

Victor Young at Paramount

Paramount and Victor Young – one of the greatest studio/composer relationships in history. Young came to Paramount in the mid-1930s and worked on a huge number of films – as an arranger, composer and conductor. His output was astonishing and his gift for film scoring undeniable. He was also one of the great melodists and many of his themes and songs became huge hits. At Paramount, he scored such classics as *The Uninvited*, *Ministry of Fear*, *Love Letters*, *Two Years Before the Mast*, *The Big Clock*, *Golden Earrings*, *Night Has a Thousand Eyes*, *The Paleface*, *Samson and Delilah*, *The File on Thelma Jordan*, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, *Shane*, *About Mrs. Leslie*, *The Country Girl* and *Strategic Air Command*, to name but a few. Along the way, Young received an astonishing twenty-two Oscar nominations (in 1940 and 1941 he was nominated four times in the same year!). But he would not win the golden statuette during his lifetime – he won the Oscar for Best Music (Dramatic or Comedy Picture) posthumously for *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Some of his themes are among the most beloved of all time.

For this CD, we are proud to present three world premiere releases – a Victor Young triple bill.

APPOINTMENT WITH DANGER

First up is *Appointment With Danger*, a 1951 crime film noir directed by Lewis Allen, starring Alan Ladd, Phyllis Calvert, Paul Stewart, Jan Sterling, Jack Webb and Harry Morgan. The film is unusual in that Ladd plays not a standard issue detective or cop or FBI man, but a U.S. postal inspector on the trail of two people who murdered another postal inspector. On the trail of the murderers, he has to find the witness to the slaying – a young nun – and he has to pose as a bad guy to get in with the killers, who have planned a huge million-dollar robbery

of funds being transported by the postal service. It's a taut and well-written yarn (screenplay by Richard L. Breen and Warren Duff), with excellent performances. Interestingly, both Jack Webb and Harry Morgan play bad guys – they went on to play opposite each other in the 1967 redo of Webb's classic *Dragnet* series. The film received excellent reviews.

Young composed a terrific score, beginning with an exciting "Prelude." From there he provides wonderful underscoring for the various plot turns, with nary a love theme to be heard. This is Young in suspense and drama mode and he keeps things moving along right up until the exciting final cues.

THE ACCUSED

Our second feature, *The Accused*, is another film noir, this one from 1949. Written by Ketti Frings (from the 1947 novel *Be Still, My Love* by June Truesdell) and directed by William Dieterle, *The Accused* starred Loretta Young, Robert Cummings, Wendell Corey and Sam Jaffe. The film had a rather controversial plot: a student fancies his teacher and tries to have his way with her. After she kills him in self-defense, she tries to cover up her crime and compounds her problems by falling in love with someone who was close to the dead boy. *The New York Times* called the film "a super-duper psychological job ... the story flows smoothly and methodically builds up suspense to a punchy climax." *Variety* also gave it an excellent review, stating, "*The Accused* exploits fear and violence into a high grade melodrama."

Beginning with a classic Young "Prelude" which sets the tone for all that follows, the score plays up the characters and their emotions. It features a beautiful theme, which is used throughout the score. There's also some suspense music here and there – it's a terrific score straight down the line.

SEPTEMBER AFFAIR

For our final feature, we have *September Affair*, a 1950 film also directed by William Dieterle. The stars of this romantic drama were Joseph Cotton, Joan Fontaine, Jessica Tandy and Robert Arthur. Bosley Crowther in *The New York Times* summed up the film's essential plot: "It is the story of a rich and tired American, homeward bound from Italy, who falls in with a charming young lady with whom he thinks he'd like to spend his autumn years. A fortuitous set of circumstances, including the wreck of a plane they should be on, gives the two an opportunity to go off quietly and live in bliss while the world thinks them dead."

The score for *September Affair* is a perfect example of what Young did as well as anyone – a gorgeously melodic, picturesque, touching and captivating score. You'll musically visit Rome, Naples, Pompeii and Capri, and be a party to all the drama the characters face. Young also subtly uses the great Kurt Weill/Maxwell Anderson song "September Song" skillfully in some cues.

Victor Young died too young at 56 – but he left behind a brilliant film music legacy and we're very pleased to bring these three great scores to CD for the first time.

— Bruce Kimmel