MUSIC AND FILM WORK IN TANDEM AT "COCO" AT JORGENSEN



People gather to watch Disney movie Coco Live-to-Film at Jorgensen Center for the Preforming Arts in Storrs on Friday. The 20-member Orquesta Folclórica Nacional de México played the music featured in the movie live for the audience.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MORGAN BLANCHARD, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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The Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts held "Coco" in concert live-to-film Friday, an event that drew in adults and children alike.

The Orquesta Folclórica Nacional de México, conducted by Grammy Award-nominated composer Esin Ayingdoz, performed the soundtrack of Disney-Pixar's "Coco" live as the movie played synchronously in the background.

"I think half the work is learning the music and how to cue the musicians, and half the work is making sure it's aligning with the movie," Ayingdoz said in an interview.

Ayingdoz is doing her third tour and 66th show with the orchestra. "Coco" live-to-film is what made her a conductor three years ago.

"For me, it is very important to honor the [original] composer's vision. I'm not trying to create anything new or do something new," she said. "I'm just there to help bring it to life."

"Coco" is about a young boy named Miguel who dreams of being a musician in a family that forbids it. On Día de los Muertos, he is transported to the land of the dead, where he meets his ancestors and journeys to find his great-great-grandfather so he can return to the land of the living before dawn.

The film's soundtrack is punctuated by traditional Mexican instruments like guitarróns and requintos, with classic mariachi brass instruments providing bright and celebratory melodies.

The orchestra performed the instrumentals of iconic songs like "Remember Me" and "Un Poco Loco," while stage lights reinforced the moods of the songs and their corresponding moments from the film.

"With the music that you put [in a film], you can completely twist the feeling that people get," Ayingdoz said. "If you are showing a war scene and putting bombastic, epic and orchestral music behind it, people feel the destruction, but if you put beautiful, emotional and soft music behind it, it is suddenly about loss, and it's all about sadness and grief."

This sentiment was echoed by members of the audience following the concert, especially during one of the final scenes, when Miguel sings "Remember Me" to his great-grandmother Coco.

"When [Miguel] sang to his grandma, it made me cry," said Hattie Landry, an attendee. "I don't think you can put music into words; it's something you just feel."

"I was about to cry," said Kieran Haider, a younger attendee.

Most of all, the concert made the audience realize how important music can be to storytelling.

"In a song you're telling a story," said Aidan Victor, an audience member. "And you need a story to make a song." need a story to make a song."



ILLUSTRATION BY CONNOR SZREJNA, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Martian invasion broadcast captures country's attention

LOGO BY COLBI LORANGER, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR//THE DAILY CAMPUS

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Imagine a brisk October evening when you settle into the couch and turn on the radio. First, you tune into NBC to listen to a ventriloquist act, and when it ends, you scan the dial for other interesting shows. Winding up on CBS, the radio plays a concert from the Meridian Room in the Hotel Park Plaza in downtown New York City. Amid the orchestral music, an announcer interrupts the program to say that explosions have been detected on Mars. After this strange interlude, the radio returns to the music before another announcement: a meteor has landed in New Jersey, and something appears to be crawling out of it.

This was the experience of some listeners of the War of the Worlds broadcast on Oct. 30, 1938. A fictional radio play that sounded so realistic that, across the country, many believed that the world was being invaded by Martians.

The company that produced this broadcast was the Mercury Theatre Company, which had been performing literary classics on air for about 17 weeks; it was a small, low-budget radio show but had begun to gain a following, according to this article from Smithsonian Magazine, "The Infamous 'War of the Worlds' Radio Broadcast Was a Magnificent Fluke." For the week of Halloween, however, actor Orson Welles, who was only 23 at the time, sought to do something special.



The company decided to perform an adaptation of the 1898 novel, "War of the Worlds," by H.G. Wells. The premise of the book is a Martian invasion of Victorian England in which the aliens are much more technologically advanced, only to be felled when they are exposed to diseases they do not have immunity against. Overall, it is said to be a satire of imperialism and colonialism, in which the oppressors (the English Empire) become the oppressed.

For the radio show, the company wanted to use the uniqueness of their medium to make it seem as if the premise of the story was happening in real time, but was not planned to be the "radio hoax" it became.

Throughout the rehearsal process and writing of the show, the team attempted to make the show seem as realistic as possible. As a result, if someone was to miss the radio disclaimer at the beginning of the broadcast, they may have believed an invasion to have been occurring, especially considering that, due to the length of the first act, another disclaimer wasn't issued until 40 minutes later. This was unlike the typical breaks that occurred after 30 minutes for most radio shows of that time.

The product of this being many phone calls to local police stations and angered listeners. The next morning, the newspapers were in a frenzy, and Welles truly felt as if he had ended his career then and there. Legal battles over the broadcast would ensue over the next few decades but the company and Welles would maintain their innocence that the broadcast was not intentionally misleading.

Later on in his life, after having an incredibly successful film career, Welles would go on to explain that the broadcast was meant to serve as a commentary regarding the large trust society had placed in the radio and that news, regardless of where its origins were, should be taken with a grain of salt. This can be seen in an interview with Welles from the BBC Archive. While the other collaborators of Welles did not feel that this was their intention when entering the project, the premise of Welles' reflection is still interesting to consider.

In this digital age, many of us receive our news and information through our cellphones and social media apps. Even the Daily Campus has begun to have a large internet presence on Instagram through the production of our reels.

With that being said, Welles' message still rings true today: perhaps we shouldn't be too trusting of everything we watch or hear, lest we find ourselves in another hoax Martian invasion.



Orson Welles presents the War of the Worlds on air. The shocking broadcast occurred 88 years ago on Oct. 30, 1938.

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