

Keller describes a belabored film attempt at modern music as “a pastiche with wrong notes duly injected.”<sup>53</sup> He notes that Leith Stevens’s “Piano Concerto in C min.,” composed for the film *Night Song* (1947), “is no piano concerto and ends in F min.” He finally and wrathfully declares it “nine minutes of stinking refuse.” He finds that another subpar effort “makes one dream of America’s first great thriller, *Scarface* (1932), wherein there was no background music at all.”<sup>54</sup>

As with observers of early film who came from outside the discipline, Keller often seems reluctant to afford film full artistic status.<sup>55</sup> “[There] is no legitimate inartistic music, which is why naturalism, the art of remaining inartistic but expressive, will always be able to say more, rather than less, without music.”<sup>56</sup> He damns with faint praise, talking in one case of “one of the least rotten American scores.” Conversely, as commentators from the start of film had done, he valorizes the participations of real composers. Praising new composition in William Walton’s *Hamlet* score he notes that “even the best Hollywood composer would just automatically have re-used the music.”<sup>57</sup>

This dismissal of Hollywood film scoring may relate to one of its central tenets. Keller disagrees with Kurt London’s oft-quoted maxim about film music being bad when one can hear it. “Any so-called artistic process or device that has to shun the light of consciousness is suspect in the extreme.”<sup>58</sup> He disagrees with the handmaiden model, finding that when the score merely reinforces the images, musical tautology results.

Though he is critical of original composition and wants the music to be heard, Keller’s greatest ire is reserved for the kind of music we are partly discussing in this study, the kind of music that, even in film, comes to the foreground. Keller decries especially “the notorious stratagem of hiding behind music from the concert hall, as if a picture had ever been uplifted by the music it degrades.”<sup>59</sup> He observes how Lionel Newman “murdered” Mozart’s “Clarinet Quintet” in the film *Apartment for Peggy* (1948) by, among other things, taking out the clarinet.<sup>60</sup> He laments Franz Waxman’s “protracted and multiple murder” of Smetana’s *Vltava* in *Man on a Tightrope* (1953).<sup>61</sup>

Keller finds that musical quotation often emerges as a “covert expression of simultaneous love and hate towards a parent fig-