

Bebe Barron, 82, a Beethoven of beeps and boops

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By [Dennis Hevesi](#)

Bebe Barron, who with her husband, Louis, composed the first electronic score for a feature film

accentuated invisible monsters and robotic creatures in the 1956 science-fiction classic

Her son, Adam, said she died of natural causes. Louis Barron died in 1989. The Barrons had divorced in 1970; in 1975 she married Leonard Neubauer.

The score for

light-years from Earth to investigate why settlers on the planet Altair-4 have gone silent

professor of electro-acoustic music at the California Institute of the Arts, said Thursday.

While the Barrons created electronically produced themes for the film characters and events, Schrader said, their score crossed the traditional line between music and sound effects.

hearing is music, sound effect or both,

foreshadowed by decades the now-common role of the sound designer in modern film and video.

While later electro-acoustic scoring became more melodic, the Barrons breakthrough fixed the technique consciousness.

Perhaps the most memorable character in Robot, who brews bourbon and performs Herculean feats; for him, the Barrons composed a mechanically bubbly theme. For the invisible monster Id, a percussive sinking sound with a descending pitch punctuates every hole his footsteps leave on the planet

Contemporary electro-acoustic effects are digitally synthesized. The Barrons used vacuum tubes and tape recorders.

Bebe Barron would sort through hours and hours of tape. Together the Barrons would cut and splice; play segments at varying speeds to change the pitch; run segments in reverse to create new sounds or induce delays to produce echoing feedback.

Charlotte May Wind (her husband nicknamed her Bebe) was born in Minneapolis on June 16, 1925, the only child of Frank and Ruth Wind. She earned a music degree at the University of Minnesota in 1947, then moved to New York, where she worked as a researcher for Time-Life while studying music composition. Soon after, she met and married Louis Barron, who was trained in electronics. Attracted by the avant-garde music scene in the early 1950s, the couple lived in Greenwich Village.

Their fascination with electro-acoustic music began with a wedding gift: a tape recorder. Part of their apartment became a studio.

Besides her husband and her son, of Los Angeles, she is survived by a stepdaughter, Dylan Neubauer, of Santa Cruz, Calif.

Dennis Hevesi