

Easy Living

Written by bluesever

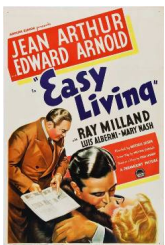
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Easy Living

Easy Living (1937) is a screwball comedy film, directed by Mitchell Leisen. Jean Arthur and Ray Milland shine in this comedy written by Preston Sturges. Mary Smith (Arthur) is a poor working girl who literally has a fortune dropped in her lap when a wealthy financier (Edward Arnold) tosses a sable coat out a window and it lands on her. Everyone automatically assumes she's his mistress, and soon her fairytale-like rags-to-riches lifestyle threatens a very real romance with an inept waiter (Milland). It's a "delightful comedy" full of misunderstandings that showcases high-society slapstick at its best!

Easy Living

Ralph Rainger and Leo Robin composed the song "Easy Living" for the film, and it has since become a jazz standard.



Easy Living, 1937

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Ralph Rainger won a scholarship to a prestigious music school but at the behest of his parents left after a year to work his way through law school, playing piano and accompanying vaudeville shows at night. His heart wasn't in his law practice so he left in 1928 to co-lead a Broadway pit orchestra. In 1930 he wrote a show hit with Leo Robin, beginning a prolific partnership that would last until his untimely death in a plane crash.



Ralph Rainger

Leo Robin studied law and drama, harboring a secret ambition to be a playwright, but he became a first-rate lyricist instead. In 1928 Robin went to Hollywood. He wrote *"Louise"* (1929) and *"My Ideal"* (1930), both famously sung by Maurice Chevalier in films. Robin's songs were ten times nominated for Oscars.



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Leo Robin

The songwriting pair took off for Hollywood and wrote for over 100 films between 1930 and 1942. But the duo's most memorable song, "*Easy Living*," was written in 1937 and has maintained its popularity to this day.



Ray Milland and Jean Arthur

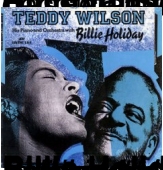
"*Easy Living*" is a slow ballad with straightforward lyrics that declare just how wonderful life can be when living for someone you love.

"**Easy Living**" did not immediately garner much public attention because it was only performed instrumentally in the original film. However, **Billie Holiday** recorded it with **Teddy Wilson's Orchestra** on June 1, 1937, and their version stayed on the charts for two weeks in July, 1937, peaking at fifteenth position.

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Billie Holiday (1915-1959) was an American jazz singer and songwriter. She is widely regarded as one of the greatest voices in the history of jazz music. Her unique tone and phrasing made her a pioneer in the field of swing music. She was known for her powerful and emotive performances, often characterized by her signature "trill" and "bent" notes. Her collaborations with pianist Teddy Wilson and saxophonist Art Tatum are among her most famous recordings. Her music has influenced generations of jazz and popular musicians.

The film 'Billie Holiday' (1959) is a biographical drama that tells the story of her life, from her early days in Harlem to her rise to fame and her struggles with addiction. It features a stellar cast, including Billie Holiday herself, Teddy Wilson, and Art Tatum. The film is a tribute to her artistry and her enduring legacy in the world of music.

Teddy Wilson (1916-1986) was an American jazz pianist and composer. He was a key figure in the swing era and was known for his elegant and sophisticated playing style. He was a frequent collaborator with Billie Holiday and other jazz greats. His music was characterized by its harmonic richness and its ability to blend seamlessly with the vocal lines of his partners. He was a true virtuoso and a pioneer in the development of the modern jazz piano.

The film 'Easy Living' (1935) is a classic Hollywood musical that tells the story of a young woman who falls in love with a man who is struggling to make his way in the world. The film is a celebration of the power of music and the transformative power of love. It features a memorable performance by Billie Holiday and is a testament to the enduring appeal of the musical genre.