



## Troubles in Hollywood

- » Studios had perfected assembly line
- » War years with peak revenues
- » Declining income
  - Anti-trust suits
  - Competition from television
- » Political attacks from HUAC
  - Accused Hollywood of Communist sympathy
  - Blacklisting of writers, actors, directors...



## Darkening Moods

- » Message movies more frequent
  - Alcoholism and drug use
  - Racism and anti-semitism
  - Euthanasia
- » Darker plots: birth of film noir
- » Music
  - Scoring used more sparingly
  - Increase in modern music
  - Popular music begins to accompany



## The Best Years of Our Lives

- » 1946 Best Picture Winner
- » Deals with issues of returning veterans
- » Music
  - Composer: Hugo Friedhofer
  - Style: American Nationalism
- » Revelation: Viewer Guide 13.2
  - Orchestra: warm strings and woodwinds
  - Wide leaps in the melodies
  - Themes similar flow into each other



## Film Noir: Typical Features

- » Lighting: shadows and dark backlight
- » Settings
  - Urban centers, especially NY and LA
  - Nighttime action
  - Wet streets; spiral staircases
- » Plots
  - Dark/ambiguous endings
  - Often fatalistic
- » Characters
  - Dogged detective
  - Femme fatale
  - Voice-Over Narrator
- » Music
  - » Less scoring; more source music
  - » Vehicle for more use of modern and popular styles



## The Killers 1946

- » Based on short story by Ernest Hemingway
- » Plot resembles Citizen Kane
  - Opens with a death
  - Witness interviews shown in flashbacks
  - Fatalism
- » Characters
  - Swede: murder victim
  - Kitty: femme fatale
  - Insurance detective
- » Mood: fatalistic



## The Killers Music



- » Miklós Rózsa composer
  - Like Herrmann, appears in Hollywood in 1941
  - Considered the best composer for film noir
  - Best known for *Ben-Hur*
- » Music
  - Unrelenting harshness related to expressionism
  - Killers motive "borrowed" for *Dragnet*
  - Kitty's theme from song she performs
  - Final scene, popular music (Boogie-boogie) accompanies violence

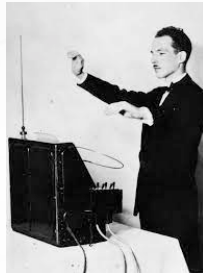
## Laura (1944)



- » Composer: David Raksin
- » AFI score ranking: No. 7
- » Theme song became one of the most popular songs of the century
- » Popular musical style employed exclusively
  - Gives principal character sophisticated quality
  - Use as underscoring sets model for future use of popular music
- » Apartment scene: Viewer Guide 13.1

## Spellbound

- » Director by Hitchcock, this is a hybrid of romance and noir
- » Set design (dream sequence): Salvadore Dali
- » Music is by Miklós Rózsa
  - Music contrasts Neo-Romantic and Expressionistic
  - Modern sections employ a theremin – the first electronic instrument in a major film score



## Sunset Blvd (1950)

- AFI: No. 12 Greatest Film
- Andrew Lloyd Weber musical
- Composer: Franz Waxman
  - His first Oscar
  - AFI: No. 16 greatest score
  - Mimics Richard Strauss *Salome* opera
- Framed story narrated by victim
  - Norma is former silent star
  - Imagines comeback as sexy Salome
  - Joe is writer that comes to her Sunset Blvd. home by accident
  - Final scene: Viewer Guide 13.3

