

Easy Living

Written by bluesever

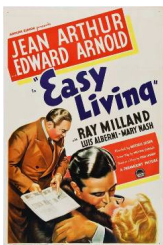
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Easy Living

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

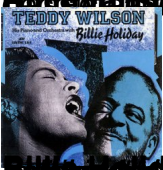
"*Easy Living*" is a slow ballad with straightforward lyrics that declare just how wonderful life can be when living for someone you love.

"**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 actress. She was known for her unique voice and her ability to improvise lyrics. She was born in Philadelphia and moved to Harlem, New York, where she began her career in the 1930s. She was married to Teddy Wilson, a pianist, and they performed together as a duo. She was also known for her collaborations with Duke Ellington and Count Basie. Her most famous songs include 'Strange Fruit', 'Billie Jean', and 'God Bless the Child'. She was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987 and the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1991. She died of liver cancer in 1959.