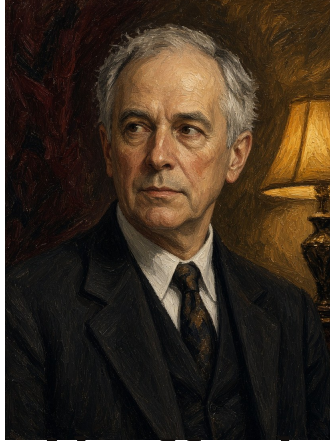




Alex North

December 4, 1910 - September 8, 1991

Died: Pacific Palisades, Los Angeles, California

Interment: Ashes scattered at sea

Alex North died at home in the Pacific Palisades on September 8, 1991, of cancer. He was eighty. Born Isadore Soifer in Chester, Pennsylvania, on December 4, 1910, he studied at the Curtis Institute, Juilliard, and in Moscow, wrote for modern dance and for the theater, and arrived in Hollywood with a conviction that a film orchestra could speak jazz without asking permission.

A Streetcar Named Desire, in 1951, was among the first Hollywood scores to treat jazz as drama rather than decor. Fifteen Academy Award nominations followed - Viva Zapata!, Spartacus, Cleopatra, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? among them - and no competitive win. In 1986 the Academy gave him an honorary Oscar, the first such honor for a composer, a late admission that the nominations had been a habit of almost. He wrote an unused theme for 2001: A Space Odyssey that Stanley Kubrick set aside; the rejection became a piece of trade lore North did not perform in public. He kept working. Theater and concert pieces sat beside the cues.

He had three children and a marriage to Annemarie that held through the Palisades years. Chester was the mill-town start. New York was the theater decade. Los Angeles was the living. Friends described a man who could be abrupt about a bad temp track and generous about a young orchestrator's credit. He treated a spotting session as work, not a room for charm.

He was cremated. His ashes were scattered at sea. Pacific Palisades was the last house, not a cemetery. The scores are the plot.

Services

Died in Pacific Palisades, Los Angeles, on September 8, 1991. Cremated; ashes scattered at sea. Honorary Academy Award, 1986.

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