

Bemerkungen zu „Touch of Evil“ (dt. Im Zeichen des Bösen)

Erscheinungsjahr: 1957

Regisseur: Orson Welles

Mitwirkende: Charlton Heston, Janet Leigh, Orson Welles, Marlene Dietrich, Zsa Zsa Gabor

Musik: Henry Mancini

Autor der Besprechung: Klaus Huckert

Vorbemerkungen: **Orson Welles** (* 1915; † 1985) war ein US-amerikanischer Filmregisseur, Schauspieler und Autor. Sein erster Kinofilm, **Citizen Kane**, wird oft als das bedeutendste Werk der Filmgeschichte bezeichnet. Im Jahre 1957 drehte der Regisseur mit „**Touch of Evil**“ einen Kriminalfilm, der als das letzte Werk in der „**Film noir**“-Reihe gilt. Unvergessen sind neben seinen vielen Regiearbeiten aber auch seine Rollen als Schauspieler, bei denen seine Darstellung als **Harry Lime** in „**Der dritte Mann**“ Kultstatus hat.

Henry Mancini (*1924; † 1994), war einer der bedeutendsten US-amerikanischen Komponisten im Bereich der U-Musik. Seine musikalischen Schwerpunkte lagen im Bereich des Swing. Zu Mancinis bekanntesten Kompositionen gehören die Filmmusik zu „**Der rosarote Panther**“ sowie das Lied „**Moon River**“ aus seiner Musik zum Film „**Frühstück bei Tiffany**“. 40 Jahre lang komponierte Henry Mancini legendäre Soundtracks, gewann vier Oscars und 20 Grammys.

Über Mancini schreibt die deutsche Wikipedia:

„Der Erfolg von Mancinis Bearbeitungen für die Filme „**Die Glenn Miller Story**“ (1954, erste Oscar-Nominierung für Mancini) und „**Die Benny Goodman Story**“ (1955) eröffnete ihm die Möglichkeit, für weitere Filme neue Musikstile einzuführen. Mancini war mit **Alex North** („**Endstation Sehnsucht**“), **Elmer Bernstein** („**Der Mann mit dem goldenen Arm**“) und **Leith Stevens** („**Der Wilde**“) einer der Ersten, die den

Jazz in die bisher spätromantisch geprägte orchestrale Film- und Fernsehmusik einführten. Als beste Leistung seiner Universal-Zeit bezeichnete Mancini die Musik zu dem Orson-Welles-Film „Im Zeichen des Bösen“ (1958), die zu dieser Zeit die erste große Filmmusik mit lateinamerikanischem Jazz war.“



Filmplakat

Filminhalt: Der Film beginnt mit einer vierminütigen Szene, die Filmgeschichte geschrieben hat. In der mexikanischen Grenzstadt Los Robles wird der Zuschauer Zeuge eines Bombenanschlages auf ein Auto, in dem ein älterer Mann und eine jüngere Frau sitzt. Vor dem Verstecken der Autobombe mit Zeitzünder bis zur Explosion ist der Betrachter durch eine geschickte Kameraführung in das Geschehen einbezogen. Wie es sich für einen **Film noir** gehört, wird kräftig mit Licht und Schatten und subtilen Kamerafahrten experimentiert. Begleitet wird diese Szene durch düsteren lateinamerikanischen Jazz. Zufälligerweise wird der mexikanische

Drogenfahnder Miguel Vargas (**Charlton Heston**) und seine frisch angetraute Frau Susan (**Janet Leigh**) Zeuge des Verbrechens. Am Ort der Explosion auf amerikanischer Seite der Grenze taucht der unsympathische und schwergewichtige US-Polizist Captain Hank Quinlan (**Orson Welles**) auf, der die Ermittlungen leitet. Dieser hat seine Frau vor etlichen Jahren durch Mord verloren hat, der Täter konnte mangels Beweisen nicht verurteilt werden. Nach einer längeren Phase der Alkohol-Abstinenz, ist er wieder auf dem Weg zurück in den Alkoholismus. Der raubeinige US-Polizist humpelt aufgrund eines Unfalls. Aber seine Intuition scheint in seinem verletzten Bein zu stecken. Jedenfalls behauptet er, dass das Zucken seines Beines ihm mitteilt, wer hinter dem Anschlag steckt. Sein Bein hat ihm angeblich schon bei mehreren aufgeklärten Verbrechen geholfen.



Ganove Grandi (Akim Tamiroff) und Polizist Hank Quinlan (Orson Welles)

Am Tatort prallen Vargas und Quinlan sofort aufeinander. Unverhüllt droht der amerikanische Polizist dem mexikanischen Ermittler sich aus den Ermittlungen

rauszuhalten. Doch der Mexikaner steckt schon tiefer in der Geschichte drin, als er ahnt. Um seine Frau zu schützen, hat er Susan vom Tatort in ein mexikanisches Hotel zurückgeschickt. Unterwegs wird diese von einem Kurier des Unterweltkönigs von Los Robles Grandi abgefangen und zu diesem gebracht. Vorher fotografiert man sie in einer anscheinend verfänglichen Situation, um auf sie Druck ausüben zu können. Grandi droht mit Konsequenzen für Vargas an, wenn dieser seinen Bruder, einen bekannten Drogenhändler in Mexiko City, nicht in Ruhe lässt.



Miguel Vargas (Charlton Heston)

Die Situation spitzt sich zu, als der Drogenfahnder von einem Neffen Grandis mit Säure erfolglos angegriffen wird.

Der amerikanische Captain hat ziemlich schnell einen Täter ausgemacht, den mexikanischen Schuhverkäufer und Freund der Tochter des Toten Manelo Sanchez (**Victor Millan**). Er habe den Mann in die Luft gejagt, weil der Millionär einen armen Schlucker als Schwiegersohn nie akzeptiert hätte, und Sanchez sei vor allem hinter dem Geld des Toten her gewesen. Der skrupellose Polizist findet aber einen Weg, um

Sanchez zu belasten, indem er dem Verdächtigen Sprengstoff unterschleibt. Und prompt findet die Polizei in Sanchez Wohnung zwei Stangen Dynamit. Aber Vargas schöpft sofort Verdacht. Er hatte kurz vorher in der Kiste zufällig nachgesehen, ob dort etwas versteckt sei. Die Kiste in dem jetzt sich Dynamit befindet war leer. Und Vargas kommt sofort der Verdacht, dass Quinlan sie heimlich dort deponiert hat.

Parallel zum Geschehen wird Susan von dem Gangster Grandi und seinen Helfern auf der amerikanischen Seite der Grenze verfolgt. Der mexikanische Unterwelt-König Grandi schmiedet mit Hank Quinlan ein Arrangement. Beide wollen Vargas mundtot machen und ihn desavouieren. Deshalb wollen sie der Frau des Drogenfahnders eine Rauschgift-Affäre andichten.



Susan (Janet Leigh)

Doch der verbitterte amerikanische Polizist spielt ein Doppelspiel. Er bringt Vargas um und versucht die Schuld auf Susan zu schieben. Allerdings lässt er ein wichtiges Utensil - seinen Krückstock – am Tatort zurück. Zum Glück gelingt es dem mexikanischen Polizisten einen Sergeanten von Quinlan auf seine Seite zu ziehen. Dieser bestätigt den Verdacht der untergeschobenen Beweise in vielen Kriminalfällen durch den Captain der amerikanischen Polizei.

Der Schluss des Filmes – es kommt zum Showdown – wird aus Spannungsgründen nicht verraten.

In einer Nebenrolle ist übrigens **Marlene Dietrich** als Ex-Freundin Quinlans zu sehen – verrückt und geheimnisvoll. Und **Zsa Zsa Gabor** darf in einer kurzen Szene die Besitzerin einer Striptease-Bar in Mexiko spielen.



Marlene Dietrich

Anmerkungen K.H.:

Hervorragend fotografiert und spannungsgeladener Krimi, der die Abgründe der menschlichen Existenz zeigt. Interessant für mich war eine Szene im Film, die zwei Jahre später in dem Film „**Psycho**“ von Alfred Hitchcock mit der gleichen Schauspielerin Janet Leigh auftaucht. Bei ihrem Aufenthalt in dem amerikanischen Motel – mit einem Portier, der einige Züge von Norman Bates vorwegnahm – ist sie existentiellen Bedrohungen ausgesetzt. Psycho imitiert diese Szene von den Lichtverhältnissen und schauspielerischen Darstellung sehr stark.

Henry Mancini stand die Elite des West-Coast-Jazz für die Aufnahmen zur Film-Musik zur Verfügung. Einige Musiker seien besonders erwähnt: Pete Candoli (Trompete), John de Soto und Red Norvo (Vibraphone), Allan Reus und Barney Kessel (Gitarren), Ray Sherman (Piano), Shelly Manne (Drums), Jack Constanzo (Bongas) und Mike Pacheco (Congas).

Die Musik von Mancini ist situationsbezogen auf einzelne Filmszenen zugeschnitten. Insgesamt ist die Musik eine bunte Mischung aus Mambo, Latin Jazz, R&B, Rock n Roll, Doo Wop, mexikanischer und afro-kubanischer Musik. Hauptsächlich wird Musik aus Radios, Lautsprechern und einem mechanischen Klavier (Pianola). Gerade dies Instrument verleiht einigen Szenen einen bizarren und furchterregenden Klang. Die Film-Musik enthält für mich zwei absolute Highlights der Film-Musik. Dies ist das Hauptthema des Filmes und der Titel Blue Pianola. Immer wenn jugendliche Gangster auftauchen ist Rock n Roll-Musik zu hören. Die Musik von Elvis und den Beatles kündigt sich an.

Die Audio CD sei den Lesern nachdrücklich empfohlen.

1	Main Title
2	Borderline Montuna
3	Strollin' Blues
4	Orson Around

5	Reflection
6	Tana's Theme
7	Flashing Nuisance
8	The Boss
9	Pidgeon Caged
10	Rock Me to Sleep
11	The Big Drag
12	Ku Ku
13	Susan
14	Son of Raunchy
15	Lease Breaker
16	Background to Murder
17	Bar Room Rock
18	Blue Pianola
19	Something for Susan
20	The Chase

Quelle: www.wellesnet.com

Henry Mancini on the scoring of Orson Welles's TOUCH OF EVIL

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Orson Welles had a perception of everything in the film, including the music. He knew. He truly understood film scoring. ...Touch of Evil was one of the best things I've ever done.

While Orson Welles often had trouble in his dealings with producers and studio executives, he usually attracted the highest calibre of artistic collaborator, who would often turn in their best work for an Orson Welles film. This certainly was the case with Henry Mancini's score for Touch of Evil, even though Welles didn't choose him for the job, or even confer with him about the use of music in the movie. As Mancini relates

in this excerpt from his autobiography *Did They Mention the Music?*, he was simply assigned to the picture by Joseph Gershenson, the head of the music department at Universal. Mancini then visited the set to observe Welles at work, but only met the director briefly, apparently when Welles was still working on his first cut of the picture.

However, Mancini's creative juices were still very much inspired by Welles, since the director had already written several memos to Joseph Gershenson explaining where and what type of music he wanted included in his movie. Unfortunately, by the time Mancini was actually composing the score, Welles was no longer a welcome presence on the Universal lot. As Welles later explained to Peter Bogdanovich: "The music, which I didn't have anything to do with, was, I thought, quite well done. But I wasn't there as I would normally be—like a mother hen, on every note."

It's also interesting to note that Mancini's *Touch of Evil* music was issued as his first movie soundtrack album, although by the time it appeared in record stores in late 1958, the film had already long been gone from movie theaters.

* Dedicated to Ray Sherman, solo pianist on TANYA'S THEME and THE BLUE (ANGEL) PIANOLA *

HENRY MANCINI ON SCORING TOUCH OF EVIL

From *Did They Mention the Music?* - Contemporary Books, 1989

I once referred to the music department at Universal as a salt mine. But it was a good salt mine, and younger composers in film today do not have access to that kind of on-the-job training. Being on staff there I was called upon to do everything. I mean,

everything. Whenever they needed a piece of source music, music that comes from a source in the picture, such as a band, a jukebox, or a radio, they would call me in. I would do an arrangement on something that was in the Universal library, or I would write a new piece for a jazz band or a Latin band or whatever. I guess in every business you have to learn the routine—in film scoring, the clichés—before you can begin to find your own way.

In Yiddish vernacular, my boss, Joe Gershenson, was a *shtarker*, well aware of the ways of the street and the world. He produced several pictures at Universal before he became head of the music department.

...Then in 1958, I was assigned to *Touch of Evil*, which Orson Welles was going to direct. Welles obviously needed the money; he was always running short. He assembled a good cast, including members of his stock company from his Mercury Theater days as well as Akim Tamiroff and Marlene Dietrich. Russ Metty was the cinematographer, and he gave the picture an effective, brooding look. It was an incongruity to have Orson Welles on the same lot that gave you *Bonzo*, *Francis the Mule*, *Ma and Pa Kettle*, countless horrible horse operas, and all those awful *Creature* pictures that Herman Stein and I scored. I didn't know what he was doing there. But he knew.

As he was shooting the picture, he wrote a letter to Joe Gershenson that I wish I'd kept. It was a three-page description of the music, as he would like to have it.

I had studied the script and by now was seeing rushes of the picture, so I read the letter with great interest. Welles's description of the music as he wanted it was exactly what I was already planning to do. He wanted no scoring as such—that is to say, underscore, the disembodied music that comes from nowhere behind a scene to enhance or establish mood. All the music had to be what we call source cues. All art is based on convention. In real life people do not stop in the middle of a sentence and express their deepest emotions by singing, yet we accept such behavior in our Broadway musicals

and opera. We all know that in real life when boy meets girl, an invisible string section does not begin to play softly from the sky. Yet we accept this convention on the stage, as in the case of Bizet's incidental music for *L'Arlésienne*, and in our movies. Generally speaking, underscoring in film serves to accentuate or bring out emotions in a scene. But by an unspoken convention we accept without thinking about it that the characters in the movie cannot hear this music that is bringing us to tears, or pulling us to the edge of the seat with suspense. Source music, on the other hand, is actually part of the story, music the characters can hear if they want to pay attention to it.

Orson Welles had a perception of everything in the film, including the music. He knew. He truly understood film scoring. And since he was making a grimly realistic film, I think he reasoned that even the music had to be rooted in reality. And that meant it all had to come from the story itself; it would have to be source cues.

There would be a lot of music in the picture, most of it with a big band Latin sound in a Stan Kenton vein. Realizing that the score would exceed the resources of our staff orchestra, I took the matter up with Joe. I said, "If we're going to do this right, we're going to have to go outside and hire a whole band. We just can't get the right sound with our people." Joe gave approval, and I hired Shelly Manne on drums, Jack Costanza on bongos, and a big brass section, including Conrad Gozzo, my old roommate with Tex. It was a tremendous band.

I went down on the set to observe the shooting, which I don't usually do. Watching a movie being made is unbelievably boring. It has been compared to watching paint dry. Since movies are rarely shot in chronological sequence, you get no sense of the story on a set, no sense of forward motion. The actors do the same takes over and over until they and the director are satisfied with the readings. Then the camera angle is changed, which usually takes some time, during which the actors and other crew members talk about the weather, their golf scores, their problems with their kids, or they read the racing form. Then they do the same scene again, and possibly even a third and fourth time. This is to give the director and film editor the various angles of the scene they

need later for intercutting. It's interminable, it's mind numbing, and I try to have as little as possible to do with it.

I was waiting for the film and its timings. But, because of his extensive knowledge of every aspect of his profession, Welles was very interesting, so I hung around as unobtrusively as possible, and he never even noticed I was there. The exteriors were shot near the ocean at Venice, California, the interiors on a soundstage at Universal.

At last the film was nearing completion, and as it came time to score, I told Joe we should have a meeting with Welles so that we'd all know what we were doing, particularly in view of his strong feelings about the music.

It was a rainy Saturday morning, I remember. Welles swept into Joe's office in a cape and a dark hat and with a big cigar, one of those Monte Cristo giants. It seemed as if doom, the wrath of hell, was invading the music department.

Al Zugsmith was the producer of that picture. I think Al was a producer by virtue of owning stock in Decca, which owned Universal. He was a Hollywood guy, streetwise, slick, and shrewd. I could not imagine a producer as incompatible with Orson Welles as Al Zugsmith, and they had a standoffish relationship throughout the whole picture.

At last we were all together in Joe Gershenson's office. It went well enough. Joe introduced me to Welles. Al Zugsmith was sitting on a couch. Welles started to cruise the room, saying, "Here we'll do this and here we'll do that."

Then Zugsmith made some point that wasn't exactly to Welles's liking. I can't remember what it was, but I certainly remember Welles's reaction to it. He let it go by for a couple of minutes. But he walked a little faster as he talked, obviously getting his offensive up. He continued walking, faster and faster, getting angrier and angrier, and directing the stream of his fury at Al Zugsmith.

I was sitting there taking it all in. By now I was used to movie people, but this, after all, was Orson Welles, and I was working on his picture. At the height of his rage—he had just met me a half hour ago—he snapped around, looked at me, pointed a long finger at me, and said from a great height, "Who's he?"

That was my only encounter and my only conversation, if you want to call it that, with Orson Welles. After that meeting, I never saw him again.

Possibly the composer in film history most admired by film composers themselves was Hugo Friedhofer, who began scoring pictures almost when talkies were first introduced. I once wrote that a single nod from that man was worth more than all the baubles the industry could bestow. For all the Oscars and Grammys I have been awarded, perhaps nothing has pleased me more than being told by a mutual friend that Hugo respected my music.

Hugo once said, "I've known two geniuses in this industry, Orson Welles and Marlon Brando, and the industry, not knowing what to do with genius, destroys it." Hugo scored the one film Brando directed, *One-Eyed Jacks*. He said that the long version of the film as Brando made it was the "damnedest, different-est western I ever saw." But the studio executives chopped it down in size, removing the opening sequence that established the motive for the later events and even changing the final scenes to give it a happy ending. They took music Hugo had designed for one scene and moved it to another. The film was butchered.

A similar fate befell *Touch of Evil*, which nonetheless withstood the assault.

I don't think Welles ever heard the music I wrote. He didn't stick around for the recording sessions, and I have been told that he refused even to look at the picture because of his anger at what the studio had done to it. He made his final edit, what is called the director's cut, which he had the right to do, and that was it. His job was done, and he was long gone. The powers that be got their hands on the picture, and they cut it up and cut it down, taking some great stuff out of it. Some of it has been restored

now and, like *One-Eyed Jacks*, it has become a bit of a cult picture. But the public has never seen the powerful movie that I saw when I scored it. It was a pity, but a pity all too common in Hollywood.

Touch of Evil was previewed at a theater on Sunset Boulevard in Pacific Palisades. It was pretty rough at that time, still fairly close to Welles's cut. It was gritty. It had a course texture, a brooding sense of violence, and a drug scene, almost unheard of in those days.

Joe Gershenson told me the next day that he and Zugsmith and some of the others were having a meeting on the sidewalk when an old lady came up to them and said, "Are you gentlemen the producers of the picture?" Joe said she must have been about seventy years old, wearing a cloth coat and carrying a handbag. They said that they were indeed the producers, expecting a compliment, and all of a sudden she started flailing them with her bag and denouncing them for this work of the devil.

Touch of Evil was one of the best things I did in that period of my life. It's one of the best things I've ever done.

And it was one of the last scores I wrote on staff at Universal.