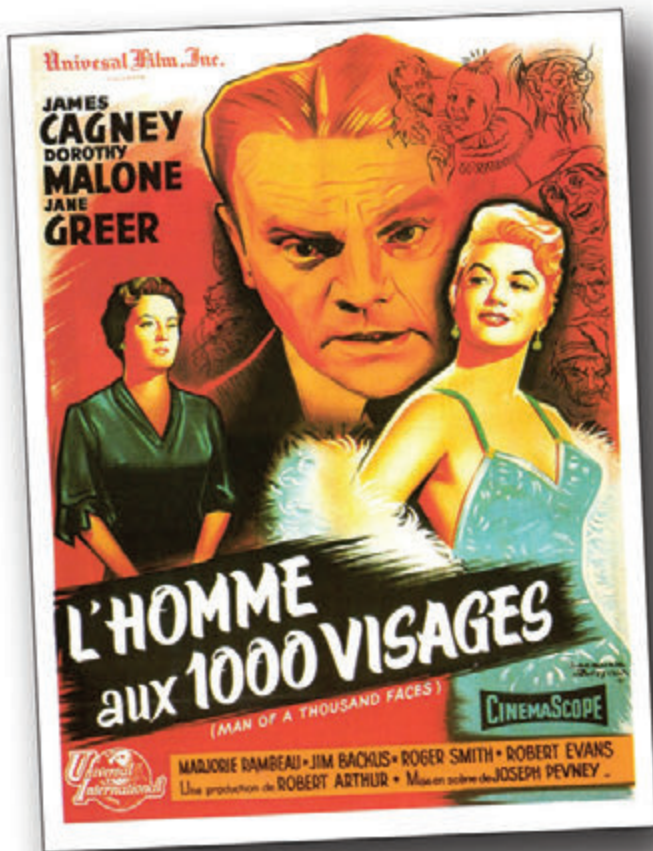




TWO ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACKS

FRANK SKINNER





As for *Imitation of Life*, previously released on the DCM label, *Man of a Thousand Faces* may be considered a major opus in the long career of this discrete composer named Frank Chester Skinner. Here again, quantity and quality go together, the 122 minutes movie offering an hour of fine music for large orchestra, conducted *con brio* by Joseph Gershenson.

Right from the *Main Title*, one recognizes Skinner's propensity to draw inspiration from the classical repertoire, both for the arrangements and the melodies. This approach perfectly suits Joseph Pevney's black and white movie, which assumes a documentary – not to say a historical – look in recreating the life and career of actor Lon Chaney, from the silent era to the dawn of talking pictures.

The overall tone of the music is dark, owing to the dramatic events that marked Chaney's personal life, embodied sensitively in the movie by James

Cagney, as well as the numerous monstrous characters he played on screen. Especially, the first marriage of the actor with a vaudeville artist (Dorothy Malone) has a tragic outcome that would mark him for the rest of his life. Still, *In Stitches*, which evokes the first years of the child born from this union, offers much gaiety, and even more lies in *Box of Tricks*, in reference to the astonishing disguises Chaney adopts for his roles.

The long, slowly paced piece *Family Circle*, dominated by gentle violins and woodwinds, reflects the importance that Chaney attached to the time spent with his beloved son and his second wife (Jane Greer). The *End Title* is another suite filled with emotion, underlying the last moments of the main character; superb solos for flute and for violin precede a conclusion whose operatic grandeur summarizes perfectly the spirit of Golden Age Hollywood.

It is both fortunate and surprising that a soundtrack album was released for *Man of a Thousand Faces* in 1957, considering the lack of a main title song or other popular tune that could boost sales. The original 41-minute Decca LP was re-released in 1981 by Varèse Sarabande but it has never been reissued in digital format. In both cases, Skinner's name was not printed on the front cover, listing only Joseph Gershenson's conducting credit.

* * *

Decca was less generous for *Written in the Wind* since the soundtrack music released filled only one side of the LP (the other one featuring *Four Girls in Town* by Alex North). It is true that the score by Skinner for this Douglas Sirk melodrama is rather concise, due to the abundance of dialogue. Its a long way from the generous *Magnificent Obsession* and *All That Heaven Allows*, two other Sirk movies of the same period – the second one sadly remaining unreleased in any format.



Written on the Wind was reissued in 1978 by Varèse Sarabande, with nearly identical content but slightly different sequence. Our release places the title song track at the beginning, in accordance with the chronological order in movie. The rest of the score is divided into three tracks for convenience. The beginning of the first *Orchestral Suite* is actually the brassy short introduction – which precedes the main titles song – blended with the continuation of the score.

Victor Young wrote the song heard on the main titles, whose visual treatment is striking, notably thanks to the use of double exposure in Technicolor. The song as performed by The Four Aces benefits greatly from these effects. As with *Imitation of Life*, the melody of the song is integrated into Skinner's score without becoming too intrusive.

A short piece music piece, *Temptation*, not written by Skinner, has a major impact on the audience. It comes in the scene where nymphomaniac Marylee (Dorothy Malone) executes a wild dance in her room, on the second floor of the majestic family home. The riot of decibels of her pick-up causes her father to have a heart attack. The "poor" oil tycoon slowly dies, in agony, alone on the huge staircase...

Clément Fontaine



Presentation of the original *Man of a Thousand Faces* Decca LP album

Man of a Thousand Faces salutes the fascinating and individual genius of the great Lon Chaney. The Universal film tells the story of Lon Chaney's (James Cagney) life from the time when, as a song and dance man, he meets, falls in love with and marries Cleve Creighton (Dorothy Malone) a chorus girl. When his wife meets Lon's parents she is shocked to see they are deaf mutes and her fear that their child will be born with the same affliction leaves a permanent scar on the couple.

Even though the baby is born normal, relations between the Chaney's disintegrate and one night, before he can stop her, she rushes on stage and swallows a vial of acid, which sears her vocal chords. This eventually leads to a divorce, and

Lon's son is placed in an orphanage to wait a proper home.

Lon develops a close friendship with Clarence Locan (Jim Backus), a press agent who advises him on his career and eventually names him "The Man of a Thousand Faces". Unhappy, lonely and bitter, Chaney marries Hazel Bennet (Jane Greer) who becomes a second mother to his resentful son. He begins his famous motion picture career as a twisted cripple in *The Miracle Man*. He follows this success with the part of the deformed dwarf in *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*; soon, hit follows hit, and Chaney's star bursts in full glory.

Unhappily, he develops throat trouble during the filming of a picture and is taken seriously ill. The doctors diagnose it as cancer. Before his death, he becomes reconciled with his son, and by giving him the same battered make-up kit which helped make Lon Chaney one of the screen's immortals, he launches Chaney, Jr. on his motion picture career.



Presentation of the original *Written on the Wind* Decca LP album

A sordid but searching story, *Written on the Wind* is a closely-knit tale of human relationships. It centers on two men and two girls and their

mixed-up lives. Kyle Hadley (Robert Stack) is an oil tycoon's wayward son who comes to New York with his closest friend, Mitch Wayne (Rock Hudson). There, Kyle meets Lucy Moore (Lauren Bacall), a secretary in the metropolitan office of one of the vast Hadley Enterprises, dazzles her with a spendthrift spree, and sweeps her into marriage.

THE STORY OF A FAMILY'S UGLY SECRET THAT THRUST THEIR PRIVATE LIVES INTO PUBLIC VIEW!



**ROCK
HUDSON**

...as Mitch
...the woman
in his arms was
now the wife of
the man he called
his best friend!



**LAUREN
BACALL**

...as Lucy,
faithful to her
husband's name...
even if she couldn't
be to his love!



**ROBERT
STACK**

...as Kyle,
...who hid his
secret behind
a bottle and
a hundred
million dollars!



**DOROTHY
MALONE**

...as Marylee
...even a woman
will find it hard
to understand
why she did
the things she did!

Universal International presents
*Written
on the
WIND*
TECHNICOLOR



...Robert Keith Grant Williams · Harry Shannon

Directed by DOUGLAS SIRK · Screenplay by: GEORGE ZUCKERMAN · Produced by ALBERT ZUGSMITH

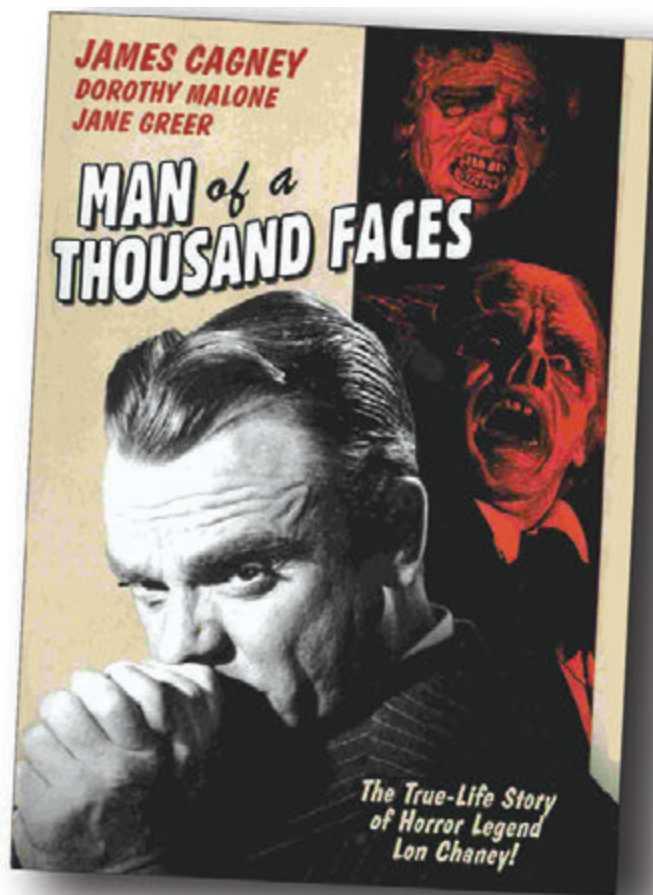
For a while everything is auspicious. Happy with Lucy and helped by her, Kyle ceases to be irresponsible; he stops drinking and looks forward eagerly to fatherhood. However, the marriage is something of a shock to Mitch Wayne, who had fallen in love with Lucy, and for Marylee Hadley (Dorothy Malone), Kyle's sister, who is sure that Kyle will never lead an orderly domestic life. Marylee, moreover, is infatuated with Mitch and tells him that she is going to have him with or without marriage. Distressed and self-divided, Mitch wants to leave, but is persuaded to stay with Kyle and stand by him.

The marriage goes to pieces when the family doctor tells Kyle it is unlikely that he will ever be a father. Kyle drinks recklessly again. Meanwhile, Marylee, frustrated in her passion for Mitch, gives herself to any available man. When she is picked up by policemen, her father, faced with the fact that his daughter is a wanton, dies in a broken heart.

Kyle's drinking grows steadily worse. Mitch urges Lucy to leave her husband, but she tells Mitch that, contrary to the doctor's diagnosis, she is going to have a baby. She hopes that this news will cause Kyle not only to rejoice but to reform – instead of which Kyle believes Mitch to be the father of the coming child, beats his wife, and threaten to kill Mitch. Lucy has a miscarriage and Mitch turns against Kyle.

Unable to get a gun in town, Kyle finds one in the library. Running into the room, Marylee sees Kyle holding the gun on Mitch and struggles with him. The gun goes off, and Kyle dies. There is an inquest and, for a while, it seems that Marylee is going to get even with Mitch for having spurned her. At the last moment, however, she tells the truth, and Mitch and Lucy leave the tragic scene for a more promising future.

The music is unquestionably an outstanding feature of the film. Supervised by Joseph Gershenson, it communicates the varied moods of the characters and the action. The title song, *Written on the Wind* composed by Victor Young to words by Sammy Cahn, is sung by the distinguished quartet The Four Ace.



Tout comme *Imitation of Life*, précédemment réédité chez Disques Cinémusique, *Man of a Thousand Faces* (*L'Homme aux mille visages*) peut être considéré comme une œuvre majeure dans la longue carrière du compositeur discret que fut Frank Chester Skinner. Encore ici, la quantité et la qualité vont de pair, le film de 122 minutes offrant une bonne heure de musique pour grand orchestre, sous la direction de Joseph Gershenson.

On reconnaît dès le *Main Title* la propension de Skinner à s'inspirer du répertoire classique, tant pour les mélodies que pour les arrangements. Cette approche convient parfaitement au film en noir et blanc de Joseph Pevney, qui revêt un côté documentaire, voire historique, en retraçant la vie et la carrière du comédien Lon Chaney. depuis l'époque du cinéma muet jusqu'au début du parlant.



La ton de la musique est souvent sombre en raison des événements dramatiques qui ont jalonné le parcours de Chaney, personnifié avec beaucoup de sensibilité par James Cagney, de même que ses nombreuses interprétations de personnages au physique monstrueux. Notamment, le premier mariage du comédien avec une artiste de music-hall (Dorothy Malone) fut un échec dont il ne se remit jamais tout à



fait. On trouve néanmoins beaucoup de gaieté dans *In Stitches*, qui évoque les premières années de l'enfant issu de cette union et, plus encore, dans *Box of Tricks*, qui souligne les étonnants déguisements de Chaney pour ses rôles.

La longue pièce *Family Circle*, au rythme lent, dominée par les violons et les bois, reflète l'importance qu'accordait Chaney aux moments consacrés à son fils adoré et à sa seconde épouse (Jane Greer). La plage *End Title* est une suite chargée d'émotion accompagnant les derniers moments du comédien ; de superbe solos pour flûte et pour violon précèdent une conclusion dont le style opératique s'inscrit parfaitement dans la tradition de l'Âge d'or hollywoodien.

Il est heureux et étonnant que l'on ait décidé en 1957 d'éditer un album 33 tours de la bande originale de *L'Homme aux mille visages*, étant donné l'absence de chanson-thème ou autre air populaire susceptible de faire mousser les ventes. L'album Decca d'une durée de 41 minutes fut réédité en 1981 par Varèse Sarabande mais il n'avait jusqu'ici jamais été repris en format numérique. Dans les deux cas, la compagnie de disques n'avait pas mentionné le nom de Skinner sur la pochette, réservant le seul crédit pour la musique au chef d'orchestre Gershenson.

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Decca s'est montré moins généreux avec *Written on the Wind* (*Écrit sur du vent*), dont la bande



originale n'occupe que la première face d'un 33 tours (la seconde étant consacrée à *Four Girls in Town* d'Alex North). Il est vrai que la partition de Skinner pour ce mélodrame de Douglas Sirk est plutôt brève, à cause de l'abondance du dialogue. Nous sommes loin des imposantes fresques que constituent *Magnificent Obsession* et *All That Heavens*

Allows, deux autres réalisations du tandem Sirk-Skinner de la même période – la seconde n'ayant malheureusement jamais été éditée sur disque.

L'album de *Written on the Wind* fut réédité en 1978 chez Varèse Sarabande avec un contenu quasi identique mais un ordre de pièces un peu différent. Notre édition place la chanson au début, conformément à l'ordre chronologique du film, alors que le reste du programme est subdivisé en trois plages pour plus de commodité. Le début de la première *Suite orchestrale* est en fait la bouillonnante introduction qui précède la chanson, et qui se fond avec la reste de la partition.

Victor Young est l'auteur de cette chanson entendue sur le générique, dont le traitement visuel est très frappant, notamment grâce à l'emploi de la surimpression en Technicolor. Interprétée par The Four Aces, cette mélodie acquiert ainsi beaucoup d'impact et, comme ce fut le cas pour *Imitation of Life*, elle s'intègre à la partition de Frank Skinner sans toutefois devenir trop envahissante.

Une autre pièce non écrite par Skinner, *Temptation*, produit également un impact considérable chez les spectateurs. Elle accompagne la scène où Marylee (Dorothy Malone) exécute une danse endiablée dans sa chambre, au second étage de la somptueuse résidence familiale. La débauche de décibels qui émerge de son pick-up provoque une crise cardiaque chez son père. Le "pauvre" magnat du pétrole agonise lentement, fin seul dans le grand escalier...

Clément Fontaine

The True Story
of the Life
and Loves of
LON CHANEY!



Universal International presents
JAMES CAGNEY
and as recorded in his Academy Award performance for "Written on the Wind"
DOROTHY MALONE
JANE GREER

**"MAN OF A
THOUSAND
FACES"**
CINEMASCOPE

with MARJORIE RAMBEAU • JIM BACKUS • ROGER SMITH • ROBERT J. EVANS
Directed by JOSEPH PETERNY • Screenplay by R. WRIGHT CAMPBELL, NANA SORT and BEN ROBERTS
Story by WALTON BRIDGES • Produced by ROBERT ARTHUR

MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES (1957) mono

Music composed by Frank Skinner
The Universal-International Orchestra
conducted by Joseph Gershenson

01	Main Title	7:03
02	Forgiveness.	4:28
03	Apprehension	3:27
04	In Stitches	3:43
05	Married Strangers	1:34
06	Box of Tricks	2:25
07	Family Circle	9:04
08	Frightened Father	2:32
09	End Title.	6:46

TT 41:09

WRITTEN ON THE WIND (1956) mono

Song and Main Title theme composed by Victor Young
Background music composed by Frank Skinner
The Universal-International Orchestra
conducted by Joseph Gershenson

10	Written on the Wind (Victor Young - Sammy Cahn). . .	1:42
	<i>sung by The Four Aces</i>	
11	Suite I	9:19
12	Temptation (Nacio Herb Brown - Arthur Freed)	1:56
13	Suite II.	9:00

TT 22:07

GT 63:16

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