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Mail Bag

To explain a bit of this exposure, when I was first working at Birdland in the early '50s, I was on the same bill with Bud Powell. We had only sporadic conversations between sets in the dressing room. So I was very surprised when Oscar Goodstein, one of the managers of Birdland, told me that when Bud had to go to the hospital for the first time and Oscar asked him what recordings he'd like him to bring to the hospital, he said, "Only Brubeck."

When Bud was living with Randi Hultin in Oslo, she said the only pianist he wanted to hear was Brubeck. Later, with Francis Paudras in Paris, it was the same thing. Francis wrote in Bud's biography that he was getting tired of constantly hearing Brubeck.

I asked Randi to write me some of this from her first-hand experience as I would like to include it in my autobiography. The enclosed letter from Randi is the self-explanatory reply. She has written a book, *Under the Sign of Jazz*, that tells of her interesting relationship with many of the jazz greats who have come through her welcoming doors on Gartnerveien in Oslo.

I am intrigued because I don't hear any influence of my style on Bud's or, for that matter, Bud's on mine. I thought you might find this interesting.

Dave Brubeck, Wilton, Connecticut

Historians should find this interesting, but probably won't. It isn't politically correct. Hultin's letter follows.

I had the chance to talk a lot with Bud Powell since I first met him in September, 1962 — that time in Oslo, and later when he moved back to Paris. In Oslo he didn't talk much, but some of the things we talked about got back to him in Paris. And specially in 1964, when he was recovering from his illness. He was like a new Bud for me. I was out with him after his gig at the Blue Note, and I was in his home (with Francis Paudras) the day he recorded his last record in Paris. He had dedicated *In the Mood for a Classic* to me — the 31st of July, 1964, exactly one year before he died — and one time in Paris, when I asked him if he ever went to jazz concerts in town, to see American friends, he said, "No." But he had heard a trumpet player, playing with Count Basie a beautiful version of *Stella by Starlight*. "It's a nice tune," he said. And suddenly he asked, "Randi, have you heard Brubeck?"

"Of course," I said.

"Have you heard this, *Some Day My Prince Will Come*?" He was whistling the tune, with changes.

"Yes, I have heard it live."

"You are lucky," he said. "The changes in that tune are marvelous. He is my favorite pianist."

I was a little surprised. But when I came to him the last evening, the 31st of July, just before he should return to the USA, and we had a recording party in Francis' house, he asked Francis to put on some Brubeck music.

Francis said, "He all the time asks for that."

When Bud was (back) in New York, I had many postcards and even a letter from him — surely one of the few letters he ever has written.

Randi W. Hultin, Oslo

The piece on *Swing Kids* by Grover Sales evoked memories, as had the movie when I saw it several years ago. I grew up in a small town on the Baltic Sea, not far from Gdansk. Here, far from the center of Nazi power, swing blossomed among the authority-challenging adolescents all through World War II, albeit in a somewhat less sophisticated form than portrayed in the film, which goes back farther than my own memories. After all, we lived in the German equivalent of the Ozarks.

My father owned a bookstore. Many of those books and records that were banned by the Nazis ended up hidden in a remote section of our warehouse. My father did not believe in book burning. Without my parents' knowledge, I was a frequent visitor to the hideaway from where I pocketed books on forbidden music, dance, and sex, which at that time encompassed my only true interests. The "borrowed" how-to books on then-deemed "degenerate" dance steps from the twenties and thirties made me a popular dance instructor among my friends. Some older brothers, stationed as soldiers in France, often supplied us with more modern material when they came home on leave. From their records we absorbed religiously whatever we could learn about the Hot Club, the Dorsey brothers, Benny Goodman, etc.

In the spring of 1942, when I was thirteen, a group of us had a picnic in a popular park, way outside town. I brought my portable record player and a few of my father's records. As we happily danced with our girlfriends out in the open, a boy of sixteen or seventeen in Hitler Youth uniform shouted at us to stop the "Negermusik" and the dancing or he would call the police. We dared him as we put on a record of *The Lambeth Walk* — it wasn't even jazz, but it was sung in English — to which we proceeded to dance with a laid-back, mocking two-step. As the Nazi youth stormed toward the record player either to stomp on it or take it away from us, a middle-aged bystander restrained him. The man flashed some sort of identification in the youth's face and sent him on his way. He then addressed us with the advice, "Keep it low, or better yet, pack up in case he comes back with reinforcements."

Before we left, we took pictures to commemorate the even. One print survived the war. None of those friends did.

B.G. Falk, Tiburon, California

B.G. Falk, who has had a prodigiously successful business career, retained his interest in jazz: he was largely responsible for the magnificent series of Oscar Peterson records for the German MPS label.

I stumbled upon the movie Swing Kids *late one night on television. I thought it was fantastically good, in close conformity to all that I had heard from German and French and other friends about the suppression of jazz first by the Nazis and, later, by the Communists, who equally recognized its challenge to authority and authoritarianism.*

Charter readers of the Jazzletter will recall that very early in the publication's history I published Joseph Skvorecky's powerful short story Eine Kleine Jazzmusik, *which tells of a group of Sudeten Czech youths who make fun of the Nazi occupying authorities and their local lackeys by playing a jazz concert with falsified titles. The authorities learn that they have been had, and the young people end up in a concentration camp, where they are eventually shot. Their girl singer becomes the mistress of the local Nazi military commander and stabs him to death in his sleep, for which she too is executed. Later, talking to Skvorecky on the telephone, I said that I found the story a brilliantly inventive piece of work. He said there was no invention in it: all these young people had been his friends. He sent me a photo of them.*

I just got back from seeing *Side Man*, a very successful Broadway play about, well, a sideman.

Gene, a trumpeter of early promise, is so focussed on his music that he seems indifferent to his wife's alcoholism and dawning madness and his estrangement from his son, whom he forces to be the grownup in the family. Gene has a small group of friends, trumpet sidemen all, who drink toasts to unemployment and sit around complaining about clubs where they're not allowed to use the patrons' bathrooms or get dinner or proper breaks or overtime pay. One of them is a junky, another has a serious lisp. All of them are handicapped in one way or another. Then there's a waitress and would-be singer who serially and rather casually marries a number of them. The show follows the seven from 1953 to 1985, mapping the sidemen's decline from youthful energy through playing with Lester Lanin in mint-green uniforms to their last gig in some pathetic little lounge.

The acting was uniformly superb. Frank Wood as Gene was perfectly vague and shuffling, full of twitchy mouth and finger tics, as if he were constantly practicing or checking his chops. His wife Terry was played with fire by Edie Falco, a wonderful actress who can also be seen as Carmella, the Mafia don's wife, in the HBO series *The Sopranos*. Kevin Geer, as Jonesy the junky, was great, as were all the others. Gene's son, named for Clifford Brown, narrates the story: actor Robert Sella has a tough role in aging from ten to about thirty, and does it well. Another highlight was the use of classic original fragments from such giants as Roy Eldridge and Clifford Brown. (A CD of the music was available in the lobby.) The staging was interesting and the pacing was good.

The bad news for me was the message of the show: that people who devote their lives to jazz are pathetic and marginal. Certainly everyone on the stage was. The "hero", who is favorably compared to Diz in the early years ("but Gene has better tone"), just shrugs when a reviewer mixes up names and another player gets credit for his terrific solo. He also shrugs off his wife and his son and any emotion that doesn't come out of his horn. When the musicians convene, they bitch about parking problems and bandleaders who smile better than they keep time. Jonesy the junky is an ongoing object of merriment (although in the classic tradition, this madman is also the "seer" who interprets meaning for the others). Also played for laughs is the scene where the desperate Terry, who hasn't been touched by her husband in ten years or taken out to dinner in fifteen, climbs out on a ledge and threatens to jump. She's talked back inside by young Clifford, who appears in another window with a plateful of ziti. It was funny and not funny at the same time, with the balance tilting toward the latter. In fact, so was the whole play, in my (very minority) opinion.

What bothered me most was the one-sided portrayal of the jazzmen, who seemed to just slog through their lives without a moment of joy or fulfillment. There was only one small scene (about six minutes' worth) which hinted that they might possibly have another motive beside inertia to keep them in the business. One of the guys gets hold of a tape of Clifford Brown's famous solo on *A Night in Tunisia* (". . . recorded the very night he died! The people who heard it said that it was like he knew!") He shares it with his two buddies, and as the solo builds, they finally fill with air and come to life, fingering along, sitting up straighter, starting to move their heads in time. Each time one starts exclaiming over the mastery he's hearing, the guy with the tape says, "Wait!" — and something even better, higher, and deeper happens. Even the lighting gets brighter. Until that moment, the play provides no compelling reason why anyone would want to scratch out such a dreary and hopeless existence.

I found this disturbing and grim. But I was outvoted by a packed house that laughed at the various misfortunes of the poor, helpless sidemen (except for the line about Jonesy's eight-year prison term for drugs). To me, these weren't characters, but caricatures, a stereotypical bunch of irresponsible losers drawn to the jazz life like lemmings heading for the cliff, but with somewhat less enthusiasm.

Fortunately, my dark mood had a quick and local antidote. I caught Gene Bertoncini's solo gig at a nearby restaurant and was inspired, as always, by his intense pleasure and brilliance in creation. Of course there are (and were and always will be) pathetic sidemen, but jazz is full of elegance and joy. After *Side Man*, it was awfully good to see and hear that again.

— Judith Schlesinger

Judith is a psychologist whose last book was a biography of Humphrey Bogart. She is working on a book titled Dangerous Joy: The Myth of the Mad Musician.

Enter Ennio

In the mid-1950s, when I was music and drama editor of the Louisville Times, I had to review just about every film that came out. I was also reviewing — and studying — the symphonic works commissioned by the Louisville Orchestra, a rather famous program operated with a substantial grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. These works were then recorded and released in boxed sets for sale.

When, a few years later in New York, my neighbor Miles Davis found out that I had those records, he asked to borrow them. He never returned them, but no matter. There was little that I found memorable in these works.

But there was much that was memorable in the movie scores I was hearing, and I began to pay them fairly close attention. Much of that music, lightly dismissed by most critics, was far better than the stuff coming out of the Louisville Orchestra, particularly scores by Hugo Friedhofer for *Boy on a Dolphin*, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, and, later, *One-Eyed Jacks*, which were among some of the finest orchestral works of our time. Later, when Hugo had become one of the dearest (and most admired) friends of my life, my inexhaustible mentor in matters musical, I realized that composers around the world shared my feelings for him.

The condescension toward film music has somewhat diminished since then, and we can get a good many scores on CDs, although not all that I would like to see issued. Works like the scores of Alfred Newman and Alex North command some of the respect they deserve, and I am much taken with the scores of Jerry Goldsmith and Allyn Ferguson (about whom more in a near-future issue).

Cut to:

France 1958. I was living there on a fellowship, with all the time in the world to attend all the music and movie and drama and opera festivals I could find, which I did all the way from Stockholm to Locarno, Switzerland. And I drove quite a bit in the south of France, where I came across landscapes that struck me as suitable for shooting western movies. But, good heavens, the western was an American genre, was it not? Well, American movie-makers have never shown any particular reluctance to film European subjects, whether set in ancient Rome or modern Paris. Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Arch of Triumph* were made into American films, the latter starring the Swedish Ingrid Bergman as a French hooker (in those days the movie did not exactly spell out that she was a prostitute, nor that the doctor played by Charles Boyer was an abortionist), and *Joan of Arc*, in which Bergman again played a French role. She played a Spanish girl in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, but what the hell, Harry, an accent's an accent, am I right?

Why then shouldn't some European film maker do a western, particularly a French film maker, since French *cinéastes* had made a mystique out of the western, as they have out of the abominable movies of Jerry Lewis, whom they have proclaimed a genius. But then, Keith Richard and Paul McCartney have now been knighted, and Andrew Lloyd Weber is a lord.

Eventually, European film-makers did essay the western. The most successful of them was an Italian, Sergio Leone, and he didn't make his film among locations I had seen in the south of France, but in Spain. He called it *A Fistful of Dollars*, made in 1964 and released in the U.S., where it was a huge hit, in 1967. It resuscitated the career of Clint Eastwood and indeed set him on the road to becoming one of the biggest stars in the world.

The style of Leone's films almost certainly was influenced by the career of his father, Vincenzo Leone, a silent film director. Sergio Leone, as film scholar Leonard Maltin put it, "almost single-handedly invented the spaghetti western," a term that no longer needs explanation in America. I think Henry Mancini invented it; if he didn't, he was the first one I ever heard use it. It also established composer Ennio Morricone with audiences around the world, for his work, as Maltin rightly noted, "became a kind of Leone signature." Leone then did, and Morricone scored, *For a Few Dollars More* (U.S. release 1967), *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966), followed by the huge *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968), one of whose writers was Bernardo Bertolucci. Henry Fonda played his first (and as far as I know last) role as a bad guy. Maltin, in his *Movie Encyclopedia*, put it succinctly: "While these films toyed light-heartedly with genre conventions, they also embodied Leone's own convictions, which included a distrust of the capitalist entrepreneurs who, as he feels, exploited the pioneers, and a bleak nihilism that, although hitting a responsive note with 1960s movie-goers, was out of touch with the general optimism that characterized American-made westerns." He called it "a languid, operatic masterpiece."

That is quite so. But the American westerns were themselves out of touch with reality. Simplistic ug-how Indians were always the villains fighting the noble U.S. Cavalry, when in fact the reverse was closer to the truth; Serbian "ethnic cleansing" has nothing on what the white man did to the Indians in America.

Perhaps that is why the Leone westerns caught on: some sense that they were closer to the truth about the killers and trash who flowed into the American west than the Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, John Wayne, and even earlier westerns wove into an American delusion about the founding of the nation, particularly its western reaches. As for Leone's view of the capitalists, one need only consider the careers of the likes of Leland Stanford, and of the railway tycoons who routinely hired Chinese laborers to build their iron roads and just as routinely executed them rather than pay them. William Wellman's 1943 *The Oxbow Incident* was a departure from the good-guys western. Later, so was Henry King's brilliantly written and executed 1950 film *The Gunfighter*, which closely honored the three unities — time, place, and events — of classic Greek (and later French) drama, occurring in exactly the time it took to tell the story. This unity is so unaffectedly achieved that you don't notice it until you have come to know the film well; I can think of no other film, ever, that so closely wove together its lines of suspense. André de Toth was largely responsible for the script.

Whether *The Oxbow Incident* and *The Gunfighter* offered any degree of inspiration or guidance to Leone I cannot say; but

obviously he had studied the genre, and just as obviously he must have been familiar with these films, and possibly with Delmer Daves' *Broken Arrow*, which came out in the same year as *The Gunfighter*, both of them tragedies. And in *Broken Arrow* (which had a Hugo Friedhofer score) the white men were the bad guys, and the Indians were sensitively portrayed — how accurately, I cannot say. (An Indian scholar, and I mean an Indian who was a scholar of Indian history, told me a couple of years ago in Santa Fe, New Mexico, that Indians liked Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves* because, for once, at least the costumes were correct.)

Sergio Leone changed westerns forever, giving them an abrasive realism that precluded any return to anything like the Ken Maynard-Tom Mix-Tim Holt-Buck Jones-Hopalong Cassidy myth of the past, or even for that matter the better John Wayne vehicles such as *The Searchers*. We were jolted at first by the seedy-looking characters who peopled his pictures, unshaven and strange, looking nothing like Mexicans and even less like Americans. These weren't westerns from another country, these were westerns from another planet, as alien as, say, a film about the Edgar Rice Burroughs figures in the John Carter of Mars books, or his *Pelucidar* trilogy. And part of what made them so strange was Leone's use of silence and sound and of the music that infused both. Again, I think his father's experience as a silent film director may be relevant, and this is where Morricone comes in.

Our impression of the music in silent films, imposed on us by countless comedies, is that produced by a little old lady in a print dress in front of the flickering screen, playing sentimental or suspense music as needed on a tack-hammer piano with lots of rolls in the right hand. Hugo Friedhofer made me understand that this was anything but the case.

I have read in treatises on film music that the composers had to fight to get music into pictures. Not according to Hugo. I wasn't there, of course. But Hugo was. He wrote his first music-for-film when he did the arrangements for the 1929 musical *Sunny Side Up*, which was one of the early talkies. Thus he was involved in motion-picture music virtually from the inception of sound, and I'll take his word for what happened.

In small towns, perhaps, little old ladies tinkled the music for silent films on bad pianos, but in larger communities, the music often came from powerful Wurlitzer organs, and in major centers, from orchestras ranging up to full symphonic size. The more important pictures were accompanied by orchestral scores. Hugo was playing cello in a San Francisco pit orchestra during that period. Sometimes the scores would arrive with parts missing, and the conductor would assign Hugo to reconstruct them, which is how he got into what we might call pre-talky scoring.

Now, Hugo said, the producers of silent films wanted and expected music throughout a picture, as in the silents. It was music wall to wall, from the start of the corridor to its end. And the real struggle of composers in the early 1930s, Hugo told me, was to persuade producers and studio executives to let them *leave music out* of scenes involving perhaps sound effects or dialogue with which it could only clash. Scores became more discreet as time went on, Hugo said. He himself produced some of the masterpieces of the genre.

The dialogue in the Sergio Leone westerns is sparse. In *For a Few Dollars More* and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, Lee Van Cleef (whose career was also restored by Leone, much as John Travolta's recently has been by Quentin Tarantino) and Clint Eastwood had little to say to each other or anybody else. What talking there is in these movies is terse and sullen. And thus there are large long spaces of stares and leers and squints and walks and malevolent atmosphere and portentous pauses before the guns blaze. The style calls for music as much as the silent movies of Hugo's youth. (The coming of talkies devastated employment among musicians who had worked in movie houses; it cost my own father his professional career as a musician.) Even the sound of gunfire in Leone movies was distinctive, as distinctive as that of shots in the Warner Bros. movies. (You can spot a Warner Bros. movie of the 1930s, if you're surfing on television, by the sounds of gunshots and the Janssen Symphony.)

After the reforms of Hugo and composers such as Alfred Newman and Bronislau Kaper, music in films became subtly supportive. Ideally, it was (at least in Hugo's aesthetic) not supposed to be heard at all, only felt. That is not a view I share, and Hugo told me that Erich Korngold (whom he idolized, personally and professionally, and whose orchestrator he once was) looked on the Erroll Flynn swashbucklers for which he composed music as operas without arias.

And I think that must have been Leone's point of view. Leone went counter to that philosophy of the unheard. He hired Ennio Morricone, and he wanted that music not only to be heard but to intrude, to prod, to tell the story, even if necessary to irritate.

Leone used an amplified guitar in westerns. I found this disconcerting. I first encountered the sound in some Henry Fonda western, and I recoiled, thinking, "Where is the amplifier plugged in, in 1890?" or whatever year it was. And it bothered me as much in the Leone westerns. But of course, my reaction was ridiculous. They didn't have modern violins and French horns and valve trumpets in the time of Richard the Lion Heart, and that didn't disconcert us in Korngold's score for Erroll Flynn's *Robin Hood*. So, gradually, I became inured to Morricone's use of electric guitar in his extremely obtrusive scores. But I still didn't like his music. I was pulled up a little short on this when I found that Henry Mancini did like and respect it. To me, however, Morricone's music still had a cartoon quality. I thought he was incapable of subtlety. He thus is one of those musicians like Claus Ogerman whom I at first underestimated.

Then, two or three years ago, in New York, I was attending with a friend a wine-and-cheese party populated mostly by writers and aspiring writers somewhere in an apartment complex near NYU. Through the talk, I became aware of some music coming from a CD, fresh and touching. I asked the host what it was. He told me that it was Ennio Morricone's score for *Cinema Paradiso*. When it was over, I asked him to play it again. When I got home to California, I bought it. Morricone has a distinctive and distinguished sense of melody, and the one he invented for *Cinema Paradiso* is surprising, wistful, and sinuously beautiful.

Since then I have been paying attention to Morricone's music. I picked up an Italian import, a CD titled *Morricone 93: Il Cinema che Suona*, which contains themes from a number of his movies. Heard with unprejudiced ears, they are quite effective. He has a taste for pulsing ostinatos, and he likes to use twanging instruments, such as guitar and harpsichord, and what sound to me like wooden or reed flutes and pan pipes. (Some of them sound like Andean flutes.) You hear that sound in the 1973 Leone film starring Henry Fonda titled *My Name Is Nobody*. That score has some odd stuff in it. Leone quotes Wagner's pompous *Ride of the Valkyries* but on harmonica or a little button accordion. It's buried in the score, but it's quite droll. There is another thing about the Leone-Morricone collaboration: it often seemed to me that the film was shot to the music. This turns out to be true.

When the intrusive is not called for, as in pictures emphasizing dialogue, Morricone can be subtle, discreet, almost inaudible.

I knew absolutely nothing about the man, however, until I came across an article about him in the French weekly news magazine *L'Express*.

Ennio Morricone, born in Rome October 11, 1928, started his musical life on trumpet, to which he was introduced by his father, who was a jazz trumpet player. Morricone is now seventy. He is probably the most prolific composer in film history, having written at least 400 scores, twenty-two of them in 1972 alone, which works out to one every sixteen days. He may not be as fast as Georges Simenon, each of whose Maigret novels was written in exactly eleven days. But Simenon collapsed in exhaustion after each such marathon writing session, and he didn't turn out twenty-two novels in a single year. Surprisingly, only six of Morricone's 400 films were with Leone.

A photo shows Morricone as a man with a round pensive face on which sit sage horn-rimmed glasses. His *Express* interviewer, Géraldine Liperoti, described him thus: "Caught in his Roman apartment, then in the privacy of his studio, where are mixed in joyous disorder books, music scores, CDs, chess board, and even a seventeenth century organ . . . from this flood of memorabilia emerges an artist who is all nuances: at once modest and sure of his value, serene and unpredictable, shy and jocular." She commented on the variety of his scores, his almost dizzying output. She noted that he had almost backed into a film career.

"That's true," he said. "When I got out of the Conservatory of Santa Cecilia, I dreamed only of classical music. But the time after the war was a very hard period in Italy, and I needed to feed my family. So I started playing the trumpet evenings in clubs frequented by Americans. I went there with no pleasure. It was with pain that I earned the money from diverting the occupants." He emphasized the word "occupants" a little. He meant the American military occupying forces.

"Then I wrote some arrangements for television, theater, and cinema. I worked clandestinely, for the prejudice against music deemed light was very strong at that time. Little by little, my name became known, and then Sergio Leone asked me to collaborate on *For a Handful of Dollars*.

"Leone, who knew my work on two previous westerns . . . . "

Ah, there is an insight for us on this side of the Atlantic: Leone did *not* make the first European westerns. "Sergio Leone . . . came to my residence . . . . When I opened the door, seeing his singular mouth . . . I realized we had gone to the same primary school for boys . . . . Later, we even found a class photo.

"For that film, he told me he wanted a Mexican military song. I got out a little berceuse that I had composed for a television broadcast seven years early but never used. I played the trumpet, and so that's how the principal theme of *For a Few Dollars More* was born. I never confessed my little ruse to Sergio until many years later. Because of this, it became a game with him: he chose from among scores rejected by other directors."

Liperoti said that *For a Fistful of Dollars* illustrated the perfect osmosis between images and music, the grandest success of Morricone's collaboration with Leone.

Morricone said, "It's a sort of poetry that comes without warning, as when two people fall in love with each other. The magic is totally unforeseeable . . . and empiric. As a result, Sergio always wanted me to compose the music before shooting, so that it could be played to the actors for them to be filled with it and understand it. That's how we did our best work, he and I."

Did they have any thought that they were revolutionizing westerns?

"No. Moreover, when we saw *For a Fistful of Dollars* for the first time, Sergio and I, we found it awful. Sergio's films, and my work with him, got better, right up to his masterpiece, *Once Upon a Time in America*. And that wasn't a western. Of the four hundred film scores I've written, only thirty-five have been westerns, and you've only spoken to me of the westerns. Why?"

Liperoti said, "Because the impact on the public was immense. And what do you think of the expression 'spaghetti western'?"

"Ah! I detest this expression! Intelligent people have to call them Italian westerns. This isn't a soup we're talking about!"

Morricone apparently developed a reputation for falling asleep during recording sessions. The interviewer asked him about it.

"You know," he said, "I get up at 5 a.m. every day. One night, at four in the morning, I was asleep during a recording. Leone sent everyone home, put out the lights, turned on the microphone, and shouted in a cavernous voice, 'Ennio-o-o-o, you have no shame, to be snoozing while everyone is working.' I woke up thinking that it was the devil who'd spoken to me. It happened when we argued. Leone was a very anxious person. He had a need to transfer his anguish to others. But it never lasted more than five minutes."

Liperoti said to Morricone that he was known for the use of unusual instruments — she used the word 'insolite', for which I have never found a good translation; and anyway in her article she was probably translating from Italian into French — such as bells, the triangle, a whistle, even human and animal cries. Actually, Morricone was not working without precedent. Henry Mancini used all sorts of non-orchestral instruments, including boobams from the South Pacific, in his scores. The harmonica (which Morricone used in *Once Upon a Time in the West*, in a two-note motif that set up a haunting effect and told some of the story) has been common in western-movie scores.

Morricone said, "It was never my point to be provocative. I just thought that the sounds of animals were pertinent in the universe of the western. During my apprenticeship . . . I always lent an ear to sounds, no matter how modest. Even the common tap of a pencil on a table, isolated from context, can be reborn in music. The cry of the coyote, if one listens well, is eminently musical. To translate it into music in *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, I asked two singers to cry together, then I mixed their two voices adding echo. When Leone heard the result, he went nuts with joy . . . .

"In *Once Upon a Time in the West*, the harmonica had to resonate like a cry of pain, for it incarnated all the humiliation of [Charles] Bronson's character During the recording, we found the musician played in a sort of monotone. Sergio threw himself on him and choked him. That's why the sound is so brilliant."

As for the *Ride of the Valkyries* quote in *My Name Is Nobody*, he said, "I always retained a nostalgia for classical music. Even if I am aware that there is an enormous moat between the public that goes to concerts and that which goes to the cinema, these winks are a way of bringing the two worlds together No one knew, for example, that the principal theme of *The Sicilian Clan* [a 1969 French film with Jean Gabin and Alain Delon — ed.] was an homage to Bach. I elaborated it in superposing a first melody inspired by one of his preludes for organ and a second, which I was amused to compose from the letters B-A-C-H, which, in German, correspond to our si, la, do, si. It was an appreciation to a composer I love."

Morricone detests long voyages, and for all the work he does in American films, he will not go to the United States. He said: "If they want to work with me, they come here. If not, I don't do the film. Warren Beatty, for example, loves to come to Rome. I didn't even have to ask him."

Liperoti commented that this was the privilege of celebrity, to which Morricone replied:

"Popularity doesn't bother me. It attests to the affection and comprehension of the public. The important thing is to retain the pioneer spirit. I profoundly love the profession, and I work on each film as if it were the first — and the last. Giving the best of myself. Many of the 'greats' ask their arranger to write their scores for them. Me, I write all alone, from the first note to the last. All."

Morricone has been nominated four times for the Academy Award, including once in 1987 for *The Mission*. He lost to Herbie Hancock, who got it for the French film *Round Midnight*, about a jazz musician loosely — very loosely — based on the late life of Bud Powell, and starring Dexter Gordon as a "great" saxophonist of supposed significant originality. Gordon was hardly that. The film's sheer silliness need hardly be documented here. The score was made of jazz tracks. Liperoti asked Morricone if he was bitter about losing that year.

He said: "Certainly I was disappointed. Especially since . . . the music that won was not a true original score: it was composed of pieces of already existing songs. I said nothing, but everyone protested the evening of the ceremony. To win an Oscar, it is necessary to campaign to the voters, and the production houses I worked with neglected to do it. But okay, I didn't make a complaint. I have received many other distinctions."

In 1986, *The Mission*, a film set in late eighteenth-century Brazil, featured Jeremy Irons, Robert de Niro, Liam Neeson, Aidan Quinn, a very good script by Robert Bolt, and an exceptional score by Morricone. The film, which is very dark, is about the slaughter and enslavement of the autocthonous population. Its point is that this ethnic cleansing continues even now in the upper Amazon rain forests.

In 1989, Morricone scored Brian de Palma's suitably outraged but cluttered Viet Nam sermon *Casualties of War*. He also scored that godawful de Palma version of *The Untouchables*, with a David Mammet script so bloody stupid, even more absurd than his script for *The Edge*, that in it the Canadian Mounties come galloping across the border in their red uniforms (they hadn't worn them on duty, any more than the U.S. Marines wear dress blues in combat, in years) to aid the American cops on United States soil, where of course they have no legal authority. The violence and camera gimmicks, including a shoot-out sequence copped from *Potemkin*, conspire to keep one watching, but the suspension of disbelief requires effort, and the Morricone score assists you into the cocoon of credulity. Any composer who could make that turkey fly has to be taken very seriously.

Morricone has continued to work, very successfully and effectively, in American films, including last year's *Bulworth*. Warren Beatty, who wrote, produced, and starred in *Bulworth* (an interesting picture, by the way) obviously likes Morricone: he used him in the earlier (1991) *Bugsy*, about the life and death of Bugsy Siegal).

The last film on which Morricone worked with Sergio Leone was *The Nine Hundred Days of Leningrad*, presumably about the German siege of that city.

"It was the only time he refused to talk music with me . . . For him, the film was a sort of dream which he knew he would never realize. A little earlier, he had refused a heart transplant. The last months of his life, he was very tired and knew that he was going to die.

"I often called to ask him when we would go to work. But he kept putting it off. It was only afterwards that I understood why. His nephew, Enrico, acknowledged it to me on the day of his death.

"Sergio was a great gentleman."

Sergio Leone died ten years ago, on April 10, 1989. A rare collaboration ended. When Morricone too is gone, it will no doubt be written that he was an unusual composer, a very fine one, and he changed film scoring.

This too should be said: all his scores, no matter what the subject of the film, have an implicit mournfulness. It is as if their composer never for a moment escapes a sense, no matter how deep in his spirit it resides, of the eternal human condition.

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