

# Paternity

By the time Paramount released *Paternity* in 1981, Burt Reynolds – thanks to his breakout performance in the 1972 film *Deliverance* – was a huge star. Through the 1970s he seemed to alternate between hits and misses – every time he'd appear in a less successful film, out would come a sensation like *Smokey and the Bandit* (1977) to keep him at the top of the heap. He appeared to enjoy switching back and forth between serious films and light comedies, and he was adept at both. The 1980s started off really well for him with *Smokey and the Bandit II* (1980) and *The Cannonball Run* (1981) – both big hits. His other two films from 1981 were *Sharkey's Machine*, a hard-hitting police drama which Reynolds also directed, and *Paternity*, one of his light and frothy comedies.

*Paternity* was the first produced screenplay by Charlie Peters, who would go on to write such films as *Blame It on Rio* and *Three Men and a Little Lady*. It concerns Buddy Evans (Reynolds), an events manager at Madison Square Garden and a confirmed bachelor, who suddenly decides he wants a son. He begins to interview surrogate mothers and, after many complications and misunderstandings (including Buddy trying to control every aspect of his surrogate's life), he realizes what's important. All turns out well in the end, except that he and the surrogate he marries don't have a son – every child they have is a girl.

For comic David Steinberg, who would go on to helm a handful of other movies before settling in to a very successful career directing hit TV shows, *Paternity* was a directorial debut. In addition to

Reynolds, the filmmakers assembled a wonderful cast – Beverly D'Angelo, Lauren Hutton, Norman Fell, Paul Dooley, Elizabeth Ashley and Juanita Moore. The film's poster and ad campaign were fun – a big image of Reynolds with the tag line, "He wants you to have his baby." The film received middle-of-the-road reviews and did only decently at the box office. But as with so many films of that era, it found a new and appreciative audience on TV, cable and home video, with people discovering the film was charming, funny, and endearing.

By 1981, David Shire was likewise well-established and in-demand – as a composer for film and TV. He had already written several classic scores (including *The Conversation*, *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three*, *Farewell, My Lovely*, *The Hindenburg*, *All the President's Men*, *Norma Rae* and others) and in 1980 he'd received his first two Academy Award nominations – both in the Best Song category – for *The Promise* and for *Norma Rae* (the latter of which took the prize). Shire began his career as a pianist in the bands of shows like *The Fantasticks* and *Funny Girl*. He was Barbra Streisand's accompanist for several years and conducted and arranged material for two of her TV specials, *Color Me Barbra* and *The Belle of 14th Street*. He and lyricist Richard Maltby Jr. started writing shows and songs together during college and, in addition to his prolific film career, he created several musicals with Maltby, including *Starting Here*, *Starting Now* (a revue of their songs), *Baby, Closer than Ever* (another revue of their songs) and *Big* (the musical version of the hit film).

In *Paternity*, Shire's gift for melody is evident from the first notes of the main title, which introduces the film's two main themes – "Love's Gonna Find You" and "Baby Talk." There are several variations of each throughout the film (in addition to some beautifully arranged source music cues), resulting in a score of great charm, beauty and fun.

With this CD we happily present the world premiere of the complete score. At the time of the film's release, Shire prepared an album master that never saw the light of day. To that master, we've added the few cues he didn't include (for time reasons, as usual in the days of LPs), plus some bonus tracks – all in beautifully recorded stereo.

— Bruce Kimmel