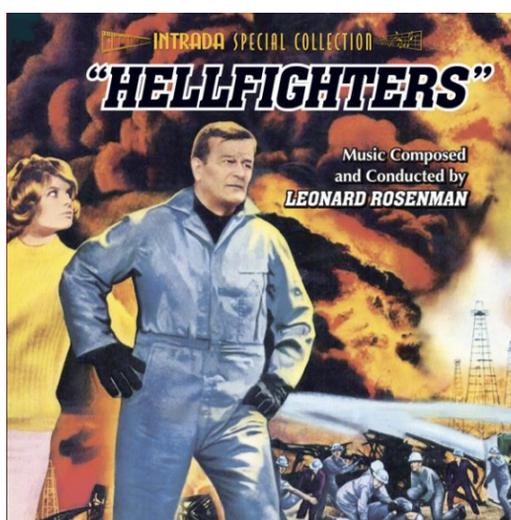




Announces:



HELLFIGHTERS

Composed and Conducted by **LEONARD ROSENMAN**

Intrada Special Collection Volume ISC 118

The 1968 Universal Pictures' film *Hellfighters* stars John Wayne as Chance Buckman, head of a company that put out dangerous oil fires worldwide. The character was based on Texas-born oil firefighter Paul Neal "Red" Adair, who founded his own oil firefighting company in 1959 and put out over 2000 oil and natural gas well fires on land and sea. Adair was a technical advisor on *Hellfighters*, and many of the incidents and details in the film were based on situations he had faced. Director Andrew V. McLaglen's film is unique among John Wayne's films in that it's man vs. man-made disasters, and in many ways the movie anticipated the popular disaster movie cycle that launched two years later with *Airport*. The film's colorful opening sequence with its energetic score, the early scenes of gathering the heroic team of firefighters together, the spectacular oil fire set-pieces, and even the soapy "relationship" subplots are all elements that would be mined successfully in the Irwin Allen films other thrillers of the seventies.

Finding a musical approach to match the outsized personality of Duke Wayne challenged film composers to find larger-than-life, muscular approaches to characterizing Wayne on film. A seemingly unusual choice for *Hellfighters*, Leonard Rosenman's early experimental scores for the James Dean films *East of Eden* and *Rebel Without a Cause* and his 12-tone score for the psychological drama *The Cobweb* established him as a master of complex, intellectual music. Rosenman's "voice" was unique and instantly recognizable: spiky, dissonant and bursting with tension, it was particularly suited for dark psychological stories, crime and war films and science fiction. And yet, Rosenman had established himself as a composer who could move between sophisticated stories and more commercial fare, and in 1968 he threw himself into *Hellfighters* with as much enthusiasm.

Rosenman's score opens with a signature cluster of metallic brass notes before launching its distinctively rambunctious rhythm in low, militaristic notes from brass, strings and piano. Rosenman's use of this rhythmic motif continues throughout the score, often in subtle treatment, as a reminder of the Buckman team's upcoming duties, and as a hammering rhythm driving through the film's action scenes. Rosenman does a virtuoso job of complicating the motif, adding competing layers of counter rhythms. A highlight of the score ("Guerillas"), written for the climactic action scene in South America, was especially challenging for the composer to get down on tape. It required no less than eight separate takes of each of two difficult sections comprising the cue. The resulting sequence remains one of Rosenman's most energetic compositions of a remarkable career.

For this premiere release, Intrada had access to all the stereo multi-track music elements stored at Universal, in thundering, crystal clear sound.

This release is limited to 2000 units.

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