

## “Die Manns” - The Score

“Die Manns”, a collage of feature film, interview and documentary film scenes with a multitude of characters, narrative strands, locations, time periods and leaps in time, places enormous and often unfulfillably contradictory expectations and demands on the film music: the music must fit ‘into the picture’ and into the narrative time, must not make itself superficially loud, must not cover up the already very dense soundtrack of dialog and statements and must nevertheless remain perceptible, must reach the viewer and have its effect. It is therefore important to strike the “right note”. Ideally, the music should sound as if it had been in the movie, in the scene, from the beginning and not just added later.

In order to achieve this, the actual composition work had to be preceded by extensive research. My early involvement in the project, even at the stage of the first script drafts, greatly facilitated this, as did the fortunate circumstance that Heinrich Breloer and Horst Königstein are themselves extraordinary music connoisseurs and lovers and both attach great importance to film music in their work.

Music has always played an important role in the life of the Mann family. The list of musical works that Thomas Mann wrote about in detail is many pages long. As a film composer, this fact helped me a lot to find an “entrance” into this work, into this film.

However, my personal encounter with Elisabeth Mann, who guides us through the story in the film as the narrator, provided a first, almost compelling point of contact. A passionate musician herself, she was able to give me precise information about the most listened to records and the most played chamber music works in her parents' house. As can be seen in the second part of the film, Elisabeth played her favorite piece, the Horn Trio op. 40 by Johannes Brahms, in her youth together with her brother Michael Mann (violin) and the publisher Fritz Landshoff (cello) at home concerts on the piano. I took a few “musical syllables” from a motif in the third movement of the Adagio Mesto and recomposed them - this resulted in the main motif of Elisabeth's memory, which later became the title music for the film.

From the compilation of Thomas Mann's favorite music, I concluded that he primarily wanted to be emotionally overwhelmed by music. He loved pieces with extremely dynamic developments and climaxes, such as the Lohengrin overture. I took a little string phrase from it as a germ cell and used it to form Thomas Mann's motif of temptation, allurements on the one hand and self-

control and concentration on the other. The Brazilian descent of Thomas Mann's mother Julia suggested the interweaving of South American rhythms and sounds, which I was also able to use elsewhere to underscore the drug excesses of Klaus and Erika.

Jazz, Klaus and Erika's preference, forms a further musical antithesis to the otherwise "classical" elements of the film music. It accompanies the family on their emigration to America, and so some of the early motifs can be found in "jazzed-up" form in the third part of the film.

In total, the film music for *The Manns* comprises over 200 individual musical takes with a total length of almost four CDs, which were created over the course of around two years.