

Paris When It Sizzles

What does it take for Paris to Sizzle? Well, add one part William Holden, one part Audrey Hepburn, a screenplay by George Axelrod (*Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *The Manchurian Candidate*), and direction by Richard Quine. In 1964, all these artists were at the top of their game. Add to them appearances by Noel Coward, Tony Curtis and Marlene Dietrich, along with the other major character, the City of Light, Paris, and you have a recipe for Sizzle indeed.

Based on the 1952 Julien Duvivier French film *Holiday for Henrietta*, the picture features Holden as Richard Benson, a playboy screenwriter who likes to wait until the last minute to write his screenplays, and does just that with a project he's doing for producer Alexander Meyerheim (Noel Coward). He hires a young woman from the typing bureau, Gabrielle Simpson (Audrey Hepburn), who arrives at his hotel room to type his script, only to find he hasn't written a single word of it. But Holden is taken with and inspired by Gabrielle and starts to come up with various ideas for the film he's calling *The Girl Who Stole the Eiffel Tower*. Of course, comedy and romance ensue, along with a heaping portion of movie business satire, poking fun at actors, studio heads, and allusions to the past roles of the two stars.

And yet critics were, for the most part, dismissive. It's hard to imagine why when watching it now, which is probably why it has a legion of fans who understand and appreciate the spoofery and the star wattage of Holden and Hepburn. The latter has never looked more beautiful, and the photography of Charles Lang and Claude Renoir

shows off both her and Paris in all their Technicolor beauty. In fact, the film is like a frothy, sparkling glass of champagne, a cream puff, and a real delight.

Helping to bring the film to effervescent life is the eclectic and fun score by Nelson Riddle. One can only imagine that Riddle had a field day with this score, getting not only to underscore the film proper, with its gorgeous themes, but also to underscore the movie parodies and to create some wonderful source cues. His main romantic theme is one of his best, and the score is kind of the poster child for how to write a great score for a comedy. As you will hear, it's a delight from start to finish and a perfect example of what nobody did better than Riddle.

Nelson Riddle began as an arranger in Hollywood for a number of great singers. In 1950 he was hired by Les Baxter to write arrangements for a Nat King Cole album on Capitol, beginning his long association with the label. And even though it was Baxter who received credit for Nat King Cole's huge-selling recording of "Mona Lisa," it was, in fact, Riddle's chart – Cole found that out and then sought out Riddle for more sessions. During those years Riddle became the main arranger for another Capitol recording artist, someone named Frank Sinatra.

Riddle was also involved in arranging for film and scored the film musicals of *Pal Joey* and *Li'l Abner*. His first original film score was in 1956 for the film *Flame of the Islands*, followed by the Ray Milland film *Lisbon* – for which he used his arrangement of the song "Lisbon Antigua," which had recently earned Riddle a gold record award. He

also scored *Johnny Concho*, *A Hole in the Head* and *Ocean's 11*, all of which starred Sinatra. He wrote a great score to Stanley Kubrick's film of *Lolita*, and then did more work for Sinatra with *Come Blow Your Horn*, *4 for Texas*, and *Robin and the 7 Hoods*. He also had a huge hit with his theme for the television show *Route 66*, and his other hit TV shows included *The Untouchables* and the first two seasons of *Batman*. He continued arranging for Sinatra and others on Sinatra's new label, Reprise. In 1983, Riddle had a comeback with his two albums of standards for Linda Ronstadt, *What's New* and *Lush Life*, bringing his unique arrangements to a whole new generation. Riddle passed away in 1985.

For this release, we present the entire score on CD 1, all beautifully restored by Chris Malone from elements in the Paramount Pictures vaults. On CD 2 we present alternates and bonus tracks, followed by the original Reprise LP soundtrack presentation.

— Bruce Kimmel