

ALONG CAME STU

To say Stu Phillips has done it all would be an understatement – firstly, he *has* done it all, and secondly, he's still doing it. He's been a jack-of-all-trades from the beginning, and the amazing thing is he did all trades equally well, whether it was musical directing for people like Jimmie Rodgers or Chris Connor, producing and receiving gold records for such classics as "Blue Moon" (The Marcels), "Johnny Angel" (Shelley Fabares), "Goodbye, Cruel World" (James Darren), producing (at Colpix) other artists like Nina Simone, Vince Edwards, The Chad Mitchell Trio, The Ronettes (Stu was there first, pre-Phil Spector), creating, producing, and arranging the amazing The Hollyridge Strings (twelve albums in all – at one time three of the albums were in the Billboard Top 20), or writing songs with various co-writers that were recorded by the likes of Tammy Wynette, B.B. King, George Hamilton, Dino, Desi, and Billy, The Sandpipers, The Electric Prunes, Nancy Sinatra, and on and on. And, of course, composing music for television and films.

Starting as a copyist for the *Milton Berle Texaco Hour*, he soon graduated to composing for *The Donna Reed Show*. Later, he did a few *Gidgets* and *The Monkees*, as well as film scores for Danny Kaye's *The Man From The Diner's Club*, *Ride the Wild Surf*, *Hells Angels on Wheels*, and the ultra-classic cult film, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*. But it was his work in the 1970s that made him legendary. In 1974 he began a seven-year run at Universal Studios, composing the music for some of the most beloved shows of that or any era – *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *McCloud*, *Quincy*, *Switch*, *The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Buck Rogers*, *Knight Rider*, and many others. Then, at 20th Century Fox, he did an astonishing ninety-six epi-sodes of the Lee Majors series, *The Fall Guy*. Other TV shows included *Spiderman*, *Chicago Story*, *Medical Center*, and *Along Came Bronson*.

Along the way, he was nominated for four Grammys, and because of the incredible continuing popularity of *Battlestar Galactica*, *Knight Rider*, *The Monkees*, and *Beyond The Valley of the Dolls*, he's as cool today as he ever was. I mean, in the last four years, there have been three hit hip hop/rap versions of the *Knight Rider* theme by Busta Rhymes, Timbaland & Magoo, and Panjabi MC with Jay-Z. Which just goes to show you, when you're cool, you're cool. And Stu has always been the coolest.

THREE SCORES

We're pleased to present the word premiere releases of three of Stu's best film scores, each one uniquely Stu and filled with his wonderful

sense of melody, rhythm, pop, and dramatic sensibility.

First up in our triple bill is *A Time to Every Purpose* (1972), which starred Martin Sheen, Jack Albertson, and Lesley Warren (soon to be Lesley Ann Warren). It was directed by John Florea, and one of the writers was Noel Black, who, a few years earlier, had directed the cult classic, *Pretty Poison*. The story revolves around three characters – Martin Sheen plays a musician on his way from Northern California to LA to play a gig. He meets Jack Albertson, a drifter who wants to get to Lompoc, California and the "Valley of the Flowers." Lesley Warren plays a teenage runaway from a private boarding school, who just wants to get away – to anywhere. Sheen picks up Warren, then Albertson, and the film follows their journey, with much pretty scenery along the way.

Here's what Stu has to say about the score: "The orchestration relies heavily on strings, with a solo harmonica and solo flugelhorn the other featured colors. Acoustic guitars are used extensively for the underlying rhythm patterns. The song 'Echoes of the Road' identifies the character of the drifter. The lyric was written to describe his inner feelings throughout the film."

It's a terrific score, with beautiful orchestral writing, and it really captures the journey of its characters perfectly.

Next up – *The Name of the Game is... Kill* (1968). The film starred Jack Lord, Susan Strasberg, Colin Wilcox, and Tisha Sterling, and was directed by Gunnar Hellstrom. A drifter from Hungary is picked up by a pretty young girl named Mikki while hitch-hiking in Arizona. She invites him to spend a few days and rest up at her family's gas station in a semi-deserted town in the Arizona desert. Her family – two sisters and a mother – are, how shall we say, quite strange, and it soon becomes obvious that the drifter is in for some weird experiences. There are dark family secrets, told Rashoman-style, and it transpires that one of the sisters is – a killer. But which one?

Stu on the score: "This was one of the earliest film scores to utilize the Moog Synthesizer of the 1960s. The score also used many other electronic instruments and effects including electric cellos and an electrified harpsichord designed and played by Mike Rubini. Percussionist Emil Richards was featured utilizing many electrified percussion instruments such as the bass vibe... bass marimba... water gong and many more. Paul Beaver supplied and played the Moog. It was set up in the booth and dubbed over the already existing score.

Emil Richards, who is featured throughout the score, and is the most famous of the West

Coast percussionists, was my friend from our days while serving in the Army. We were stationed in Japan and formed a friendship during our ten-month stay. We reacquainted when, in 1956, I produced and recorded a jazz album for MGM Records. Emil was the vibe player in the group."

The third score is *The Meal* (1975), which starred Carl Betz, Dina Merrill, and Leon Ames. A gathering of old friends at a fashionable weekend party in Florida comes to a tragic end when one of the guests is murdered. During the course of the weekend there is lots of dining and playing cards. During those moments many past secrets are revealed, causing tension to build among the guests. The host of the party is a lover of classical music, especially Rachmaninoff. There is also a piano concerto that one of the guests has composed that seems to be mysteriously played during the nighttime hours. There is a surprise ending, which, in the 1970s, was considered very racy and *avant garde*. Today, it wouldn't even lift an eyebrow and would be at home on any network TV show.

For this score, Stu says, "Similar to the score for *A Time to Every Purpose*, strings are featured with the piano being the predominant solo instrument. The score is pretty much standard film scoring." Stu's use of the Rachmaninoff Pre-lude #6 opus 23 is masterful, and he's set it beautifully for orchestra. Additionally, he had the fun of writing his own concerto for the film.

Stu remains busy, and in the last ten years he's tackled the task of orchestrating some classical works for symphonic orchestra, including two Beethoven sonatas and five Rachmaninoff Preludes / Etudes. He's also written an autobiography entitled *Stu Who? Forty Years of Navigating the Minefields of the Music Business*, which is available on his website, www.stuwho.com, in stores, or at most Internet book sites. In fact, he told me to tell you he's more than happy to answer as many e-mail questions as possible concerning any of this projects – so, if you're a fan, drop him a line. He's a class act all the way.

— Bruce Kimmel