

The Far Horizons / Secret of the Incas

There have always been “event” films, from silent movies on. But unlike today, there used to be thousands of movies made that were not event films because the movie-going appetite was insatiable. There was a steady stream of classy pictures coming out every week, along with programmers to fill the bottom half of double bills. Some films turned out to be classics, some were simply entertaining movies that passed the time pleasantly, and some disappeared – it was a wonderful time to be a moviegoer.

Charlton Heston made his first professional film in 1950, not in a bit part or co-starring role, but as the lead in Paramount Pictures’ *Dark City*. Audiences and critics took notice, but it was his next film that would propel him into movie star status: Cecil B. DeMille’s *The Greatest Show on Earth*. From there, he became a regular Paramount leading man, starring in *The Savage*, *Arrow-head*, *The Naked Jungle*, and, in 1954, *Secret of the Incas* and a year later in *The Far Horizons*. Then Cecil B. DeMille, the man who’d cast Heston in the film that vaulted him into stardom, cast him in the role for which Heston would give one of his most iconic performances and one for which he would be remembered for his entire career – Moses, in *The Ten Commandments*.

And so, we have two movies from the Golden Age, both starring Charlton Heston, a double bill in the old style – well-made pictures designed solely to entertain.

THE FAR HORIZONS

The Far Horizons holds the distinction of being the only major motion picture made about the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Based on a fictional novel by Della Gould Emmons, the film combined fact and fiction in its depiction of the two-year expedition. Heston played Lt. William Clark; co-starring as Captain Meriwether Lewis was Fred MacMurray. As they trek across the beautiful but dangerous Pacific Northwest, they are aided by a Shoshone maiden named Sacagawea, played by beautiful Donna Reed. The film also featured William Demarest, Barbara Hale, and Alan Reed. The director was Rudolph Mate, and the film was shot in gorgeous Technicolor and Paramount’s then-new widescreen process, Vista-Vision, by Daniel Fapp. Whatever historical inaccuracies the film has, it’s still very entertaining. And it has a terrific score by Hans J. Salter.

Born in 1896, Salter began scoring films in 1930. For a composer whose name is rarely included among the top composers for film, Salter scored an amazing number of beloved horror and sci-fi films, including *Man Made Monster*, *The Black Cat*, *The Wolf Man*, *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*, *Son of Dracula*, *House of Frankenstein*, *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, *This Island Earth*, *The Mole People* and *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, but he was equally at home in every genre and wrote great scores for such diverse films as *Hold That Ghost*, Fritz Lang’s *Scarlet Street*, *The Strange Affair of Uncle Harry*, *Magnificent Doll*, *The Reckless Moment*, *Against All Flags*, *The Black Shield of Falworth*, *Autumn Leaves*, *Hold Back the Night*, *Come September*, *If a Man Answers*, and *Bedtime Story*, to name but a few from his extraordinarily prolific career. And he also scored a number of western and adventure films, including *Bend of the River*, *The Far Country*, *Man Without a Star*, *Wichita* and many others.

His score for *The Far Horizons* is a majestic beauty, with a wonderful main theme that gets plenty of variations, along with some great dramatic scoring. For this CD, we present all the surviving cues, which thankfully constitute most of the score. It’s movie music in the grand tradition – full-bodied, emotional, and filled with melody. The score is presented in mono. There isn’t nearly enough Hans J. Salter on CD, so it’s a particular treat to bring this excellent score to a new generation of soundtrack fans. Salter passed away in 1996 at the ripe old age of ninety-eight.

SECRET OF THE INCAS

Here’s the plot: A legend says that the Inca Empire was destroyed by the gods when a starburst of gold and jewels was stolen from the Temple of the Sun many centuries ago. The legend continues that the empire will be reborn once the treasure is returned. Now, an adventurer is seeking the treasure, as is his nemesis. The adventurer wears a brown leather jacket, a fedora, tan pants, and an over-the-shoulder bag and revolver. Sound familiar? Can we say Indiana Jones?

But this was 1954, and the adventurer was Harry Steele, played by Charlton Heston. But *Secret of the Incas* was definitely an inspiration for the Indiana Jones series. Deborah Nadoolman, who did the costumes for *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, has said that the makers of *Raiders*

watched the film several times, and that Indiana’s costume was absolutely inspired by Heston’s.

Secret of the Incas was and is a fun picture. Shot on location in Peru at Cuzco and Machu Picchu (the first major Hollywood film to shoot at those locations), with a great cast that, in addition to Heston, included Thomas Mitchell, Robert Young, Nicole Mauray, and the then very popular exotic singer, Yma Sumac. Helping to make it so much fun is the film’s musical score by David Buttolph.

Like Hans J. Salter, David Buttolph is a bit of an unsung film composer. Buttolph was born in 1902 and over the course of his extremely prolific career he scored hundreds of films, including some pretty great movies such as *This Gun for Hire*, *The House on 92nd Street*, *Somewhere in the Night*, *13 Rue Madeleine*, *The Brasher Doubloon*, *Kiss of Death*, *The Enforcer*, *House of Wax*, *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, *Phantom of the Rue Morgue*, *Long John Silver*, *The Lone Ranger*, *The Horse Soldiers*, and *PT 109*. He also moved into television scoring, working on such series as *Laramie*, *Wagon Train* and *The Virginian*.

Buttolph’s score for *Secret of the Incas* is exotic and adventure-filled like the film. Because of Yma Sumac’s involvement, it was decided to use a piece of music that was from one of her albums, specifically “High Andes” by Moises Vivanco. Buttolph used it sparingly, but in the end Sumac’s recording was used for the film’s main title. For this CD, we present Buttolph’s arrangement of it in his own setting. Other-wise, Buttolph has memorable themes of his own, underscoring all the adventure, romance and thrills. For this CD we present all the surviving film cues in glorious stereo sound.

— Bruce Kimmel