

Rolf Alexander Wilhelm

Rolf Alexander Wilhelm (23 June 1927 Munich - 17 January 2013) was a German composer, film composer, arranger and conductor, sometimes referred to as the German John Williams.

At the age of seven, Wilhelm began piano lessons. He then attended school in Berlin and Vienna. From 1942 he studied piano and composition with Joseph Marx at the Vienna Academy of Music. His studies were interrupted by service in World War II. Thereafter he graduated from the Hochschule für Musik in Munich where he studied with Henry Squire (conducting), Joseph Haas (composition) and Hans Rosbaud (Master Class).

In 1946, Wilhelm produced a radio play, The Canterville Ghost. This work was impressive enough to secure the 19-year-old composer his first commission, and he soon became a busy freelance employee of the radio station. Even for the relatively new medium television, he composed music for different characters stories from Reiner Zimnik, such as for The Angler Jonas (1954) or The Crane (1956).

Wilhelm's first major film music was for the 1954 first film of the 08/15 trilogy, the most successful films of the postwar era include. Through the 1990s, he composed music for 62 feature films, including classics like And Forever Sing the Woods (1959), It may not Always be Caviar (1961), The Black-White-Red-Poster Bed (1962), Scotland Yard Hunts Dr. Mabuse (1963), Lausbubengeschichten (1964), The Flying Classroom (1973), The Serpent's Egg (1977), Ödipussi (1988) and Pappa ante Portas (1991). Among his most complex film work is the music for major German production Die Nibelungen (1966/67).

Wilhelm also composed the music for far more than 250 radio plays, more than 350 television and 300 commercials. In addition, he created numerous stage musicals , orchestral suites and literary songs.

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