano treatment for Lisa and the sound of the Family theme. As Zachary climbs toward Neville’s balcony,

Neville struggles to restart the building generator and return to protect Lisa. Grainer does a spectacular job of tying together the triple plot threads in one well-developed musical sequence, and he engages in a bit of foreshadowing by allowing the piano to take on lighter versions of both Neville's theme and the Family theme during shots of Lisa's vigil, implying the divided loyalties on which the film's plot will eventually turn.

14. Making Lisa (8M2, "A-2") In the aftermath of Zachary's attack, Neville finally has his way with Lisa and Grainer's score turns smooth and lightly romantic, dominated by Lisa's piano-based melody.

Cobwebs and Vials (8M3, "C") Neville and Lisa visit the county morgue in search of medical supplies as the title music plays eerily on organs.

Hope Springs Eternal (8M4, "A-1") A new and hopeful theme for Dutch's group of children (syncopated like the Family theme, but representing a different future) is introduced for a deleted scene that would have made more explicit the film's subtext of Neville as Christ. A young girl, who earlier in the film asked if Neville was God, leaves daisies and apples outside his apartment in prayer for him: "Please—I brought you this stuff. Don't let them take me and put me in a bag... please!"

Gravestones and Surprises (9M1, "C") A second deleted scene was meant to appear after a reel change: Lisa, visiting the graves of her parents, encounters a young girl who is suffering from the plague—and is herself holding a dead infant.

Lisa Shopping (9M2, "B") The track resumes with music used in the picture as Lisa shops alone; the mood lightens considerably.

15. Richie on the Roof (9M3/10M1, "A-1") Grainer produces some of the most haunting and beautifully melodic music in the score as Neville and Richie debate the wisdom of leaving the malevolent Family members alive. Echoes of the main title's "B" theme rock in indecision between two notes as Neville ponders the question of whether to show mercy to the barbarians, while Richie's theme moves between a rich string arrangement and a more hollow treatment for keyboard.

16. The Future Is Secured (10M1A, "A-1") The warm children's theme returns for a brief scene in which Neville informs Dutch that his serum successfully reverses the effects of the plague.

Neville and Dutch (10M2, "A-1") An uncertain motive for strings and harp continues with Richie's material as the young boy leaves a note for Neville. Neville and Dutch discuss leaving the city in the wake of their success with the serum; the music accelerates suspensefully as Neville discovers Richie's note, telling him that the boy has decided to go to Matthias with

news of the cure.

Richie Is Caught (10M3, "A-1") Richie's theme returns in an even more concerned mode as he enters Matthias's lair and is confronted by members of the Family. (The first half of this cue was dialed out of the finished film, but it was meant to overlap "Neville and Dutch.") Tabla percussion and organ shrieks accompany shock cuts of the ghostly Family members' faces.

This segues into a brief recapitulation of the opening phrases from "Zachary Makes His Move" as Neville stockpiles equipment for a rescue mission. This edit was made in post-production; the scene was not originally scored by Grainer. It is a familiar moment of the score and has been recreated for this album, the only such "tracking" replicated on the CD.

Lisa Joins the Family (10M6, "A-2") The Family material continues as a traveling shot reveals that Lisa has "turned" to the "light side"—succumbing to the plague.

Star Chamber (10M4, "A-2")/Neville Finds Richie (10M5, "A-2") The Family theme (in "Star Chamber") and "Omega Man" theme (in "Neville Finds Richie") are heard as Neville infiltrates the courthouse only to discover the brutalized body of Richie. (The beginning of "Star Chamber" was meant to accompany deleted footage in which Matthias, presiding over the captured Richie in "court," incites his followers into a chant that all but seals the boy's fate.) These two cues were originally located prior to "Lisa Joins the Family," but were flip-flopped with that scene so that Neville's solemn "Oh my God" (punctuated by a single strike of the waterchime—actually an overlay repeated from 1:56 of "On the Tumbriel") could segue immediately into his action revenge. The original FSM CD of *The Omega Man* featured a "hybrid" sequence that inserted "Lisa Joins the Family" between "Star Chamber" and "Neville Finds Richie."

Neville Crashes Through (10M7 Pt. I "A-2") An action treatment of Neville's theme appears as humanity's last warrior races through the streets in a jeep, attacking the Family head on.

Music Box (10M7 Pt. II, "C") Grainer engages in a fascinating conceit as Neville battles Family members in front of a toy store: the main theme plays out in a ghostly, music-box-like duet for the EX-42 and YC-30 organs during a brutal exchange of crossbow bolts and machine gun fire. (This is proscribed by the film's timing notes: "This being a toy store now visible, use a simple *music-box* theme here.")

17. The Trap (11M1, "A-1") Neville returns to his compound to find Lisa hidden in the dark. She emerges to reveal that she is now a member of the Family, and that she has brought Matthias and his brothers into Neville's sanctuary. The elegiac title theme

plays wistfully on keyboards and strings as Lisa and Matthias reveal themselves; Neville's fanfare emerges in a rhythmically shifting treatment as Matthias has his men destroy all of Neville's possessions and technology. The Family theme finally dominates, in a triumphant setting for strings and horns.

Nemesis for Neville (11M2, "A-2") Waterchimes and organ chords sound as Neville turns the tables and briefly takes Matthias hostage to the tune of a heroic trombone setting of Neville's motive, quickly transitioning to a treatment for piano as Neville drags Lisa into an elevator and outside. More rock percussion greets Neville as Matthias begins a siren-like call to Lisa. Neville's theme blasts forth as the hero is struck by Matthias's lance.

Matthias the Victor (11M3, "C") Mortally wounded, Neville sinks into a fountain as the title melody plays in a ghostly, fragmented rendition for synths.

(The next music heard in the film, slated 11M4, is Dutch's group of children singing "Old McDonald Had a Farm." This can be heard exclusively as an unmarked bonus passage at the end of FSM's first edition CD.)

18. Dutch Takes Over (11M5, "A-2") Neville's theme plays in a melancholy treatment for piano, strings and guitar as Dutch and the children find Lisa and the expiring Neville. Neville's theme returns in a rhythmic, downbeat treatment that was meant to continue through the end titles.

Dutch Takes Over (11M5 Alternate, "A-2") In the film, the concluding statement of Neville's theme was replaced by a final tag of the children's theme, an upbeat coda that played ironically over the final, symbolic image of Neville crucified in a fountain of his own life-giving blood. Both the unused end titles and the version heard in the film conclude this album, in that order.

"I think we wanted the downbeat ending and the distributor insisted on the other one," Walter Seltzer recalls. "Playing that upbeat music over a man who's basically being crucified seemed a little weird to me, but then the whole picture was kind of weird, so I couldn't complain. I know Heston and I wanted the downbeat end title."

—Jeff Bond and Lukas Kendall