

Entertainment

Two holiday samplings

Music and film portray egos and world war

By EVAN LEIBOVITCH

The 1976 holiday season crop of films has brought out some of the year's best and worst productions, including two interesting "musicals".

Probably the biggest disappointment this year (mine, at least) was *A Star is Born*, which could be more possibly be called the Kristofferson and Streisand ego trip. Featuring a semi-passionate love scene on the cover (not from the film, incidentally), the soundtrack album featured a regrettable rock song from Kristofferson, followed by some weak attempts by Streisand at singing rock. Slick production does help on an album of this sort, and there are a few displays of Barbara's excellent Broadway-style vocals, which even this collection cannot tarnish.

After listening to the album, the movie was no surprise. It reeked of Streisand: Barbara the star, Barbara the singer, Barbara the subject of the old rags to riches story, Barbara the Executive Producer. Kristofferson was quickly but subtly shoved into the background after a cute little ego trip of his own: the film showed him as a rock star who could fill football stadiums with screaming kids, something he could never do in real life. Then, with Kristofferson going downhill (both in his role and his acting), Streisand slowly begins to take over, both emoting and singing Kristofferson under the proverbial table. The film ends predictably, and the audience sheds a little tear for everyone involved.

Another movie had its soundtrack released before it, though this one recieved heavy airplay on CHUM-FM. It was a different sort of musical, set in Europe, Japan and Hollywood, featuring a soundtrack that the cast of millions had never heard of, performed by no less than 24 different artists. And it's *All This and World War Two*.

Alphabetically, the list of



A scene from All This and World War Two, courtesy Tora, Tora, Tora

musicians goes from Ambrosia to Roy Wood, and the soundtrack provides four sides of vinyl that are amusing to say the least. Even music Director Lou Reizner has a go a one of the Lennon-McCartney tunes, "You Never Give Me Your Money" from Abbey Road.

Much of the soundtrack's music is complemented by the strings and brass of the London Symphony Orchestra.

Some of the attempts to redo Lennon-McCartney's finest fall flat on their chords. Such is the case in the Brothers Johnson rendring of Hey Jude, which becomes downright lethargic under these conditions. And the Franke Laine version of Maxwell's Silver

Hammer is downright disgusting. Other well intentioned tries that don't quite make it include, Peter Gabriel's "Strawberry Fields Forever", and all of Leo Sayer's three songs.

Though that may seem like too long a list, the rest of the album is a pleasure to listen to. There were some pleasant surprises among them, including Bryan Ferry of Roxy Music, Lynsey De Paul's soothing version of "Because", and a trio of excellent material by the Bee Gees.

What does all this have to do with a war that laid countries to waste and claimed the lives of millions? And how does this kind of music, bad or good, find its way into a

documentary of this war, combining actual war films with Hollywood stuff like "Tora Tora Tora"? It's not easy, but sometimes it even works.

Or course, some of the timings are corny, such as playing "Fool on the Hill" while showing film clips of Hitler, but others, like Japanese Zeros taking off to the tune of "Sun King" blends rather well.

However, the whole film seems

like the music was used to draw the present generation in the theatre, to be hit with the visual impact of the war film. In a sense, the film is a good medium to those who didn't grow up with the Beatles or WW2. Though the music has some redeeming value on its own, the soundtrack usually jags around more erratically than the film, which is fairly consistant in its chronological order of events. However, the selection of certain scenes (such as the swearing in of Clark Gable and James Stewart) indicate that *All This* is not a pure documentary, but a story of the film aimed at a specific audience.

All this is also a good excersize in dubbing and splicing, and the transitions from the rough, celluloid war films, to the slick, colour modern renditions, are fascinating at times.

The two films *All This and World War Two* and *A Star is Born*, convey very different subjects to very different audiences with the same medium: Though both lean on the soundtracks heavily to help their motives develop, they also find weakness there. For *All This*, the seeming incompatibility of music and film is a major stumbling block, and for *A Star is Born*, the dependance on a soundtrack of its style contributed to the downfall of the film.

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