

# The Verdict - The Seven-Ups - M\*A\*S\*H

## JOHNNY MANDEL

began his professional life in the 1940s, playing trumpet and trombone with various top bands and performers. In the late 1940s he began writing jazz compositions for folks like Woody Herman, Stan Getz, Count Basie, and Chet Baker. But in 1958, Mandel burst on the film music scene with his incredible jazz score for the Robert Wise film, *I Want to Live*, one of the greatest jazz scores ever written for the cinema. Over the years he's written many classic scores, such as *The Americanization of Emily*, *The Sandpiper* (which yielded the hit song, "The Shadow of Your Smile" for which he won an Academy Award), *Harper*, *The Russians Are Coming*, *The Russians Are Coming, Point Blank*, *Pretty Poison*, *M\*A\*S\*H* (both film and TV), *The Last Detail*, *Freaky Friday*, *Agatha*, *Caddyshack*, *Deathtrap*, and *The Verdict*, to name a few. All the while he continued doing arrangements for singers like Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee, Barbra Streisand, Diane Schurr, Shirley Horn and others, as well as writing pop tunes like "Where Do You Start" with Marilyn and Alan Bergman. As of this writing, he's thankfully still with us at 92. He has a completely unique film music voice, as you're about to hear in the two film scores we present here, along with the world premiere release of his work on the *M\*A\*S\*H* TV series.

## THE VERDICT

Upon its release, *The Verdict* was an instant critical and box-office hit. But the road there was anything but easy as is frequently the case in the world of Hollywood. The saga began when producers Richard Zanuck and David Brown purchased the rights to the novel of *The Verdict* by Barry Reed. Arthur Hiller, who'd had a lot of success by

then (*The Hospital*, *Plaza Suite*, *Love Story*, *The In-Laws*), was hired to direct, and David Mamet was hired to write the screenplay. Neither the producers nor Hiller liked Mamet's script, so Hiller left the project and the producers hired Jay Presson Allen to do a new script. Zanuck and Brown liked her script. Robert Redford was interested in taking on the lead but didn't like Allen's script, so he suggested hiring James Bridges to write and direct. Bridges wrote a few drafts of the script, but no one was happy with them and Bridges left the project, followed by Redford. Then Zanuck and Brown hired Sidney Lumet and they sent him all the script versions up to that point. In the end, he went back to Mamet's script. Paul Newman read it, liked it, and finally the film was on.

*The Verdict* tells the story of a once-promising attorney who was framed for jury tampering and who is now an alcoholic reduced to ambulance chasing. He takes on a case, and that case becomes a life-changer for him and a chance for redemption.

The fact that the producers initially did not like Mamet's script is mind-boggling because it's so obviously great, and Newman turns in one of his all-time best performances as Frank Galvin. One could not ask for a better supporting cast: Charlotte Rampling, Jack Warden, James Mason, Milo O'Shea, Lindsay Crouse, and Wesley Addy, all giving memorable performances. Nobody directed this kind of film better than Lumet, and it's one of his best, too.

Roger Ebert raved, "The screenplay by David Mamet is a wonder of good dialogue, strongly seen characters and a structure that pays off big in the courtroom scene... the performances, the dialogue and the plot all work together like a rare machine."

The film garnered five Oscar nominations – Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Director, Best Picture, and Best Adapted Screenplay. Sadly it lost

in all categories. Over the years the film has lost not an iota of its power – it's one of those films that you can just watch over and over again and never tire of.

For *The Verdict*, Mandel wrote a very short, very sparse, but hugely effective score. Running under fourteen minutes, but placed perfectly in the film, it's amazing how such a little amount of music can still work so powerfully and make such an impact. It's a somber score, but the cues have a dark beauty about them and his use of a choir is not the cliché it occasionally is in other scores. Sometimes less is more and Mandel's score for *The Verdict* is a perfect example of it.

## THE SEVEN-UPS

Rare is the film composer who hasn't had a score replaced at one time or another, especially from the 1970s on. And with *The Seven-Ups* it happened to Mandel.

Producer Philip D'Antoni had already had a huge success with the film *Bullitt*, starring Steve McQueen, and that film's car chase had become an instant classic. Then he produced another smash, *The French Connection*, starring Gene Hackman, Roy Scheider, and Tony Lo Bianco.

The car chase in that film became even more of an instant classic than the *Bullitt* car chase. The film also won the Academy Award for Best Picture.

While making *The French Connection*, Sonny Grosso (the film was based on the exploits of Grosso and Eddie Egan), told D'Antoni a story about a group of policemen who were only assigned felonies where the penalties were seven years and up. D'Antoni hired writers to write it and pitched it to Twentieth Century-Fox, who agreed to let him direct as well as produce.

D'Antoni brought back Roy Scheider

and Tony Lo Bianco to star, and populated the film with excellent New York character actors. While the movie has many memorable scenes and performances, it's never quite in the same league as *The French Connection*. Like its predecessors, it, too, contains a lengthy car chase and it's a doozy, designed by stunt coordinator and driver Bill Hickman, who'd done both *Bullitt* and *The French Connection*. It's a heart-pumping, brilliant sequence. It's amazing to watch these car chase sequences – today most of that would be done with CGI in a computer, but with these films what gives the chases their visceral power is that it's all very real and very dangerous. It's the highlight of *The Seven-Ups*. The film did reasonable business but did not replicate the success of *The French Connection*.

It's unknown why D'Antoni turned to Johnny Mandel for the score. Don Ellis had done *The French Connection* and had created a unique and dissonant score for that film. Mandel turned in a terrific score, but very different in style to Ellis's jagged kind of music. In the end, D'Antoni went back to Ellis, who provided an excellent score that was much more in keeping with the feel of *The French Connection*. But thanks to the new Twilight Time Blu-ray, one can see exactly how the film would have played with Mandel's score and, as always, that's fascinating to watch. Much of it works really well and at times it seems to give the film an emotional underpinning that the Ellis score never does. His choices for the scoring of the two car wash scenes are the most interesting, as they're the polar opposites of what Ellis would do. Mandel chose to have the first two-thirds of each of those scenes play with source music (his original source music) and only at the end does he bring in the dramatic scoring to give a huge punch to those moments. If the source music had been mixed in with the loud sounds of the car wash, that approach might have been weird enough to have worked, but it never got that far. Ellis' approach gives the entire sequence a surreal and suspenseful quality and that choice ob-

viously worked better for D'Antoni. But the Mandel score is really great on its own.

The previous CD release only had about nineteen minutes of it – here, for the first time, you get the complete score, close to forty minutes. You'll note some differences in track titles and layout – that's because the earlier version had some sound issues that could not be corrected, so a few things were moved around or presented in slightly different form. One example: The track called Antique Shop on the previous release was actually an overlay for the Main Title, but because that portion of the Main Title couldn't be used back then, it was simply included as a stand-alone track. The actual Antique Shop cue was edited into the Main Title on the previous release. While there are still a few instances of wow, most of this has much-improved sound thanks to the expert work of Mike Matessino.

## **M\*A\*S\*H – THE TELEVISION SERIES**

The 1970 film *MASH* was a smash. Irreverent and satirical, the Robert Altman film took audiences and critics by surprise. With a great screenplay by Ring Lardner, Jr. (based on the novel by Richard Hooker), and perfectly cast with such terrific actors as Elliot Gould, Donald Sutherland, Tom Skerritt, Sally Kellerman, Robert Duvall, Roger Bowen, Rene Auberjonois, and others, the film was an example of a movie being in the right place at the right time.

Two years later, writer/producer Larry Gelbart developed *M\*A\*S\*H* for television (the asterisks were not used for the film version, but were added for the TV series (the book had used them). Starring Alan Alda, Wayne Rogers, MacLean Stevenson, Gary Burghoff, Loretta Swit, Larry Linville, and others, *M\*A\*S\*H* hit the airwaves on September 17, 1972. It struggled for its first season, ratings-wise, but CBS wisely

moved it to Saturday nights following *All in the Family* for its second season and that turned the show around. Like several shows of that era, *M\*A\*S\*H* was groundbreaking TV. While it would undergo several major cast changes, the show was must-see TV right through to its final episode, "Goodbye, Farewell, and Amen," which aired on February 28, 1983, capping an eleven season run. That extended finale was, at the time, the most-watched and highest-rated single television episode in U.S. television history, with a record-breaking 125-million viewers.

As with the film, Johnny Mandel provided some of the scores for the TV show, along with his iconic title theme. For this world-premiere release, all of the episodes featuring Mandel scores are from season one.

— Bruce Kimmel