

Mp3 Don Caron - The Basket Motion Picture Soundtrack



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"The Basket is a lush, fully orchestral, mostly mono-thematic score which, although bearing some superficial similarities to Danny Elfman's *Sommersby*, is nevertheless wholly beautiful...both film and score are absolutely superb.." *moviemusic* 28 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Orchestral, CLASSICAL: Traditional Details: *The Basket* (1999 MGM) Original Filmscore Review by Jonathan Broxton *moviemusicuk* "I'd happily wager that 99 of the people reading this have never heard of Don Caron, and have never heard of *The Basket*, let alone seen it. The film was never released widely in cinemas, you cannot buy the soundtrack in stores, and it premiered on TV in the UK as late as June 2001, well over two years after it was made. Contrary to all of the above, however, both film and score are absolutely superb, proving once again that you cannot judge a film's quality by its success, or a composer's talent by the size of his 'name'. The film, directed by Rich Cowan, is an elaborate tapestry of plot threads set in the farming community of Waterville, Washington, at the height of World War II. 13-year-old Helmut Brink (Robert Karl Burke), and his elder sister Brigitta (Amber Willenborg) are German immigrants, taken from an internment camp to live with the kindly Pastor Simms (Tony Lincoln). Their arrival generates a great deal of anti-German feeling in the town, not least in land-owner Nicholas Emery (Jock MacDonald), whose eldest son Ben has returned from active duty in Europe minus his right leg. The Brink's only friend seems to be the town's new schoolteacher Martin Conlon (Peter Coyote), who brings with him from Boston a vinyl copy of "Der Korb", a German-language opera allegorising the nature of war, which he plays to his charges as a kind of morality play. As well as the opera, Conlon also brings with him a new sport - basketball - which brings the town's children closer together, and teaches them the value of teamwork. However, as the story of the opera becomes the talk of the town, and the popularity of the new game spreads, the spectre of bigotry raises its ugly head, threatening the lives of the Brink children, and the

community as a whole. A bit of background information: Don Caron is a composer who, during the last 25 years or so, has written dozens of ballet scores, dance scores, and video and commercial music from his base in Spokane, Washington. As well as composition, Caron has long been a high-profile member of the Northwest music scene, having been involved in music education at every level, and over the years has worked with several highly-regarded orchestras, theatre companies and ballet troupes. *The Basket* is, to date, his only film score - but its one of the most impressive debut works I have ever heard... Broadly, *The Basket* is a lush, fully orchestral, mostly mono-thematic score which, although bearing some superficial similarities to Danny Elfman's *Sommersby*, is nevertheless wholly beautiful. The vast majority of the score is based around a recurring four-note motif, which first appears eight seconds into the first cue and is virtually ever-present thereafter, with a few variations thereupon. On first appearances, this conceit may appear to be a little overly-repetitive, but the clever part comes when you realize just how malleable these four notes actually are. It can appear as an amusing jaunt ("Pastor Simms' Trip"), a tragic lament ("The Pendant"), in an action setting ("Fire"), a glorious dance ("Bessie's Dream") or as a joyously romantic celebration of young love ("Brigitta's Dance"). For the most part, though, the music is simply an elegant homage to the sun-kissed, golden-hued north-western countryside, and to the simple rural way of life undergone by its inhabitants. In addition to the main theme, a couple of unusual, playful, vocally-led ensemble pieces capture the wandering spirit of the opera as it travels through Waterville like housewives gossip, at the end of "Zwei Steine" and during 'Stealing the Basket'; the conclusive basketball game between the ragtag Waterville team and the professional Spokane outfit is scored with an unusual jazz rag replete with honking brasses and string runs ("The Game Parts I and II"), while a couple of unnervingly stark tracks ("The Hanging", "Pledge of Allegiance", "Killing the Ball") remind the listener that all is not perfect in wartime Washington. And then there is the opera. Eight tracks are taken directly from "Der Korb", an imaginary opera supposedly written at the turn of the century by a composer named Gottlieb Mller, but which was actually written by Caron specifically for the film. In broad terms, "Der Korb" tells the story of a mysterious stranger who appears in an isolated village and incites the inhabitants to stand firm against the invading Barbarians with nothing more than the contents of his korb (basket) - two stones and a sling - while also seducing the daughter of the Duke, who lives in a castle nearby. Once again, the four note motif from the score proper features in the opera, providing a link between the fantastical and realistic. Most tracks feature vocal performances of high quality, the highlight being the

aria 'Sanftesten Trumen', performed by soprano Ann Fennesy, which is simply sublime. It would not be an overstatement to say that Puccini himself would have been proud to have written it (there are shades of "Madam Butterfly"). The only vocal let-down comes with the performance of boy soprano Jonathan Westfield, who doesn't seem to have the range, talent or experience to hold his notes for long enough (listen to 'Der Fremder' or 'Tausend Kleine Stckchen' for proof). Overall, this is a very positive debut from Don Caron, and one which I hope will lead to other film scoring assignments in future. He shows undoubted talent for writing for orchestra and chorus, an aptitude for memorable themes, and obvious dramatic nous." ---Jonathan Broxton moviemusicuk.com

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