

On December 1, 1968, *Promises, Promises*, the musical version of Billy Wilder and I.A.L. Diamond's *The Apartment*, opened at the Shubert and took Broadway by storm. The show was such a breath of fresh air, with its hilarious book by Neil Simon, and pop-sounding and brilliant score by Burt Bacharach and Hal David. When that overture began, you knew the sound of Broadway had just changed forever – it was electric in the best way. Simon's book, while being pretty faithful to *The Apartment*, is its own particular wonder – filled with classic Simon one-liners, and also a surprising amount of pathos. The score, of course, is Bacharach and David at their best. The show became an instant smash and ran for 1,281 performances.

One of the reasons the sound of the show seemed so innovative was that Bacharach brought in Broadway's first recording-type mixing board. Also his use of four pit singers doing back-up vocals was unique. The show's orchestrations were by the young up-and-coming Jonathan Tunick, who honored the Bacharach sound while adding a few wonderful touches of his own. He once said to me, "Bacharach taught me how to do a rhythm chart." In fact, I think it's pretty safe to say that the "sound" of *Promises, Promises*, paved the way for the "sound" of the Stephen Sondheim score to *Company* in 1970, with its use of pit singers and those same electric rhythms.

For several years there was talk of a film version of *Promises*, but it never materialized. The show was done at *Encores* in New York in March of 1997 (starring

Martin Short, and directed and choreographed by Rob Marshall), and at *Reprise* in LA in May of 1997 (starring Jason Alexander). There have been a few productions in other venues over the years, but this thoroughly modern musical was generally considered dated and not with-it. Until *Mad Men*, that is. Then suddenly it seemed right for its first official Broadway revival, which opened in March of 2010, starring Sean Hayes and Kristin Chenoweth. To make its *Mad Men* connection stronger, the show was reset in the early 1960s, and then two other Bacharach and David songs were interpolated into the show – "I Say A Little Prayer" and "A House Is Not A Home" and from most reports did nothing to improve a show that didn't need the improvement.

The London production, starring Anthony Roberts, Betty Buckley, and Jack Kruschen (reprising his role from *The Apartment*, for which he received an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actor), opened in 1969 and ran 560 performances.

This is the first release of the Original London Cast Album, which has been mastered from the two-track album masters. It's quite a different listening experience from the Broadway cast album, and equally fun in its own different way. There are some interesting adjustments in the orchestrations occasionally, and naturally the recording balances are completely different than the original cast recording. The cast is superb, with Buckley really socking home her numbers, and Roberts truly charming and lovable. And it's great to have Kruschen in the role he created in

the film of *The Apartment*. We've put the songs back into show order, as they were heard on the Broadway and London stage.

The various *Promises, Promises* albums are all interesting – in addition to the US and UK cast albums, there was a studio cast recording in the UK and an Italian version (starring Johnny Dorelli and Catherine Spaak) that contained highlights from the show, with orchestrations that were different and yet similar. The interesting thing about the Italian version is that it's the only one of the recordings that contains the wonderful dance music that accompanied Michael Bennett's choreography for "A Fact Can Be a Beautiful Thing."

After the joy of being able to present the original cast album's original LP mix on CD for the first time, as well as the newly mixed version with the pitch-corrected vocals, it's an equally great pleasure to be able to present the London cast album, which has been something of a Holy Grail for fans of the show and score.

— Bruce Kimmel