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The First American Film Scores

Martin Marks

The earliest American film scores known to survive date from 1912. One may well ask: Why did it take so long? After all, by that date silent films had been in existence for nearly two decades, and from the beginning they were almost always presented with live musical accompaniment. Moreover, there are film scores of European origin which survive from well before 1912. One is an anonymous compilation created for Max Skladanowsky's presentations of his Bioskop films in Berlin and other cities during 1895 and 1896; others are by French composers, including a pioneering venture into the field by Saint-Saëns, who wrote music for the Parisian première of *L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise* in 1908.¹

These examples aside, during the first half of the silent period fully written-out film scores were uncommon things; and in America there were good reasons why they did not make an appearance until 1912. The year came near the end of a period of decisive change in the American film industry, both in terms of production and distribution. In particular, the vaudeville theaters and Nickelodeons that served as the movies' first homes were increasingly replaced by well-designed moving-picture theaters, with better facilities and larger budgets for music. (Compare, for example, figures 1-3, containing photographs of theaters dating from 1909, 1912, and 1913.) At the same time, there was a shift from what has been termed a vaudeville-style "cinema of attraction" to a cinema of narrative integration, based on traditions of melodrama and pantomime.² In other words, the movies settled into standard types of stories, for which synopses and cue sheets were regularly distributed, making it easier for musicians to prepare their accompaniments in advance.

The new attention to music within the industry led to one more innovation, when film companies themselves began to offer exhibitors the chance to make use of "special" scores—that is, scores reproduced in multiple copies and distributed, for a small fee, to as many theaters as cared to use them. This novel idea began to circulate in the trade press beginning about 1910, at a time when accompaniments generally were improvised or prepared within individual theaters; it was the Kalem Company, then one of America's most innovative producers of

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¹ For a detailed study and documentation of the earliest European and American film scores, see my Ph.D. dissertation, "Film Music of the Silent Period, 1895-1924," Harvard University, 1990 (UMI order no. 9021808); a revised version is forthcoming from Oxford University Press in New York. This paper is partly based upon material contained in Chapter Three, "Compiled and Composed Film Scores in America, 1910-1914: A Survey and a Case Study"; but the particular films and scores being analyzed here are not discussed in the dissertation.

² See Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," *Wide Angle*, 8, nos. 3/4 (1986), 63-70. In this article Gunning explains the term "cinema of attraction," which he applies to films made before 1906-1907, as "a conception that sees cinema less as a way of telling stories than as a way of presenting a series of views to an audience." See, also, Gunning, "'Primitive' Cinema—A Frame-up? or The Trick's on Us," *Cinema Journal*, 28, no. 2 (Winter 1989), 3-12.

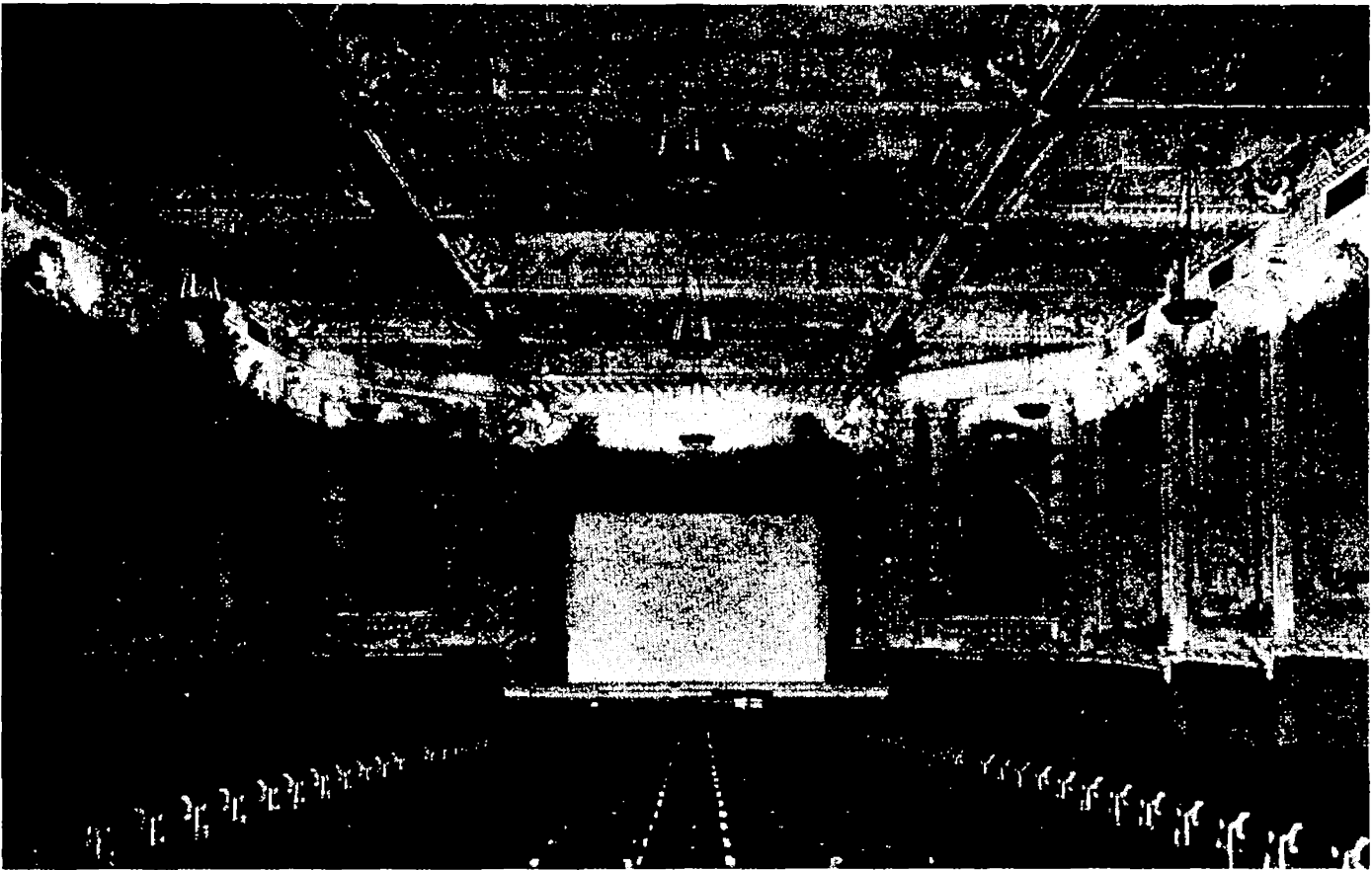
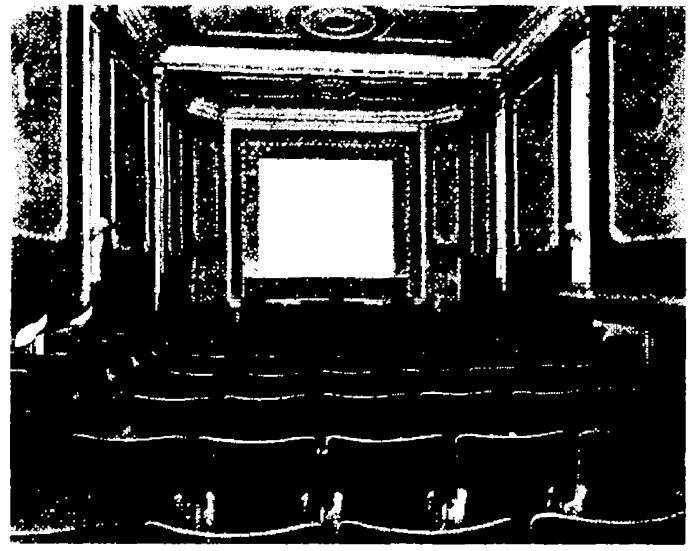
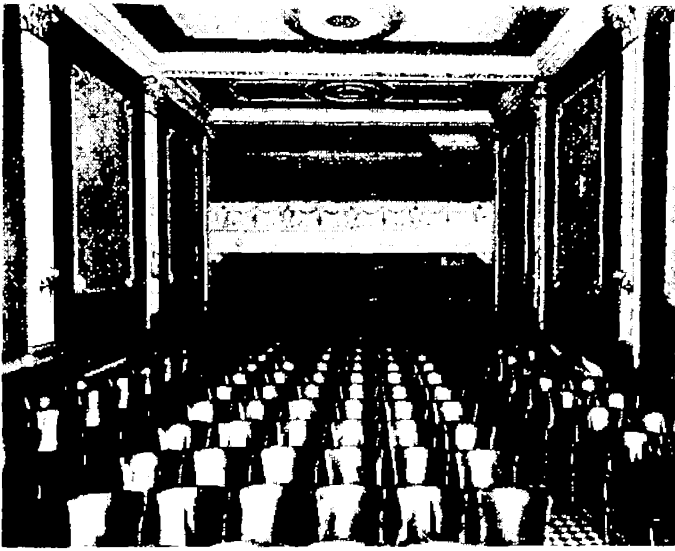
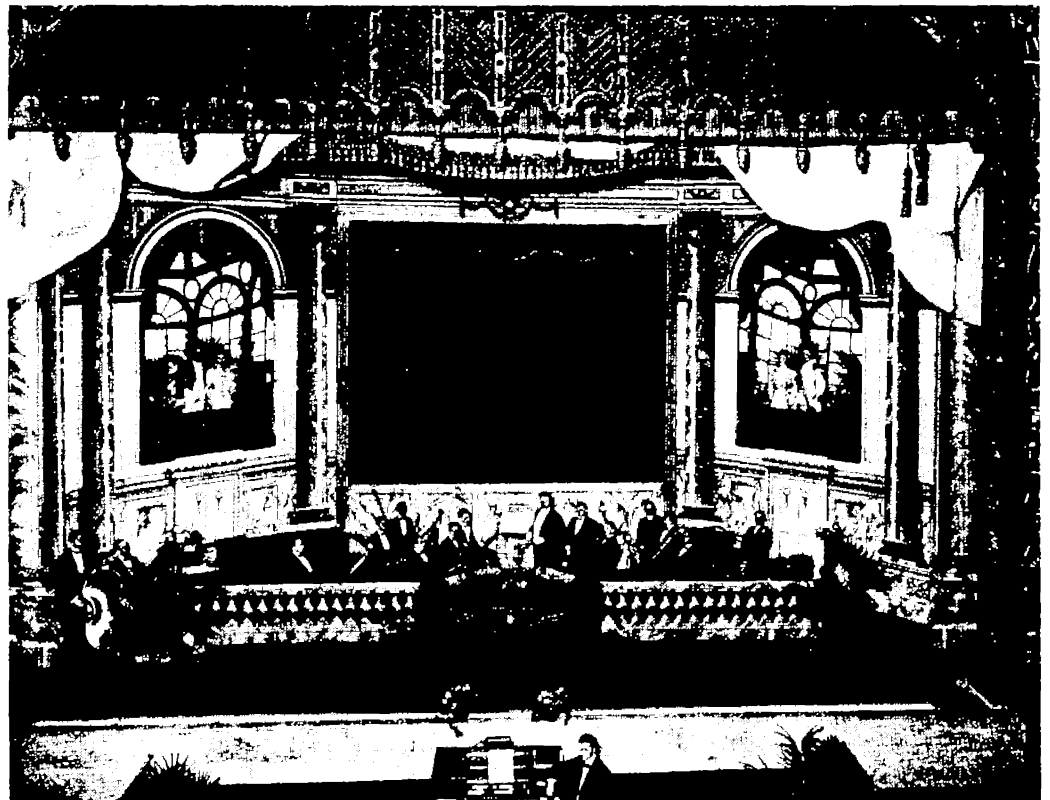


Figure 1 (top left and right). The Knickerbocker Theater in Rochester, New York; it opened in 1907, seated 250, and presented "high class moving pictures and illustrated songs," according to *Moving Picture World*, 4 (January-June 1909), 441. Figures 1-6 are reproduced by kind permission of Baker Library, Harvard University.

Figure 2 (bottom). The Majestic Theater in Louisville, Kentucky; a grand piano is at the foot of the stage; an orchestra of ten musicians rendered "not only a daily musical program, but also numbers by request," according to *Moving Picture World*, 14 (October-December, 1912), 248.



Figure 3. The newly renovated Regent Theatre in New York City: shown in lower photo are fifteen players, singers in boxes on each side of the screen, and a Wurlitzer organ at the foot of the stage; from Moving Picture World, 18 (October-December, 1913), 1401.



moving pictures, that first decided to put the idea into systematic operation. Between November 1911 and May 1913, Kalem commissioned, published and vigorously promoted a series of piano scores for two dozen of its releases. Of these, sixteen scores are known to be extant, all for films made in 1912, all registered for copyright and deposited in the Library of Congress, and all but one the work of a pianist named Walter Cleveland Simon.³ (Figures 4-6 contain examples of Kalem's trade press advertisements for three films and their published scores. The advertisements do not mention who composed the music, but the composer's name is given in the scores.)

Biographical information about Simon is scant, but from recent editions of the *ASCAP Biographical Dictionary* we learn that when he began to compose these scores he was about twenty-six years old and already an experienced theater musician.⁴ The latter point is confirmed by various items in *Moving Picture World*, which gave much attention both to the Kalem films and to Simon's innovative work. For example, a review of one of the earliest films in the series, *Arrah-na-Pogue*, concluded with an announcement of Simon's "special music," and stated that he had been "playing the pictures for several years."⁵ Simon at this time published a collection of piano pieces, advertised as a *Progress Course of Music* to help others play for "Moving Pictures, Vaudeville, and Dramatic Shows properly."⁶ The *World's* music columnist recommended the "course" to his readers with enthusiasm, noting Simon's experience in the field: he had "filled the position of pianist in various theaters of the West and was pianist for Lyman Howe [a leading exhibitor] for one year"; he had "a number of song successes" to his credit; and his accompaniments had often been praised by the critics as "a feature of the entertainment."⁷

In this paper I will discuss Simon's scores for two "entertainments," originally released in June and October of 1912 (see figures 4 and 6). The first was composed for *Captured by Bedouins*, one of Kalem's exotic Arabian pictures—which were filmed "on location" in the Middle East, an unusual practice at the time. The second accompanies *The Confederate Ironclad*, one of Kalem's Civil War pictures, which were filmed at unspecified locations, perhaps near the company's studios in Jacksonville, Florida.⁸

Ironclad, as I shall call it, is more interesting than *Bedouins* in terms of cinematic style; but while there are important differences between the two films—a point to which I shall return later—we do well to begin by noting some of their basic similarities. First, they are nearly equal in length. Shown at proper speed, *Bedouins* lasts

³ A study of Simon's score for *An Arabian Tragedy* and a table of Kalem film scores, 1911-1913, are given in my dissertation.

⁴ According to the 4th ed. of the *ASCAP Biographical Dictionary*, comp. Jacques Cattell Press (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1980), Simon was born in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1884 and died in New York City in 1958. In the 3rd ed. (1966), his birthplace is given as Cincinnati. Both editions state that he played pipe organ for a Bronx film theater in 1912, and "also for all major circuits of theatres, including Pantages, Keith, & Orpheum."

⁵ "Special Music for *Arrah-Na-Pogue*" [caption-heading for a paragraph placed at the end of an anonymous review of the film], *Moving Picture World*, 10 (October-December, 1911), 536.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁷ Clarence E. Sinn, "Music for the Picture: More Help for Picture Pianists." *Ibid.*, 200.

⁸ Copies of *Captured by Bedouins* are at the Library of Congress, British Film Institute Collection, which is in the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division, Paul Spehr, curator. Copies of *The Confederate Ironclad* are at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, Jan-Christoph Horak, curator. I am grateful to these archives and curators for allowing the loan of 35 millimeter prints of each film; also to Jeanne Newlin, curator of the Harvard Theatre Collection, and to Professor Vlada Petric, curator of the Harvard Film Archive, for facilitating the loans. (The symposium on 30 November 1990 culminated with a showing of both films, for which I played Simon's scores.)

KALEM

The Colonel's Escape

Featuring General C. Rhys Pryce, an insurgent officer, for whom the Mexican Government has offered a reward of \$25,000, dead or alive. General Pryce was especially engaged by the Kalem Company for this production.

Released Monday, June 24th



Captured By Bedouins

This production was made by Kalem Company on the S.S. "Adriatic" while crossing the Atlantic Ocean; in Cairo, Egypt and on the Great Sahara Desert.

Released Wed., June 26th
Special Piano Music,
25 Cents.

Postage Prepaid
Special One, Three and
Six-Sheet, Four-Color
Lithographs

The Penalty of Intemperance

A Splendid Story With a Moral

Released Friday, June 28th

SPECIAL MUSIC

Your Exchange will furnish *Special Piano Music* for all Kalem Features at 25 cents per copy for complete score.



KALEM COMPANY

INCORPORATED

NEW YORK, 235-239 W. 23rd St.

86 Wardour St., LONDON, W.

BERLIN, 35 Friedrich Str.

PARIS, 13 Rue du Faubourg Montmartre

Figure 4. Advertisement for three Kalem films: "Special Piano Music" was available for "all Kalem Features"; the photographic still depicts the heroine Doris as a captive in the Bedouin camp; from *Moving Picture World*, 12 (April-June, 1912), 1002.

A BIG SPECIAL FEATURE TRAGEDY OF THE DESERT IN TWO REELS



Controlled Exclusively
by the General Film
Company

Released Monday, July 1st

EVERY scene in this remarkable drama was made in Luxor, Egypt, and on the Great Sahara Desert. It is intensely dramatic and a headliner par excellence. The backgrounds of primitive Egypt and the scenes of native life combine a superb educational subject with a gripping drama that abounds with thrilling action and unusual episodes.

Kalem offers you exceptional facilities for presenting this feature attraction in a manner which will insure unprecedented box-office receipts.

SPECIAL MUSIC

You should not fail to obtain the music which has been especially prepared for this headliner. Complete piano score will be sent, postage prepaid, for 25 cents. Any pianist can play it. This is a great opportunity to present "fine music with a fine picture." Advertise it as an added attraction. Music may be secured from your Exchange, distributors or from Kalem Company direct.

SPECIAL LITHOGRAPHS

You may secure special one- (two kinds), three- and six-sheet posters in four colors—reproduced from actual photographs—from your Exchange, the A. B. C. Co. of Cleveland or distributors.

Kalem Headliners Are Always Winners



KALEM COMPANY

INCORPORATED

NEW YORK, 235-239 W. 23rd St.

86 Wardour St., LONDON, W.

BERLIN, 35 Friedrich Str.

PARIS, 13 Rue du Faubourg Montmartre

Figure 5. Advertisement for a Kalem feature, Tragedy of the Desert, with an emphatic announcement of "Special Music"; from *ibid.*, 1241.



KALEM
325-329 W. 23rd ST.
NEW YORK

The Poacher's Pardon

This is the first production ever made in England by an American Company.

Dora, the gamekeeper's daughter, is in love with the poacher, whom her father is hunting down.

Picturesque locations in rural England compose the backgrounds for this intensely dramatic story.

Released Monday, September 30th.

One and Three Sheet Posters

A Hospital Hoax

The funny story of a young man who falls in love with a nurse at a hospital and how he enters as a patient in an effort to win her.

One the Same Reel.

Ancient Temples of Egypt

This trip to the Orient takes in the wonderful ruins of the temples of Luxor and Thebes.

Released Wednesday, October 2d.

The Village Vixen

The ungovernable temper of Eva Storm has caused her to be known as "The Village Vixen." Her charming daughter, Maud, is the antithesis of her mother and promises her hand to Willis, a wealthy young farmer. Willis' father helps the young folks to execute a plan which results in "the Taming of the Shrew."

Released Friday, October 4th.



The Confederate Ironclad

A powerful dramatic wartime story with sensational action throughout.

See the great battle between the Confederate Ironclad and Union Gunboats and the explosion of the car loaded with ammunition!

Released Saturday, October 5th.

Special One, Three and Six Sheet Posters

Special Piano Music for this Feature 25 cents Per Copy



FOUR A WEEK



Figure 6. Advertisement for five Kalem films, including a "Feature," The Confederate Ironclad, with "Special Piano Music"; from *Moving Picture World*, 13 (July-September, 1912), 1150.

about a quarter of an hour, *Ironclad* a few minutes more.⁹ These were normal lengths for films made between 1910 and 1913; and, as was also customary at the time, *Bedouins* and *Ironclad* crowd large amounts of action into their short, conventional narratives. Each begins by introducing a pair of main characters joined in a budding romance. There follows a rupture between the amorous couple, and once this occurs the action moves into high gear. In each film the main characters fall into mortal danger, and at the denouement the audience is given heroic rescues, climactic battles, and the reaffirmation of the romantic bond, though in these prudent pictures, no kiss—salty or sweet—is shown on screen.

Let me describe the plot of *Bedouins* in more specific terms, to make these abstractions clear. The story begins aboard the steamship *Adriatic*, whose passengers include a young English lieutenant named Greig. He sees in passing a young woman named Doris, is instantly smitten, and seeks to make her acquaintance. They do meet, and while aboard ship she finds him “a pleasant companion”; however, once landed in Cairo, she rejects Greig’s marriage proposal without explanation. Apparently she regrets her decision: “some hours later,” a title tells us, she “slips away to ask the Sphinx if she has acted wisely.” Now alone in the desert save for guide and camel, she is taken captive by “prowling Bedouins,” who send the guide back to Cairo with their demand of ransom for the “hostage.” It is of course Greig who ultimately rescues her, by disguising himself as an Arab (that is, in blackface), venturing into the camp, and engineering “a hazardous escape.” Pursued by the Bedouins, the couple is saved by the arrival of a rescue party, which functions much like the conquering cavalry in Westerns. Among the rescuers are Doris’s father and brother (minor characters in this quick-paced film). Once the family is reunited, Greig’s identity is revealed, and at the film’s end Doris eyes the lieutenant with unmistakable affection.

Bedouins, as my synopsis indicates, has its share of silliness, and so does the *Ironclad*. I have chosen to make this pair of pictures the focus of my paper not because they are particularly distinctive, but for a simple reason: they are the only ones in the whole Kalem series for which, happily, the complete films and scores have both managed to survive.¹⁰ But even though their survival is no more than an accident of history, they make for a highly instructive pair. Both scores can be seen as professional and polished examples of the kind of accompaniments that pianists all across the country were then scrambling to come up with on their own. What Simon produced might be called “music of narrative integration,” because the scores follow the stories closely from beginning to end. But Simon’s peculiar methods of subordinating music to films also leads to results resembling—and here I tip my hat to Tom Gunning—a vaudevillian “music of attraction,” because Simon mixes many types of music in quick succession. Indeed, just as moving pictures are themselves nothing more than bits of celluloid spliced together, each representing a title, a shot, a part, or all of a scene, these scores assemble many pieces tiny to middling in size, with the intent of interpreting all manner of things viewed on the screen.

⁹ Throughout the silent period, cameras and projectors were operated with a wide range of manually variable speeds, of which sixteen frames per second is now thought to be the average. See David A. Cook, *A History of Narrative Film*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1990), p. 110. See, also, the essay by Kevin Brownlow, “Silent Film: What Was the Right Speed?,” *Sight and Sound*, 49, no. 3 (Summer 1980), 164–167. For the showing of the

films at the Harvard Symposium, a projection speed of about eighteen frames per second was used. Slower than that, the film contained too much flicker; any faster, and the action appeared unnaturally quick or jerky.

¹⁰ The only other extant Kalem film for which Simon composed a score is *The Siege of Petersburg*, which is incomplete in the surviving copy in the Library of Congress, American Film Institute/Cromwell Collection.

To illustrate Simon's methods, I now turn to his score for *Bedouins*, with attention first to its overall structure, second to its types of music and their functions. As can be seen in the Appendix, the score is made up of twenty discrete pieces. Though Simon did not number them, they are nonetheless clearly set apart by new cues.

After studying the score a bit, a picture pianist could easily learn to watch for these cues out of the corner of her or his eye, since they are of two straightforward types. Fourteen of them are "titles" which appear on screen and are also printed in the score, in whole or in part. All of the remaining cues save the last one (a special case, to be discussed later) are what the score describes simply as "changes of scene"; today we might more precisely call them changes of shot, but they amount to the same thing, since every new shot, just like every new title, shifts the action to a later time and/or a new location.

What is interesting is that Simon matched *all* of the film's changes of title and shot with changes in the music, which thus occur, if the film is projected at a moderate speed, about every three quarters of a minute. The result is continuous music, continually changing. Moreover, though the music on the printed page gives an impression of coherence and completeness, in that each piece is written to end with a full cadence on its tonic chord, in practice such coherence is apt to fall by the wayside; for at the end of every number except the last, there are instructions to "Repeat until [the next cue] then segue."

Followed literally, these instructions mean that Simon's pieces are liable to be broken to bits at any moment. However, to a certain extent the composer seems to have sought to counter the effects of such fragmentation—and to make life easier for the pianist—in a couple of ways. For one thing, most of the adjacent pieces are in either the same or closely related keys. For another, they are *already* broken into self-contained bits, that is, into short phrases which typically pause on the tonic or dominant chord of whatever key the music happens to be in. No phrase lasts more than sixteen bars in fast tempo, eight at moderate speed, or four or even two when the music is slow.

Still another way in which Simon gave coherence to his fragmented score was to begin each piece cued by a title with a short introduction—either a phrase leading to the dominant or a vamping figure on the tonic—marked to be played "as long as the title is on the screen." One function of these segments is to keep the film's titles distinct from the action; at the same time, they set the tempo and mood for the music to follow and give the audience, preoccupied by the words on the screen, as well the pianist, trying to keep on track, a chance to prepare for what is coming next.

Of course, pianists can follow Simon's instructions in different ways: some will try, via adjustments of tempo, et cetera, to create smooth transitions from one piece to the next; in other hands, the score may sound like nothing but fragments whizzing by. Yet, whatever the performer's style, the listener is rarely in doubt as to where Simon's music is going or what it is trying to say, because each piece is of a simple functional type, able to communicate its point in four bars just as well as sixteen, in ten seconds as easily as sixty.

Consider, for example, the score's first three pieces. *Bedouins* begins with a march in compound meter that serves to set the film quickly in motion, much in the manner of the tiny overtures heard at the outset of today's television programs. Implicitly, this buoyant music launches the film's depiction of an ocean voyage; and the next piece explicitly sets the scene, since it is an arrangement of the well-known tune *Sailing, Sailing*, in the same key and meter as the preceding march. One good

tune, it seems, deserves another; for *Sailing, Sailing* is followed directly by a popular song in waltz time, *Over the Waves*, which clearly keeps us afloat. Though this piece, too, is in C Major and very buoyant, it is more lyrical than its predecessors, and smoothly accompanies the film's shift in attention from Greig to Doris.

As shown in the Appendix, the first half of the *Bedouins* score includes eight borrowed tunes, and we may presume all of them to have been quite familiar at the time the film was made. Each is identified with a short title above its opening measures; thus pianists know in a flash what is to be played next. Just as quickly, as the examples I have given demonstrate, the lyrics associated with these tunes help the audience to interpret the settings and actions of the story. As an additional illustration of this point, see figure 7 (= Appendix, no. 6). It consists of two well-known pieces within a single number, which accompanies the scene of courtship between Greig and Doris. Initially the *Sailor's Hornpipe* sets a jolly mood for a light-hearted shipboard romance; then, when the dance gives way to a tender tune, *The Sweetest Story Ever Told*, the couple's brief encounter is suddenly made to seem more consequential. The change is appropriate for the scene, because *The Sweetest Story* is played as we see the actors commence a leisurely stroll on deck, while the camera follows them with a panning shot, resulting in a romantically scenic view. The words of the song's refrain undoubtedly express their unspoken inner thoughts: "Tell me, do you love me? Tell me softly, sweetly as of old. Tell me that you love me, for that's the sweetest story ever told."¹¹

The last borrowed tune in this score is another sentimental favorite, *Love's Old Sweet Song*, used as an accompaniment to the scene in which Doris rejects Greig's proposal. In this case there is cause to ask if the song is appropriate for the story at hand, since the words conjure images of "twilight," a "weary heart," and a day "sad and long," none of which seem very applicable to a young couple on holiday in Egypt. Perhaps Simon intended for the bittersweet melody to give some emotional depth to a scene in which the feelings of the actors are concealed to the point of being unclear. (The lieutenant moves stiffly, as if uneasy with his own proposal, and no explanation for Doris's refusal is given, either in her gestures or by means of a title.) Whatever Simon's response to this scene may have been, the music he chose suggests that he had one simple point in mind: as another professional picture pianist stated it, "How well people like the old tunes!"¹² Moreover, this aptly-named "old sweet song" serves to mark the end of Simon's medley with a moment of wistful repose, which makes for sharp contrast with the music to follow.

Throughout the score's second half, that is, for all of the desert scenes, the music is by Simon, and consists of mood and action pieces decidedly more intense than anything heard before. Many are based on stark pseudo-Arabian ostinatos, perhaps suggestive of movement through the desert by camel; most of them are essentially tuneless and carry relatively high levels of dissonance. As illustrations of these points, consider Simon's first two pieces of desert music, shown in figure 8. The first piece

¹¹ Words and music by R. M. Stults, "written for Miss Myra Mirella" (Boston: Oliver Ditson, c.1892); see the facsimile reprint in *Favorite Songs of the Nineties: Complete Original Sheet Music for 89 Songs*, ed. Robert A. Fremont (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), pp. 286-289.

¹² C. K. Aiken, "Music for the Picture: Suggestions for Pianists," *Moving Picture World*, 12 (April-June, 1912), 33. Aiken illustrates his point by discussing the playing of *Old Folks at Home* for Kalem's *A Spartan Mother*; this was

another film for which Simon had composed a score, and it is not clear whether Aiken was unaware of Simon's music or chose to disregard it. The article was one of several he contributed to the *World's* music pages during this period, usually with attention to uses of the "classics," rather than "old tunes," for dramatic accompaniment. See, for example, his "Suggestions for Pianists," in vol. 11 (January-March, 1912), pp. 853 and 1149.

Captured by Bedouins

All^o mod^o Repeat these four bars while title is on screen - 5 - *All^o mod^o*
(Sailors' Hornpipe)

The musical score consists of six systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked *All^o mod^o* and includes the instruction 'Repeat these four bars while title is on screen - 5 -'. The second system continues the piece. The third system is marked *And^{te} mod^o* with the subtitle '(Sweetest slayers told)'. The fourth system includes the markings *rall* and *al tempo*. The fifth system includes the marking *rall*. The sixth system concludes with the instruction 'Repeat until title appears then segue' and the title 'THEY MEET AGAIN IN CAIRO'. The score is written in a 2/4 time signature with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Repeat until title appears then segue
(Title) **THEY MEET AGAIN IN CAIRO**

Figure 7. Walter Cleveland Simon, *Captured by Bedouins* (New York: Kalem Company, [1912]), p. 5. Reproduced by kind permission of the Library of Congress.

Captured by Bedouins
- 7 -

Adagio Repeat these two measures while title is on screen *4/2 Largo*

The musical score consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *Adagio*. It features two measures of music that are to be repeated while the title is on screen. The tempo then changes to *Largo*. The second system continues the piece, marked with *ff* (fortissimo) and includes a *trémolo* effect in the bass line. The piece concludes with a *p* (piano) dynamic and a *D.S.* (Da Segno) instruction.

Repeat until title appears then segue

(Title) **DISCOVERED BY PROWLING BEDOUINS**

Mod^{to} Repeat these two measures while title is on screen *4/2*

The musical score consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system starts with a *Mod^{to}* tempo and a *4/2* time signature. It includes two measures to be repeated while the title is on screen. The tempo then changes to *piu mosso*. The second system features a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic and includes the markings *poco a poco cresc.* (poco a poco crescendo). The third system continues the piece, marked with *trémolo confuso* and concludes with a *D.S.* (Da Segno) instruction.

Repeat until title appears then segue

(Title) **TAKEN CAPTIVE TO THE NATIVE VILLAGE**

Figure 8. Simon, Captured by Bedouins, p. 7.

Captured by Bedouins
- 12 -

All' con Fuoco

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The tempo is marked *All' con Fuoco*. The first system begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The music features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass and a more complex melodic line in the treble. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic changes. The final system concludes with a *DS* marking and a repeat sign.

Figure 9a. *Simon, Captured by Bedouins, p. 13.*

Repeat until man comes running to embrace woman then segue

Captured by Bedouins
- 14 -

Maestoso

The musical score is written for piano and consists of three systems. The first system is marked *Maestoso* and *sf*. It features a melody in the right hand with slurs and accents, and a bass line with chords and eighth notes. The second system continues the piece with similar textures. The third system includes a section marked *rit* (ritardando) and *rall* (rallentando), leading to a section marked *D.S.* (Da Segno) and *Repeat*. The piece concludes with a final chord.

End of picture

Figure 9b. *Simon, Captured by Bedouins*, p. 14.

gives solemn voice to the ominous visage of the Sphinx, which Doris has decided to consult and which, akin to the music's mysterious Neapolitan (E-Flat) chords, looms enigmatically in the background of the scene. The next piece builds dynamically and rhythmically to a violent eruption in its final four bars, marked "Allegro con fuoco," which again emphasize the Neapolitan harmony. This passage is a particularly effective accompaniment for the action at the end of the scene, where the Bedouins overpower Doris and her guide.

Mixed in with these tense and rather exotic pieces are a few conventional "hurries," which accompany the scenes of Greig and other Englishmen preparing for Doris's rescue. In context these segments stand out like oases in the desert, owing to their four-square phrases and unambiguously bright harmonies in D-Major (the key farthest to the sharp side within the score). To put the matter another way, these pieces sound more civilized than their neighbors, and serve to set the English heroes clearly apart from the Bedouin villains; nevertheless, all of the score's pieces of action and desert music are alike in their use of fragments defined more by harmonic and rhythmic motion than by melodic structure.

At the film's end *Simon* returns to music in a sentimental vein, here with an original tune, given special emphasis (figure 9). For the first time in the score, the composer cues a change from one piece to the next in response to changing action

within a continuing shot.¹³ As father and brother run up to Doris after the Bedouins have been dispersed, Simon instructs the pianist to segue from the previous *agitato* (again marked "Allegro con fuoco") to a slower-moving melody, suitable for the film's depiction of family reunion and rekindled romance. Unlike all previous tunes, this one is marked "Maestoso" and is filled with pulsating harmonies and widely spaced chords in both hands. Moreover, the piece is followed by the instruction to "repeat," which, if observed, might carry the grandiose conclusion past the end of the film and draw attention as well as applause to the pianist.

In sum: the score for *Bedouins* begins with a vibrant march and ends with a romantic "apotheosis"; and en route it offers first a varied succession of lively and sentimental tunes, then a mixture of alternately weird bits and wild action music, largely based on melodramatic formulas. From one piece to the next there is rapid change; and overall there is little repetition. (This last point stands in contrast to the recommendations found in many of the cue sheets of the period.) One of Simon's goals for a "special" score, it seems, was to cram into it as many different bits and pieces as the picture dictated, and thereby to make the music move every bit as dynamically as the images.

These summary points, based on a perusal of *Bedouins*, are equally valid for *The Confederate Ironclad*, as a more rapid survey will demonstrate. The latter score contains twenty-four pieces, and its cues are once again a mix of titles and changes of scene, with introductory segments for the title cues, and with instructions for open-ended repetition at the end of each piece. Furthermore, mixed into the score are twelve borrowed tunes, and, while these are distributed somewhat more evenly than in *Bedouins*, there is a distinct shift to *agitatos* and the like within the score's second half.

Undoubtedly both scores are constructed along similar lines; yet their contents differ in several important respects, owing to the latter film's distinctive subject matter. First, since the *Ironclad* is a Civil War picture, seven of the pieces in the score are marches; moreover, its bits of battle music are filled with imitations of bugle calls, as well as instructions for a drummer (if one joins the pianist in the "pit") to provide sound effects for the gunshots and explosions on screen. (There are no cues for a drummer in the score for *Bedouins*.) Second, some of the *Ironclad*'s borrowed tunes have special potency because of their association with the war: one prime example is *Dixie*, heard near the end of the film after the Confederates have triumphed. Finally, since some of the film's most vivid action takes place on a train, in lieu of pseudo-Arabian *ostinatos* the score's weirdest fragments mimic a train's sound and movement, sometimes with quite jarring breaks between one bit of music and the next. See, for instance, figure 10.

I come now to a more crucial point of comparison, which I mentioned earlier: *Ironclad* is a more complex film than *Bedouins* in terms of plot and visual style, and the differences made Simon's task more difficult. Consider the plot first. Though I oversimplify, it is not too far from the truth to say that the story of *Bedouins* amounts to "boy meets girl, girl loses way, boy saves girl"—all dressed up in exotic locales. As for *Ironclad*, one could hazard a summary such as: "boy has Southern sweetheart, boy meets Northern girl, South has secret battleship, girl spies for the North, South nearly loses ship, sweetheart and boy save ship, South defeats North in river battle,

¹³ The shift from the "Sailor's Hornpipe" to the "Sweetest Story," described above, might be considered a similar case; but, as can be seen in figure 7, Simon links the two

tunes as part of a single "piece," and he provides no cue to signal the change from one to the next, contrary to his method for the film's final scene.

boy pardons Northern girl." Another point of difference: compared to the former film's sketchy characters, the *Ironclad's* three principals are all more vivid, in large part because they are filmed closer to the camera from beginning to end, so that facial expressions are easily observed. Furthermore, seeing the two films one after the other, and comparing the ways in which their stories are told, we cannot help but notice that the latter makes use of shorter titles, longer sequences, more unusual camera angles, and more frequent cross-cutting.

Face to face with this complex film—in its day, an exciting and sophisticated example of cinematic narrative—Simon somewhat modified the methods he had employed when constructing his earlier score. For example, he did not allow the mere indication of changes of "scene" to suffice for cues, but instead described each change in specific terms. Also, within several numbers he provided additional cues, with shifts in the music to match. At the same time, it seems that Simon sought a more unified score, since he used several fragments more than once. For example, a phrase of a sentimental song, *Goodbye, Rose*, is twice used to accompany scenes involving the character with that name. (There is no such theme for the heroine of *Bedouins*.) Other repeated fragments include the train music, played for three separate scenes, and the six-measure introductory phrase of martial music with which the score begins, and which reappears five more times in varied forms. (This phrase makes its penultimate appearance as the "Marcia" given in figure 10.)

Perhaps even more interesting than the characteristics which differentiate the two scores is Simon's way of responding to *Ironclad's* peculiar narrative tone. On the one hand, the picture tells a story about a glorious though fictional moment in the Confederacy's history; on the other, the story is told from a seemingly neutral point of view, perhaps because the film-makers wished to avoid offending audiences North or South. This ambivalence can be seen in the balanced treatment of the two leading female characters, Rose, the "Southern sweetheart," and Elinor, the Northern spy: both are attractive, both act decisively, and both are shown in closeups as they witness the battle of the boats—though to be sure, the purpose of these reaction shots is to counterpoint Elinor's sour disappointment with Rose's jubilation. A similar ambivalence may be perceived in the film's ending: once Rose and her sweetheart are reunited, Elinor is pardoned by her "generous foe" and allowed to escape, presumably because her deeds—though they have included her betrayal of friends and relations, and have led to many deaths—are motivated by a noble cause.

However heroic or noble these characters may be, the film they appear in skims the surface of its subject; and much of Simon's score, including the rather comical musical imitations of the sounds of a train, is similarly lacking in depth. Yet he also stirs our feelings near the end of the film, with a sudden turn to *Auld Lang Syne* for a scene in which the *Ironclad* moves to engage the Yankee gunboats (figure 11). Always a song capable of moving its listeners, it may nonetheless surprise us here, since it has no obvious relationship to the action on screen. Perhaps Simon intends for the song to remind us that "old acquaintance" between North and South has been "forgot," transmuted into heroic confrontation; and this explanation might account for Simon's transformation of the song into a spirited march, befitting the scene of battle. Even in this guise the pathos of the music remains strong, and sets it apart from some of the score's other marches: their style is that of "fight" songs for school bands (such as "Ten Thousand Men of Harvard" or "Buckle Down, Winssocki"), and they make the film seem like the story of a friendly football game

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- 13 -

All: agitato

tr.m.
Play bass two octaves lower

mod^{to} *Drummer catches "explosion" in distance.*

ff tr.m. *Bass two octaves lower*

Repeat until title appears, then segue.
(Title) THE POWDER IS DELIVERED.

Marcia *Repeat these four measures while title is on screen*

mod^{to} *crescendo as train approaches*

f-ff *Play Bass two octaves lower*

Repeat until train stops, then segue quick.

Detailed description: The image shows a page of musical notation for a piano accompaniment. It consists of six systems of music. The first system is marked 'All: agitato' and includes a piano (p) dynamic and a note to play the bass two octaves lower. The second system is marked 'mod^{to}' and includes a note that a drummer catches an explosion in the distance. The third system is marked 'ff tr.m.' and also includes a note to play the bass two octaves lower. Below this system is a title card: 'Repeat until title appears, then segue. (Title) THE POWDER IS DELIVERED.' The fourth system is marked 'Marcia' and includes a note to repeat four measures while the title is on screen. The fifth system is marked 'mod^{to}' and includes a note 'crescendo as train approaches'. The sixth system is marked 'f-ff' and includes a note to play the bass two octaves lower. Below this system is a final instruction: 'Repeat until train stops, then segue quick.'

Figure 10a. Simon, *The Confederate Ironclad* (New York: Kalem Company, [1912]), p. 13. Reproduced by kind permission of the Library of Congress.

between college rivals—say, for example, one played at the Cotton Bowl, between Notre Dame and Virginia.

For a final example of the score's peculiar mixture of styles, consider Simon's use of another borrowed tune, *Tenting on the Old Camp Ground*. He quotes a phrase of the song's refrain in order to introduce a scene at the Confederate camp when Elinor comes to visit. "Tenting tonight, tenting tonight, tenting on the old camp-ground" are the words of this fragment. Simon elides the phrase with a coquettish tune called *The Pretty Things You Say*, followed by one of his brisk marches. (See figure 12.) One could argue that these shifts are appropriate, since the first song sets the scene and the second draws attention to Elinor's seductive qualities, while the

Presto Two octaves higher

fff poco a poco

Marcia

Repeat until title appears, then segue.

(Title) THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE IRONCLAD AND THE GUN BOATS.

The musical score is presented in piano format with treble and bass staves. The first section is marked 'Presto' and 'Two octaves higher', featuring a rapid, ascending melodic line. The second section is marked 'Marcia' and begins with a series of chords. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'fff' and 'poco a poco', and concludes with the instruction 'Repeat until title appears, then segue.' followed by the title in all caps.

Figure 10b. Simon, The Confederate Ironclad, p. 14.

march suggests the bustling activity at the camp, seen in the background. Yet the medley destroys the effect of *Tenting*, which is quite mournful when heard in its entirety, from "Many are the hearts that are weary tonight" to "Dying tonight, dying tonight, dying on the old campground." These lyrics were what made the song, popularized by the Hutchinson family and published in 1864, a richly elegaic and potentially anti-war piece, one which found new life as a protest song when sung by Pete Seeger and others in the 1960s.¹⁴

¹⁴ See the music and commentaries in *Popular Songs of Nineteenth-Century America: Complete Original Sheet Music for 64*

Songs, comp. and ed. Richard Jackson (New York: Dover Publications, 1976), pp. 206-209 and 282; and in *The*

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15.

Molto Repeat these four measures while title is on screen *55* (Guldberg Style)

Molto agitato

Basso agitato *agitato* *Basso*

Molto agitato cannot during this number

Repeat until title appears (See segue.)

VICTORY

Figure 11. Simon, The Confederate Ironclad, p. 15.

Today the limitations of Simon's cut-paste-and-compose methods are quite obvious; but, of course, we are looking at the film and listening to its music almost four-score years too late to be just. Certainly in 1912 *The Confederate Ironclad* was received by audiences as satisfying entertainment. At that time, most pictures were ephemeral enough to be seen one day and forgotten the next. The challenge to a

Civil War Songbook: Complete Original Sheet Music for 37 Songs, comp. and ed. Richard Crawford (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), pp. 58-61. See, also, *Songs of the Civil War*, comp. and ed. Irwin Silber (New York:

Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 168 and 183; and Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America* (New York: Norton, 1979), pp. 236-239.

Andante (tending to night) *Mod^{to} (Presto, things pass by)*

mf *mf*

Marcha

Repeat until title appears. Then segue

DS

THE CONFEDERATE IRONCLAD IS

Figure 12. Simon, *The Confederate Ironclad*, p. 4.

musician like Simon was to respond to them day by day, with enough varied bits and pieces to bring the pictures to life.

It was the very ephemerality of these films which caused Simon's scores quickly to disappear; still, the results remain impressive enough to justify modern viewings and "revivals." Between 1911 and 1913, Kalem brought forth the first *published* American film scores, written by a professional in the trade; and one of Simon's most striking achievements was to make his music serve each film well, despite a consistently limited musical vocabulary. Watching and listening today, we may well wonder what it is about his music that makes it seem at once so tawdry yet so innocent, so obvious yet so exhilarating. We may wonder, too, whether Simon's scores reflected the practices of many anonymous theater musicians of his day and of earlier days, whose works do not happen to survive. Of one thing we can be certain: the problems he faced and the methods he used will in some form or another remain current, so long as the arts of theater and music maintain their captivating confederacy.

Appendix

CAPTURED BY BEDOUINS: THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS OF THE SCORE

Signs & abbreviations

T	The cue for the next number is a "title."
C	The cue for the next number is a "change of scene."
D.S.	Dal Segno.
§	Indicates the place where the "Dal Segno" repetition begins.
INTRO	An introduction, which pauses on the dominant.
VAMP	A one or two-measure accompanimental figure, on the tonic.
★	Indicates the instruction to "Repeat these measures while title is on screen."

N.B. The end of every number except the last is followed by the instruction to "Repeat until [the next cue] then segue."

No.	<i>Cue</i> initial meter & tempo	form <i>changes of meter and tempo</i> TITLES OF PRE-EXISTENT MUSIC (<i>as given in the score</i>)	key
1	<i>Title of film, followed by a second explanatory title.</i> 6/8 Marcia	INTRO 4 : § a a' b b' 8 8 4 4 D.S.	C
2	<i>T: "On board the S. S. Adriatic, Lieutenant Greig becomes interested" in a young woman, Doris, observed in passing.</i> 6/8 Andante con moto	INTRO 4★ : § a a' 8 8 D.S. SAILING SAILING	C
3	<i>C: Doris and others, lying on deck chairs, rise to walk about.</i> 3/4 Valse moderato	a a' 16 16 OVER THE WAVES	C
4	<i>T: "He manages to meet Jack," Doris's brother.</i> c Moderato	INTRO 4★ : § a a' 8 8 D.S. FAIR WEATHER WHEN GOOD FELLOWS GET TOGETHER	G

- 5 C: Doris walking with her father, met by Jack and Greig.
 c Allegro moderato a b G
 % 4 || 8 || D.S.
 2/4 Moderato
 MEET A FRIEND FROM YOUR HOMETOWN
-
- 6 T: "Doris finds the Lieutenant a pleasant companion."
 2/4 Allegro moderato INTRO a INTRO b b' C
 4* || 8 || 4 || % 8 8 || D.S.
 c Andante moderato
 SAILOR'S HORNPIPE SWEETEST STORY EVER TOLD
-
- 7 T: "They meet again in Cairo."
 c Moderato a b b' C
 % 8 || 4 4 || D.S.
 SHE HAD NEVER WALKED [THE STREETS OF CAIRO]
-
- 8 T: "A week later ... Doris rejects" the Lieutenant's proposal.
 6/8 Andante INTRO a a' F
 2* || % 8 8 || D.S.
 3/4
 LOVE'S OLD SWEET SONG
-
- 9 T: "Some hours later, Doris slips away to ask the Sphinx if she has acted wisely."
 c Adagio VAMP a a' b d
 2* || % 2 2 4 || D.S.
 Largo
-
- 10 T: Doris is "discovered by prowling Bedouins," who seize her.
 2/4 Moderato VAMP 1 VAMP 2 a a' b d
 2* || % 2 4 4 4 || D.S.
 Allegro con fuoco
-
- 11 T: Doris is "taken captive to the native village."
 3/4 Moderato VAMP a a' b c d
 2* || % 4 4 4 4 || D.S.
 Allegro moderato
-
- 12 T: Next morning, her guide "is allowed to return to Cairo," to ask for ransom.
 (En route, he meets Greig, who sets off to rescue Doris.)
 2/4 Moderato INTRO a a' b D
 4* || % 4 4 8 || D.S.
 Agitato

-
- 13 T: "Greig meets a lone Arab," whom he knocks down.
6/8 Allegro INTRO a a' b d
4* ¶ % 4 4 4 ¶ D.S.
Allegro con fuoco
-
- 14 C: The guide runs up to men in a grove (in Cairo?).
6/8 Allegro a a' d
4 4 ¶
[a' = mm. 1-2 and 15-16 of no. 13.]
-
- 15 T: "A charred handkerchief furnishes the necessary coloring" for Greig's disguise.
2/4 Moderato INTRO a a' b D
4* ¶ % 4 4 8 ¶ D.S.
-
- 16 T: "A strange Arab," i.e., Greig, in the Bedouins' village.
2/4 Moderato VAMP a a' d
2* ¶ % 4 4 ¶ D.S.
C Adagio
-
- 17 C: A rescue party mounts on horseback.
[= no. 14, section a]
-
- 18 T: "A hazardous escape" by Greig and Doris.
2/4 Moderato quasi Turca VAMP a a' d
4* ¶ % 4 4 ¶
Misterioso
-
- 19 C: The rescue party gallops across the desert and arrives to save the couple from their pursuers.
6/8 Allegro con fuoco a b b a c d d' e e' d
4 2 2 4 4 2 2 4 4 ¶ D.S.
-
- 20 Same scene: Doris's brother runs up to embrace her, and she is shown that her rescuer is none other than Greig.
6/8 Maestoso a a' G
% 8 8 ¶ D.S. "Repeat"