



Announces:



THE CHINA SYNDROME

Composed and Conducted by **MICHAEL SMALL**
Intrada Special Collection Volume ISC 110

Intrada announces a first – the release of a score to a film with no music. Often treated as urban legend and rumor, there was occasional talk and jokes about an unused Michael Small score to the 1979 Columbia film *The China Syndrome*. As it turns out, this legend was true.

Coming shortly after the partial meltdown of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in March 1978, Columbia pictures delivered a solid Hollywood political thriller starring two-time Oscar-winners Jack Lemmon and Jane Fonda. Fonda plays an ambitious TV news reporter longing for “hard news,” but saddled under the burden of “happy talk.” This hard news comes with her news series called “Energy In California” which takes her to the Ventana Nuclear Power Plant. There an accident variously described as a vibration or a turbine trip or radiation containment incident or something much more troubling takes place. Rebellious cameraman Richard Adams, played by Michael Douglas, surreptitiously films the entire panicky sequence of events in the control room. Here we encounter the moral authority of the film, engineer Jack Godell (Lemmon), who initially denies that anything dangerous took place, but throughout the film grows increasingly doubtful and mistrustful of the plant bosses. Ultimately Godell commandeers the Ventana control room with a gun for a live TV broadcast about the potential dangers threatening the public and enlists Fonda for the TV broadcast, but the bosses order a SWAT Team to break into the control room and kill him.

A substantial orchestra was hired for the recording sessions at the Burbank Studio on October 16 and 17, 1978, conducted by Michael Small: 23 violins, 4 violas, 5 cellos, 5 basses, 4 flutes, 5 clarinets, 2 each of oboes and bassoons, 4 each of French horns and trumpets, 2 trombones, 3 guitars, 4 pianos and other keyboards, a harp, 5 drums and percussion—always an area of special interest for Small. DVD interviews with both producer/actor Michael Douglas and Jack Larson corroborate the fate of the soundtrack for *The China Syndrome*. Douglas says, “We were putting in the music scoring where we thought it should be, and when we came for one of our first mixes and laid the music in, what was dramatic became melodramatic: [with] a great sound editor, all the clicking of the dials...became much more powerful— and when we laid the music in, it didn’t work.”

While only mono mix downs ultimately survived, they were complete and in very good condition, offering clean and crisp audio. Michael Small wrote a terrific score for a terrific film that ultimately proved quite exciting without any original scoring at all. Fortunately for fans of this great composer, an ultra-rare opportunity to hear what might have been now becomes a reality.

This release is limited to 1000 copies.

Intrada Special Collection Volume ISC 110
Released September 1, 2009