

THE APARTMENT THE FORTUNE COOKIE

“Shut up and deal.”

A marriage made in heaven, Wilder and Lemmon-wise.

In 1959, Billy Wilder made screen history with one of the funniest films ever made. Those who watch it today in the privacy of their home theaters might not understand what all the fuss was about, but seeing *Some Like It Hot* in its first-run engagement was an unbelievable experience – I know, I was there. Even as a young lad I had never heard laughs that long and that loud in a movie theater before, one huge laugh after another. I made note of the director's name, and also noted that he was the co-writer. Of course, I knew the leading players from many other films, and Jack Lemmon was a particular favorite of mine, and I thought his performance as Jerry/Daphne in *Some Like It Hot* was the funniest thing I'd ever seen (and I still think so).

Flash forward one year, and I noticed that my local theater had a new film from the co-writer and director of *Some Like It Hot*, and, best of all, it starred Jack Lemmon. Needless to say, I was at the theater on opening day. Well, *The Apartment* was a whole different beast. Yes, there were still huge laughs, but there was also a sadness, a melancholy, a yearning quality to the film that was very surprising to me, given my expectations after *Some Like It Hot*. But then, the best writers and directors always surprise you. I was quite taken with *The Apartment* and thought Mr. Lemmon once again gave a brilliant performance – he made everything look so easy and natural, and just had the best timing. I instantly fell in love with Shirley MacLaine, but it took me years to like Fred MacMurray because he played such a cad. Even when I saw him in *The Absent Minded Professor*, all I could think was, “Oh, he's that creepy guy from *The Apartment*.” Another thing I was immediately taken with was the music from *The Apartment*. I didn't know the name of its composer (by that time I made regular notes about composers I liked), but I'd heard the theme on the radio (as played by Ferrante and Teicher) and I'd even bought the album on which it appeared. Of course, I ran and got the soundtrack album after I'd seen the film, made note of its composer (Adolph Deutsch) and I saw the film several more times during its initial run. Only later did I learn that the famous theme was not by Deutsch at all – it was a piece called “Jealous Lover” by British composer Charles Williams, and had been featured in a 1949 film called *The Romantic Age*. Interestingly, the theme was so identified with *The Apartment*, that through an arrangement with the publisher,

the title was changed from “Jealous Lover” to “Theme From The Apartment.” *The Apartment* went on to receive several Academy Award nominations, including picture, screenplay, direction, art direction, editing, photography, sound, and nominations for Lemmon, MacLaine, and co-star Jack Kruschen. It took home statues for picture, screenplay, direction, art direction, and editing. The soundtrack album was nominated for a Grammy. Eight years after the film was made, *The Apartment* became a big hit Broadway musical called *Promises, Promises*, with a book by Neil Simon, and score by Burt Bacharach and Hal David.

Flash forward a few years later and I am, of course, at the Grauman's Chinese for the opening performance of Billy Wilder's *Irma La Douce* – once again starring Jack Lemmon. I sat there entranced, and, in fact, stayed for two more showings that very day. And once again, I thought Jack Lemmon was great, and once again I was smitten with Shirley MacLaine. The film got huge laughs from each audience I saw it with. Part of the reason I loved it so much was the musical score. This time I knew the composer – Andre Previn, who was one of my all-time favorites even at that young age. Every theme was fantastic, and the orchestration was beyond fantastic – only later did I find out that many of the themes were from the stage musical, and only a handful were by Previn (the score to the musical was written by the great French composer, Marguerite Monnot). But it didn't matter, because the sound of it was all Previn and all masterful and I bought and wore out several copies of the LP. The film was nominated for three Academy Awards (including one for Miss MacLaine) – it took home the prize only for Mr. Previn – Best Music, Scoring of Music, Adaptation or Treatment.

It was, by this time, abundantly clear that Mr. Wilder and Mr. Lemmon made magic together. Oh, the years seem not to have been kind to *Irma* in the way they've been kind to *Some Like It Hot* and *The Apartment*, but I like it just as much now as I did then. Whatever their comedic temperaments were, they just seemed to bring out the best in each other, and Wilder obviously brought out the best in whatever composer he was working with (and he worked with some of the best).

Flash forward a few years later, and I'm there for the opening performance of *The Fortune Cookie* – yes, directed and co-written by Wilder, and yes, starring Lemmon. Funnily, I'd stayed away from the previous Wilder film simply because it didn't have Lemmon in it and because it had gotten such awful reviews (*Kiss Me, Stupid*). While I didn't think *The Fortune Cookie* reached the heights of *Some Like It Hot*, *The Apartment*, or *Irma*, I did find it very funny and oddly endearing and, of course, it made Walter Matthau a star. He and Lemmon would soon go on to screen immortality as *The Odd Couple*. The music for *The Fortune Cookie* was once

again by Andre Previn (his fourth for Wilder, and his final original Hollywood film score), and once again I thought it was absolutely perfect. His themes were truly memorable and clever and really served the film beautifully. Thankfully, there was an LP, and, of course, like all the others, I bought it and played it to death. The film won an Oscar for Matthau, and was nominated for screenplay, photography, and art direction. Previn uses not only Cole Porter's great “You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To” in the score, but also his own “Second Chance” from *Two For The Seesaw*.

Wilder and Lemmon would make three more films together – *Avanti*, *The Front Page*, and Wilder's final film, *Buddy, Buddy* (the latter two also starring Matthau). *Avanti* was not well received but it's quite a good film, while *The Front Page* and *Buddy, Buddy* were not well received and, other than occasional flashes of the Wilder (and I.A.L. Diamond) brilliance, just aren't very good – to quote the famous last line of *Some Like It Hot* – “Well, nobody's perfect.” But those first four classic Wilder/Lemmon films were four of the best actor/director collaborations ever – pure magic in every way. And the scores for the three films represented on this CD are just as memorable as the films themselves.

The music for *The Apartment* and *The Fortune Cookie* was previously released on CD by Film Score Monthly, as part of a very big and very expensive box set called The MGM Film Music Treasury. That set was limited to 1500 copies and sold out quickly. So, those who couldn't afford it, missed it, or only wanted a handful of its scores were out of luck. So, it is with particular pleasure that we're able to bring this out as a single release, so that fans of these films and of their composers can finally have the music. We've also included a bonus track – the original main title music from *Irma La Douce*, a wonderful track that includes all the main themes from the film rolled into one delightful cue.

Since the previous release had liner notes about the specifics of each cue, you can read them at filmscoremonthly.com. Since both LPs were put together with great care and play very well, despite not being in film order, we've left them as they were released, save for the “Main Title” of *The Fortune Cookie*, which we've restored to its proper position as the opening track of that score.

— Bruce Kimmel