

The Song of the High Seas. This is the recurring theme of Victory at Sea, evoking a mystic sense of boundless waters and the resolution of the lonely ships that dare sail upon the "m". The theme gives way to an ominous passage announcing the presence of a prowling U-boat, followed by the violence of a submarine attack on an Atlantic convoy in the period when Great Britain stood alone. The movement ends with the melancholy and dismay of the aftermath: death, destruction, the drifting remnants of disaster. The Pacific Boils Over.

The Pacific theme. shifts the scene to Hawaii, where there is still time for the hula, still time for one more aloha. Then, out of the azure skies, comes the drone of approaching planes, heralding the stunning fury of the attack on Pearl Harbor. The movement ends on a subdued but unmistakable note of resurgence as the shattered base prepares to rebuild and fight back.

Guadalcanal March. The United States is at war. While a handful of marines hold the enemy on Guadalcanal, America marshals her titanic industrial strength for the ordeal ahead. The rousing strains of the march proclaim the call to battle.

D-Day. Beginning with the enormous buildup of men and material by the Allied Nations, this movement takes us on the epic invasion across the English Channel, onto the Normandy beaches—to the moment of assault, to the moment of triumph won at such bitter cost.

Hard Work and Horseplay. In contrast to the violence of D-Day, the music now tells of sailors scattered across the Pacific on a

hundred rear-area bases, in a thousand plodding ships that never fire a shot in anger. The GIs work and play under the palms, and live as best they can on conquered islands and coral atolls, where combat has gone and the dull routine of war has come to stay.

Theme of the Fast Carriers. But ahead, under the sundown, the war drives on, ever nearer Japan. A new theme announces a carrier task force on its way to assault still other islands, other strongholds. The planes and the troops batter Micronesia—Tarawa, Kwajalein, Eniwetok, then the Marianas and the Philippines, Iwo and Okinawa. When the strife is over, the battle done, back come the wounded, back to the carriers limp the stricken planes. A funeral at sea symbolizes the tragedy of conquest.

Beneath the Southern Cross. In the South Atlantic a different kind of war is being fought, and this movement tells of it. Names like Trinidad and Brazil, Ascension and Montevideo, Natal and Fortaleza are evoked by the strains of the sparkling, sweeping tango. (This melody was later adapted by Mr. Rodgers for Me and Juliet where it appears under the title of "No Other Love.")

Mare Nostrum. Back to the violence of invasion, the fury of assault in the Mediterranean. Allied troops are steadily breaching the Festung Europa by way of the sea, liberating North Africa, defending Malta, landing at Sicily, Salerno and Anzio. The tempestuous music of a convoy in a storm leads to the slow, majestic advance of the Allied Armies to Rome.

Victory at Sea. The final movement sings a hymn of victory. This is followed by memorable themes from the conflict that has passed. And the sailors?—they are going home, each in search of his own design for peace. To the jubilation is added a final phrase of profound thanksgiving.

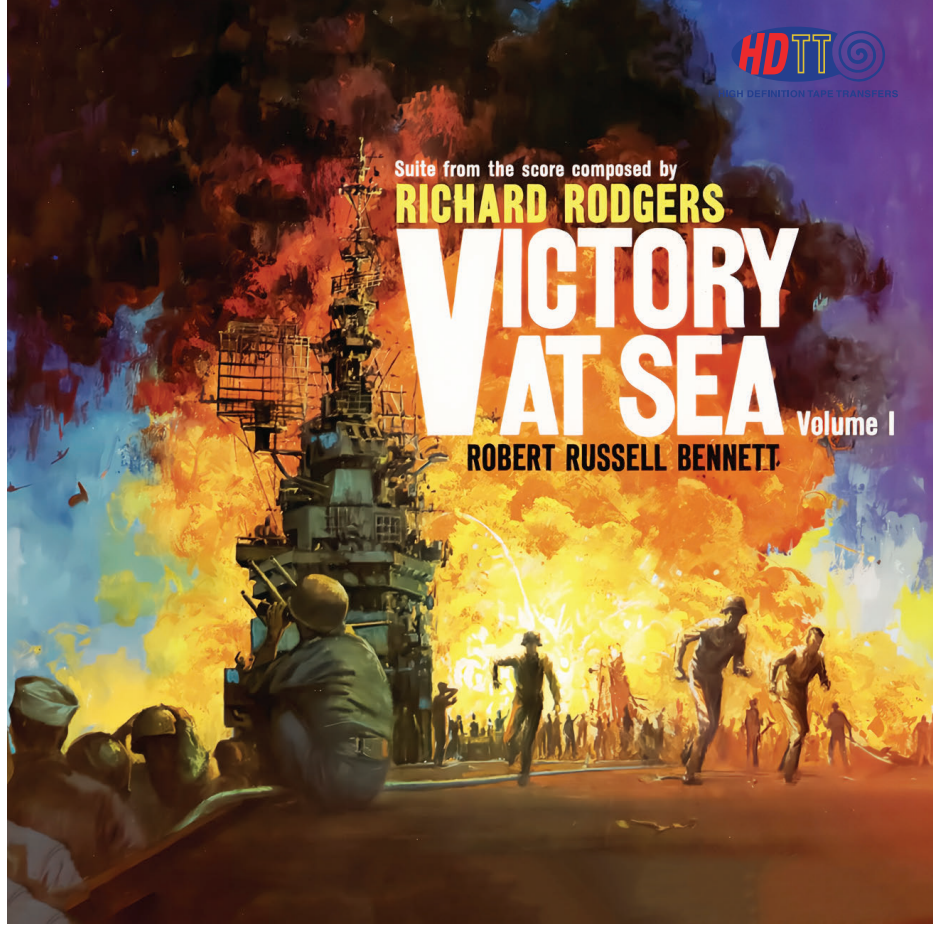
Suite from the score composed by

RICHARD RODGERS

VICTORY AT SEA

Volume I

ROBERT RUSSELL BENNETT



The following essay was written by the late Henry Salomon, who conceived the idea of Victory at Sea and who was the producer of the series and co-author of the script.

The wild, haunting cry of horns, trumpets and trombones with which Richard Rodgers begins his score for Victory at Sea has in it all the vast restlessness and mystery of the sea itself, heralding a score which The New Yorker describes as "a seemingly endless creation, now martial, now tender, now tuneful, now dissonant . . . memorable, and tremendously moving." From the first conception, I envisaged Victory at Sea as an integrated pictorial and musical history of the epochal events pertaining to the life and death of those engaged in the naval action of World War II. The films which comprised the 26 half-hour television programs were incomparable of their kind, bringing to the eye of the audience, for the first time, the war at sea as it actually was, that war that was fought for the aquatic two-thirds of the earth's surface. But there was something the pictures by themselves could not convey, a subtle, spiritual dimension needed to give them - and the entire drama - its ultimate meaning.

It is this emotional quality, in all its scope and implications, which Richard Rodgers' music captures so keenly. The naval war was perhaps the most powerful and stirring expression, in both human and physical terms, of the might and potential of contemporary America. Since Rodgers is America's foremost musical spokesman, it was of him I thought when I first grasped the full implications of Victory at Sea.

It was not surprising that Richard Rodgers shied away from the task when first approached. Having lifted musical comedy to new heights of excellence with Oklahoma!, South Pacific and The King and I, he was naturally reluctant to risk precious time in the new, difficult and untried field of television. But Mr.

Rodgers' innate sensitivity for human drama was stimulated by the heroic spirit of the films. The impact of the pictures and the breath-taking quality of the action first arrested, then challenged him.

The symphonic sweep and depth of the Rodgers' score captures the moods and variations of the panoramic war at sea, all its terror and beauty, all its exaltation and despair. It adds the elusive emotional dimension which neither camera nor words could quite convey. The richness and scale of the Rodgers' music were greatly enhanced by the comprehensive arrangements of Robert Russell Bennett, who has long been a collaborator of Mr. Rodgers on Broadway, and who is an internationally recognized classical musician in his own right.

The present recording is a distillation of the original 13-hour score. Mr. Bennett has taken Victory at Sea's major themes and woven them into a unified pattern which miraculously suggests the musical wealth and fullness of the much longer work from which they are derived.

The music of this recording is an experience in itself, quite apart from the pictures and narration it was designed to supplement. It fully justifies Variety's description of the Rodgers' score as "the finest original work of its kind produced by an American composer." Many elements combined to win for Victory at Sea more awards than were ever lavished on a single television program, and the music was not the least among the contributing factors. In giving Victory at Sea the highest accolade in its field, the George Foster Peabody citation referred to its score as "magnificent." That, surely, is the right word.

This orchestral suite is divided into nine movements, each of which reflects a major aspect of the war at sea.

Victory At Sea Volume 1

Robert Russell Bennett / RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra

1 The Song Of The High Seas 4:58

2 The Pacific Boils Over 5:39

3 Guadalcanal March 3:03

4 D-Day 5:48

5 Hard Work And Horseplay 3:37

6 Theme Of The Fast Carriers 6:43

7 Beneath The Southern Cross 3:58

8 Mare Nostrum 4:24

9 Victory At Sea 6:09

Recorded By – Lewis Layton



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