

DIVORCE, AMERICAN STYLE

THE ART OF LOVE

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A man drives up into the hills overlooking a Los Angeles suburb. He pulls out some legal briefs and then a baton and begins conducting as Dave Grusin's music accompanies shots of upscale houses from which we hear sounds of the endless bickering of unhappy married couples. Thus begins *Divorce, American Style*. It's a classic opening to a film that veers confidently from comedy to drama and back again. In 1967, when the movie was released, its satire was considered scathing and brittle and the film was a hit with audiences and most critics. *Divorce, American Style* was written by Robert Kaufman and Norman Lear (who received an Academy Award nomination for their work), and directed by Bud Yorkin (the latter two gentlemen would shortly change the face of television forever with *All In The Family*), and starred an incredible cast that included Dick Van Dyke, Debbie Reynolds, Jason Robards, Jr., Jean Simmons, Joe Flynn, Shelley Berman, Tom Bosley, Lee Grant, Martin Gabel, Van Johnson, Lee Grant, and a young Tim Matheson. The plot is simple – Barbara and Richard Harmon (Van Dyke and Reynolds), an affluent couple who have been married for seventeen years, bickers all the time and find they can no longer communicate with each other. Counseling doesn't work and they file for divorce. Both have adventures, meet various people who try to be helpful to the newly-single couple, get set up with various potential romantic partners, but, in the end, realize they love each other and reconcile. The film had beautiful production values and wonderful photography by Conrad Hall and was all slickly directed by Yorkin.

Tying all these elements together into a cohesive whole is the utterly charming, tuneful, and great score by Dave Grusin. Grusin had been toiling in television, writing scores for *Gidget*, *The Wild Wild West*, and *The Girl from UNCLE*, but in 1967 he received not one but three choice scoring assignments for features – *Divorce, American Style* was his auspicious debut, followed by *The Graduate* (which featured the songs of Simon and Garfunkel) and *Waterhole #3*. From then he was off and running on what would be an incredible career as film composer, arranger, and recording artist and becoming an Oscar and Grammy winner in the process. The list of films he's scored is truly impressive and eclectic, and includes *The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter*, *Winning*, *Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here*, *The Yakuza*, *Three Days Of The Condor*, *Murder By Death*, *The Front*, *Bobby Deerfield*, *The Goodbye Girl*, *Heaven Can Wait*, *The Champ*, ...*And Justice For All*, *The Electric Horseman*, *Absence Of Malice*, *On Golden Pond*, *Tootsie*, *The Goonies*, *The Mila-*

gro Beanfield War (for which he won the Oscar for Best Score), *A Dry White Season*, *The Fabulous Baker Boys*, *The Firm*, *Mulholland Falls*, *Hope Floats*, and many, many others.

The score to *Divorce, American Style* is instant classic Grusin right out of the gate. We get the classical-sounding yet jazzy main title music, we get cool big-band grooves, we get gorgeous 1960s-style romantic music (the kind you always wish was accompanying you in your romantic endeavors), dramatic scoring to lend the film a bit of pathos and depth, a baroque-flavored fugue, a Herb Alpert/Baja Marimba-style Mexican-flavored tune, but all uniquely Grusin – it's an amazing debut film score.

Divorce, American Style was released on a United Artists LP. For this release, we had the original album masters but happily we also found the original four-track masters and that is what was used for this release. The sound on the four-tracks was spectacular, and there was even a little bit of music that didn't make the LP. Every note of what was on the four-tracks has been used and put where it belongs in the score sequence. This is our third Dave Grusin CD (the others are *A Dry White Season* and *Mulholland Falls*), and it's a particular thrill to bring his very first film score to CD for the first time, in stunning sound and with all music present and accounted for.

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Two years prior to *Divorce, American Style*, Dick Van Dyke starred in another comedy, this one a frothy farce from director Norman Jewison (in the days when he made frothy farces) and screenwriter/actor Carl Reiner. *The Art Of Love* also starred James Garner, Elke Sommer, Angie Dickenson, Carl Reiner, Miiko Taka, and Miss Ethel Merman as Coco La Fontaine (a role that was originally offered to Mae West). Produced by Ross Hunter in his usual sumptuous, glossy style, the film had great costumes by Ray Aghayan, jewels by Cartier, and photography by Russell Metty. The plot revolves around a down-at-the-heels artist (Van Dyke) and his opportunistic, conniving roommate (Garner). Van Dyke pretends to commit suicide and his paintings suddenly increase in value. Garner not only profits from the sales but tries to make time with Van Dyke's girl. Naturally this upsets Van Dyke who then sets up evidence that Garner murdered him, and Garner is eventually implicated in Van Dyke's "death", goes to trial, and is sent to the guillotine. What happens is too much fun to reveal, but since it's a comedy, let's just say it all ends happily and with heads firmly attached.

To score the film, Jewison turned to Broadway composer Cy Coleman. At that point, Coleman had done two Broadway shows, *Wildcat*, starring Lucille Ball (and which featured the hit song "Hey, Look Me Over") and *Little Me*, starring Sid Caesar, both written with lyricist Carolyn Leigh. But prior to the Broadway shows, Coleman had already written several songs that would become standards, including "The Best Is Yet To Come" and "Witchcraft" (also written with Leigh). In 1964 he was hired to score two films – Theodore J. Flicker's low-budget comedy *The Troublemaker*, and Universal's big-budget comedy, *Father Goose*, starring Cary Grant and Leslie Caron. *Father Goose* produced another classic Coleman/Leigh song ("Pass Me By").

Coleman's score for *The Art Of Love* is tuneful, fun, and filled with his typical gift of melody and rhythm. It also features a wickedly amusing homage to Mancini's *Peter Gunn*, infectious main title music set to great De Patie Freling animation, and romance and comedy in equal doses. The following year, Coleman would have himself a new lyricist, Dorothy Fields, and create one of his biggest successes, *Sweet Charity*. In the 1980s he returned to film scoring, doing three Sidney Lumet films in a row – *Garbo Talks*, *Power*, and *Family Business*. He continued writing for Broadway right up until his death at seventy-five in 2004.

The Art Of Love had an album on Capitol Records, but, in the style of the then-popular Henry Mancini albums, it was a re-recording with Coleman conducting and playing piano, doing all the main themes from the film but in more pop-style arrangements. However, three tracks on the album were very close to their film counterparts and those three tracks were orchestrated by the great Russ Garcia (*The Time Machine*). The rest of the tracks were orchestrated by Bob Bain. Since the album was designed more as an easy listening album than a score album, we've slightly rearranged the sequence to play more like the film. This is the first CD release of this delightful score and the original two-track album masters, which were housed in Capitol's vaults were in pristine condition.

So, here are two wonderful 1960s scores by two very different but equally terrific composers.

— Bruce Kimmel