

All in a Night's Work

Once upon a time in a land called Hollywood, major studios churned out wonderful, frothy, fizzy romantic comedies, one after another. They churned them out until the world turned into a slightly darker place as the 1960s got tumultuous and turbulent. Some still managed to slip through the cracks, but they became few and far between. They kind of made a small comeback starting in the mid-1980s, but few got the froth and the fizz right. In 1961, Shirley MacLaine was riding high on the success of *The Apartment* and Dean Martin had become a real leading man after the team of Martin and Lewis had broken up. They'd already appeared together in Vincente Minnelli's *Some Came Running* and Paramount's production of *Career*, and because both were terrific comic actors, it was a natural to pair them up in Paramount's *All in a Night's Work*.

All in a Night's Work was given the lavish, glossy Paramount treatment. Everything was top-of-the line – the director was Joseph Anthony (*The Rainmaker*, *The Matchmaker*, *Career*), and the bubbly screenplay was by Edmund Beloin (*Visit to a Small Planet*, *The Sad Sack*, *Don't Give Up the Ship*), Maurice Richlin (*Pillow Talk*, *Operation Petticoat*, *Soldier in the Rain*, and the classic *The Pink Panther*), and Sidney Sheldon (*Billy Rose's Jumbo*, *Pardners*). And, in addition to the two leads, a stellar supporting cast – Cliff Robertson, Jack Weston, Charlie Ruggles, Norma Crane, Jerome Cowan, and Gale Gordon.

The plot kicks off in high style when a mysterious woman is seen running from a ritzy Palm Beach hotel room, wearing only a bath towel and not a very large one at that. Since the hotel room's guest, a New York publishing baron, is

found dead in bed, the question is who was that lady and was that lady his mistress? The mystery woman turns out to be Katie (MacLaine), who just happens to work in the research department of the publishing firm owned by the now-deceased publishing baron. From there it's a comedy of errors, with the board of directors trying to avoid a headline-making scandal and the blackmail they most assuredly think is coming their way, and the heir to the publishing company (Martin) trying to find out who MacLaine really is and what she really wants. Complications, misunderstandings, mink coats, fancy nightclubs, and, of course, love and a happy ending, and all in glorious Technicolor, set to the romantic, propulsive, and phenomenal music of André Previn.

Actors and directors usually say that drama is easy – comedy is hard. The same holds true for scoring a comedy. It's a tightrope walk because when the music tries to be funny, frequently everything fizzles. So, it becomes a balancing act – how to underscore comic scenes without Mickey-Mousing them, i.e. hitting the comedy over the head musically. And no one was better at that tightrope walk than André Previn. His score for *All in a Night's Work* is as much fun as any of its other components, but never calling attention to itself and never undermining the comedy.

The main title sets the tone – an upbeat, dynamic, and colorful showpiece for orchestra. That theme recurs again, but it's the delicious and beautiful love theme that gets most of the attention, in a large number of guises – it's instantly memorable and works wonderfully throughout the film – as underscore for romance, shopping, cocktails, dinner and dancing, and yes, more romancing. There are

other equally excellent themes, and the score is just a constant delight of melody and inspiration. In the bonus tracks you'll find an alternate main title where, instead of the upbeat, dynamic, and colorful showpiece for orchestra, you get an equally terrific but very different-in-feel opening using the love theme as its basis. But they made the right choice because the upbeat version just gets you in the right mood instantly.

When Previn finally gave up on writing original film music, it was a great loss. He was one of the masters, and his scores really stand the test of time – *The Catered Affair*, *Elmer Gantry*, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, *The Subterraneans*, *Irma la Douce*, *The Fortune Cookie*, *Dead Ringer*, *Inside Daisy Clover* and many others – all are filled with his particular brand of musical genius. Although he left film music far behind, Previn is still active as can be as conductor, composer of classical works, and jazz pianist.

All in a Night's Work was transferred from the original session masters housed in the Paramount vaults. The tapes were in excellent condition and in stereo save for two cues that only existed in mono. The first of those is presented in sequence (track two), and the last, the complete finale, is presented in the bonus tracks section, since we had a shorter version of the finale in stereo.

— Bruce Kimmel