

Music

in the Parks

by Lori Elias

Walt Disney once said, "Music has always had a prominent part in all our products, from the early cartoon days. So much so, in fact, that I cannot think of the pictorial story without thinking of the complementary music that will fulfill it." Though he was speaking of the studio's film work, he could just as easily be describing the Disney theme parks.

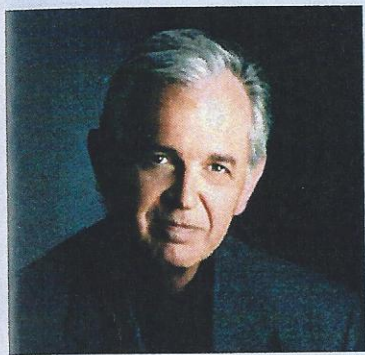
From the moment you approach the main gate of any of the Walt Disney World parks, music is already doing its part to immerse you in the magic, even if you don't realize it. As you move through each park the music provides a soundtrack, or "audio wallpaper," to enhance each leg of your journey.

Many of the parks' composers are also known for their outstanding contributions to film. Jerry Goldsmith, who created the unforgettable music for the Soarin' attraction, penned the scores for Disney's *Mulan*, as well as many other films including *Lilies of the Field*, *Patton*, *Hoosiers*, and *The Omen*, for which he won an Academy Award. Disney Legend Buddy Baker, whose attraction music can be heard in the Magic Kingdom's Haunted Mansion and the Impressions de

France film in Epcot, created the scores for a number of Disney animated and live-action films, such as *The Apple Dumpling Gang* and *The Shaggy D.A.*

Bruce Broughton, whose music from *Silverado* appears both in Disney's Hollywood Studios and in the queue for Soarin', can be heard throughout Walt Disney World: he penned the soundtracks for *One Man's Dream*, *Spaceship Earth*, *Ellen's Energy Adventure*, and the films *O Canada!* and *Honey, I Shrunk the Audience*. Though his television work has garnered multiple Emmy Awards, and *Silverado* earned him an Oscar nomination, Broughton has a special place in his heart for his theme park compositions. "I have begun several of these projects with the thought that I didn't have a clue either as to what was going on or how I would do it," he said, "but I've honestly never worked on a theme park project that I didn't enjoy from top to bottom. I've often told people that theme parks and animation are the two jobs that are the most fun, partly because the composer is viewed as a real creative partner. The people you work with are very, very imaginative, prepared, and skilled. They know everything about the project down to the smallest detail."

While film and theme park attraction scoring certainly have their unique challenges, Broughton (*below*) finds many similarities as well. "The process for scoring a film, whatever it is, is pretty much the same," he explained. "However, in the theme park films the sequences are generally shorter and are meant to involve the viewer much more quickly than in a [traditional] film, so the music is often much less constrained. In Ellen's Energy Adventure, for example, part of



the film deals with the birth of the universe. There was no reason to be shy about making a big musical statement on that!"

And of course, the composer needs to familiarize him or herself with the project at hand. "If it's a ride you're working on, you ride it!" Broughton said. "If it's a show with lots of special effects, you work with storyboards until you understand what's happening. Sometimes the shows are so complex, it takes a while to know how to pull it all together with music. Working with Disney people, however, is to work with people who are extraordinarily prepared and knowledgeable about what the attraction is, how it will play physically in its space and what the effect should be on the audience."

Disney's Hollywood Studios

Disney's Hollywood Studios' effect on their Guests is to place them in the magic of making movies as soon as they enter the park. As Guests approach the gate, they are greeted by some of film's most glorious scores, including John Williams' well-known *Superman* and the theme from television's hit series *Dallas* by Jerrol Immel.

As Guests move down Hollywood Boulevard, they are immersed in the "Golden Age of Hollywood" through the décor of the buildings, the starlets and directors moving through the throngs, and of course the music, reminiscent of the films of the thirties and forties. Movies are the name of the game at DHS, and film scores such as James Horner's rollicking *Rocketeer* and Erich Korngold's swash-buckler *Captain Blood* serve as the audio backdrop throughout the park, except for the Streets of America, where you can hear the sounds of the cities. Songs such as "You've Got a Friend in Me" can be heard as you stroll through Pixar Place and Toy Story Mania, while "Muppetational" music sets the theme

for Muppet Vision 3-D and the entire Muppets vicinity.

Magic Kingdom

In an opera or Broadway musical, the first piece of music heard is the overture, an instrumental piece that presents the audience with musical themes they will hear later on in the production. The Magic Kingdom follows their lead by providing Guests with a medley of the park's most popular tunes as they approach the entranceway, including "it's a small world," "Heigh-Ho," and "Yo Ho (A Pirate's Life for Me)." As Guests filter down Main Street, U.S.A., the mood is set with a series of songs evoking a beautiful day in small-town America, such as piano tunes from the Ragtime era and melodies from classic "Americana" musicals, including Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II's (*below left and right*) *Oklahoma!* and Meredith Willson's *The Music Man*.



In order to keep the diverse music from overlapping, there is a "fade out" as Guests depart one section of the park and a "fade in" as they approach another. For example, as Guests leave Main Street, U.S.A. and veer left, they may notice that the all-American tunes slowly give way to the exotic sounds of marimbas, drums, and claves, luring them to Adventureland, where the music takes a decidedly tropical turn. The change is seamless and subtle, and many Guests are surprised when they notice the transition for the first time. Middle Eastern music takes over near The Magic Carpets of Aladdin and the Agrabah Bazaar, beckoning visitors to a "faraway place...when the winds from the east and the sun's from the west and the sand in the glass is right."

The exotic sounds of Adventureland give way to the down-home country charm of the banjo, harmonica, and fiddle as Guests venture into Frontierland. As you amble down the street, you'll feel as if you've been transplanted

into a prairie town in the Old West, with cowboy tunes such as "My Darling Clementine" and "Home on the Range" providing an authentic soundtrack to your journey through time. A lively polka draws Guests through a quaint village and into Fantasyland, where Prince Charming's Regal Carousel both literally and musically takes center stage and Guests can hear Disney hits played by the charming sound of the calliope. Electronic music provides the audio backdrop throughout Tomorrowland, effectively enhancing a mood of looking—and listening—into the future.

The Magic Kingdom is, of course, where fans of Disney film music can hear some of the biggest hits from the most prolific of Disney's composers. The compositions of Richard and Robert Sherman (*below*) can be heard throughout the park: "It's a Great Big Beautiful Tomorrow" in the Carousel of Progress; "it's a small world" from the attraction of the



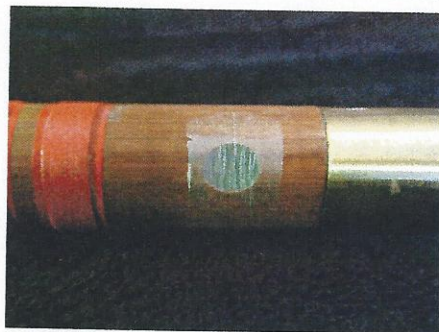
same name; and a medley of memorable songs at The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh. Buddy Baker's "Grim Grinning Ghosts" accompanies visitors to the Haunted Mansion, and when Fantasyland reopens we will be hearing some of Alan Menken's unforgettable work as Ariel takes us "Under the Sea" in the new attraction, Under the Sea: Journey of the Little Mermaid.

Disney's Animal Kingdom

Two of Walt Disney World's most popular musical performances can be found at the Animal Kingdom: Festival of the Lion King and Finding Nemo—The Musical. But it's the background music that really brings this beautiful and exotic world to life. The rhythmic tones of the African mbira (thumb piano) and shekere (gourd maraca) welcome Guests to the main gate. Drumming is prevalent in many cultures of Sub-Saharan Africa, and traditional rhythms can be

heard through the Africa section of the park.

As Guests move on to Asia, the dizi (*below*), a Chinese flute, makes its presence known. Listen closely for a sound simi-



lar to the xylophone: what you are hearing is the gamelan, a type of instrumental ensemble from Indonesia. And that piercing reed

instrument you hear is the suona, a sort of hybrid between a trumpet and oboe found in China.

But the best is saved for the park's unforgettable centerpiece. One of Walt Disney World's most beautifully haunting original pieces of music is the "Tree of Life Theme," composed by Tish Eastman. This piece is commercially available on many "music from the Disney parks" recordings, and the sheet music can be found in The Disney Park Songbook: Remember the Magic, published by Hal Leonard. Eastman contributed other incidental music for the park, including a piece called "Sunlight and Shadows" that, along with 15 or so other snippets by other composers, comprises the welcome music as Guests enter the park.

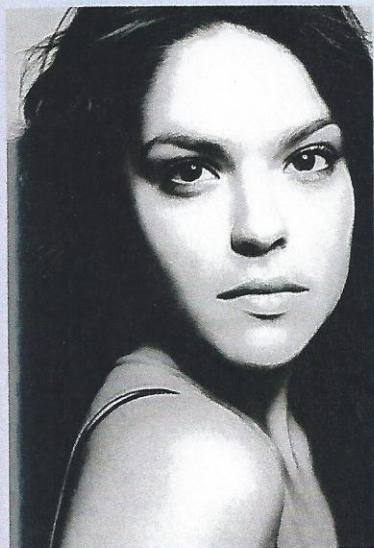
Epcot

Epcot may feature the most diverse of Walt Disney World's soundtracks. As Guests move through Futureworld into the eleven countries of World Showcase, the music reflects what is going on around them.

Like the Magic Kingdom, Epcot introduces its Guests to an overture of musical favorites heard throughout the park when they first arrive. Some of the best-known tunes include "One Little Spark," written by the Sherman brothers for Journey into Imagination and Ellen's Energy Adventure by Bruce Broughton. Much like Tomorrowland in the Magic Kingdom, the music of Futureworld is electronic and futuristic. While much of the park's soundtrack was written by Disney's musical composers specifically for Epcot, a commercially-available piece by New Age composer and performer David Arkenstone, "Papillon (On the Wings of the Butterfly)," is prominently featured and can be found on his recording In the Wake of the Wind.

Music plays a large part in transporting Guests around the globe in World Showcase. As Guests move from country to country, traditional, popular, and classical music of

the eleven Showcase nations are just as integral to the "immersion" experience as the Eiffel Tower or the Marrakesh. Memorable songs include the glorious "Golden Dream," featured in the American Adventure show and written by Robert Moline, who also composed "Canada (You're a Lifetime Journey)" for the O Canada! film. (The latter song was rerecorded in 2007 when the attraction was updated, and featured a new arrangement by Bruce Broughton. The song was sung by Canadian Eva Avilia (left), winner of the 2006 edition of Canadian Idol.)



Because Epcot strives for authenticity, some of the ethnic musical offerings heard in World Showcase may be unfamiliar to many, but keep listening; you may find yourself singing along to a familiar melody! In Canada, sharp-eared listeners can pick up Gordon Lightfoot's "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald." Though "the ship was the pride of the American side," with an entirely American crew (two of whom were from Florida—both less than two hours' drive from Epcot), Lightfoot is a native of Orillia, Ontario, and a Companion in the Order of Canada, the nation's highest honor for a civilian; his "Alberta Bound" can also be heard in the Canada Pavilion's music loop.

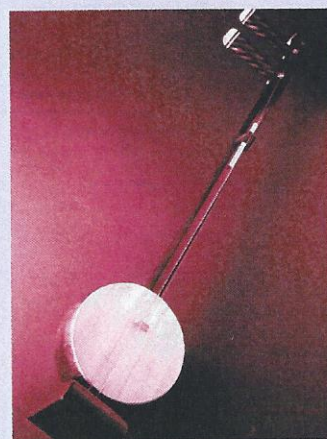
The United Kingdom features some of the most well-known traditional tunes in World Showcase, including "Greensleeves," "The British Grenadiers," "The Ash Grove," and popular melodies from Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta HMS Pinafore.

France has its share of recognizable songs as well, including "La Vie en rose," made popular by French songstress Édith Piaf (right) in the 1940s, "Sur le Pont D'Avignon," and



the singing game "Alouette," as well as Jacques Offenbach's "The Galop Infernal" from the operetta Orpheus in the Underworld. (You may know the last tune better as the music of the Can-can!)

Just as the eleven pavilions provide Guests with a wondrous variety of authentic architecture and enticing aromas, the varied music of the pavilions is like an audio mosaic of the world. Lively tunes like "Funiculi, Funicula" in Italy and the German bierhaus songs are contrasted with haunting ballads like the Newfoundlander folksong "Let Me Fish Off Cape St. Mary's" and "Sakura," a well-known song from Japan. Music written two centuries ago, such as the American folksong "Old Folks at Home" (more popularly known as "Swanee River") is contrasted with more contemporary creations like "Days of Emancipation," composed by Zhu Jian'er in 1950. This particular song was written for the banhu (a Chinese bowed string instrument) and orchestra to celebrate the emergence of a new China. For those who prefer classical composers, you might notice a tarantella by Italian opera master Giacchino Rossini (if that name is unfamiliar to you, think the William Tell Overture, a.k.a. the theme to The Lone Ranger...and Mickey's featured piece in The Band Concert!). Or perhaps you'll sing along with "Summertime" from the opera Porgy and Bess by New York native George Gershwin (whose Rhapsody in Blue is also featured in Fantasia 2000), as you stroll by the American Gardens Theatre.



When your day at the park has come to an end, you can find the perfect ending to your magical day at any of the magnificent evening shows, complete with resplendent music of course. Bruce Healey's score for Fantasmic! at Disney's Hollywood Studios, Gavin Greenaway's Reflections of Earth for Epcot's IllumiNations, and Gregory Smith's Wishes at the Magic Kingdom provide the perfect musical backdrop to the glorious laser and fireworks presentations.

As you take in the glamour of 1950s Hollywood, the yesteryear innocence of Main Street, U.S.A., the lush flora of the Maharajah Jungle, or a figurative journey across the globe, let the magical music of the Disney parks take you to "a whole new world!"

