

# THE CUE SHEET

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### Some Problems in Conducting Film Music Research

Recently a young university music student, who is a member of SPFM, visited Los Angeles from Australia to do research for a thesis he is writing on a major film score of several years ago. SPFM endeavored to assist this young man in making contacts with the composer of the score and the studio which produced the film, as well as refer him to other leads which might be useful in his research. However, in spite of the efforts made by SPFM in his behalf, he was unable to accomplish two of his major objectives: to interview the composer and to obtain a copy of the paper score. Although SPFM had knowledge that the composer would be in Los Angeles during the young researcher's visit, we could not guarantee that the composer would be able to see him, although we did not anticipate any problem, as most film composers, if they are not too busy, are usually glad to discuss their work with serious scholars.

Because of the disappointment and frustration caused to our Australian friend, we want to advise prospective researchers coming to Los Angeles to study film music, that although SPFM can assist in making preliminary contacts with composers, we cannot assume responsibility in securing their cooperation. For this reason, we suggest that researchers write to the composer c/o SPFM, and that we will forward the letter. The researcher should thereafter make his own arrangements for the purpose of interviewing the composer.

As to obtaining copies of scores, both the studios and SPFM frequently receive requests for such material, and all we can say is that this is an ongoing problem, which has no definite solution in the foreseeable future. The most that a researcher can hope for is to be granted permission to study the score in a studio music library. As a general rule the studios do not allow photocopying for reasons of copyright, Musicians Union regulations, and because they are unable to maintain control over the material once it has left the studio (some of these problems were discussed by Leslie Zador in earlier issues of *The Cue Sheet*, particularly as regards obtaining tape copies of music from the studios). This is not to say that studios will not under any circumstances allow copies to be made, but rather, that as a matter of general policy, they will not. It is incumbent upon each researcher to make his own inquiry in this regard.

As a word of friendly caution, researchers coming to Los Angeles should understand before incurring expensive travel costs the limitations which they may potentially face in conducting their research.

— William H. Rosar