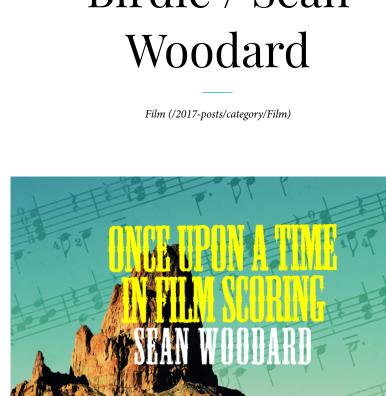
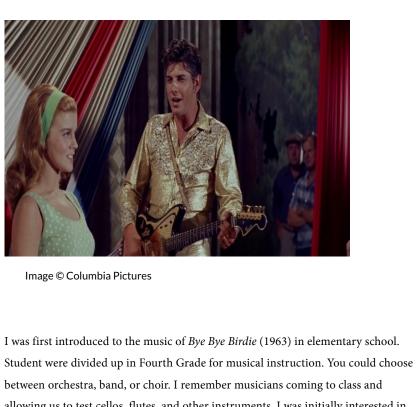
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## Jun 3 FILM / Once Upon a Time in Film Scoring / Bye Bye Birdie / Sean Woodard Film (/2017-posts/category/Film)



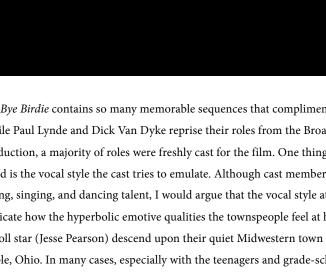




allowing us to test cellos, flutes, and other instruments. I was initially interested in orchestra. But the cost of purchasing a string instrument and taking private lessons on top of piano lessons would have been too cost prohibitive. So on the final day as a group before splitting up into our respective sections, I decided to join the choir. In a way, the decision made sense. I loved to sing, which made me happy. The music wasn't anything special, and our performances mainly consisted of us singing medleys with choreography, but who would have known that it would be a small

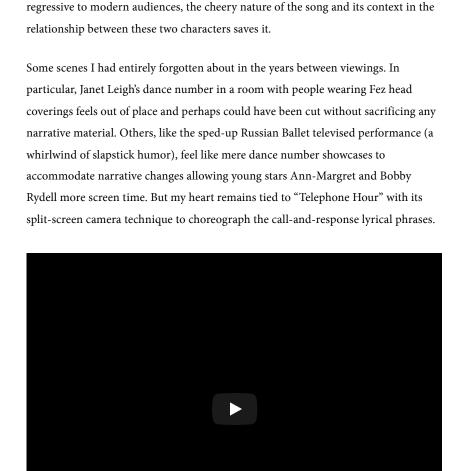
stepping stone to later participating in school, church, and community choirs? In Sixth Grade, our music teacher handed out packets of songs to choose from during each class period. Each set contained the lyrics. My two favorite songs to pick were "The M. T. A." by the Kingston Trio and "Telephone Hour" from the original Broadway cast recording of *Bye Bye Birdie*. A fellow student named Katrina shared my enthusiasm for "Telephone Hour." Every weekly class period we'd wave our hands to get our teacher's attention and then belt the song in our prepubescent voices. At one point, our teacher showed us the scene from the film version on the old VHS  $\,$ tape. It was a different arrangement to the recording we had sung, but the staging and visuals made the song even more fun. A couple months ago I had the chance to re-watch the 1963 Columbia Pictures

also hilariously spoofed by the cast and crew (https://youtu.be/5ryFcDoWEjg).



In the "We Love You Conrad" sequence, the tracks a group of marching and singing school girls. This is hilariously contrasted by eversing to the boys who tweak the lyrics to say how much they hate Conrad. The third verse finds both groups trading off musical phrases. The two groups then meet face-to-face and Hugo (musician Bobby Rydell), who is going steady with Kim (Ann-Margret), pleads with her not to appear on television and receive a kiss from Conrad Birdie before he goes off to war. The song possesses a chipper melody that can easily be sung in a round. (It's also more catchy, albeit less annoying, than getting "It's a Small World" stuck in your

The most memorable scene is perhaps that of Dick Van Dyke and Janet Leigh performing the quintessential piece, "Put on a Happy Face." The use of optical effects, animation, and projection compliments the musical number—whether they be happy faces drawn in the air that either crumble or switch to a frown, or a second projected Janet Leigh colored in pink that duets with Van Dyke's character. It all culminates into a perfectly choreographed sequence, complete with tap dancing. While the notion of asking a woman to smile may come across as insensitive or



Overall, Bye Bye Birdie remains a fun musical for the family. With its strong cast, music, and dance numbers, it still manages to hit the right notes and provide  $whole some\ entertainment\ for\ no stalgia-riddled\ people\ like\ me.\ Perhaps\ you'll\ also$ 

find yourself humming one of its tunes after the film ends.

Sean Woodard serves as the Film Editor for Drunk Monkeys and as a co-producer of  $the\ faith\ and\ spirituality-based\ Ordinary\ Grace\ (http://ordinarygrace.org/)\ pod cast.$ Focusing on a wide variety of interests, Sean's fiction, film criticism, and other writings have been featured in Horrorbuzz, NonBinary Review, Los Angeles Review of Books, Cultured Vultures, The Cost of Paper, and Los Angeles Magazine, among other publications. A native of Visalia, CA, he now resides in Orange County.

Film (/2017-posts/tag/Film), Once Upon a Time in Film Scoring (/2017posts/tag/Once+Upon+a+Time+in+Film+Scoring), Sean Woodard (/2017 $posts/tag/Sean+Woodard),\ Bye\ Bye\ Birdie\ (/2017-posts/tag/Bye+Bye+Birdie),\ Musical$ (/2017-posts/tag/Musical)

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Bye Bye Birdie contains so many memorable sequences that compliment the music. While Paul Lynde and Dick Van Dyke reprise their roles from the Broadway production, a majority of roles were freshly cast for the film. One thing to keep in mind is the vocal style the cast tries to emulate. Although cast members possessed acting, singing, and dancing talent, I would argue that the vocal style attempts to replicate how the hyperbolic emotive qualities the townspeople feel at having a rock 'n' roll star (Jesse Pearson) descend upon their quiet Midwestern town of Sweet Apple, Ohio. In many cases, especially with the teenagers and grade-school children, the tone possess a bright, almost nasally, quality with minimal vibrato. Pitch remains  $\,$ relatively correct, but the actors are allowed to imbue more emotion into their musical numbers. It resembles how many people, who may or may not be vocally trained, sing in real life. Come on, who hasn't sung in the shower or belted in their

adaptation and was hit by a wave of nostalgia. It was truly an enjoyable two hours where I could relax with a goofy grin on my face and sing along. The film version of Bye Bye Birdie opens and closes with a title song commissioned by director George Sidney that did not appear in the stage production. Ann-Margret appears in a yellow dress against a blue background saying how much she'll miss music star Conrad Birdie. The sequence was later paid homage in a Mad Men episode (https://youtu.be/-AgTnQok3RU) for a Patio Diet Cola advertisement and