

He looks rather like a long-haired version of Efrem Zimbalist Jr., he talks rather like a witty version of Erich Segal, and he is a happily fragmented man.

On one evening a while back he was taking bows after the Los Angeles Philharmonic had performed his "Untitled Instrumental-Electronic Composition." The next day he was at Universal Studios conducting the score he had written for a *Movie of the Week* Western.

He then returned to his home in Malibu to work on his newest concert piece, "Foci for Orchestra Based on Astronomical Principles." The astronomical principles were honestly come by—observed on an eight-inch celestial telescope mounted on a cast-iron pier in his back yard.

The next week it was time to get down to the year's heavy work, the bread-and-butter stint, and crank up the old *Marcus Welby, M.D.* Music Machine. In the ensuing 10 weeks he composed and conducted, bar for bar, the equivalent of five Beethoven symphonies. He got paid for this music probably 10 times what Ludwig van Beethoven was paid for a lifetime's work.

His name is Leonard Rosenman and, at 48, he is one of the most productive and creative spirits in Hollywood.

Other creative spirits have tried to support their "serious" work by dabbling their pinkies in the crass morass of Hollywood. Most of them couldn't keep their Muses hitched to Mammon. F. Scott Fitzgerald gave up after an unlettered producer "corrected" the dialogue in one of his scripts. William Faulkner packed it in (along with his private stock of bourbon) and went back to Mississippi. The great modernist composer Arnold Schonberg had one interview with Irving Thalberg, and fled Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in utter atonal bafflement. Leonard Rosenman has not suffered this art-vs.-money conflict—perhaps because he grew up in the great equalizing borough of Brooklyn. Philharmonic performances bring sweet balm to his psyche, while

television music pays the bills, but Rosenman takes a score for a *Welby* episode quite as seriously as he does his "Concerto for Piano, Saxophone, Flute, Violin and Four Orchestral Groups with Four Conductors."

"How could I take *Welby* lightly," he says, "when I'm such a hypochondriac? I have developed symptoms, or thought I have, for everything the doctor's patients ever had. It's a miracle I'm not a total wreck by now."

Money and hypochondria are not the only reasons Rosenman is hooked on writing for *Welby*. There are creative benefits as well. "Working with film gives me an understanding of the relationship between sound and image, and more and more my bag in concert work is mixed media."

Like what? "Like the thing I'm into now. 'A Short History of Civilization, or, The Death of Vaudeville.' Scored for actors, singers, dancers, tapes and movie clips. All kinds of high jinks. Songs of the '20s. Tap-dancing through the war in China. The Depression. Mobster killings. And in the end they shoot the tap dancers."

"The point is, it utilizes everything I've learned doing films, making sound

and image work together."

Which is basically a matter of creating music to match the action or the mood on the screen, no? "No. That went out with the nickelodeon piano player—or should have. The role of music in films should be to say something *not* shown on the screen. It's a waste of time and effort to say something twice, two different ways.

"Example. A movie opens with a New York City scene. Big-city hustle and bustle, right? So the composer pencils in Big-City Music and sound effects. Like the taxi-horn and traffic motif in George Gershwin's 'American in Paris,' right?

"Wrong. Not if the composer is thinking. What isn't on the screen that needs saying? Well, for one thing, the lost feeling of an individual in a big city. So the thinking composer might write a lament for a single saxophone to play against the hustle-bustle background.

"Or let's say *Marcus Welby* is at a party. Tinkle of drinks, lots of happy talk and laughter. *Welby* appears to be enjoying himself. But we know he's not—he's gravely concerned about the looks of his host. No dialogue, so how do we know? The music says it. Thirty-

five million people who wouldn't recognize an English horn if they were bopped over the head with one are told by an English horn that old Doc is worried, and they believe it."

It wasn't so many years ago that movie scores were ordered like delicatessen: 3 minutes love music—5 minutes fight music—6½ minutes chase music—1 minute happily-ever-after music—all sliced from the public (uncopyrighted) domain.

When I reminded Rosenman of this, he laughed and said, "Hell, when I was hired for *The Defenders*, one of the first things producer Herb Brodtkin said to me was, 'We'll want some good Legal Music here.' Actually, the theme I wrote for *The Defenders* is almost interchangeable with my theme for *Welby*. Musically. But heard against different images, they have different meanings."

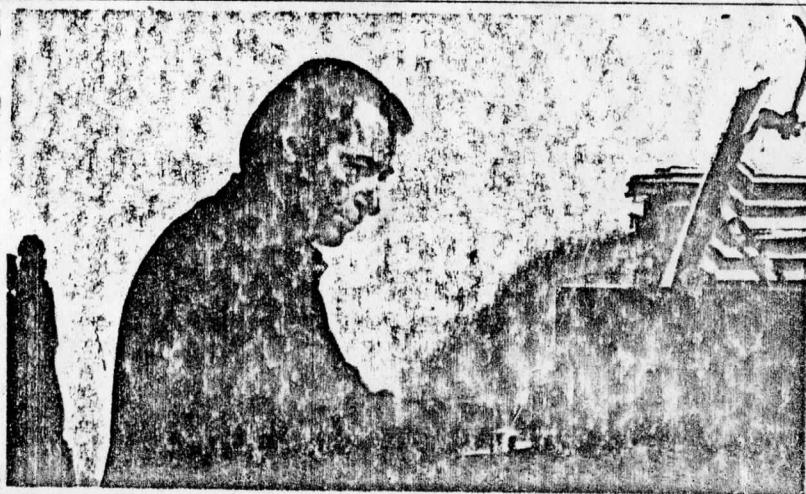
Film producers—both movie and TV—have obviously come a long way, baby. So has Rosenman.

There is a quaint native axiom in Brooklyn: "If you can't be born tough, you'd better be born smart." Rosenman chose smart. At the age of 17 he was ready for a change of careers already—from art to music, to become a con- →

Could Dr. Welby Practice Without Music?

A noted composer-conductor explains what it adds to TV drama

By Rowland Barber



cert pianist. But a funny thing happened on his way to Carnegie Hall: World War II. While serving in the Air Force he turned to composing, and that has been his forte ever since.

He studied with the aforementioned Schonberg, in Los Angeles, and with the American composer Roger Sessions in Berkeley. Rosenman's first recognition came in the summer of 1953, when he was appointed Composer-in-Residence at the Berkshire Music Center, in Tanglewood, Mass., with a commission for a one-act opera.

That fall he subsidized himself by teaching piano in New York City. His most impressive pupil—who became his best friend—was a young actor named James Dean. Dean convinced Rosenman that they could both do better by their careers in Hollywood. There the two of them enrolled in an acting course conducted by the highly regarded Jeff Corey—Rosenman feeling that he could not qualify as a movie composer until he knew what it was like on the other side of the camera.

When Dean was cast in the film "East of Eden," he brought Rosenman to the director, Elia Kazan. Kazan was intrigued by Rosenman's musical style—which old-line moviemakers had dismissed as too avant-garde to be useful—and signed him to do the score.

It was a breaking of the movie sound-barrier, liberating the medium from its bondage to 19th-century music, and opening it to other young, daring composers.

The "East of Eden" sound-track won a Gold Record, and so did Rosenman's score for "Rebel Without a Cause." James Dean's second memorable film. Between those assignments Rosenman galvanized the tin ears of Hollywood by employing the entire 12-tone scale for an MGM movie called "The Cobweb."

Then he lost his friend. In a fiery highway crash. James Dean became a premature legend. Rosenman's relation-

ship with the actor had been exploited by the press, and he became a target for the incredibly morbid cult that pursued Dean beyond the grave. "I must have gotten 5000 letters from those maniacs," Rosenman says. "Sick. Absolutely sick. It almost drove me out of Hollywood."

But his work was in demand, and he stayed on. Scores for films like "The Chapman Report," "Pork Chop Hill" and "Fantastic Voyage" furnished the wherewithal for raising a family and for returning to nonfunctional composition. Movie work led inevitably to TV work. *Law of the Plainsman*. *The Road West*. *Garrison's Gorillas*. *The Virginian*. Theme music for *The Defenders*. He spent four years in Italy, as composer-in-residence for the series *Combat*, and as guest conductor of the major Italian symphony orchestras. Of the *Combat* stint he recalls: "After four years of Germans skulking through the bushes, I said, 'Enough already!' and requested a transfer to the South Pacific."

He got as far as the West Coast, where he still lives. More movies: "A Man Called Horse," "Beneath the Planet of the Apes." Television specials. A broad spectrum of new compositions, performed by orchestras, chamber groups and soloists all over the world. He lectured, wrote, taught at universities.

He was then picked by David Victor for the happiest breadwinning chore he had yet done—*Marcus Welby, M.D.* But tragedy struck between *Welby* production seasons. At year's end (1970) his second wife, actress Kay Scott, died.

Since that time he has thrown himself into his work, all facets of it, *molto con brio* (he has recently remarked—his wife Lyn is an artist).

Like all true professionals, Rosenman makes everything look easy. "Writing for film is easy," he insists. "People have the idea that it involves all kinds of arcane techniques. Hell, all →

the 'techniques' can be learned by a half-intelligent person in 10 minutes. What's mostly involved is plain good sense. I don't know when I last used a stop watch while composing. Still, I'd like to give a course someday in movie and TV scoring. The course would be in a school of business administration and it would have nothing to do with music. I would teach things like How to Find an Agent, and How to Deal with Unions."

The score for any given segment of *Marcus Welby* is born in what is called a spotting session, attended by Rosenman, his "two Davids" (executive producer David Victor and producer David O'Connell), the film editor and the music editor. Running the episode (all finished except for sound track) through many times, stopping, backing up, scene by scene, they decide in committee where there should be music, where unscored dialogue and action.

Victor: Hold it! Music here, where Bob pauses at the door.

Rosenman: I don't think so. I'll write it, but I don't agree.

Rosenman writes it. Even if his opinion ultimately prevails, the music for the contended scene is not lost. It goes into cold storage, the "library," to be pulled out and put to use on some future sound track, perhaps as a "play-off" to a commercial or a "play-on" to the following act.

All agree there should be surgery music, starting with the word "forceps" and running until the surgeon says, "OK, Charley, wrap it up." This, along with the other music spots, will be translated by the music editor into footage—number of reel, number of feet into the reel, number of picture frames into the foot—and into running time, minutes and seconds.

What it all comes down to, on paper, is a Music Work Order Cue Sheet from which the composer will then compose some 15 original compositions, ranging in length from 10 seconds to four minutes.

The composer takes the cue sheet home to Malibu. He writes at an old piano that's jarringly out of tune; one-fourth of its keys don't work at all. The floor of the room is ankle-deep with papers, books, magazines, old scores. The composer mutters, sings, croaks, chortles to himself as he creates, but he can barely hear himself. The television set is blaring. So are the visiting kids romping through the creative syndrome with Rosenman's four dogs. It is not exactly a reincarnation of Ludwig van Beethoven in a Viennese garret, goose quill aquiver with inspiration.

In two days the score is finished. The next time Rosenman sees it is in neat notation—at the recording session at Universal Studios.

The recording session is loose, relaxed, and astonishingly efficient. Rosenman, on the conductor's podium, wearing red-stripe, flare pants overhung by salmon-colored shirt, legs entwined around his stool, surrounded by sheet music, clock (which he largely ignores) and ash tray (which he stuffs full of butts from chain-smoked unfiltered cigarettes). Lank dark hair flopping, a Botticelli portrait come to life, he leads 25 musicians through the business at hand as he watches a large-screen projection of *Welby* production #32502.

"I challenge anybody to get together under one baton 25 better instrumentalists," he says during a break. "These people are terrific. The best of the best from the L.A. Philharmonic, the Hollywood Bowl orchestra, the International Society of Chamber Music."

He runs a hand through his hair, lights a cigarette, and says: "I really love what I do for *Marcus Welby*. But then I wonder—does anybody out there really hear what I do? Really dig it? It's, I guess, like wondering do the stars look back at me through my telescope."

Portrait of a man enjoying the best of all kinds of possible worlds. Music up and out. (END)