



RANDY NEWMAN

An interview with composer Randy Newman

In conversation with Jon Burlingame

Recorded May 30, 2017 at Randy Newman's home in Pacific Palisades, California by The Film Music Foundation and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Visual History Program

Footnotes supplied by Jennifer Rowekamp



RANDY NEWMAN (b. 1943)

Randy Newman is a multi-award-winning American composer, singer-songwriter, and arranger. Born into an extended family of Hollywood film composers and conductors (his uncles Alfred, Lionel, and Emil), Newman began his songwriting career in his teens and his recording career as a singer and pianist in 1968 with the release of his first solo album, *Randy Newman*. He released seven more

albums between 1970 and 1990 including *Sail Away* (1972), *Good Old Boys* (1974), and *Little Criminals* (1977).

While continuing to perform and record, Newman began scoring films in 1971 with the comedy film *Cold Turkey* (dir. Norman Lear). He has since earned acclaim for his scores to the films *Ragtime* (Miloš Forman, 1981), *The Natural* (Barry Levinson, 1984), *Avalon* (Barry Levinson, 1990), *Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1995), and *Monsters, Inc.* (Pete Docter, 2001) among many others. He has won two Academy Awards, three Emmys, seven Grammys, and was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame (2002) and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (2013).

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Jon Burlingame: My name is Jon Burlingame. Today is May 30, 2017. I'm interviewing Randy Newman for The Film Music Foundation and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Visual History Program. We are at Mr. Newman's home in Pacific Palisades, California. Randy?

Randy Newman: Jon, good to see you.

Burlingame: Thanks for joining us.

Newman: Pleasure.

Family History: Father "IG" and Uncles Emil, Lionel, and Alfred Newman

Burlingame: We want to start out by getting a little bit of background about you, a little bit about your childhood and how you wound up here in L.A. When and where were you born?^[1]

Newman: I was born in L.A., and then went to New Orleans. My father was in the Army, and my mother didn't know anyone here. Her family's all in New Orleans. Still is.

Burlingame: What year were you born?

Newman: Nineteen—well, three. [November 28,] 1943.

Burlingame: So, tell me about your parents, your mom and your dad. In fact, maybe we should talk a little bit about the family your dad comes from.

Newman: Well, the family he comes from has seven brothers and three sisters; and one, two, three of the brothers were musicians, and they became film composers: Emil Newman,¹ Lionel

¹ Emil Newman (1911–1984) was an American music director, conductor, and composer. Working primarily as a music director, Emil earned over two hundred film and television credits; among these are the films *Sun Valley*

Newman,² and Alfred Newman.³ The reason we're out here is that in 1929 or so, Al came to Los Angeles to do an Eddie Cantor⁴ movie. There was something else, I don't know what, but I think he came out here for *Whoopie!*⁵ He was conducting on the stage. Alfred was a child prodigy, and he started essentially supporting the family when he was about thirteen.

Burlingame: Where did they grow up?

Newman: He'd gotten out of school. They were from New Haven, and then moved to New York at some point. He went on the road accompanying [Grace La Rue], wearing a little Lord Fauntleroy type suit. He was small, and he looked younger than twelve, I guess. He did that and then conducted some Broadway shows—some big ones—and then came out here in 1928-'29.

Burlingame: So where does your dad fit in the scheme of brothers?

Newman: He is the second to the last. His brother Lionel is younger than he, and then all the others were older.

Serenade (Humberstone, 1941; *Sun Valley Serenade*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2007. DVD.) and *Laura* (Preminger, 1944; *Laura*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2009. DVD.). His brothers are composers Alfred (see footnote 3) and Lionel Newman (see footnote 2), and he is the uncle of composers David (see footnote 25), Randy, Thomas (see footnote 121), and Maria (see footnote 14).

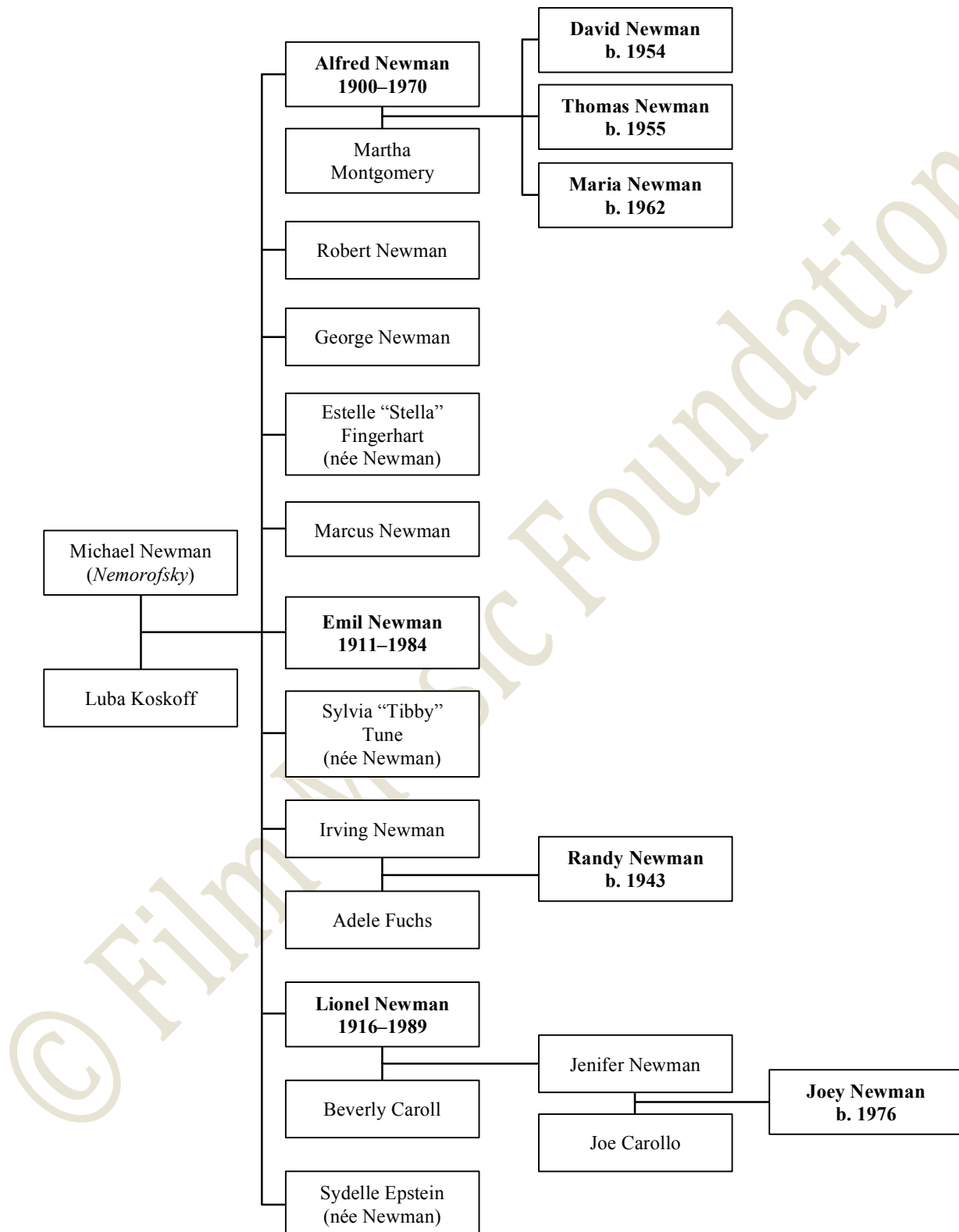
² Lionel Newman (1916–1989) was an American composer, conductor, musical director, and pianist best known for his work in music for films and television as well as his forty-six-year tenure at the Music Department of Twentieth Century Fox, where he accrued over two hundred composing and conducting credits. An eleven-time Academy Award nominee, Lionel won the Academy Award for Best Score of a Musical Picture (co-win with Lennie Hayton) for the score to *Hello Dolly!* (Kelly, 1969; *Hello, Dolly!*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2005. DVD.). His brothers are the composer Alfred (see footnote 3) and the conductor Emil Newman (see footnote 1). He is the uncle of composers David (see footnote 25), Randy, Thomas (see footnote 121), and Maria (see footnote 14).

³ Alfred Newman (1900–1970) was an American film composer, conductor, and arranger. One of the early practitioners of film music, Alfred has over two hundred scoring credits as well as forty-five Academy Award nominations and nine wins. His best-known film scores include *All About Eve* (Mankiewicz, 1950; *All About Eve*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 1999. DVD.), *How the West Was Won* (Ford, Hathaway, and Marshall, 1962; *How the West Was Won*. Warner Bros. Home Entertainment, 2008. DVD.), and *Airport* (1970, Seaton; *Airport*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2012. DVD.). His brothers include Emil (see footnote 1) and Lionel Newman (see footnote 2), and his children are composers David (see footnote 25), Thomas (see footnote 121), and Maria (see footnote 14).

⁴ Eddie Cantor (1892–1964) was an American singer, songwriter, actor, dancer, and entertainer. His music routines are featured in dozens of 1920s–1930s musicals and film shorts. His song hits included “Makin’ Whoopie!” (1928) and “Merrily We Roll Along” (1935).

⁵ *Whoopie!*. Directed by Thornton Freeland, 1930; Alfred Newman, musical director. *Whoopie!*. Warner Archive Collection, 2013. DVD.

Musical Offspring of Michael and Luba Newman



Burlingame: And your dad's name was?

Newman: "IG" or Irving.⁶ He never liked it, so he called himself "IG", which is just fantastic [SMILES]. So much better.

Burlingame: Was Irving musically inclined like his brothers?

Newman: Yes. I think he loved it more than I ever noticed that they did, in a way, but I don't know whether he had the talent. He certainly didn't have the talent Alfred had. I think Al wanted him to be a doctor, wanted him to go to school, because academically, he was the best of them. So, he went to college and then med school.

Burlingame: And where was that?

Newman: LSU [Louisiana State University] and Alabama [University].

Burlingame: Why did he go to the South?

Newman: Well, there were quotas for Jews in a lot of the schools in the North—that's what I heard—and he also got into some school up there.

Burlingame: You were saying there were quotas⁷ for Jews in schools in the North, so it was easier to get into the South? ^[L]_[SEP]

Newman: I think so, because [in the South] they wanted people to come, and they wanted to fill their med schools. There was some kind of story that he punched a dean for some reason at—I don't know where it was, I can't remember. It might have been NYU [New York University], and that was held against him by the authorities.

Burlingame: Was your dad a hothead?

Newman: Yeah, I can safely say that. He is the only adult I knew who got in fights. I didn't see anybody who did, just him.

Burlingame: So, who paid for your dad's med school?

Newman: Alfred.

Burlingame: He did?

⁶ Irving George Newman (1913–1990)

⁷ In the 1930s, a number of private universities on the East coast of the United States introduced policies that enacted a "Jewish quota" to limit the number of Jewish students admitted to each school. These universities included Cornell University, Columbia University, Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Yale University (Burrow, 2008, p. 107).

Newman: Yeah, he paid for a lot of the family over the years. I think he supported his father, too, who left the family, although he must have been back because they had ten kids. Al was already working. The youngest was born in 1917, and Al was born in 1900 or 1901. You know, I've never seen certainty on that one.

Burlingame: So, Lionel was the youngest? He was born in 1917.

Newman: Lionel was the youngest boy. Lionel was born I think in 1916, and Sydelle,⁸ who's still alive, was the last.

Burlingame: So, Sydelle was the last of the ten Newman children who's still alive?

Newman: That's right.

Burlingame: Wow, that's interesting. Did Irving meet your mom in New Orleans? ^[SEP]

Newman: In New Orleans, yes.

Mother Sydelle and Family Dynamics

Burlingame: Tell me about your mom.

Newman: My mom⁹ was really—if you can be Southern, she was it. She never lost her accent, I would say. And she was a little slower than the people run out here, but I mean, you could understand her. She'd get tangled up with pronouns: "He went to there—" and you know. I saw some of the wives the boys had; the brothers were drunks, and they'd get a little nasty—they couldn't outright make fun of my mother, but they looked like this [POSES], like they were the duchess of Moorpark or something, looking like, "Oh, what do you mean I'm not a very good actor?" Or actress. He/she would be going on: "He did this and done that. They went over there," and "It was them." You know, things like that, but a little better than that. They would make a big thing of it, and my father didn't like that much.

Burlingame: What was the family dynamic between the brothers like? ^[SEP]

Newman: It was pretty good. I believe that my father was the one who felt connected the most. I mean, while their mother was alive, they'd get together on weekends at her house on Midvale Avenue here in Westwood. After she was gone, things drifted a bit, but Lionel would call my dad most days, and Emil did when he had a phone or had access to a phone.

Emil Newman

⁸ Sydelle Epstein née Newman (b. 1917)

⁹ Adele "Dixie" Newman née Fuchs (1916–1988)

Burlingame: Was Emil like the brother who was constantly not doing so well?

Newman: Well, it was a strange thing with him. My dad one time was lying there—my dad was dying at the time—and he said, “You know, I think Emil has faulty wiring,” that there was “something”—and he said exactly that, that there was something. When Emil was a kid, for instance, the story is: In New York, he would get on a city bus, and he’d dress in a long coat, a fake beard, and a hat, and beg. For some reason, they called him ‘Count Bruga’¹⁰—which is a book by Ben Hecht. I don’t know what it’s about, some Hungarian con man. But Emil did some strange things. Oh, a couple of houses burned under him. He went to the Academy Awards on a motorcycle and in tennis shoes and strange colored socks, which in those days was—I don’t know whether he thought it was hip or not, but he just wasn’t paying attention. He conducted once for me in New York at Lincoln Center, which is a big deal to me, and it was a tough place to play, because you couldn’t hear each other. But we’re out there, and I do one thing, and then I look over, and I couldn’t help but say, “Emil, what the hell? You got purple socks on.” I couldn’t help it—that doesn’t sound too radical, but it’s an odd thing.

Alfred Newman

Burlingame: Talk a little bit about Alfred. Who was he out here [in Los Angeles], and how important was he to you growing up? ^[L]_[SEP]

Newman: He was important. I mean, my father kind of worshipped him as a musician, and he was responsible. The other brothers earned whatever prominence they got, but they treated him differently. It was a quasi-father relationship that everyone had with him; he was earning the money since they were babies. They didn’t have a father at all, so it was a bit reverential. It was a little different. He was always very nice to me. And, he always worried about what he was doing. I mean, he’d ask me, “What do you think of this? Do you think people will like the counter-melody?” He asked me—I was twelve—he asked me that question. I was like, “I don’t know,” I said, “What is the counter—.” I knew what it was, but he cared a great deal about the job. I think he was the best there ever was, frankly. I don’t know what the general opinion is of him. I think that if John isn’t—Johnny Williams¹¹—Johnny and Alfred, I think, were as good as it ever got, and that’s pretty good.

Burlingame: In terms of being a film composer?

¹⁰ *Count Bruga* is a 1926 comic novel by Ben Hecht that revolves around a mysterious man named Count Hippolyt Bruga.

¹¹ Considered one of the greatest composers in film music history, John Williams (b. 1932) is an award-winning American composer, conductor, and pianist with a musical career of over sixty years. His critically acclaimed film scores include *Jaws* (Spielberg, 1975; *Jaws*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2012. DVD.), the *Star Wars* series (1977–present, beginning with *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope*. Lucas, 1977; *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope: Special Edition*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004. DVD.), *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (Spielberg, 1982. *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2012. DVD.), *Schindler’s List* (Spielberg, 1993; *Schindler’s List*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2018. DVD.), and many others. He has also composed classical works for various orchestral and chamber ensembles and served as the principal conductor for the Boston Pops Orchestra from 1980 to 1993.

Newman: Yeah, oh, entirely that. Al didn't write anything that wasn't for film.

Early Childhood

Burlingame: Did you grow up here in L.A.? ^[L]_{SEP}

Newman: Yeah.

Burlingame: But you went back—

Newman: Came back here when my dad got out of the Army, and I was back here permanently like in 1946 or so.

Burlingame: Did you spend any time as a kid in New Orleans?

Newman: Oh yeah, every summer for a while. And then, when I was eleven or twelve, I quit going. My brother went longer than that.

Burlingame: Tell me about your brother [Alan].¹² Was he older or younger?

Newman: Younger. He was good, and I was bad, you know, relatively. My brother's really smart and nice, and he cares about the family quite a bit. He talks to people I haven't talked to in a while for no reason. Just I'm self-centered. ^[L]_{SEP}

Introduction to Music

Burlingame: When did you start to feel musically inclined? ^[L]_{SEP}

Newman: I haven't yet. But when I was five or six, I think I started piano lessons. When I was five, I went to sleep one night, and I woke up, and there was a piano in the room. It was like—I've said this before, but in case I was Mozart,¹³ they wanted to have it ready so I could do it, prove it. You know, if I played two thirds in a row, "Oh!" Because in the family—you would know better than I—there seems to be something genetic about musicality, and I've seen it, I think. And of course, I have cousins who are motion picture composers, really good ones. And my cousin Maria [Newman]¹⁴ is a great violinist and violist, so it's in there somewhere.

¹² Alan Newman (b.1947)

¹³ Regarded as one of the most influential and important composers in Western music, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) was a Classical composer and a virtuosic pianist and violinist. Mozart began his musical career as a child prodigy and went on to compose over six hundred works in numerous genres including symphonies, concertos, operas, and chamber music. His notable works include his operas *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786), *Don Giovanni* (1787), and *Die Zauberflöte* (1791) and his chamber work *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (1787).

¹⁴ Maria Newman (b. 1962) is an American classical composer, violist, violinist, and pianist. She is the daughter of film score composer Alfred Newman (see footnote 3), sister of composers Thomas (see footnote 121) and David (see footnote 25), cousin of Randy, and niece of Lionel (see footnote 2) and Emil (see footnote 1).

Burlingame: So, you stuck with piano all through—

Newman: Yeah, stuck with it but I was never going to be a concert pianist. I didn't practice enough and may not have had the hands. I don't know. Then I studied theory, harmony, and counterpoint when I was—I don't know—eleven or twelve.

Burlingame: With anyone in particular?

Newman: With Herb Donaldson¹⁵ and then with Tedesco, [Mario] Castelnuovo-Tedesco,¹⁶ when I got a little older.

Burlingame: That's pretty impressive.

Newman: Yeah, it is. My uncle Lionel studied with him, too. He was a good teacher for orchestration. I mean, you get out of it what you put into it. Now, and as bad as that sounds, as much of a truism as it sounds like, it is true. You do.

Burlingame: So, does that mean that from a fairly early age you felt like you wanted to write music as well?

Newman: I think that I thought I would be a film composer; I mean it looked like a job that was possible. It didn't look easy; it didn't look easy for Alfred. Al's son Tim, who's older than I, he's worked with me, which is depressing to have to do. He's always thought that my seeing his father agonizing and worrying about whether it should be an eighth note or a dotted eighth note, made me subconsciously also be inclined to excessive worry about [whether] everything was going to be bad and be a disaster. I don't think so, but I wouldn't know. Subconscious, maybe.

Hearing Alfred Newman's Music in Films

Burlingame: Did you hang out at 20th Century Fox much when you were a kid? [SEP]

¹⁵ Based in Los Angeles, Herbert Franklin Donaldson (1918–2008) was a composer, pianist, and music educator who composed many works for piano and published several series of intermediate-grade music tutorials.

¹⁶ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895–1968) was an Italian concert and film composer and pianist best known for his influential and numerous compositions for guitar. In addition to his prolific concert composition career, he scored nearly two-hundred films including *And Then There Were None* (Clair, 1945; *And Then There Were None*. Synergy Entertainment, 2010. DVD.) and *The Loves of Carmen* (Vidor, 1948; *The Loves of Carmen*. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2016. DVD.).

Newman: Not much, occasionally when he recorded. The first time I remember, I think it was *The Gunfighter*,¹⁷ a Western with a modern score—it was a bit dissonant, in any case. I remember *The King and I*.¹⁸ What else? I don't remember *All About Eve*.¹⁹

Burlingame: Do you remember *The Robe*?²⁰

Newman: Oh yeah, I was there. Palm Sunday. A lot of ethnic instruments.

Burlingame: And these were all Alfred Newman scores?

Newman: Yes, but *The Robe*—he really didn't seem to care about the Academy Award. I would only hear this from my father, that my father would have to urge him to go to the ceremony, in case he won something. He'd go, and the only time he was ever bothered about it was, I think, not getting nominated for *The Robe*. He thought that that wasn't—was that the year of [Leonard] Bernstein?²¹ Was that *On the Waterfront*?²²

Burlingame: That was 1954. *The Robe* was 1953.

Newman: It was? Oh. That made him mad. I know he worked hard on it, but that was it. Otherwise, he didn't care about that kind of stuff.

Burlingame: So, you were ten, eleven, twelve in this period of time?

Newman: Yes.

Early Aspirations for A Musical Career

Burlingame: And did you feel like maybe you wanted to conduct orchestras, too?

¹⁷ *The Gunfighter*. Directed by Henry King, 1950; *Fox Western Classics*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008. DVD.

¹⁸ *The King and I*. Directed by Walter Lang, 1956; *The King and I*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2017. DVD.

¹⁹ *All About Eve*. Directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1950; *All About Eve*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 1999. DVD.

²⁰ *The Robe*. Directed by Henry Koster, 1953; *The Robe: Special Edition*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2014. DVD.

²¹ Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990) was an acclaimed American composer, conductor, pianist, and lecturer with an internationally renowned musical career of over forty years. Bernstein was a successful and prolific composer for the concert hall, stage, and screen and served as the musical director of the New York Philharmonic (1958–1969, Conductor Emeritus thereafter). His best-known works include his score for *On the Waterfront* (1954, see footnote 22), the operetta *Candide* (1956 Original Broadway Production. Recorded performance: *Leonard Bernstein's Candide In Concert*. Shout! Factory/UMG, 2016. DVD.), and the musical *West Side Story* (1957 Original Broadway Production. Film adaptation: Robbins and Wise, 1961; *West Side Story: 50th Anniversary Edition*. MGM Video & DVD, 2012. DVD.).

²² *On the Waterfront*. Directed by Elia Kazan, 1954; *On the Waterfront*. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2001. DVD.

Newman: I don't know whether I thought about it that hard, but it wasn't, "This is what I want to be, so I better work real hard." I always was not satisfied with my work, with the discipline I had. I mean, I'd beat myself up about it. It wasn't cool, or hip, or anything, I just didn't do it. I cared, but I could not organize myself enough to get things done. It wasn't like, "I don't give a damn." When I went to college, I couldn't get organized enough to take the right courses to graduate and see a counselor. There's just something—I've got faulty wiring organizationally. I can't do it.

Education and Musical Training

Burlingame: Where did you go to college?

Newman: UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles].

Burlingame: Was it specifically for composition? Was it specifically for music?

Newman: Yes, it was for music. You did have to take other things, and I did. One of them was sight-singing, and man, I was bad. I didn't have an instinct for it—now I'm all right—but I didn't go to that class much.

Burlingame: But that must have been the grounding you needed to ultimately become a film composer, right?

Newman: Well, along with the other study with [Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco], and [Herbert] Donaldson, and along with paying attention to music when it was in movies and listening to classical music.

Going to The Movies as a Child

Burlingame: So, did you go to movies a lot as a kid?

Newman: Oh, I don't think more than the average kid, but I saw what there was. I saw *Shane*²³ and what else? *Greatest Show on Earth*.²⁴ I would pay attention to the music. I was very fortunate to have the sound of that orchestra and the stuff that Al did for the orchestra in my head as an orchestra sound. Things change. John [Williams]'s trumpet stuff is a different thing and an improvement on what they were doing.

Burlingame: But why was that important?

Newman: In what I do now. That's what I have in my head, I think.

²³ *Shane*. Directed by George Stevens, 1953; *Shane*. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2017. DVD.

²⁴ *The Greatest Show on Earth*. Directed by Cecil B. DeMille, 1952; *The Greatest Show on Earth*. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2017. DVD.

Burlingame: The sound of the Fox orchestra?

Newman: The sound of the Fox orchestra with everything with a line over it. My cousin Dave [David Newman]²⁵ said that. Everything—it's like a big *legato*. Some kind of thing happens with them playing together so much, and with Al for being—he is generally considered to have been the best conductor. There's no doubt about that, I don't think; he got a hell of a sound out of them, and they played for him. He said one time that he thinks he could have been a really good conductor if he didn't do what he had to—support everybody. He didn't say “support everybody.” It wasn't like a Thanksgiving message or anything, but I think he just said it to me.

Early Songwriting

Burlingame: When did you start writing songs?

Newman: When I was fifteen—my friend Lenny Waronker,²⁶ whom I grew up with, his father played in the orchestra.

Burlingame: The Fox orchestra.

Newman: He was a violinist, yeah, and he started a record company. Lenny was into pop music and the people who made it. He knew some producers, and he knew who he thought was a good writer and all that. He'd tell me about this person, that person, Carole King,²⁷ Barry

²⁵ David Newman (b. 1954) is an American composer and conductor. With nearly one hundred scoring credits, David's best-known scores include *Anastasia* (Bluth and Goldman, 1997; *Anastasia*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2002. DVD.) and *The Nutty Professor* (Shadyac, 1996; *The Nutty Professor*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 1998. DVD.). He is the brother of composers Thomas (see footnote 121) and Maria (see footnote 14), the son of Alfred (see footnote 3), the nephew of Lionel (see footnote 2) and Emil (see footnote 1), and the cousin of Randy.

²⁶ Lenny Waronker (b. 1941) is an American producer and music executive who served as the president of Warner Bros. Records and co-chair of DreamWorks Records. Waronker first entered the record industry by working with his father Simon, who co-founded Liberty Records in 1955 with Al Bennett and Theodore Keep. He has since worked with artists like Burt Bacharach (see footnote 30), Carole King (see footnote 27), Tommy LiPuma, Randy Newman, and James Taylor.

²⁷ Carole King (b. 1942) is an award-winning American singer-songwriter. First as a staff songwriter at the Brill Building in New York City, King transitioned into a solo artist with a prolific and successful songwriting career. Her 1971 album *Tapestry* produced some of her most popular songs to date including “You’ve Got a Friend,” “It’s Too Late,” and “I Feel the Earth Move.” King’s life is also the basis for the Broadway musical *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (2014 Original Broadway Production).

Mann,²⁸ people at Aldon Music,²⁹ and [Burt] Bacharach.³⁰ And so I started writing songs.

First Successful Song and Family Support

Burlingame: When did you first have success as a songwriter?

Newman: The first thing I wrote and gave to him was on the backside of a hit for the Fleetwoods.³¹ The people who did “Mr. Blue.”³² It was the backside of “Lovers by Night, Strangers by Day,”³³ a song called like “[They] Tell Me it’s Summer.”³⁴ That’s the first one that I wrote.

Burlingame: How old were you?

Newman: Either fifteen or sixteen. I don’t know what the publishing date on it is. It may be later.

Burlingame: How did your family feel about you becoming a pop songwriter?

Newman: I only know my mother was very proud. My father [Irving]—I don’t know if he started right then, but by the time I was twenty-one, he says, “Why don’t you do a movie?” He really thought that was one of the great art forms of the twentieth century because his brothers did it, and I think he wanted me to be that. My father wrote songs all his life, actually. He’d write lyrics down, and then Lionel would put it down for him or something which enabled Lionel to call and, say, ask for two hundred codeine. My father used to call them “By the way...” messages. “Jeez that’s a great song. I just love that new song you wrote. We’re going to try and do something with it. By the way—” Wham.

²⁸ Barry Mann (b. 1939) is an American composer, songwriter, and musician. He is married to songwriter (and collaborator) Cynthia Weil. Among his many hit songs are “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin’” (1964, with Cynthia Weil and Phil Spector) and “Somewhere Out There” for the 1986 film *An American Tail* (Bluth, 1986; *An American Tail: 4 Movie Complete Collection*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2017.).

²⁹ Aldon Music was an American music publishing company based in New York City, New York. It was founded in 1958 by Don Kirshner and Al Nevins and played an influential role in the creation of the “Brill Building” sound, a light, romance-focused subgenre of pop music marketed towards teenagers and composed by songwriting teams at New York’s Brill Building. The style is exemplified by “Take Good Care of My Baby” (1961).

³⁰ Burt Bacharach (b. 1928) is an award-winning American composer, songwriter, singer, pianist, and record producer best known for his many chart-topping songs and frequent collaborations with lyricist Hal David. A seminal figure in popular music, Bacharach’s prolific oeuvre includes “Raindrops Keep Fallin’ on My Head” (1969) and “That’s What Friends Are For” (1986).

³¹ The Fleetwoods were an American doo-wop singing group active from 1958 to 1983. Its members were Gretchen Christopher, Barbara Ellis, and Gary Troxel. Their songs include “Mr. Blue” (1959, see footnote 32), “Lovers by Night, Strangers by Day” (1962, see footnote 33), and “Tell Me It’s Summer” (1962, see footnote 34).

³² “Mr. Blue” is a song by The Fleetwoods (see footnote 31) released as a single 1959.

³³ “Lovers by Night, Strangers by Day” is a 1962 song by The Fleetwoods (see footnote 31) released on the flip side of “They Tell Me It’s Summer.”

³⁴ “They Tell Me It’s Summer” is a 1962 song by The Fleetwoods (see footnote 31) released on the flip side of “Lovers by Night, Strangers by Day.”

Burlingame: We should probably say your dad was a fairly prominent physician here.

Newman: No, he was a drug dealer [SMILES]. No. He was a physician, yeah.

Burlingame: And he treated a lot of fairly well-known people, right?

Newman: Yeah, he did.

Burlingame: Can you name a few of them?

Newman: Oh, gee. Pat Boone.³⁵ Well this is just offhand, like Glen Campbell,³⁶ Mitzi Gaynor,³⁷ the [Rolling] Stones³⁸ when they were here, a couple times. Others. I don't know.

Working in the Television Music Library at 20th Century Fox

Burlingame: Before you did your first movie, you did some music at 20th Century Fox for TV, right?

Newman: I had a job in the TV music library making Thermo-Fax things.

Burlingame: And what are those?

Newman: They are copies of the music for the engineer and those that need to look at it. The conductor gets the original, usually. I did that, and then I'd mark them up for the engineer, which was an education also. It helped me. I learned stuff from that, definitely, but that was all. Lionel

³⁵ Charles "Pat" Boone (b. 1934) is an American singer, composer, and actor best known for his variety television show *The Pat Boone Chevy Showroom* (Cohn, 1957–1960; *Pat Boone Compilations: 1950s–70s*. The Video Beat!. DVD.).

³⁶ Glen Campbell (1936–2017) was an American singer, songwriter, guitarist, and actor. He hosted the variety television show *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour* (Shea, 1969–1972; *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour: Country Special*. Shout! Factory, 2016. DVD.). His best-known songs include "Gentle on My Mind" (1967) and "By the Time I Get to Phoenix" (1967).

³⁷ Mitzi Gaynor (b. 1931) is an American actress, singer, and dancer who starred in the movie-musicals *There's No Business Like Show Business* (Lang, 1954; *There's No Business Like Show Business*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2012. DVD.) and *South Pacific* (Logan, 1958; *South Pacific*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2017. DVD.).

³⁸ Formed in 1962, the Rolling Stones are an English rock band who were highly influential in the development of the hard rock genre. The band's current members are Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts, and Ronnie Wood; past members include Brian Jones, Ian Stewart, Bill Wyman, and Mick Taylor. Their hit songs include "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" (1965), "Paint it Black" (1966), and "Honky Tonk Woman" (1969).

would give me, if there was rock and roll stuff, like in *Peyton Place*,³⁹ there'd be a rock and roll scene, and I'd do it, the "source music"⁴⁰ it's called.

Burlingame: Was this when you were out of college?

Newman: No.

Burlingame: You were still in college?

Newman: I was still in. I was in, then I was out, and I was in, and I was out. I never graduated due to an administrative squabble. What I lacked—one of the things I lacked was a performance requirement.

Burlingame: Of all things.

Newman: And by that time, by the time I was what, forty-four? [Laughter] No, I was still young, but I was performing a little bit at twenty-five, twenty-six, yeah. And I tried to get out of it, to petition out of it, but I couldn't do it. They've called me since occasionally about doing something.

Burlingame: They should owe you an honorary by now.

Newman: I don't know. I don't know.

Writing for Music in Television

Burlingame: So, you did some music for TV in that era.

Newman: I did. It's saxophone rock and roll. You know [sings an ad lib tune]:



³⁹ Loosely adapted from the 1956 novel *Peyton Place* by Grace Metalious, *Peyton Place* is a prime-time soap opera that was broadcast on ABC from 1964 to 1969. It follows the various residents of a fictional town in New England as they encounter romance, scandal, and murder. The cast includes Dorothy Malone, Warner Anderson, Ed Nelson, and Mia Farrow. (Monash and Philips, 1964–1969; *Peyton Place: Part One*. Shout! Factory, 2009. DVD.)

⁴⁰ "Source music" is part of the fictional setting presumably heard by the characters, also called *diegetic* which is a style of storytelling.

That's where we were, and I guess I could have done something better, but it was some of the first stuff I'd written for people other than myself. And I did one cue for *Lost in Space*.⁴¹

Burlingame: Really?

Newman: It was a library cue. No, it was an actual cue, then they used it in the library, I think. Yeah, I did. I think it was the first time I heard an orchestra [play my music], except at school—they played an arrangement of “La Cucaracha”⁴² at UCLA.

Burlingame: So, you did write some dramatic cues as well?

Newman: One.

Burlingame: One?

Newman: No, I also did one for [*The Many Loves of*] *Dobie Gillis*.⁴³ Lot of clarinets.

Burlingame: Did you decide at some point that this was not really for you, when you'd prefer to do pop music?

First Movie Score: *Cold Turkey*

Newman: No, I just had some success doing pop music, and it's what I was doing. Someone has to offer you a picture. No one was soliciting for me—far from that—and so I wrote songs, and that was what it was. And I thought, “Well, maybe that's what it'll be.” I started getting offered movies when I was twenty-two, twenty-three, and I was scared I think to do them, and I didn't—nothing was offered that I liked until *Cold Turkey*,⁴⁴ whenever that was.

Burlingame: Well, the movie came out in 1971. You might have done it a little earlier. Tell me about that. You'd been offered movies, but you accepted *Cold Turkey*. Why?

Newman: I like Norman Lear.⁴⁵ I don't know how I knew him.

⁴¹ *Lost in Space* is a science fiction television series that aired from 1965 to 1968 on CBS. The series, featuring actors like Guy Williams, June Lockhart, and Mark Goddard, follows the adventures of a family of space colonists. (Allen, 1965–1968; *Lost in Space: Complete Series*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2015. DVD.)

⁴² “La Cucaracha” is a traditional Spanish folk song. It is especially popular in Latin America and was widely performed in Mexico during the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920) with altered, politically relevant lyrics.

⁴³ *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*, also known as *Dobie Gillis*, is a sitcom that aired from 1959 to 1963 on CBS. The show follows the teenager Dobie Gillis (portrayed by Dwayne Hickman) through his daily struggles. Other stars include Frank Faylen, Florida Friebus, and Bob Denver. (Shulman, 1959–1963; *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis: The Complete Series*. Shout! Factory, 2013. DVD.)

⁴⁴ *Cold Turkey*. Directed by Norman Lear, 1971; *Cold Turkey*. Olive Films, 2018. DVD.

⁴⁵ Norman Lear (b. 1922) is an American television writer and producer best known for his successful television sitcoms of the 1970s and 1980s; these include *All in the Family* (Lear and Yorkin, 1971–1979; *All in the Family: The Complete Series*. Shout! Factory, 2012. DVD.), *The Jeffersons* (Nicholl, Ross, and West, 1975–1985; *The Jeffersons: The Complete Series*. Shout! Factory, 2014. DVD.), and *One Day at a Time* (Blake and Manings, 1975–

Burlingame: He was the director.

Newman: Yeah, it was the only thing he ever directed. I think I cured him. I just thought that I can't allow fear to dictate what I was doing, and it scared me.

Burlingame: What was the movie about?

Newman: The movie was about a town in Iowa quitting smoking. It was funny, and I did all right. I don't remember now, but I loved hearing what I wrote. Well, except it was almost entirely orchestrated by Arthur Morton.⁴⁶ I mean, he was Jerry Goldsmith's⁴⁷ orchestrator, and I was loathe to tell him what to do. I figured, "Well, he knows more than I. What am I doing telling—" and then he asked me, he said, "Well, you know, you try and get some ideas yourself." I mean there were some things that were basic—something was clearly going to be a woodwind, and this was clearly going to be strings, but I let him orchestrate it, except toward the end I got it—I started writing more and then after that, I did it.

Burlingame: So how was the experience? Was it intimidating? Was it scary? What was it like?

Newman: It was scary, and it was scary for Norman Lear. My first wife was German, and she was out of town, and he worried about me. He came over to my house at like 6:00, 7:00 in the morning and I'd be—people would just be leaving. [LAUGHS] Not really, and he just wanted to make sure if I didn't give him a feeling of confidence that I wouldn't take the money and go to Argentina or something, or have just some giant party, and forget everything. I don't know what he thought, but he was probably right. I hated seeing him in the morning, and he's a nice guy, and a cheerful guy. But I, I regret some of my behavior, but he doesn't remember, I wouldn't think. He just saw one of my sons and said to say hello. [SMILES]

Burlingame: But yet, you didn't do another movie for over a decade. How come?^[SEP]

Newman: Oh, I don't know. Maybe I didn't get offered them—I think I did. I didn't want to, and I was busy. I think I made four albums in that time, or right around there. Yeah, one [*Randy Newman*, 1968], *12 Songs*,⁴⁸ then *Sail Away*⁴⁹ and *Good Old Boys*,⁵⁰ yeah. In making the choice

1984; *One Day at a Time: The Complete Series*. Shout! Factory, 2017. DVD.).

⁴⁶ Arthur Morton (1908–2000) was an American composer and orchestrator best known for his frequent film score collaborations with composer Jerry Goldsmith (see footnote 46).

⁴⁷ Jerry Goldsmith (1929–2004) was an award-winning American composer and conductor with over two hundred scoring credits for film and television. One of the most influential film composers of all time, Goldsmith's scores include *Chinatown* (Polanski, 1974; *Chinatown*. Paramount Home Entertainment, 1999. DVD.), *The Omen* (Donner, 1976; *The Omen: Special Edition*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2000. DVD.), and *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (Wise, 1979; *Star Trek: The Original Motion Picture Collection*. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2016. DVD.).

⁴⁸ *12 Songs* is a 1970 album by Randy Newman featuring songs like "Mama Told Me Not to Come" and "Rosemary."

⁴⁹ *Sail Away* is a 1972 album by Randy Newman featuring songs like "He Gives Us All His Love" and "Political Science."

⁵⁰ *Good Old Boys* is a 1974 album by Randy Newman featuring songs like "Rednecks" and "Louisiana 1927."

of what to do, I felt that music had to be important. It had to mean something to the picture, so I waited for one that would do that. And that used to be the first criteria for what I would do. Changed a little bit when I lowered my standard. [SMILES]

Burlingame: But you had a lot of success in the 1970s as a pop songwriter.

Newman: A bit, yeah. Not a lot, so that I could know that I was all right. It was a very big critical success.^{[L][SEP]}

Composing for *Performance* and *Ragtime*

Burlingame: You worked on a picture called *Performance*⁵¹ in 1970.^{[L][SEP]}

Newman: I just conducted for Jack Nitzsche⁵² and I played in the band.

Burlingame: You didn't write anything for that?

Newman: No. We just pretended to be the Rolling Stones in "Memo From Turner."⁵³

Burlingame: Jumping ahead to the movie you did say yes to, which was?^{[L][SEP]}

Newman: *Ragtime*.⁵⁴

Burlingame: About when was that? About 1980, maybe?

Newman: 1980, yeah it might be.

Burlingame: So, who asked you to do *Ragtime*?

Newman: Miloš Forman.⁵⁵

⁵¹ *Performance*. Directed by Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg, 1970; *Performance*. Warner Archive Collection, 2017. DVD.

⁵² Jack Nitzsche (1937–2000) was an American composer, songwriter, orchestrator, arranger, studio musician, and record producer who worked extensively with producer Phil Spector and artists like the Rolling Stones (see footnote 38) and Neil Young (see footnote 103). Nitzsche's film scores include *Performance* (1970, see footnote 50), *The Exorcist* (Friedkin, 1973; *The Exorcist: The Complete Anthology*. Warner Home Video, 2006. DVD.) *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Forman, 1975; *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Warner Home Video, 2011. DVD.), and *An Officer and a Gentleman* (Hackford, 1982; *Richard Gere: Triple Feature*. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2007. DVD.) for which he and his co-writers, Buffy Sainte-Marie and Will Jennings, won the 1983 Oscar for Best Original Song ("Up Where We Belong," 1982).

⁵³ "Memo From Turner" is a song by Mick Jagger for the soundtrack of the 1970 film *Performance* (see footnote 50).

⁵⁴ *Ragtime*. Directed by Miloš Forman, 1981; *Ragtime*. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2004. DVD.

⁵⁵ Miloš Forman (1932–2018) was an award-winning Czech-American film director, screenwriter, and actor. Born in Czechoslovakia, Forman established himself as a prominent figure of the Czech New Wave movement of the 1960s before immigrating to the United States in 1968 where he continued to earn acclaim for his work. His films include *The Firemen's Ball* (Forman, 1967; *The Firemen's Ball*. Criterion Collection, 2002. DVD.), *One Flew Over the*

Burlingame: And why?

Newman: He was a fan of mine and a fan of the orchestra writing on my record, and I knew him. He was a friend of the guy, Mace Neufeld,⁵⁶ who was my manager at the time, and so I talked to him. We were going to do a biography of Beethoven⁵⁷ called *I Can't Hear You*. It got printed, actually. The reporter printed it, and he said, "You look like Beethoven."

Burlingame: So, why did you say yes to *Ragtime*?

Newman: Because it was a big deal. I thought it would be a bigger deal than it was. I mean, the story he chose to tell basically could have been the Medgar Evers⁵⁸ story. I mean, it was a Civil Rights story, which is fine, but I thought he'd do the book in the spirit of the book where characters got jerked around. You know, if Teddy Roosevelt⁵⁹ never met Albert Einstein,⁶⁰ have him meet him, or things like that. Like Tom Stoppard's⁶¹ *Travesties*.⁶² He does that. I love the idea of doing that with historical characters, putting them places they never were, and then setting them up and seeing what they do. I figured music would be important, and it was. I was very glad I did it, in retrospect.

Burlingame: How would you describe the nature and style of the score?

Cuckoo's Nest (Forman, 1975; *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Warner Home Video, 2011. DVD.), and *Amadeus* (Forman, 1984; *Amadeus*. Warner Bros. Home Entertainment, 2009. DVD.).

⁵⁶ Mace Neufeld (b. 1928) is an American talent agent, manager, and producer of film and television. In the 1950s and 1960s, Neufeld managed artists such as Randy Newman, Neil Diamond, and Don Adams. He entered television and film production in the 1970s; his credits include the films *The Omen* (Donner, 1976; *The Omen: Special Edition*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2000. DVD.) and *No Way Out* (Donaldson, 1987; *No Way Out*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2012. DVD.).

⁵⁷ Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) was a German composer and pianist who played a crucial role in the transition from the Classical to Romantic musical era. Despite deteriorating hearing beginning in 1802 and complete deafness by 1814, Beethoven continued to compose. Widely regarded as one of the most influential and popular composers of all time, Beethoven's compositions include nine symphonies, thirty-two piano sonatas, the opera *Fidelio*, and the mass *Missa solemnis*.

⁵⁸ Medgar Evers (1925–1963) was an African-American civil rights activist who worked to overturn segregation and expand opportunities for African-Americans in Mississippi. He was assassinated in Jackson, Mississippi by white supremacist and Ku Klux Klansman Byron de la Beckwith.

⁵⁹ Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt (1858–1919) was the 26th president of the United States (1901–1909) and vice president to William McKinley (25th president, 1897–1901). During his time as president, Roosevelt was a driving force for the Progressive Era through his "Square Deal," the construction of the Panama Canal, and his conservationist work in establishing national monuments, parks, and forests.

⁶⁰ Albert Einstein (1879–1955) was a German-born theoretical physicist known for his development of the theory of relativity. One of the most well-known and influential physicists of all time, Einstein received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1921 and published over three hundred scientific papers.

⁶¹ Tom Stoppard (b. 1937) is an award-winning Czech-British playwright and screenwriter. Among his most-popular works are the plays *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966), *The Real Thing* (1972), *Travesties* (1974, see footnote 61), and *Arcadia* (1993) as well as the Oscar-winning screenplay for *Shakespeare in Love* (co-written with Marc Norman, directed by John Madden, 1998; *Shakespeare in Love*. Lionsgate Home Entertainment, 2011. DVD.).

⁶² *Travesties* is a Tony Award-winning play by Tom Stoppard (see footnote 60). Premiering in London, England in 1974, the original production was produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company with director Peter Wood and actors John Wood, John Hurt, and Tom Bell among others. The story revolves around an elderly man reminiscing about his meetings with writers James Joyce and Tristan Tzara and revolutionary politician Vladimir Lenin.

Newman: Late Romantic, nineteenth century. A little closer to Vienna than to New Orleans, or—where was [Scott] Joplin⁶³ from St. Louis, I think. There wasn't much ragtime in it.

Burlingame: I wondered about that.

Newman: It didn't fit exactly. There were two [pieces] in it that were sort of rag-like.

Burlingame: And were you comfortable with writing that kind of music?

Newman: That kind? Not at first, because the tempo—you don't want it to lumber, and you don't know what's going to do it. You might have trombone after-beats or something, and if they play them too long, things get slowed down, or tend to lumber, and if they're too short and sforzando, it tends to make too big a deal of it. Yeah, one thing my uncle [Al] said that I always remembered—I don't know, we were talking about orchestration or something—and he said, "If it sounds good, what you're doing on the piano, it'll sound good in the orchestra." Now, that's not completely true, because you can get ranges wrong and have it be imbalanced and stuff, but if any kids do see that, and they worry about, "Oh, is this going to sound?", let it go sometimes, and if it sounds good on the piano, it'll transfer over.

Burlingame: There is a lot of piano in *Ragtime*.

Newman: Yeah.

Burlingame: Is any of it you?

Newman: Yeah. Let me think. I can't remember. *Avalon*?⁶⁴ Yeah. I played piano on that. I can't remember which ones. I don't remember whether I played the big montage solo at the end or whether Ralph Grierson⁶⁵ did.

Burlingame: Was that a Dino De Laurentiis⁶⁶ production?^[11 SEP]

⁶³ Often called "The King of Ragtime," Scott Joplin (1868–1917) was an African-American composer and pianist best known for his influence in the development of ragtime music. He wrote over one hundred original ragtime pieces, notably "Maple Leaf Rag" (1899) and "The Entertainer" (1902), one ballet, and two operas.

⁶⁴ *Avalon*. Directed by Barry Levinson, 1990; *Avalon*. Columbia TriStar Home Video/Mill Creek, 2001. DVD.

⁶⁵ Ralph Grierson (b. 1942) has had a brilliant career as a first call studio musician with thousands of hours of studio session work to his credit on both piano and keyboard synthesizer. He is known for his work on *Fantasia 2000* (Algar, Brizzi, et al., 1999; *Fantasia 2000*. Walt Disney Video, 2000. DVD.), *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (Spielberg, 1982; *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2012. DVD.), *Field of Dreams* (Robinson, 1989; *Field of Dreams*. Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2012. DVD.) and over a thousand other titles. His parallel classical career features collaborations with conductors Michael Tilson Thomas and Pierre Boulez, and composers Aaron Copland and Steve Reich. <http://musicandhealth.com/RGRecording>

⁶⁶ Dino De Laurentiis (1919–2010) was an Italian-American film producer. A prolific producer with over five hundred credits, De Laurentiis was an influential figure in the rebuilding and international dissemination of Italian cinema after World War II. His production credits included the films *La Strada* (Fellini, 1954; *La Strada*. Criterion Collection, 2010. DVD.), *Ragtime* (1981, see footnote 53), and *Hannibal* (Scott, 2001; *Hannibal*. MGM Video & DVD, 2006. DVD.).

Newman: Yeah, I met him.

Burlingame: What was he like? He seems like a fairly larger-than-life character.

Newman: He was, except he was, you know, about five feet tall, but he had suits that were worth more than my house and they were beautiful. He was beautiful-looking, and he would talk about, “Dustin Hoffman’s⁶⁷ going to play Douhini—” [Harry] Houdini.⁶⁸ And he had a bunch of books stacked up, “You know this book?” He had optioned it. He was real, almost a cliché of an impresario, that kind of thing, you know. I liked him.

Burlingame: Did you work closely with Miloš Forman at all on this [for *Ragtime*]?^[L SEP]

Newman: No.

Burlingame: No?

Newman: Not only wasn’t he there for the sessions, which was great, but when he got the score, he cut it up and put it in places, more so than any score I’ve ever done. Things changed, placement and stuff. He did what he wanted to do much of the time.

Burlingame: But that doesn’t necessarily sound like it’s a good thing. Was it?

Newman: I don’t remember. I remember being surprised at the time. So many things—it probably wasn’t a good thing, because here was a great filmmaker—it doesn’t necessarily mean that a great filmmaker necessarily knows much about music, where it should be, because it’s a very arcane discipline. It’s odd how it [placement] works and how it doesn’t work.^[L SEP]

Burlingame: Do you feel like you had a dramatic instinct that helped you know what to write for the movies?^[L SEP]

Newman: Maybe. I think so. If I had to say what my biggest talent is, that wouldn’t be it. I’m not a tremendous movie lover the way many people are, but I was interested in that [*Ragtime*], because of the time. I love that. The time period before World War I, when any innocence at all

⁶⁷ Dustin Hoffman (b. 1937) is an American actor and director. His notable roles include those in *The Graduate* (Nichols, 1967; *The Graduate*. MGM Video & DVD, 2014. DVD.), *Kramer vs. Kramer* (Benton, 1979; *Kramer vs. Kramer*. Columbia Pictures, 2009. Blu-Ray.), *Rain Man* (Levinson, 1988; *Rain Man*. MGM Video & DVD, 2014. DVD.), and *Avalon* (1990, see footnote 63).

⁶⁸ Harry Houdini (1874–1926) was a Hungarian-American magician who is best known for his stunt performances and intricate escape acts.

disappeared, and I like the music of the period. [Richard] Strauss⁶⁹ and Berg,⁷⁰ Stravinsky⁷¹ a little bit, Mahler,⁷² Debussy.⁷³ It's a great period.

Two Academy Award Nominations for “One More Hour”

Burlingame: And you wrote a song for that movie, “One More Hour.”⁷⁴

Newman: Yes, it's a counterpoint to the theme of the movie, yes.

Burlingame: And that was sung by?

Newman: Jennifer Warnes.⁷⁵

Burlingame: And you wound up with two Academy Award nominations. Were you surprised?

Newman: Yes, I was surprised every time. It was very nice, but then you go to the ceremony and he [the performer] did well enough, but the person who sang the song was John Schneider⁷⁶ from the *Dukes of Hazzard*.⁷⁷ That's the way it goes. I mean, as a kid I'd seen enough of the Academy

⁶⁹ Richard Strauss (1864–1949) was a German composer, conductor, pianist, and violinist of the late Romantic and early Modern musical eras. One of the leading composers of his time, Strauss's works include the operas *Elektra* (1909) and *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911) and his tone poems *Don Juan* (1889), *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1896), and *Don Quixote* (1898).

⁷⁰ Alban Berg (1885–1935) was an Austrian composer. Berg's style combined the twelve-tone technique of Arnold Schoenberg (with whom Berg studied as part of the Second Viennese School) with Romantic musical techniques and sensibilities. An important figure in twentieth-century music, Berg's works include the operas *Wozzeck* (1925) and *Lulu* (1937) along with his *Five Orchestral Songs* (1912) and *Lyric Suite* (1926).

⁷¹ Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) was a Russian composer, conductor, and pianist. An influential and important twentieth-century composer, Stravinsky's diverse oeuvre includes *The Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911), *The Rite of Spring* (1913), *L'Histoire du soldat* (1918), and *Les Noces* (1923).

⁷² Gustav Mahler (1860–1911) was an Austrian Romantic composer and conductor who was influential in the transition from the Romantic era into the Modern era. Considered a leading conductor of his time, Mahler's most popular compositions include his second, third, and eighth symphonies as well as his many songs and song cycles.

⁷³ Claude Debussy (1862–1918) was a French composer. Debussy is considered one of the most influential composers of his time; his notable works include *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (1894), *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902), *La Mer* (1905), and his piano *Préludes* and *Études*.

⁷⁴ “One More Hour” is a song composed by Randy Newman for the 1981 film *Ragtime* (see footnote 53).

⁷⁵ Jennifer Warnes (b. 1947) is an American singer, songwriter, and arranger. Her award-winning performances include the songs “Up Where We Belong” for the film *An Officer and a Gentleman* (Hackford, 1982; *Richard Gere: Triple Feature*. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2007. DVD.) and “(I've Had) The Time of My Life” for the film *Dirty Dancing* (Ardolino, 1987; *Dirty Dancing*. Lionsgate Home Entertainment, 2009. DVD.).

⁷⁶ John Schneider (b. 1960) is an American actor and singer. Schneider is best known for his roles in the television series *The Dukes of Hazzard* (1979–1985, see footnote 76) and *Smallville* (Gough and Millar, 2001–2011; *Smallville: The Complete Series*. Warner Bros. Home Entertainment, 2017. DVD.).

⁷⁷ *The Dukes of Hazzard* is an action-comedy television show that aired from 1979 to 1985 on CBS. It follows the comedic adventures of members of the Duke family on their farm in Hazzard County, Georgia. The cast includes John Schneider (see footnote 75), Tom Wopat, Catherine Bach, and Denver Pyle. (Rushing and Waldron, 1979–1985; *The Dukes of Hazzard: The TV Complete Series*. Warner Home Video, 2007. DVD.)

Awards to know that you didn't necessarily get top-flight vocal talent or musical talent that you would think, and the scores—they did an instrumental medley of the scores with Liberace.⁷⁸

Burlingame: That year?

Newman: Yeah. It was a hell of a thing. My father used to piss my uncle [Alfred] off. He says, "Look at Liberace." And he [Al] would say, "What's the matter with him?" "He plays a lot of notes—" he did play a lot of notes. He also had a great act. Liberace was very funny.

Burlingame: So, what was your next film after *Ragtime*?^[LSEP]

Newman: You're kidding. You think I remember? Let me think.

Burlingame: Shall I give you a hint—

Newman: Was it *Parenthood*?⁷⁹

Burlingame: No, it was *The Natural*.⁸⁰

Composing for *The Natural*

Newman: Oh, *The Natural*. Hmm. Both of those are pretty good scores. I wish I'd done more dramatic pictures. You'd think people would ask me, because those scores are highly thought of, as is *Avalon*.

Burlingame: It's true. What kind of music did *The Natural* need? Why was that a good fit for you?

Newman: Well, I always liked baseball, but that had nothing to do with it. It required some notice of the period, which was the late 1930s I think, and the Americana stuff was important, I think, to them. When he was pitching, the Babe Ruth the "Whammer"⁸¹ on the train, and that was important to him. Again, I think he, Barry Levinson,⁸² liked my songs and the arrangements for them. And he may have liked *Ragtime* a great deal.

⁷⁸ Liberace (1919–1987) was an American pianist, singer, actor, and entertainer. He hosted *The Liberace Show* (Goldstone, 1952–1969; *The Liberace Show*. Passport Video, 2004. DVD.) and was especially known for his flamboyant performance style and lifestyle.

⁷⁹ *Parenthood*. Directed by Ron Howard, 1989; *Parenthood*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2007. DVD.

⁸⁰ *The Natural*. Directed by Barry Levinson, 1984; *The Natural: Director's Cut*. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2007. DVD.

⁸¹ Nicknamed "The Bambino," George "Babe" Ruth Jr. (1895–1948) was an American professional baseball player. Ruth set many major league records with the New York Yankees and is regarded by many as the greatest baseball player of all time.

⁸² Barry Levinson (b. 1942) is an award-winning American filmmaker, screenwriter, and actor. His films include *The Natural* (1984, see footnote 79), *Rain Man* (Levinson, 1988; *Rain Man*. MGM Video & DVD, 2014. DVD.), and *Wag the Dog* (Levinson, 1997; *Wag the Dog*. New Line, 2005. DVD.).

Burlingame: So, did you work closely with Barry on the score?

Newman: Pretty closely, because I was in the next room. I had an office where he did, and so I'd run stuff by him. It was a day in which composers didn't have to audition what they were writing, didn't have to do demos of it all, the way they do now. Now you have to do some sort of a synth mockup so the director can hear it. I almost don't know of any cases where you don't have to do that. Maybe John [Williams] and [Steven] Spielberg⁸³ don't have [to].

Burlingame: So, in that era would you play a couple themes for the director?

Newman: I'd play it on piano.

Burlingame: On piano. And what they'd say—yes, and it could go ahead?

Newman: He'd say yes or no.^[SEP]

Collaborating with Jack Hayes

Burlingame: You worked a lot with [orchestrator] Jack Hayes⁸⁴ I think.

Newman: I did.

Burlingame: Who was Jack Hayes, and what did he do for you?

Newman: Jack Hayes was an older man who was a great orchestrator. He worked for [Hugo] Friedhofer,⁸⁵ for my Uncle Alfred, Lionel too, and he taught me a lot. I taught him a little. I mean, he'd say things when you do a picture: "You make a sketch of it."

Burlingame: As the composer.

Newman: Most composers do [make sketches]. Now there are guys that just play it or hum it. There's a whole branch of music. My uncle [Alfred] used to call them 'hummers'. They just hum it to an orchestrator, and they orchestrated it, Charlie Chaplin⁸⁶ style. But in any case, we're

⁸³ Steven Spielberg (b. 1946) is an award-winning American director, producer, and screenwriter who co-founded Amblin Entertainment and DreamWorks Studios. A pioneering member of the New Hollywood Era, Spielberg is considered to be one of the most well-known and most popular filmmakers in cinematic history. His notable films include *Jaws* (Spielberg, 1975; *Jaws*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2012. DVD.), *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (Spielberg, 1982; *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2012. DVD.), and *Schindler's List* (Spielberg, 1993; *Schindler's List*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2018. DVD.).

⁸⁴ Jack Hayes (1919–2011) was an American orchestrator and composer. He worked on over two hundred films including *Avalon* (1990, see footnote 63) and *Maverick* (1994, see footnote 112).

⁸⁵ Hugo Friedhofer (1901–1981) was an orchestrator, arranger, and composer who wrote the Oscar-winning score to *The Best Years of Our Lives* (Wyler, 1946; *The Best Years of Our Lives*. MGM Video & DVD, 2000. DVD.). He received eight other Oscar nominations and orchestrated scores for composers Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Max Steiner, and Alfred Newman (see footnote 3).

⁸⁶ Charlie Chaplin (1889–1977) was an English comedian, actor, filmmaker, and composer. One of the most

going over the music that I had written, and [Jack Hayes] is going to have to orchestrate it, and he's sitting there like this, and he's shaking his head, and I said, "That bad?" And he says, "No, no, no, [I'm] just starting to worry about things." He'd say things like—he'd again be looking, and he says, "I hate thirds." I knew what he meant. When you can't avoid doubling a third, it often causes you trouble. [He was] right. He'd been around a long time, and he knew everything. He taught me a great deal.

What Makes A Good Orchestrator

Burlingame: What does a good orchestrator add to the score?^[SEP]

Newman: Well, there'll be things you don't think of, or mistakes. In my case, since I didn't come from there, [they] arrange things or they'll think of another line. It's hard to have the time to have counterpoint. My Uncle Al did it, and some guys can do it, but it takes the time, and sometimes you need it. It's dictated by what's on the screen. If the screen's full, you very often have to match it and be full yourself. And they add stuff, or they'll double things in this [sketch] to use. You see, I'm fairly particular about what an orchestrator [contributes]—I like to do it myself essentially, and just leave the notes that are clear enough. I like them to do what I say and not to change things to make it "more" or to "fix" it. I can do that myself. If I want it broke, they should keep it broke, I think.

Conducting His Own Scores

Burlingame: You also conduct all your own scores, don't you?

Newman: More or less. You'd have to ask the band. [SMILES] I think so.

Burlingame: Why? Why is that important?

Newman: I love conducting. I studied it some. I, too, think I could have been a really good conductor. I think I have an instinct for music had I chosen to do it, and been a different person and had a little more discipline. I can safely say, and I don't care what anyone says, it's easier than composing is. Most things are.

This is a bit of a digression here. I was in Hungary because my wife wanted to go there. In many places in the country, or in Budapest anyway, there were statues for Georg Solti,⁸⁷ the conductor,

recognized film stars of early cinema, Chaplin is best known for his silent film era screen persona "The Tramp." Chaplin invented excellent melodies, such as the hit song "Smile," but he needed the help of others to write down the music.

⁸⁷ Sir Georg Solti (1912–1997) was a Hungarian-British conductor and pianist. Internationally known for his conducting skill, Solti served as the music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 1969 to 1991. He also served as the music director of the Bavarian State Opera and the Royal Opera, and conducted concerts and opera productions around the world.

and for a lot of Hungarian conductors. And there was almost nothing for [Béla] Bartók,⁸⁸ certainly one of the three great composers of the last one hundred, two hundred years. It was an odd kind of flash—statues like this where Solti was leading the band, and almost nothing [for Bartók]. It may have been happenstance that I didn't get to the [Bartók tributes]—you ever been there?

Burlingame: No.

Newman: Maybe I didn't get to the Bartók stuff, but if he had been born in Germany, he'd have been president.

Methods for Writing a Movie Score

Burlingame: So then, once you've got your material, then does it take eight or ten weeks? How long do you take to write a score?

Newman: As long as they give me. It's less than it used to be. You used to get ten [weeks], I think, fairly consistently. Now it's way less. But my experience has been, with Pixar, they are a long time with these pictures, so in general I've had time. You'll do it in three separate sections. They'll do ten, twelve minutes; then, another month later, another ten or twelve [minutes]; and then in two months, the rest of it, another twenty-five, thirty [minutes].

Burlingame: So, they'll record a little at a time?

Newman: Yeah, they do.

Burlingame: And while we're at it, why is that? Why is that better?

Newman: Oh, no, it's not necessarily better, but it's better—they have been very generous about the amount of time I've been given. I'm not fast, I don't think. Well, I have been when I've had to be, but when I don't have to be, I'll think about it.^{[L]_{SEP}}

Burlingame: Do you find any of the process of scoring films fun?^{[L]_{SEP}}

Newman: I like it when I get an idea, and I love those days with the orchestra. It's more than fun. It's like one of the best things I've ever experienced in my life. It's such an honor to be able to work with those kinds of accomplished people.

Burlingame: How good are the L.A. musicians?

⁸⁸ Béla Bartók (1881–1945) was a Hungarian composer, pianist, and one of the founders of comparative musicology, a branch of musicology that later developed into ethnomusicology. Considered one of the most important twentieth-century composers, Bartók's works include *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* (1936) and *Concerto for Orchestra* (1943).

Newman: They're tremendously good. I mean, they're tremendously good. It would be a world-class orchestra if they had the same sort of schedule as Boston or Chicago had. They sightread—I can't imagine anyone reading the way they can, nor could I imagine anyone with the versatility to swing a little bit. It's hard for some orchestras to go [sings an ad lib rhythmic melody]:



[Others] don't get it, can't do it, particularly string players. They're getting better all over the country, in my limited experience of being there, but nothing like here.

Co-Writing for *Three Amigos!*

Burlingame: So to go back to the 1980s for a second—tell us what you did on *Three Amigos!*.⁸⁹

Newman: On *Three Amigos!*, I co-wrote the script. We were trying to get stuff by Steve who had the word processor.

Burlingame: Steve?

Newman: Steve Martin⁹⁰ was an early proponent of computers and electric things. Steve Martin, Lorne Michaels,⁹¹ and I co-wrote it, and I wrote the songs and played “The Singing Bush”⁹² out of my seventh-grade glee club book. You sang songs like, “Got an old mule, and her name is Sal. Fifteen miles—” except with a tune I can't remember. “Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal.”⁹³ Yeah. “We've seen some barges in our day. Da-da-da-da.” Yeah, and “The Singing Bush” was angry.

⁸⁹ *Three Amigos!*. Directed by John Landis, 1986; *Three Amigos!*. HBO Home Entertainment, 2009. DVD.

⁹⁰ Steve Martin (b. 1945) is an award-winning American actor, comedian, musician, writer, and film and television producer. Martin is known for his stand-up comedy routines and many appearances on the sketch variety television show *Saturday Night Live* (Michaels, 1975–present; *Saturday Night Live: The Complete First Season*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2006. DVD.). As an actor, Martin's film credits include *Roxanne* (also writer) (Schepisi, 1987; *Roxanne*. Mill Creek Entertainment, 2015. DVD.), *Three Amigos!* (1986, see footnote 88), and *Parenthood* (1989, see footnote 78).

⁹¹ Lorne Michaels (b. 1944) is an award-winning Canadian-American television producer, screenwriter, and comedian. He is best known for creating and producing *Saturday Night Live* (Michaels, 1975–present; *Saturday Night Live: The Complete First Season*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2006. DVD.) as well as producing the *Late Night* series (Letterman, 1982–present; *Late Night with David Letterman: Special Guest Johnny Carson*. Gaia Americas, Inc., 1995. VHS.) and *The Tonight Show* (Allen, Hemion, et al., 1954–present; *Heeere's Johnny: The Definitive DVD Collection from the Tonight Show*. Respond 2/Carson Entertainment, 2007. DVD.).

⁹² “The Singing Bush” is a song written by Elmer Bernstein for his score to the film *Three Amigos!* (1986, see footnote 88). Randy Newman provided the vocals for the song as well as the voice for the ‘Singing Bush’ character in the film.

⁹³ “Low Bridge, Everybody Down,” also known as “Fifteen Miles on the Erie Canal” or “Erie Canal Song,” is a popular song written by Thomas S. Allen in 1905. The song reflects on travelling along the Erie canal first by mule, then by engine-powered barge.

He was irritable, like he'd given himself poison oak or something, and he sang these old glee club songs. "For he's a jolly good fellow, for he's a jolly good fellow!" Like that.

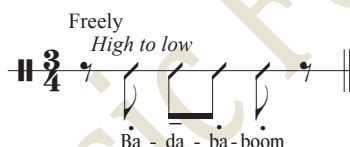
Burlingame: It sounds funny. Was it fun?

Newman: Yeah, it was fun. When I had written *Faust*⁹⁴—I did a show based on Goethe's⁹⁵ immortal work [*Faust*].⁹⁶ Writing that was the most fun I've ever had writing, and that was just by myself. But it was fun being with these guys. No, not easy to be funny from 2:00pm to 6:00pm every day or whatever the hell the time we worked.

Composing for *Parenthood*

Burlingame: So not long after that, you did a picture called *Parenthood*, and you wrote a song that's become a kind of standard. Tell us about that.^[LSEP]

Newman: In the beginning of the picture [*Parenthood*]⁹⁷—Steve Martin's in it. It's a Ron Howard movie. He drives his family to a park, or a picnic or something the beach maybe and carries everything, dropping things and all. And I had written an instrumental for it and I thought it was good, but Howard wanted a song. I said, "You know, I don't think so. There's stuff to hit, and you don't want to be singing a song and go (mimes hitting tom-tom drums high to low):



⁹⁴ Randy Newman's *Faust* is a 1995 musical by Randy Newman. Largely based on Goethe's *Faust* (see footnote 95), the musical modernizes the folk tale of Johannes Faust (a man said to have sold his soul to the Devil for knowledge and power) and follows God and the Devil fighting over the soul of a student at the University of Notre Dame. The original production premiered at La Jolla Playhouse in San Diego and featured David Garrison, Kurt Deutsch, Ken Page, and Bellamy Young.

⁹⁵ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) was a German writer of scientific treatises, epic poetry, novels, and plays. His notable works include *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), the poem "Prometheus" (1789), *Metamorphosis of Plants* (1790), and *Faust* (*Part One* published in 1808, *Part Two* published posthumously in 1832; see footnote 95).

⁹⁶ *Faust* is a tragic play by German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (see footnote 94). It comprises two separate parts, the first published in 1808 the second published posthumously in 1832. Based on the folk legends surrounding real-life alchemist and magician Johannes Faust, Goethe's play revolves around Heinrich Faust, an accomplished yet disillusioned scholar who sells his soul to the Devil for knowledge and power.

⁹⁷ Ron Howard (b. 1954) is an American actor and filmmaker. His notable acting roles include Opie Taylor in *The Andy Griffith Show* (Leonard, 1960–1968; *The Andy Griffith Show: The Complete Series*. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2016. DVD.) and Richie Cunningham in *Happy Days* (Marshall, 1974–1984; *Happy Days: The Complete First Series*. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2004. DVD.). His directing credits include the films *Apollo 13* (Howard, 1995; *Apollo 13*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 1998. DVD.), *A Beautiful Mind* (Howard, 2001; *A Beautiful Mind*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2006. DVD.), and *The Da Vinci Code* (Howard, 2006; *The Da Vinci Code*. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2016. DVD.).

But I did, and wrote “I’d Love to See You Smile.”⁹⁸ And it was very well-liked, and the scene looked all right. I mean, he was right.

Burlingame: And it’s a wonderful, warm song about family, in a way.

Newman: That’s what he wanted.

Burlingame: Which doesn’t necessarily sound like a “Randy Newman” song that we would have gotten from one of your albums.

Writing “You’ve Got a Friend in Me”

Newman: No, but I’m writing for a movie. I’m writing for them. I mean “You Got a Friend in Me.”⁹⁹ I wouldn’t—you don’t have a friend in me. [SMILES] I mean, I wouldn’t write it for myself. I like to think I’m easy enough to get along with, but I wouldn’t write that. Sounds like a used car salesman. And “When Somebody Loved Me,”¹⁰⁰ the thing for Jessie in *Toy Story 2*.¹⁰¹ No, when I write for a movie, my songs are really strange. I mean, I’ve been really lucky to have done as well as I can with songs that weird. Nobody writes like that because there’s no demand for it. I mean it’s not like a popular—I write songs where people are in character, so they’re often not good guys. Like the guy in “Short People”¹⁰² which is an example of something that many people may know.

Burlingame: And you’re talking now about the songs on your albums?

Newman: Yeah. The guys are crazy, but when I write for a picture it pulls me into the middle of the road a bit, or completely, usually.

Burlingame: And yet you’re still writing for characters?

Newman: Yeah, but they’re different kind of characters.

Burlingame: More loveable?

Newman: They’re usually—oh yeah, they’re not aberrant, which is apparently what interests me in the way I usually write.

⁹⁸ “I’d Love to See You Smile” is a song written and performed by Randy Newman for the film *Parenthood* (1989, see footnote 78).

⁹⁹ “You Got a Friend in Me” is a song written and performed by Randy Newman for the film *Toy Story* (1995, see footnote 102).

¹⁰⁰ “When She Loved Me” is a song written by Randy Newman and performed by Sarah McLachlan (see footnote 123) for the film *Toy Story 2* (1999, see footnote 100).

¹⁰¹ *Toy Story 2*. Directed by John Lasseter, 1999; *Toy Story 2: Special Edition*. Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2010. DVD.

¹⁰² “Short People” is a song by Randy Newman released on his 1977 album *Little Criminals*.

Newman's Songwriting Process

Burlingame: When you write a movie song, does the tune come first, or does the lyric?^[1]_[SEP]

Newman: Movie songs are a little different. They'll tell me what they want, and I'll ask for adjectives. Sad and happy. Anything. As simple as it can be. Non-musical. In "I Love to See You [Smile]"—in *Toy Story*,¹⁰³ "You've Got a Friend," they said, "We want to emphasize the friendship between the boy and the toy," and they said it a few times. "You know it's very important," so, "you got a friend." "You got a friend." "You got a friend in me." So usually, more so than in my usual stuff where I have nothing in my head particularly, there is the idea to do it in an approximate tempo. It's easier for the most part than writing the way I usually write with nothing.

Burlingame: Because you have some direction?

Newman: Yeah. Some direction and there are strict parameters to it. There's not going to be any swearing, so I'm grateful to get the chance to do that.

Burlingame: And does it surprise you that some of these songs, like "You've Got a Friend in Me," and "I'd Love to See You Smile" have become iconic?

Working on Disney and Pixar Films

Newman: Well, a little bit, yes it does. But they're Disney too. I mean when I think, "Well, it's surprising that there it is, all over Disneyland." "You Got a Friend"—considering what kind of composer I usually am, it's a little surprising, but it's Disney. It's a big deal. It's a lifetime. Some of their stuff's going to be here one hundred years from now, and I probably won't.

Burlingame: How does that make you feel though?

Newman: Good. Nothing but good. I have no bug up my ass at Disney, the evil empire or anything like that. I just—I don't feel it. I wonder whether Neil Young¹⁰⁴ would object to that, the way he does to commercials and stuff.

Burlingame: Yeah, because he won't sell his songs for commercials, right?

Newman: No, but I think he would do it for a movie. I don't know.^[1]_[SEP]

Burlingame: When you write your songs, is it pencil and paper?^[1]_[SEP]

¹⁰³ *Toy Story*. Directed by John Lasseter, 1995; *Toy Story: Special Edition*. Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2010. DVD.

¹⁰⁴ Neil Young (b. 1945) is a Canadian singer-songwriter and musician. A multi-genre artist with a notably unique voice, Young's career includes songs like "Heart of Gold" (1972) and "Old Man" (1972).

Newman: Songs? No. Uh-uh. I was just playing and singing. I put it on tape and then eventually it'll get down, yeah. The movies is on pencil and paper.

Burlingame: So do you still write your scores by hand?

Newman: Yeah.

Burlingame: So do you still use pencil and paper when you write your scores?<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>

Newman: I do. The copyists wish I didn't, but I use pencil and paper. I mean I could master that thing where you do it on the keyboard with three is an eighth note and four is a quarter, but I've never done it.

Burlingame: Starting in the 1990s, you seemed to do more movies. I counted eleven.<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>

Newman: I did.

Burlingame: Why was that, do you think?

Newman: I don't know, but I got better by doing more.

Burlingame: Really?

Newman: Yeah. As I remember, I did some stuff in—was *Monsters, Inc.*¹⁰⁵ there?—I didn't know I could do. That surprised me, and I don't know whether I could do it now. *Cars*¹⁰⁶ was in around that time. I don't know what was in the 1990s from them.

Burlingame: Let's take a minute to talk just quickly about some of those movies from the 1990s. Maybe one memory from each one of these titles. What do you remember from *Avalon*? Something special about that film.<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>

Newman: It had some good cues, nice tunes here and there. Oh, I remember—I think it was the first instance—oh no, I had to do it in *Ragtime* too—where the people were dancing to something they put on a phonograph. They were dancing, and I had to write something that would somewhat fit what they were doing. It was just a matter of tempo mostly. There's a scene in which the old man plays the theme on a busted-up piano. And when you can see too much of his fingers—if you ever direct a picture, don't show a guy's hands when they're playing piano—you have to match it, and I can't remember whether I played it or Randy Kerber¹⁰⁷ played it, but in any case, it's not that. It should be on the cutting room floor.

¹⁰⁵ *Monsters, Inc.* Directed by Pete Docter, 2001; *Monsters, Inc.* Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2013. DVD.

¹⁰⁶ *Cars.* Directed by John Lasseter, 2006; *Cars.* Walt Disney Home Entertainment, 2006. DVD.

¹⁰⁷ Randy Kerber (b. 1958) is an American keyboardist, composer, orchestrator, and arranger. Kerber has played on over eight hundred records, film scores, and television scores. Notably, Kerber performed the solo celeste part in John Williams's scores to the first three *Harry Potter* films (1–2: Columbus, 2001 and 2002; 3: Cuarón, 2004; *Harry Potter: The Complete 8-Film Collection.* Warner Bros. Home Entertainment, 2011. DVD.) and the featured piano

Burlingame: Anything notable—

Newman: In *Avalon*, I was happy with how it turned out. There's a scene in the park where they're going to sleep in the park that was a very great evocative scene. I could feel the park, and I think it inspired me to write well. I wrote something that was good.

Music Enhancing a Picture or Performance

Burlingame: And *Awakenings*¹⁰⁸ was around the same time.

Newman: Yeah. I think that picture, along with another one, was maybe the most I ever did to make a picture better. You can't make a bad picture good, but sometimes you can make a picture appear better than it might be.

Burlingame: How do you think you did that?

Newman: I don't know how I did. Oh, I think I made the Robin Williams¹⁰⁹ character with more gravitas and also more believable as a scientist somehow. Somehow, the music that went with it. And [Robert] De Niro¹¹⁰—just more emptiness feeling. I think I did it. I know that's what I tried to do. There's a scene I worked real hard on, and it was suspended every which way. Everything was suspended, not like a major chord, but a fourth. I know you know that, but it was called "Ward Five."¹¹¹ They were in Ward Five, and he walked to his mother or something, and I thought it would be great. I thought it would be like the best thing I ever wrote, but sometimes you can overcook things. I'm not sure it was. You can undercook. You can overcook.

Burlingame: How do you know? Are you just taking your best shot?

Newman: I don't know. I'm taking my best shot, yeah. And also nowadays, even if you think you're taking your best shot, and you think it is the best shot, the director may not like it. You have to please yourself first of all and do something that helps the picture, and you have to please the director.

solo in beginning and ending sequences of Alan Silvestri's score to *Forrest Gump* (Zemeckis, 1994; *Forrest Gump*. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2017. DVD.).

¹⁰⁸ *Awakenings*. Directed by Penny Marshall, 1990; *Awakenings*. Image Entertainment, 2010. DVD.

¹⁰⁹ Robin Williams (1951–2014) was an award-winning American actor and comedian. He is known for his role as Mork in the television show *Mork & Mindy* (Marshall, McRaven, and Glauberg, 1978–1982; *Mork & Mindy: The Complete Series*. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2014. DVD.) as well as his roles in the films *Dead Poets Society* (Weir, 1989; *Dead Poets Society*. Touchstone Pictures, 1998. DVD.), *Mrs. Doubtfire* (Columbus, 1993; *Mrs. Doubtfire*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2015. DVD.), and *Good Will Hunting* (Van Sant, 1997; *Good Will Hunting*. Lionsgate Home Entertainment, 2011. DVD.).

¹¹⁰ Robert De Niro (b. 1943) is an award-winning American actor, director, and producer. His acting credits include the films *Taxi Driver* (Scorsese, 1976; *Taxi Driver*. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2007. DVD.), *Raging Bull* (Scorsese, 1980; *Raging Bull*. MGM Video & DVD, 2011. DVD.), and *Awakenings* (1990, see footnote 107).

¹¹¹ "Ward Five" is the eleventh track of the official soundtrack album for the film 1990 *Awakenings* (see footnote 107). Randy Newman composed the score.

Composing for *The Paper*

Burlingame: Anything notable to say about *The Paper*?¹¹²

Newman: No, but it was my rule about doing pictures where the music is important. I broke it there, and the music wasn't too important to that movie, I don't think. I don't know whether it helped it. Oh, it had a good song in it, "Make Up Your Mind." That was good, I liked that, yeah. I like it more than most people do. In that case it's not usual, yeah.

Composing for *Maverick*

Burlingame: Tell me about your experience on *Maverick*.¹¹³

Newman: *Maverick* was a western. Dick [Richard] Donner¹¹⁴ and—

Burlingame: Was the director.

Newman: Yeah, he was. In retrospect, he was concerned I think that the comedic element of the picture might be missed. I didn't think it was possible to miss it from an audience. I'm not sure who was right, but he wanted to know, "Are there any funny instruments?" And I wanted to tell him at the time, but he may have been right. It's a comedy, and I did some of it comedically. I can't remember a scene where I could have done more, but he was looking for funny sounds, but they don't carry you that far. You can't go [MAKES NOISE] you know, a tuba and banjo, a trombone. But I don't know.

Newman: I mean, I saw him a few years ago, and he was sort of pissed off. He said, "You know, I hear you're—" I heard from someone else, "He thinks you don't like him," but I like him fine, and I'm not sure he wasn't right.

Burlingame: Did he ask you to rewrite some cues to make it funnier?

Newman: Yeah, but it wasn't a hell of a lot. I mean Nora Ephron¹¹⁵ was a number of things.

Burlingame: What picture did she do with you?

¹¹² *The Paper*. Directed by Ron Howard, 1994; *The Paper*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 1997. DVD.

¹¹³ *Maverick*. Directed by Richard Donner, 1994; *Maverick*. Warner Bros. Home Entertainment, 2009. DVD.

¹¹⁴ Richard Donner (b. 1930) is an American director and producer known for the films *The Omen* (Donner, 1976; *The Omen*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2000. DVD.), *Superman: The Movie* (Donner, 1978; *Superman: The Movie* (Special Edition). Warner Home Video, 2001. DVD.), and *Lethal Weapon* (Donner, 1987; *Lethal Weapon*. Warner Home Video, 2000. DVD.).

¹¹⁵ Nora Ephron (1941–2012) was an American writer, filmmaker, and journalist. Known for her work in the romantic comedy genre, Ephron's most popular films include *When Harry Met Sally...* (Reiner, 1989; *When Harry Met Sally...*. MGM Video & DVD, 2015. DVD.) and *Sleepless in Seattle* (Ephron, 1993; *Sleepless in Seattle*. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2003. DVD.).

Newman: *Michael*,¹¹⁶ about the angel. Music was sort of important to the picture. Could have been, but she had things she wanted. Again, she'd do things like where a couple would be waking up together, and on the radio would be "Love Me in the Morning."¹¹⁷ And I asked, "You know, maybe you don't want to be right on that. Nail on the head," but she didn't mind it, and maybe again, that is all right. But I had to redo some stuff, of course. Look, it's the director's medium. You have to do what they tell you. There's no way out of it except suicide.^[SEP]

Composing for Animations: *Toy Story* and *James and the Giant Peach*

Burlingame: So, Pixar comes calling in 1995 with *Toy Story*. What do you remember about the circumstances? Did John Lasseter¹¹⁸—why did he want you?^[SEP]

Newman: Well Lasseter—I think—I just read recently that Chris Montan¹¹⁹ recommended me. He was head of music at Disney, and he recommended me for the job, and I think John had heard of me and I think liked the songs and all. And they wanted an orchestral score, because it was the first animated computer animation, and they thought it might have a cold look to it. They never did, I don't think. At the time I was doing three animated pictures, some in different stages. There was *James and the Giant Peach*,¹²⁰ and the songs for *Cats Don't Dance*¹²¹ or *Cats Won't Dance*. It was called *Cats Don't Dance and They Won't* [commercially released as *Cats Don't Dance*]. That really trips out the tongue. I thought that that one was going to turn out to be—see I told you, my movie instinct is not great—I thought that was going to turn out to be the best of them, and it barely dribbled out. The animators sort of got screwed, because they kept changing administrations, and people wanted different things.

Burlingame: But it's interesting the *Toy Story* people felt that the orchestra would warm up what might be cold?

Newman: Yes, because it was a computer-generated world, it might have a little chill on it or the touch of the machine. I don't think they ever suffered from that.

Burlingame: This was your first animated movie, right? *Toy Story*? Or were you already working on *James and the Giant Peach*?

Newman: I was already working on *James and the Giant Peach*. I couldn't tell you which was first.

¹¹⁶ *Michael*. Directed by Nora Ephron, 1996; *Michael*. Warner Bros. Home Entertainment, 2009. DVD.

¹¹⁷ "Love Me in the Morning" is song by Clare Erica Burson featured on her 2005 album *Idaho*.

¹¹⁸ John Lasseter (b. 1957) is an American animator, director, screenwriter, and producer. He formerly served as the chief creative officer of Walt Disney Animation Studios and Pixar Animation Studios. His directorial credits include the films *Toy Story* (1995, see footnote 102), *A Bug's Life* (1998, see footnote 126), *Toy Story 2* (1999, see footnote 100), and *Cars* (2006, see footnote 105).

¹¹⁹ Chris Montan is an American music producer currently serving as the president of Walt Disney Music.

¹²⁰ *James and the Giant Peach*. Directed by Henry Selick, 1996; *James and the Giant Peach*. Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2010. DVD.

¹²¹ *Cats Don't Dance*. Directed by Mark Dindal, 1997; *Cats Don't Dance*. Warner Bros. Home Entertainment, 2004. DVD.

Burlingame: But how in general did you find writing for animation? Was it more difficult?

Newman: Yes.

Burlingame: How?

Newman: More notes, simply. You don't get any rest. There's no soulful moments of landscape or romance. Buzz and Woody had a romance, but they cut it. [SMILES] No. I'm just kidding. There's nothing like that. And when they're moving—I tried to do it otherwise, but it didn't look right. If they're running like that, you have to run with them. I meant to talk to my cousin Tom [Thomas Newman],¹²² who does a great job on these pictures, whether he feels that way, that when an animated picture acts in an animated fashion you have to be with them. I think the style has changed slightly since twenty years, like this last picture I did, *Cars 3*.¹²³ I think it's less immediately cue-y. "Cue-y" meaning hitting [onscreen] stuff. But it might be, because they're cars.

Composing for *Toy Story 2*

Burlingame: *Toy Story 2*. You wrote a song for *Toy Story 2*. Tell us about that.^[L SEP]

Newman: In *Toy Story 2* there's a character named Jessie. Cowgirl character. Kind of rambunctious and tomboy, but she's sadly looking out the window, and Woody goes up next to her on the chair, and Jessie tells Woody the story of her life. That she was owned, her owner loved her as a little girl, and things went on well, and then the little girl began to lose interest in her. And she was more often just kept under the bed, and then—I can't remember the ending. I think they had it, but they animated to what I wrote. So in any case, at the end, the little girl thinks there's hope again, because she's doing something. She's so proud to be going somewhere with her owner in the car, and it turns out that they're giving her away in the—what would you call that?

Burlingame: The toy's been dumped basically.

Newman: Yeah, yeah, just dumped. She dumps the toy.

Burlingame: So, you wrote a song called?

¹²² Thomas Newman (b. 1955) is an American composer best known for his acclaimed film scoring career. Newman's more than one hundred scoring credits include *The Shawshank Redemption* (Darabont, 1995; *The Shawshank Redemption*. Warner Bros. Home Entertainment, 2005. DVD.), *American Beauty* (Mendes, 2000; *American Beauty*. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2017. DVD.), and *Finding Nemo* (Stanton, 2004; *Finding Nemo*. Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2013. DVD.). He is the brother of David (see footnote 25) and Maria (see footnote 14), the son of Alfred (see footnote 3), the nephew of Lionel (see footnote 2) and Emil (see footnote 1), and the cousin of Randy.

¹²³ *Cars 3*. Directed by Brian Fee, 2017; *Cars 3*. Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2017. DVD.

Newman: “When She Loved Me,” I think it’s called. “When somebody loved me, everything was beautiful. Every hour we spent together, when she loved me.”

Burlingame: And your singer? Sarah McLachlan.¹²⁴

Newman: Sarah McLachlan. Brenda Lee?¹²⁵ No, the singer for *Toy Story 2* was Sarah McLachlan.

Burlingame: How important is the choice of a singer when you’re doing a poignant song like that?

Newman: Very important. A lot of singers could do it. She did it, and every take she had was fine. I was dropping a few notes under the table, because I played piano, but she was great every time—I’d never seen that in the studio. [Barbra] Streisand¹²⁶ was like that.

Burlingame: Do you cast your singers?

Newman: I didn’t pick her. She was picked by [John] Lasseter. They loved her stuff, and they asked me “How will she be?” And I said, “She’ll be fine.”^{[11] [SEP]}

Composing for *A Bug’s Life*

Burlingame: What do you remember about *A Bug’s Life*?¹²⁷

Newman: Lots. It had some of the hardest stuff I’ve done, because it was a dragonfly chasing an ant at ninety-five miles an hour, so he’s going. It was important to them, they said, to musically set up the world that the bugs lived in, early in the first reel. So I wrote this thing, attempted description, sort of expansive landscape stuff. But then when they did it, they fell all over the sound effects. They had this dragonfly flying by, and he sounded like B29s, so you didn’t really hear it [the music]. Lasseter apologized for that actually and said that they would fix it on the DVD, which they did.^{[11] [SEP]}

¹²⁴ Sarah McLachlan (b. 1968) is an award-winning Canadian singer and songwriter. Her music has been noted for its intense emotion and introspection. MacLachlan’s best-known works include the albums *Fumbling Towards Ecstasy* (1993) and *Surfacing* (1997) and songs “I Will Remember You” (1995) and “Angel” (1997).

¹²⁵ Brenda Lee (b. 1944) is an American singer. She is known for her performances of the songs “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree” (1958) and “I’m Sorry” (1960).

¹²⁶ Barbra Streisand (b. 1942) is an award-winning American singer, songwriter, actress, director, and producer. As a singer, her most popular albums include *The Barbra Streisand Album* (1963) and *The Way We Were* (1974). As an actress, her notable credits include *Funny Girl* (Wyler, 1968; *Funny Girl*. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2001. DVD.), *A Star is Born* (Pierson, 1976; *A Star is Born*. Warner Bros. Home Entertainment, 2006. DVD.), and *Yentl* (Streisand, 1983; *Yentl*. MGM Entertainment, 2009. DVD.).

¹²⁷ *A Bug’s Life*. Directed by John Lasseter, 1998; *A Bug’s Life: Collector’s Edition*. Walt Disney Home Entertainment, 2003. DVD.

Winning an Academy Award for *Monsters, Inc.*

Burlingame: So, after sixteen Academy Award nominations, you finally won for a song from *Monsters, Inc.* How did you feel?<sup>[11]
SEP]</sup>

Newman: I felt good. I felt better than I thought I was going to feel. I mean, I was surprised how moved I was. And I went out there to get it, and there was a girl out there. I knew Jennifer Lopez¹²⁸ had announced it, but I wasn't watching. I was backstage, and it didn't look like Jennifer Lopez. She was real curly-haired, and so I was fumbling around and making vague passes to get the award from the girl, the Vanna White¹²⁹ girl, you know. But I got out there and the orchestra stood up, and it really got to me when they did that. It really did. I said, "My God, you're not going to cry at something like this," because I'd always felt it never meant much to me when I lost. Really didn't. I was happy to get nominated, and when I did win it was hardly for the best thing I'd done. You know, in fact, of all the things I got nominated for, those two songs are maybe less interesting to me than some of the other stuff I'd written. But I was moved. It was no small thing to me.

Burlingame: You got a laugh with your acceptance speech on the stage. Do you remember what you said?

Newman: Oh, "I don't want your pity," or was that the second time? I can't remember. Yeah. I told the band not to play, because if they wanted to work—the orchestra was happy that I won, and they had told them not to do any demonstration of affection, but they did. It means a lot to me. I've been around those orchestras since I was a little boy. It means a lot to me that they like what I write, and they like me. I mean if there's one thing I would want my kids to know about me, that would almost be it. That would be it, I think. It's pretty self-centered, but I mean, that I earned their respect.

Collaborating with Director Pete Doctor

Burlingame: If I'm right, it was Pete Doctor¹³⁰ who directed *Monsters, Inc.* wasn't it?<sup>[11]
SEP]</sup>

Newman: Yes.

¹²⁸ Also known as J. Lo, Jennifer Lopez (b. 1969) is an American singer, actress, dancer, and producer. As a musician, her popular songs include "Jenny from the Block" (2002) and "On the Floor" (2011). As an actress, her credits include *Selena* (Nava, 1997; *Selena*. Warner Bros. Home Entertainment, 2008. DVD.) and *Maid in Manhattan* (Wang, 2002; *Maid in Manhattan*. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2003. DVD.).

¹²⁹ Vanna White (b. 1957) is an American actress and television personality. She has served as the co-host (alongside Pat Sajak) of the television show *Wheel of Fortune* (Griffin, 1975–present; *Wheel of Fortune*. DirecTV, 2019. Digital video.) since 1982.

¹³⁰ Pete Doctor (b. 1968) is an American animator, director, screenwriter, and producer. Doctor currently serves as the chief creative officer of Pixar Animation Studios. His directorial credits include *Monsters, Inc.* (2001, see footnote 103), *Up* (2009, see footnote 139), and *Inside Out* (Doctor, 2015; *Inside Out*. Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2015. DVD.).

Burlingame: Did you work closely with him?

Newman: I think so. He's pretty musical, Docter is. I don't remember any instances of talking to him much. We had to do some stuff over, as I recall. Not much though at all. No, it was pretty good. There was that big rollercoaster cue that I was very happy with how it turned out. They're going down in the factory.

Composing for Emotional and Comedic Moments in Film

Burlingame: A lot of the Pixar films contain highly emotional moments. Are they harder to write as a composer, or is it all just music?

Newman: I think for me, even though that is not what I've done basically with my career in movies, since it's been so much for Pixar, and there's a lot of running around, it's what I do best, and they think that, too. They wouldn't care if I didn't do the entirety of *Toy Story 3*,¹³¹ as long as I did that ending—that had to work. It would have worked, the picture worked, so I mean I believe a number of people [composers] maybe could have done that, but less than could have done it thirty, forty years ago. Just not called for, or they're just not writing it. I don't know.

Burlingame: And that's a highly emotional ending. *Toy Story 3*.

Newman: Yeah, they really, really did it. I mean they make good pictures, jeez, and the emotional component is overwhelmingly the most important thing to them.

The Difficulty of Writing for Emotional Moments

Burlingame: Many of the Pixar films that you've done contained highly emotional moments. Talk about how easy or difficult they are for you as a composer.<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>

Newman: Usually writing emotional music is easier for me than chasing people around. It's very important to Pixar, however, and important to the picture, that they like those emotional cues. So sometimes that makes it equally difficult. There'll be periods where I can't think of anything doing those kind of cues.

Burlingame: How about the comedic moments? How do you know when to play the comedy, and when not to, with music?<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>

Newman: I don't always know. We had a scene in *Bug's Life*. There was the joke. They were sort of scared jokes, but they were jokes definitely with faces. One face. Another face. Another face and I did it, and Lasseter said, "It should build from the one to the next," and I hadn't noticed that that was there, because I forgot what I wrote by the time I got to the second part of the joke. But we fixed it, and he was right. I've told you before, another instance—the end of *Toy*

¹³¹ *Toy Story 3*. Directed by Lee Unkrich, 2010; *Toy Story 3*. Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2010. DVD.

Story 2. Woody's running to get on the plane to save somebody, Jessie. And to me, I felt like there's little Woody and big bags and trucks and plane, and I played it like that, where he was little against big things crashing together. And Lasseter said, "Just play the picture." Meaning, "Here comes our hero, and he's trying to make it." No indication that he was animated, or that he was little, and it was big. He wanted just the drama of the moment and the emotion of the moment, and he was right. He was right. I tend to be literal, and usually ninety percent of the time it's right to play what's up on the screen. What you see is what you have to write for.

Burlingame: It sounds like these Pixar guys may be a little bit more astute as to how to use music than some of your other collaborators?

Newman: What am I going to say? No? When they get going—Brian Fee,¹³² who directed *Cars 3*, he's just finished. At the beginning I think his instincts were not so sharp. He'd never directed before, and he'd certainly never talked to a composer about doing things, but he got better and better. He picked it up very quickly. They do do that. Lasseter did too. Lasseter got better and better too. He's really very good now with that.

Best Way for a Director to Communicate with a Composer

Burlingame: What's the best way for a director to communicate with a composer?<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>

Newman: Basic adjectives. Nouns too, occasionally, but I mean you just say you want—"It should be very sad right there, and maybe you should notice her coming into the scene, and do something a little different for her," like that. Generalities, but the emotion of it, if that's what you're doing. And almost always, that's what music does well. That's the best way to talk.

Composing for *Seabiscuit*

Burlingame: Tell me about your experience on *Seabiscuit*.¹³³ I thought that your casting as composer was just right on. It was just the right kind of movie for you.<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>

Newman: Yeah, it was. Had some major disagreements with the director, and they were because he wasn't—I said it was a race, for instance. Now this may make me look good and him less than good. the picture is not black and white. But in this case, he's running maybe the Santa Anita Derby, and the horse is going into the stretch, and he's coming around, and he's pulling up. Babum. So, I played the whole thing like we're in some doubt as to what's going to happen. We care. It's the horse. But he didn't want it. No. He said, "Don't play the race." I said, "Don't play the race? What do you mean? It's *Seabiscuit*. There he is. We don't know who won the derby in 1939." And he said, "It's not about the horse," and for him I think it was about the Depression.

¹³² Brian Fee is an American animator, storyboard artist, director, and producer. He directed the film *Cars 3* (2017, see footnote 122).

¹³³ *Seabiscuit*. Directed by Gary Ross, 2003; *Seabiscuit*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2003. DVD.

Though how you're going to do that when there's a horse race up there...but he wanted the music slowed down. That was the main directive, because he had narration the whole way, and he wanted that narration to be a big deal, and I couldn't make myself do it. I mean you can slow things down, but you slow them down to a point where Beethoven's 7th [Symphony]¹³⁴ is no good. You can do things too slow, and I thought—that's how it was, and by the end of the picture I was sort of gone. I mean, I didn't do it. Bill [William] Ross¹³⁵ came in and did a couple cues.

Composing for *The Princess and The Frog*

Burlingame: I want to ask you about *The Princess and the Frog*,¹³⁶ which is not Pixar, but still Disney, and it's a film set in New Orleans. I'm guessing maybe you wanted to do that.^[SEP]

Newman: Well, if I want to do anything, yeah I did want to do it, and it was a musical. Sort of amazing. I've done three of those musicals. I've been unsuccessful actually on Broadway and in the theater. *James and the Giant Peach*, the *Cats Don't Dance*, and *Princess and the Frog*. Well, that was successful.

Burlingame: And it's got great flavor. It's got great colors in it.

Newman: It does, yeah.

Burlingame: Can you talk about that?

Newman: Well, they did it. They're very big on authenticity. We went down there and recorded with the band in New Orleans, which is dangerous. It's dangerous to try and do anything in New Orleans and have it actually get done. But music—the town is tremendously good at, and so we went down, and worked with people, and Dr. John [Malcolm John Rebennack]¹³⁷ sung the song, and it was pretty nice. Pretty nice. We had one thing, it was a funeral. So, they wanted a New Orleans funeral, so I played it slow, and then sped up when they were done, and then they changed their mind after previewing it, I think. Maybe. They said, "People don't know what a New Orleans funeral is, so just play it like a regular funeral," which I did.

Burlingame: Gee, that's kind of a shame.

¹³⁴ Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92 is a four-movement symphony by Ludwig van Beethoven (see footnote 56). It was composed between 1811 and 1812 and premiered in 1813. Its second movement, *Allegretto*, has been featured in a number of film and television soundtracks.

¹³⁵ William Ross (b. 1948) is an American composer, orchestrator, arranger, conductor, and music director who has worked on over one hundred and fifty films and television shows. He composed the scores to *Tuck Everlasting* (Russell, 2002; *Tuck Everlasting*. Walt Disney Home Entertainment, 2003. DVD.) and *The Tale of Despereaux* (Fell and Stevenhagen, 2008; *The Tale of Despereaux*. Universal, 2009. DVD.). Among the many composers and musicians that Ross has worked with are film composers John Williams (see footnote 11) and Michael Giacchino (see footnote 139) as well singers Barbra Streisand (see footnote 125) and Celine Dion.

¹³⁶ *The Princess and the Frog*. Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker, 2009; *The Princess and the Frog*. Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2010. DVD.

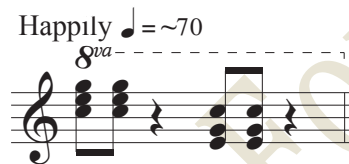
¹³⁷ Also known as Dr. John, Malcolm John Rebennack (b. 1941) is a Grammy-winning American singer, songwriter, and studio musician. His songs include "Mama Roux" (1968) and "Right Place, Wrong Time" (1973).

Newman: Who's to say they're wrong about that? The picture, I thought, was better with the other kind of music, but if people don't understand what you're doing and get pulled out of the picture, what can you do?

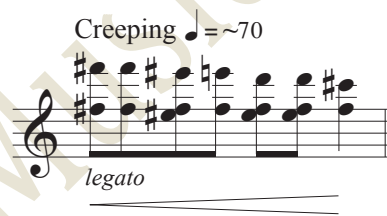
Films Newman is Proud Of: *Bug's Life* and *Monsters, Inc.*

Burlingame: Are there any films we haven't mentioned that you particularly enjoyed, or that you were proud of, or are fond of?^[SEP]

Newman: I was proud of *Bug's Life*, actually you mentioned it, because it was hard to do. I thought I did it all right, and I thought music was important in *Bug's Life*. And *Monsters 1*, because it dragged me into the twentieth century. There was no way out. There was no consonance in the first forty-five minutes of the picture. It was all sort of horror or scare stuff, so I could not just do—which my inclination is—[plays short, happy sounding chords in the upper register of the piano]—



—I had to do—[plays slowly building creeping chords in the upper register of the piano]—



—or better. Anyway, that sounds very simple, and it is. It's too simplistic, but it forced me to do some things I didn't think I could do, and I did it. I got to where I was fairly comfortable with that idiom and understood it better.

Burlingame: Was it more complicated musically?

Newman: Yeah, I think so. I think it was—*Cars* [the first film] was complicated musically. I don't exactly know why. So was *Bug's Life*. Yes, it was more complicated because of that element, that's all. You had to go there.

Newman's Career as a Pop Music Composer

Burlingame: The other side of your career the pop music composer and the songwriter, do you view that as a completely different part of your life and career, or is it all one continuum to you?

Newman: To me it's all one thing. They're very different. The writing comes up from a different place, too. There's no frame writing pop songs, or whatever it is I do. It's what I'll be remembered for, I think, though more people know me from "You've Got a Friend" than anything else, I'm sure. These pictures are going to be there forever, and my songs have gotten weirder and weirder over the years.

Burlingame: Do you view one as artistic and the other as commercial?

Newman: No. I view it all as artistic. I'm trying as hard as I can. In one case you're trying to make the picture come alive, or look better or reach its potential. And in the other I am indirectly and not very effectively trying to sell myself. I'm trying to make a great record and it's a different thing, but neither one is more important to me. Certainly, to critics doing movies—I've been accused of selling out, of it being a bit of a sellout for me to do. But writing for an orchestra is not a sellout, and where else do you get a chance? I mean, I did it on this last album, but I don't know whether I'd do it all the time. It's a phenomenal privilege to be able to write for an orchestra.

Burlingame: Is one more creatively satisfying than the other?

Newman: No. You'd think the songs would be, or that a record would be. The songs enable me to perform, which is very satisfying. I don't know whether it's creatively satisfying, but it is of-the-moment satisfying. It feels good. And when they laugh at a song, it's a very big deal to me, a new one, or get very quiet for one. But I'm, rightly or wrongly, just as proud of some of the movie stuff as I am of good songs. I don't know why that is. I think that's because of family. That's being inordinately proud of something that, even though we both work in it, is really subordinate to something else, and there's no way around it. If it isn't subordinate to something else, you're not doing it right. It's do-or-die for the picture. That's it. Sometimes you want to do something different, go somewhere else, but you shouldn't. You can't really do it. Not if you're being straight.

Burlingame: You're servicing the picture.

Newman: Yeah, you really are. You're not doing anything else.

Musical Goals Newman Would Like to Achieve

Burlingame: Do you have any other musical goals that you'd like to achieve?

Newman: No. Not really. I mean as I mentioned, I really loved writing *Faust* for the stage, doing dialogue and things like that, and the songs also. But I don't think that I can do something that people would like in that field. I don't like much of what I've seen on Broadway, successful or

no, and I don't think—I mean, I would be proud had I done *Book of Mormon*,¹³⁸ say. It's a genuinely funny thing, but I can't think of what I would do. Maybe, but I don't think so now. I don't think I would do it.

How Newman Would Like to be Remembered

Burlingame: How would you like to be remembered?<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>

Newman: Really, would I like to be remembered? I would like to be remembered as one of the best songwriters of the period, one of the best songwriters, I guess, and one of the best film guys. I don't think I've done enough film work maybe for people to know that, and when you do—like my cousin David [Newman], who's tremendously good. He does pictures like *Dr. Dolittle 6*¹³⁹ and doesn't get recognition, because of the nature of the movie he does. And you don't get—except [Michael] Giacchino,¹⁴⁰ *Up*,¹⁴¹ when he had the Italian tune there—you don't get the recognition, basically, when you do animated comedy that you do as in a dramatic picture. But I'd like to be recognized as someone who's good. I mean how the orchestra thinks of me would be nice. And I got that. I'm real happy about it.

Burlingame: Thank you, Randy. Thank you for having us.<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>

Newman: Thank you. Thank you very much. Pleasure. See if you can make sense out of it.

* * *

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¹³⁸ *The Book of Mormon* is a musical written by Robert Lopez, Trey Parker, and Matt Stone that follows two Mormon missionaries on their missionary assignment in Uganda. Premiering on Broadway in 2011, the original production was co-directed by Trey Parker and Casey Nicholaw and featured actors Josh Gad and Andrew Rannells in the two lead roles. Songs from the musical include “Hello,” “Hasa Diga Eebowai,” and “I Believe.”

¹³⁹ Referring to *Dr. Dolittle 2*. Directed by Steve Carr, 2001; *Dr. Dolittle 2*. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2014. DVD.

¹⁴⁰ Michael Giacchino (b. 1967) is an award-winning American composer of music for film, television, and video games. Giacchino's scores include the television show *Lost* (Lieber, Abrams, and Lindelof, 2004–2010; *Lost: The Complete First Season*. Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 2005. DVD.) and the films *The Incredibles* (Bird, 2004; *The Incredibles*. Walt Disney Home Entertainment, 2005. DVD.), *Star Trek* (Abrams, 2009; *Star Trek*. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2009. DVD.), and *Up* (2009, see footnote 140).

¹⁴¹ *Up*. Directed by Pete Docter, 2009; *Up*. Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2009. DVD.

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