

Notes on the Program

In early 1961, Audrey Hepburn penned a note to Henry Mancini:

I have just seen our picture — *Breakfast at Tiffany's* — this time with your score. A movie without music is a little bit like an aeroplane without fuel. However beautifully the job is done, we are still on the ground and in a world of reality. Your music has lifted us all up and sent us soaring. Everything we cannot say with words or show with action you have expressed for us. You have done this with so much imagination, fun, and beauty. You are the hippest of cats — and the most sensitive of composers!

The actress was expressing equal gratitude for the music and for the composer's support

of her performance as Holly Golightly. After all, he had written "Moon River," the film's signature song, with her in mind. For a scene that calls for Holly to sit on the fire escape, strum her guitar, and sing a long-remembered tune, Mancini had crafted a wistful melody gauged to Hepburn's limited vocal range. He'd studied, and appreciated, her not-necessarily-polished singing of Gershwin's "How Long Has This Been Going On?" from the 1957 film *Funny Face*. "I thought, you can't buy that kind of thing, that kind of simplicity," Mancini said of her ability to nonetheless express the song's lyrical message. He composed "Moon River" with a range of an octave plus one note, in the key of C. "You can play it entirely on the white keys." Lyricist Johnny Mercer provided the nostalgia-tinged lyrics.

Breakfast at Tiffany's

Henry Mancini



Born: April 16, 1924, in Cleveland, Ohio

Died: June 14, 1990, in Los Angeles, California

Work composed: 1961

World premiere: film premiered October 5, 1961, at Radio City Music Hall in New York

New York Philharmonic premiere: "Moon River," first performed December 31, 2006, Ted Sperling, conductor, Audra McDonald, soloist; this performance marks the premiere of the complete score

Most recent New York Philharmonic performance: "Moon River," instrumental arrangement, July 25, 2014, at Bravo! Vail in Colorado, Bramwell Tovey, conductor

Estimated duration: ca. 118 minutes

Audrey Hepburn as Holly Golightly

Studio executives weren't exactly bowled over; there was talk of cutting that "stupid song." But Hepburn stood her ground, exclaiming, "Over my dead body" — or a more provocative variation of the same. Mancini, in turn, considered Hepburn's original recording of "Moon River" his all-time favorite, later saying, "No one else has ever understood it so completely."

"Moon River" serves as the film's key musical theme, tracking with the main character's spirited high jinks and her drastic lows (or, as she puts it, bouts of the "mean reds"), as well as the secret behind Holly's veneer of big-city sophistication — that she is keeping at bay her humble roots in Tulip, Texas. The dichotomy is clear in the opening scene, as Holly, still dressed in the previous evening's finery, steps out of a taxi into the early morn-

ing light, coffee and Danish in hand, to peep the windows of Tiffany's. A solo harmonica — not an instrument typically associated with Fifth Avenue — introduces the "Moon River" melody, giving way to strings and wordless, smooth-jazz vocals.

The theme reappears in different guises: in bass flute, for a dream-like variation, as Holly shares the story of her hardscrabble childhood in a late-night confessional; as a cha-cha for party scenes; in low strings and minor key for her bittersweet reunion with Doc, the country vet she left behind; in discordant piano that opens into full-throated strings for the final scene.

Elsewhere, Mancini deploys jazz and Latin instrumentations: brass, saxophones, and bongos for increasingly chaotic party music; breathy sax and drum kit for a bump-and-grind

A Controversial Character

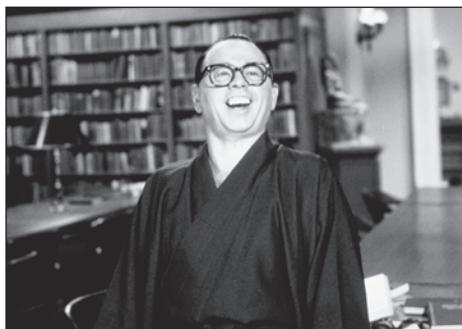
In bringing Truman Capote's 1958 novella *Breakfast at Tiffany's* to the screen, Paramount Pictures was most concerned about how to translate Holly Golightly's free-wheeling lifestyle (Capote characterized her as "an American geisha," not a call girl). The solution was to gloss over Holly's nebulous occupation (getting "\$50 for the powder room") and to throw questions of morality onto her neighbor, Paul, who is supported by his "interior decorator."

Little thought seems to have been given to a more troubling aspect of the film — Mr. Yunioshi. The decision to not only cast a Caucasian actor as Holly's upstairs neighbor, but to have the Japanese photographer portrayed by Hollywood veteran Mickey Rooney in yellow-face makeup, buck teeth, and thick glasses, calling out to "Miss Go-Right-ry," hits the most noxious of stereotypes.

Reviews of the time gave glancing mention to the characterization, but criticism has mounted over the years. Public objection resulted in the cancellation of a 2008 screening in Sacramento, California. In 2011 organizers of a viewing at New York's Brooklyn Bridge Park acknowledged the concerns raised in an online petition; they opted to show the film and include a documentary on Hollywood portrayals of Asian Americans.

For his part, Rooney long maintained that he had been hired by a comedy director, Blake Edwards, to play a broad character, and that people around the world told him how funny it was. He did recognize the issue in a 2008 interview, saying that if he had known it would have caused so much offense, "I wouldn't have done it."

Mickey Rooney as Mr. Yunioshi



striptease; a walking bass line in piano plus xylophone to evoke “heist” music; sparkling piano, vocals, and vibraphone for out-on-the-town excursions. Vibraphone plays a regular

role throughout, used as a shimmering cue to close scenes.

That kind of punctuation mark, and mix of styles, flowed naturally from Mancini, who’d

Breakfast on Location

“Oh, I love New York,” Holly sighs toward the end of *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, as she and the writer Paul take a break while walking among midtown skyscrapers. The city’s allure for this dreamer and schemer is encapsulated in such moments. While most interiors were filmed in Hollywood, some key scenes were shot on location, including:



Tiffany’s — The very first scene was the first filmed, early on October 2, 1960, outside of the store at Fifth Avenue and 57th Street. Tiffany’s also opened its doors for interior scenes.

Holly’s apartment — Today, a unit in the townhouse at 169 East 71st Street might be a little out of Miss Golightly’s reach. The building, consisting of two duplexes, sold in 2015 for \$7.4 million.



Central Park — Paul leads a possible stalker on a trail from the boat basin to the Naumburg Bandshell, where they share a box of Cracker Jack and find a ring inside.

New York Public Library — Paul introduces Holly to the main branch at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue (now the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building). They find his name in the (now defunct) card catalog and pick up a copy of his book in the Main Reading Room.



Seagram Building — Holly and Paul stop for a smoke on the plaza of the building on Park Avenue between 52nd and 53rd Streets. The 1958 landmark was designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe as headquarters for the Seagram’s distilling company, and until 2016 housed the Philip Johnson-designed Four Seasons restaurant.

From top: browsing at Tiffany’s; Central Park’s Naumburg Bandshell; sunglasses for the New York Public Library Main Reading Room

cut his teeth in the film scoring department of Universal-International Studios, working on music cues and arrangements for projects ranging from *Creature from the Black Lagoon* and *Abbott and Costello Go to Mars* to *The Glenn Miller Story* (which earned him an Oscar nomination in 1955) and Orson Welles's *Touch of Evil*. Musical curiosity was an early hallmark of the composer, born Enrico Nicola Mancini, to Italian immigrants in Cleveland, Ohio. The family soon moved to West Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh, where his father, Quinto, was a steelworker who played flute in local ensembles. Quinto introduced his young son to the piccolo, then flute. Along the way, Mancini began studying piano and became fascinated with the big-band orchestrations he heard on radio broadcasts, crafting his own hand-drawn staff paper to puzzle out how the arrangements were put together. "I have a feeling for the top line of a melody, but I think orchestrally," he wrote in his autobiography, *Did They Mention the Music?*

Mancini's skills earned him entry to The Juilliard School, winning over the audition panel with a "fantasy" on Cole Porter's "Night and Day," improvised on the spot. However, his Juilliard career was cut short when he was drafted into World War II, serving in the infantry and as an Army band member. Following the war, Mancini became an arranger for the re-formed Glenn Miller Orchestra, an experience that would prove invaluable for his work on the subsequent biopic of the band leader.

He first gained wide attention in 1958 with the popularity of his driving guitar and saxophone theme for the television series *Peter Gunn*. Show creator Blake Edwards suggested Mancini as composer for his upcoming

directing project, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. The film and its music were a hit. Mancini took home Oscars for both Best Score and Best Original Song, for "Moon River." The sound track also won a 1962 Grammy, and Mancini picked up additional Grammys for Record of the Year, Song of the Year, and Best Arranger for "Moon River." A string of film scores and songs that followed would make Mancini a household name: *Days of Wine and Roses*, *Charade*, *Dear Heart*, *The Pink Panther* (and *Pink Panther* sequels), "Baby Elephant Walk" from *Hatari!*; and dozens more.

It was *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, though, that ushered in a fresh, and contemporary urban style. Where past sound tracks had tended to evoke New York with clichés derived from Gershwin, wrote John Caps in *Henry Mancini ... Reinventing Film Music*,

Mancini saw the rousing, striving city of the 1960s — all glass and steel and plastic ... the populace as one big, youthful, jostling workforce — and made his theme for New York a piece of cool jazz-pop.

Instrumentation: four horns, four trumpets, four trombones, two alto saxophones (doubling piccolo, flute, alto flute, and bass flute), two tenor saxophones (doubling flute, alto flute, bass flute), baritone saxophone, timpani, harmonica, guitar (acoustic, rhythm, electric bass), drum set, vibraphone, bells, marimba, xylophone, triangle, suspended cymbal, guiro, cabasa, congas, bongos, timbales, cow bell, cymbal, harp, piano (doubling celeste), and strings, plus mixed chorus.

— Rebecca Winzenried,
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and Publications Editor