'Twilight Echoes'
Arranged and Played by
Bob Brozman
(Original Recording by Roy Smeck)

Symphony No. 5 Opus 47
(Dmitri Shostakovich)

Music in the film:

Stock footage shows a Hawaiian style band in action. The band sets the tone for the steel guitar musical styling which appears through most of the film and appears over the end credits. Amongst the stock footage, a guitar appears as a treasured islander possession.

Shostakovich's fifth symphony is used in the body of the film to establish a more serious tone.
**Arranger/performer:**

This was the first music that Dennis O'Rourke had commissioned for a film. In previous outings, he had tended to hew to the documentary ascetic/aesthetic of not using a score.

O'Rourke looked around widely, especially in Hawaii, for someone who could play the steel guitar style music he had in mind, but as he jokes in his commentary for the film's DVD release, he eventually settled for a New York Jew, who incidentally happened to be a brilliant steel guitar player.

Bob Brozman, who has a detailed wiki [here](#), died in 2013. He could also be found performing on *YouTube*, and in many other areas of the internet. There is, for example, an obituary at *The Guardian* [here](#), WM [here](#).

*(Below: Bob Brozman, and a couple of his instructional efforts).*
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TAUGHT BY
BOB BROZMAN
Composer Roy Smeck:

Ironically, Roy Smeck, the composer of the piece arranged and played by Brozman, was also an American. There is a good summary of his career here:

- Born Ray Smeck, 6 February 1900, Reading, Pennsylvania
- Died 4 April 1994, New York City, New York

Roy Smeck was one of the truly great American popular musicians of the 20th century, one whose name would be as recognizable as Louis Armstrong's or Les Paul's if he hadn't specialized in a "minor" instrument, the ukulele.

As a boy, Smeck was obsessed with learning to play musical instruments, and he almost suffered a nervous breakdown from his relentless practicing. He eventually narrowed his focus down to the guitar, banjo, and harmonica, and somewhere around the time of America's entry into World War One, he began performing on the vaudeville circuit. His was a novelty musical act. He would play one or more current popular tunes on the banjo while also playing
a small harmonica.
Over the next ten years, Smeck polished his act, incorporating a variety of
dance steps and adding more amazing tricks. He added a jew's harp to the
banjo and harmonica, and learned to flip the harmonica over with his tongue,
even pretending to swallow it only to pop it back to his lips. As the popularity
of Hawaiian music on the mainland grew, he added the ukulele, switching
instruments in mid-tune. Then he began do such gymnastics as playing
behind his back, spinning the instrument around, blowing across the sound
hole, plucking the strings with his teeth and tongue, and bowing the strings
like a violin. After studying fellow performer Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, he
came up with a way to imitate the sound of Robinson's tap dancing on the
ukulele. His amazing dexterity made him one of the more popular acts on the
vaudeville circuit, and landed him a small spot in film history.
In 1926, as movie studios were experimenting with a variety of sound
technologies, Warner Brothers shot a short that showed Smeck performing
his act at the Manhattan Opera House, using the Vitaphone system. The
Vitaphone synchronized a film projector with a record player. A 33RPM record
provided the soundtrack for the silent film. Titled His Pastimes, the film and
several other shorts, along with Don Juan, a feature starring John Barrymore,
debuted on 6 August 1926 at the Warners Theatre in New York City. The film
allows us to witness Smeck in his prime, and it still blows away people who
thought that T. Bone Walker or Chuck Berry invented duckwalking and
playing behind the back.
Smeck appeared in several other early sound films, including a feature with
crooner Russ Colombo and a 1933 Paramount short that showed Smeck
playing four instruments simultaneously. This short is also something of a
milestone, since it uses split-screen editing and multiple soundtracks to show
Smeck playing the steel guitar, tenor banjo, ukulele, and guitar. The multi-
tracking technique pre-dates Les Paul's own experiments by over ten years.
Testament to Smeck's celebrity at the time is the fact that he was invited to
perform not only at the Inaugural celebration for President Roosevelt in 1932,
but also to the gala concert held at the London Palladium in honor of King
George VI's coronation in 1937.
Smeck made over 500 recordings, starting in 1921 for the Edison Company,
and continuing on until his last album, for Kapp, in the mid-1960s. He often
worked with Hawaiian and haole musicians, including Harry Owens and Ray
McKinney, and he recorded several albums in the late 1950s with the
Hawaiian singer Alfred Apaka. Most of his studio recordings in the 1950s and
1960s were on the Hawaiian acoustic guitar and steel guitar, although the
ukulele remained his favorite instrument. As vaudeville died, he shifted to
radio and even had his own show, heard in the New York City area, in the late
1930s. During World War Two and the Korean War, he appeared in USO
shows, and played for GIs everywhere from Greenland and Iceland to Korea
and Japan. He was a frequent guest on the many variety shows that ran in
the first 10-15 years of network television, including Ed Sullivan's, Steve Allen's, and Jack Paar's.

Smeck believed in educating as much as entertaining. He published numerous books of musical instruction, including a series with Mel Bay, and he stayed active as a teacher right up to the time of his death. Several generations of ukulele and banjo players credit him as an inspiration and mentor. When he was touring, he often put on workshops, appeared free at music stores, or held talent contests for local players. Over the course of his career, his name became better known among musicians than average listeners. When the Gibson Guitar Company released its Roy Smeck Hawaiian acoustic guitar, it was only the second artist model made, and at least three other companies named guitar or ukulele models after him. Smeck himself designed an unusual variant on the ukulele, called the Vita-Uke, that had a pear-shaped body and no sound hole.

Although his performing and teaching schedule slowed down in his last two decades, he never retired. In 1983, two New York University film students, Alan Edelstein and Peter Friedman, made a documentary, Wizard of the Strings, about Smeck and his career, and the film won a mention for Merit at the 1984 Student Academy Awards.

Recordings
- Drifting and Dreaming, Coral
- Songs of the Range, Decca DL-5473
- Memories of You, Decca DL-8674
- South Seas Serenade, ABC-Paramount ABC-119
- Melodies with Memories, ABC-Paramount ABC-174
- Hi-Fi Paradise, ABC-Paramount ABCS-234
- The Magic Ukulele of Roy Smeck, ABC-Paramount ABCS-279
- The Happy Banjo, ABC-Paramount ABCS-309
- Alfred Apaka, Adventures in Paradise, ABC Paramount ABC-329
- The Haunting Hawaiian Guitar, ABC Paramount ABCS 330
- Alfred Apaka, Adventures in Paradise Vol. 2, ABC Paramount ABC 358
- Roy Smeck, His Singing Guitar and Paradise Serenaders, ABC Paramount ABCS 379
- Stringing Along, ABC-Paramount ABCS-412
- I Love to Hear a Banjo, ABC Paramount ABC 484
- The Many Guitar Moods of Roy Smeck, ABC Paramount ABC 452
- Hawaiian Guitar Hits, Kapp KS-1491
- Wizard of the Strings, Blue Goose BG 2027
- Roy Smeck Plays Hawaiian Guitar Banjo Ukulele and Guitar 1926-1949, Yazoo 1052

(Below: Roy Smeck, first in 1926)