

11th Sept 12.

Dear David,

Thanks for your letter. Glad you enjoyed the audio tape of filmtracks. When copying music became so easy with all the new technologies and gadgets, I decided only to continue filmtrack compilations of my own, as they are not so easily compiled, as a great deal of cinema knowledge is required to recall memorable clips and to locate them in each film. Second, the music and dialogue in selections have several dimensions of personal and aesthetic meaning and interpretation. So, I overcame the common nature that audio music compilations had created. Some years ago, someone sold one of my compilations to a national newspaper and they opened a website with it. Typically, of the fifty or so soundtracks of classic films, including "Snow White", "Bambi", "West Side Story", "Casablanca" etc, etc, they made much of a clip from "Natural Born Killers" music. With such biased selectivity you could make an Archbishop appear evil. It's naturally the same calibre of self-flattering malicious selectivity used by the tenth-rate quacks in this place, of course, sharing the ignorant propensities of the mindless mob and pandering to it. You refer to the Marseillaise playing in one extract - that's the iconic scene in "Casablanca" in Rick's nightclub when the Germans are loudly singing national songs and Paul Henreid leads the French to drown it out with the Marseillaise. Which, incidentally, is the only national anthem that inspires emotion in me, because of the many aesthetic and moral connotations of the spontaneous uprising against tyranny and greed. The only other national song I respond to like that is "Auld Lang Syne", internationally associated with celebration of New Year - which, in Scotland and Russia, has a special place on the heart. Not now to me, of course, after half a century of the same old year repeated, and getting worse.

Bastille Square a symbolic location since the French Revolution in 1789 (?) Yes, ironically, since the Bastille was the privileged prison for the aristocrats, imprisoned for petty offences against royalty or the state; such as de Madae. Later, when the mobs stormed the other prisons in Paris, they slaughtered the inmates - probably to make up for the mistake of freeing the aristocrats from the Bastille, inspired by the flowery rhetoric of the Marat circle, all of whom (including Danton and Robespierre) ended on the guillotine. Coincidentally, watched an old video of "A Tale of Two Cities" last week. I kept it as it's the best film version, made in Hollywood in the early 1930s, starring Ronald Colman and Basil Rathbone. There's a gigantic set for the storming of the Bastille. All those thousands of extras no much more impressive than the computer simulated ^{stuff} of today, because they are real people.

"The election of Hollande in France". The same naïve faith in mere "change" got President Al Johnson Obama elected and, as I predicted, he achieved nothing, short-changing everybody, and has spent the past four years with his phoney family trying to do impression of the Kennedys! He's now so unpopular that he's got his wife fronting the election, in a sit-com based on the Bill Cosby show! I don't know who the Republicans are running, but he can't be as bad as Bush - the only reason America elected a halfbreed.

Has Bordeaux got catacombs like Paris? I visited the Paris ones but, more interestingly, on a night wander to ^{quarries?} quarters connected with the underground catacombs, saw Lisa Gardner, with an entourage, at this candlelit and bonfired sort of hippy congregation, with dancing and guitar music.

I now gather from your letter that Bordeaux excavates its mummies and relics. Yes, you sent me a photo of the St Michael Basilica and the mummies some time ago.

The "gymnastics" of reading / interpreting Old French? I used to translate Shakespeare into German & and Goethe into English, back in the 1960/70s.

Best wishes,
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