Original Operatic Score
and Violin Theme

Written and Composed by
Alfred Hill

Incidental Music Horace Keats
Conductor Hamilton Webber

(Cast)
Diana Du Cane Ann Brady
Lionello Cecil The tenor

(Isolde Hill dubbed for Miss Du Cane in the finale of the operetta).

(Credits not in film)
Conductor of the choir Richard McClelland (40 voice choir)
Australian Broadcasting Commission's Sydney Symphony Orchestra

1. Composer Alfred Hill:

Hill's violin theme for The Broken Melody has been catalogued at Stiles Music Publications here, along with his other works. A version is also held within the National Library of Australia for reference, as an arrangement for voice and piano, under the title Rest within these arms, music from the film The Broken Melody, words and music by Alfred Hill. It is variously described as a song and a serenade from the first act of the opera scene of the film.

Alfred Hill was born Richmond Melbourne in 1869, and became a significant Australian composer. He also contributed incidental music to Ken Hall's Smithy and to Chauvel's Forty Thousand Horsemen, giving both films a musical lift.

A more detailed biography of Alfred Hill is available at ADB here, though it doesn't mention his film work. However, in relation to Hill's contribution to The Broken Melody's concluding operatic moments, these passages are worth noting:

In the first phase of his creativity Hill wrote mainly for the theatre, including the comic operas The Whipping Boy (1893) and Lady Dolly (1900). With Fritz Hart he tried to create an Australian operatic tradition and founded the short-lived Australian Opera League (1913-14), which in 1914 presented in Sydney and Melbourne Hill's Giovanni and Hart's Pierrette, although neither was on an Australian theme. In 1913 Hill was a founder of the Sydney Repertory Theatre Society (for which he wrote three one-act plays under a Maori pseudonym, 'Arapeta Hia', in 1914) and was a foundation council-member (later president) of the Musical Association of New South Wales. With David Souter as librettist, he wrote The Rajah of Shivapore (performed in 1917), Auster (staged in 1922) and in 1923 set to music Hugh McCrae's poem The Ship of Heaven (staged in 1933).
Unfortunately the librettos for his operas never reached the standard of his music.

Hill's instinctive love of Maori music and legends inspired some of his most notable works—the cantata, Hinemoa; the operas, Tapu and Teora (1913); the Maori Symphony (1896); and many songs including 'Waiata Poi' (made famous by Peter Dawson and Ada Crossley among others). He recorded Maori music and for many years tried to found an institute of Maori studies at Rotorua and worked for a New Zealand conservatorium of music. Meanwhile in 1913 Hill had been appointed to the advisory committee for the establishment of the New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music, and on 18 January 1916 became first professor of theory and composition—over the years distinguished pupils included Roy Agnew, F. M. and Bryce Carter, Monk and John Antill. The early years at the conservatorium under Henri Verbrugghen were inspiring. In 1916-25 Hill was conductor for the Royal Sydney Apollo Club and was deputy conductor of the New South Wales State Orchestra in 1919-22. From 1924 he played in the new conservatorium quartet.

Before, during and after the time Hill was composing the violin theme and operatic component for The Broken Melody, the ADB notes some of his other musical activities:

Between 1924 and 1938 Hill concentrated upon creating string quartets and concertos for piano, violin, viola, French horn and trumpet. He was a much practised chamber musician and his part-writing is characterized by its idiomatic assurance and easy execution. His best-known concert work is the Viola Concerto (1940); the soloist is offered an exceptionally graceful part, emphasizing both the lyrical and virtuoso personality of the instrument.

According to Roland Foster Hill was 'a temperamental virile musician who would have fitted perfectly into the scheme of Alfred de Musset's 'La Vie de Bohême' and been thoroughly in his element at the London Savage Club'. A forceful and outspoken member of the conservatorium staff, Hill was passed over twice in the appointment of a director. He resigned at the end of 1934 because of differences with the new director Edgar Bainton. In 1935 he opened the Alfred Hill Academy of Music, but it closed in January 1937. In the early 1930s he had conducted the Sydney Professional Symphony Orchestra; he was sometime president of the Sydney centre of the British (and International) Music Society and in 1940 first president of the New South Wales Guild of Composers.

Devoting all his time to composing from 1937, Hill revised earlier chamber music pieces to create twelve symphonies. Bubbling with energy in his old age, he was 'a short, alert man with a backswept thatch of iron hair and brown eyes'. He now clipped his once-swaggering waxed moustache. His works were better known overseas than in Australia, but in February 1946 Henry Krips conducted the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in an entire programme of Hill's works including the Life Symphony (1941). Neville Cardus commented that Hill was 'still the most substantial and comprehensively cultivated of Australia's composers'. In
September 1953 he was guest conductor for the first performance of his Australia Symphony in B Minor by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He was appointed O.B.E. in 1953 and C.M.G. in 1960.

(Below: Alfred Hill):

(Above: Ken Hall left, with star Diana Du Cane, and composer Alfred Hill)

2. Horace Keats:

Horace Keats was the other classically orientated composer employed by Hall.

(Below: Horace Keats)
English-born Keats was dubbed the Schubert or poet's composer of Australia. During the nineteen thirties he was extremely active as a composer, especially of songs, and also worked as an accompanist, frequently for the ABC.

The ADB contains a biography [here](#), and there are other details [here](#), and at the Australian Music Centre [here](#).

The ADB notes some of Keats' activities before, during and after his work for the film:

In January 1930 Keats went to England to work for the British Broadcasting Corporation but ill health forced him to return to Sydney within six months. In 1932 he joined the Perth staff of the new Australian Broadcasting Commission but was dismissed next year; from 1934 he worked as a freelance accompanist in Sydney, sometimes for the A.B.C.

Married on 9 November 1918 to soprano Janet le Brun Brown, Keats described his wife as his 'critic' and 'guide'. As 'Barbara Russell' she also became the principal performer of his songs.

Keats's first published composition was for piano, Three Spanish Dances (1922), but most of his work was for voice, and dates from the last twelve years of his life. He wrote at least 115 songs, two choral works, incidental music for films and radio plays, and a musical, Atsomari (1935). Thirty of his songs were published (chiefly in Sydney by W. H. Paling & Co.) and some were recorded by Dawson, Harold Williams, Lionel Cecil and Anthony Strange; all are now rare. Keats believed that 'real music must first of all have a melody' and he wrote attractive, fluent tunes with economical, evocative accompaniments. His best-known work, She Walks in Beauty (1939), uses a Byron text, but he concentrated on setting Australian poetry, notably by Christopher Brennan, Hugh McCrae and early manuscript poems of
Kenneth Mackenzie.

A tall and rather thickset man, Keats ‘tended to “huddle” over the piano, as if he were “savouring” every sound’. Described by contemporaries as modest, amiable and gentle, he had a lifelong love for Australia and faith in Australian culture. He died of cerebral haemorrhage on 21 August 1945 at his Mosman home and was cremated with Christian Science forms. He was survived by his wife and by a son and daughter; his elder son Russell had been killed in action in H.M.A.S. Canberra in 1942. An anonymous etching of Keats, commissioned by Paling’s, appears on the title pages of much of his published music.

3. Ken Hall and Richard Tauber:

Hall lavished attention and a relatively large budget on the music for the film.

In his autobiography, Directed by Ken G. Hall, Hall recorded the effort involved in having an opera as climax to the film:

Of course, that musical climax was a big risk and no one knew it better than I. It involved fifty members of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the full Sydney male choir, three soloists and a female chorus. We were not anything like equipped to record properly such a large assemblage. The studio itself was not suitable because it was purposely 'dead' for normal work. You need wooden surrounds, special 'bright' acoustics for music.

All American, and major studios everywhere, have specially designed and built music-recording stages. The sound engineers and mixers have remarkable control. The stage can be brought down by degrees from ultra 'live' to almost 'dead' by the manipulation of wooden baffles and other means. The soloists and chorus are all in separate glass-fronted, sound-proof cells from which they can see the conductor's beat but cannot hear the sound of the orchestra they are singing with - that is not until they put on their headphones. The sound outputs of all these people are generally recorded on separate tapes (film in my day, of course) and the whole mixed together for the final result long after all the performers have gone home to bed.

By this very broadly described method, most hi-fi records are made also, and it accounts for the remarkable balance achieved the ability to pick out and accent at will, a voice, the orchestra, the choir, even a single instrument.

We had no such perfection. The orchestra was on wooden rostrums beneath the overhead dressing-rooms floor which acted as a ceiling. The set-up was between the generator room and the lavatories. All our music recordings were made there because it was the only 'live' area available. All that wood above and below was essential. While recordings were on, the lavatories were out of bounds to everyone, and often the odd bod, who had failed to take prior precautions, stood around with pained look, biting the lower lip and crossing the legs in a vain plea for
leniency.

When I heard Alfred Hill's music come back as the ABC ran Broken Melody after more than thirty years, it was as good as when it was first recorded. Which was a tribute to the people who made the impossible possible and to Arthur Smith's recording equipment which imprisoned sound on film in 1937 which was still beautiful in 1970.

Hall's efforts were rewarded when tenor Richard Tauber, touring Australia in August 1938, requested screenings of Let George Do It and The Broken Melody, and was so impressed that he asked to meet Ken Hall and visit the Cinesound Studios at Bondi, watching a scene from Dad and Dave Come To Town being filmed.

High praise was given by Tauber to Alfred Hill, composer of the operatic sequence in 'The Broken Melody.' 'I would like to meet Mr. Hill,' he said. 'His music is of a very high standard and is ahead of many compositions I have heard in American and English films. It is sincere, melodious, and never above the heads of the audience.' (Courier Mail 11th August 1938)

(Below: Melbourne Argus 4th July 1938)
4. Lionello Cecil:

Tenor Lionello Cecil was born in Waverley Sydney in 1893, before embarking on a successful international career, then returning in the thirties to work under contract to the Australian Broadcasting Commission, singing the leading role in some seventeen broadcast operas, and thus handily available for Hall's film.

A more detailed biography can be found here at the ADB.

(Below: Lionello Cecil with Rosalind Kennderdale in the operetta):
5. Newspaper reports on the music and filming to playback:

The Sydney Morning Herald 22nd October 1937:
AUSTRALIAN FILMS.
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Music and Actors.

Mr. Alfred Hill has now completed the operatic music for the new Cineaccom film, "The Broken Melody," which Mr. Ken Hall is producing at the Bondi studios. The score consists of an overture, a duet for tenor and soprano, and a finale. Mr. Lionel Cecil has been engaged as tenor, and Miss Diana du Cane will sing the soprano part. Mr. Hamilton Webber will conduct the A.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, with Mr. Lionel Lawson as leader; and Mr. Richard McClelland will direct a choir of 40 voices. The theme song will first appear as a violin solo, played by Mr. Lloyd Hughes.

New Era Film Productions, which is making "The Avenger" at the National Studios, Pagewood, has added Jean Batty to the cast. In private life, Miss Batty is Mrs. Alfred Frith.

She began her musical career in Melbourne by winning a Conservatorium scholarship which had been donated by the Returned Soldiers' League of Victoria. Three years ago, she toured South Africa as one of the principals in J. C. Williamson's Gilbert and Sullivan company.

The Sydney Morning Herald 5th October 1937:
6. Hamilton Webber

Ken Hall reinforced Hill's participation by maintaining his association with his favourite musical director Hamilton Webber.

Hamilton Webber's theatre collaborations include composing original incidental music and songs for a number of the Fullers productions, including Frank Neil's...
1918 pantomime *Bluebeard* and three of Nat Phillips’s pantomimes: *Babes in the Woods* (1918), *Cinderella* (1919), and *Dick Whittington and His Cat* (1921). In 1919, Webber also acted as music director for Phillips’ *Stiffy and Mo Company* during its season at Fullers’ Theatre, Sydney. His music was also used for the Fullers’ 1920-1921 version of *Babes in the Woods*, with a libretto by George H. Ward et al, and possibly the company’s 1926 pantomime, *Puss in Boots* (with a libretto by Jim Gerald and Frank Neil).

In 1940 Webber was engaged by Greater Union to take charge of a fully augmented orchestra at the State Theatre in Melbourne. Among his film credits are *On Our Selection* (1932, as composer), *Strike Me Lucky* (1934, as composer/music director), *Thoroughbred* (1936, as music director), *The Broken Melody* (1938, as music director) and *Dad and Dave Come to Town* (1938, as composer with Maurie Gilman). (Original source of this information [here](#)).

*(Below: Hamilton Webber)*