November 28, 2016

REEL Learning features the first movie to use original music: *King Kong*

Edmonton – In 1933, RKO Studios released the now-classic *King Kong* that wowed audiences and also was the first movie to use original music, which was composed by Max Steiner. The impact of the movie was astonishing; in four days it pulled in $89,931 at Radio City in New York (roughly equivalent to $1.6 million in 2016), setting a new all-time world record for attendance.

“Not only is the original 1933 version of *King Kong* a great film, it’s also essentially the first to have a custom musical score,” says John McMillan, a faculty member in the Department of Music at MacEwan University who received his certificate in film scoring from U.C.L.A. "That ground-breaking step allowed musicians and composers to become part of the storytelling process. From that point on, we were no longer musicians alone—we were musicians and filmmakers.” McMillan’s composing credits include *Hawaii 5-0, Now You See Me, Iron Man 3* and *Thor: The Dark World*.

The composer of the music for *King Kong* was Max Steiner, known by many as the “father of film music.” Steiner went on to compose iconic scores for dozens of movies – including *Gone With the Wind* and *Casablanca* – and won three Academy Awards for best original score.

Following the film presentation, join composers Allan Gilliland and John McMillan from MacEwan University’s Department of Music as they discuss the art of film scoring and the role music plays in enhancing the cinematic experience.

The REEL Learning series provides audiences with an opportunity to take a deep dive into movies and their relationship to current events and topics related to their content. Expert commentary is provided by industry experts and MacEwan University faculty members.

When: Wednesday, November 30  
Where: Metro Cinema (8712-109 street)  
Time: 7:00 p.m.