

WEDNESDAY MATINEE

Some suggested visuals.

Before script starts

Over a black screen, the sound of stilettos on a concrete floor. Fade in to follow the feet along a corridor. Cut to interior of a theatre. (The inside of the Astoria, but the fact that it's a cinema shouldn't be given away yet.) We see the empty rows of seats and the spotlights. Cross-cut between the feet backstage and the interior. Growing excitement. As Dolores (whose stilettos these are) reaches a door, travel up to take in her back. She throws the door open, sweeps in. The door shuts out the camera. On the door, the word 'Manager'.

1) Opening song

Dolores with her back to the door she has just entered, a la Greer Garson. Peabody at his books. First verse done in office, in ham '42nd Street' style. At the beginning of verse 2, Peabody drags Dolores out to the cloakroom, and starts dressing her in her usherette's coat, putting her torch in her hand, etc. Through the rest of the song, she follows him through the building as he gets the place ready, switching on Emergency Exit signs, putting cash in till, arranging the popcorn, winding the film. The song is actually sung by the characters onscreen to each other. Two points to get over: a) The physicality of the place, and its decay. b) Peabody has to do everything himself. The huge building is run on a shoestring, with a sense of rush and worry. Song ends 'Well, I s'pose I could try'. Transpose 'Tickets please..... we'll have to go over to Bingo' to after 2nd verse of 'Rainy Wednesday Afternoon'.)

2) Rainy Wednesday Afternoon

Extended instrumental introduction. Exterior of cinema. Close-ups of dripping leaves, puddles, trickles on windows. Very quiet, still and depressing. Deserted street. First verse starts as voice over. The only points at which characters sing onscreen is where they have individual lines. Shot of the exterior of the cinema. Pensioners are waiting outside, very cold and forlorn. Shot of them peering in, from inside foyer. As the temp increases, ~~xxxxxxdrawsxxxx~~ We see head and shoulders of Greaser, his hair flying in the wind. Pull back to reveal he is travelling on abus, on the boarding platform. Bus pulls up and greaser gets off, followed by Housewife, who carries large shopping bags and a squeazy mop she has just bought. She wrestles with this lot on the rain. The Dirty Old Man arrives on foot, dodging from doorway to doorway, to keep out of the rain. The schoolboy arrives on his bike, knocking over the Housewife. They have a row in mime. As the words of Verse 2 suggest, we follow the characters into the cinema, to getting their tickets and into the auditorium. Dolores both sells and tears tickets, suggesting a pretty pointless ritual. Over 'it's damp and chilly and it's raw outside', in Verse 2, the Critic ~~xxxx~~ gets out of a battered MG, and sweeps past the camera, large-brimmed hat, cigarette-holder, flying scarf. The camera focuses on the upstairs window of a house opposite, where the Old Lady is through her lace curtains at the people arriving. The camera then turns and follows the Critic into the auditorium. He flourishes a press card at Dolores; she is suitably impressed. By now we are in the auditorium for verse 3, where the action is suggested by the words; settling down, getting out sweets, looking round at other members of the audience, greeting, reacting. The film is never seen, merely suggested by flickering lights and muffled soundtrack (used mainly in the gaps between songs as the camera pans from one character to another.

3) Wedded Bliss

Over the intro music, muffled soundtrack. Dialogue in whispers, shots of heads looking at the screen. The characters when they start singing, do so directly to the camera taking the audience into their confidence. (Note: Since nobody has yet made a successful television musical, there aren't any conventions for it. This means we're going to have to make our own. The problem is how to make individual character songs credible in the context. To do this I've adopted two conventions. One, used here, I call buttonholing later on. Though the ways the characters attract the camera's attention will vary according to the song. The other is the voice over, used for the private, interior songs. Probably the best thing to bear in mind is certain musical adverts, which seem to have the measure of this (see film.) For the intro they sit as if posed for a Golden Wedding photo. At the beginning of verse 2, and till the end of it, we fade from the cinema to stills of their life together - a photo album of holidays, weddings, children, funerals etc. Photos go from sepia to black and white to colour, as we get nearer the present time. Photos are sentimental, but not too much so. Verse 2 is addressing the camera again. Chorus 3 is back to the first sequence. Last chorus addresses camera, settling into Derby and Joan tableau.

as at the start for 'We're a model of man and wife'. More muffled soundtrack, pans along the engrossed faces till it reaches the critic. Sudden flash of mat, his face as he lights a cigarette.

4) Critic's Choice

Another direct-to-camera song. Over the intro, Critic scribbles notebook before addressing us. At the end of the first chorus, he leans back and looks at the projector. The camera follows his look, travelling up the flickering beam to projector lens. The flickering stops. The projector is now a spotlight. Camera travels back down the beam, and the Critic is in the light. We are on an MGM musical set, bare, with an armchair. The rest of the song is a dance routine, and will need a choreographer. In it the Critic is showered with awards and publications from off-camera. He plays to cardboard cutouts of film stars (whose lack of reaction emphasises the way he is deluding himself.) He knocks them over between verses 4 and 5. At the end (Is everybody clear?) he slugs smugly into the MGM armchair. Dissolve to critic in his cinema seat, staring into the distance, his notebook in his lap.

5) Escapist

Pan from Critic to Schoolboy. More soundtrack. Schoolboy is wrapped in dreams, his song is voice-over. He never stops eating while onscreen throughout the show. Hold on his face, eating through Versel, to 'Give you things to live up to'. Dissolve to council semi, with mother ticking him off, him dinking, father coming home, heavy interview, him being sent to his room. Back to cinema for 'that Tim.....do to him'. His face is contorted sadistically, and he has pummelled the crisp bag to a pulp. 'If I could be James Cagney' to 'Conventry attack' is a parody film sequence of the St. Valentine's day Massacre, but played by him and Tim in school uniforms. 'Revenge is sweet' takes us back to the cinema, Schoolboy is transfixed by his fantasy, a chocolate bar just about to go into his mouth. He shakes fantasy off at 'If only...' starts eating again, squirming sulkily in his seat. This pattern repeats with each verse. Verse 2 - school replaces home, teachers for parents, being sent to Headmaster, caning. This film parody is a Western saloon bar shootout, also in school uniforms. We come back and the chocolate bar is crushed and sticky in his hand. Next seen eating popcorn. Third verse from 'you're no good at karate' shows girls ragging him at school, nicking his cap and throwing it around. They stop and gawp as Tim goes past god-like, Beauty on his arm. Film sequence is slow motion 6m. dollar man parody, with schoolboy racing up the field as the words describe. At end popcorn has fallen to the floor, and he starts picking up bits off the floor and eating them.

6) The Idol

The Housewife buttonholes the camera forcibly. She bounces in her seat with excitement. Soundtrack suggests the film is at a romantic bit, and she is bursting to tell all. At 'The thought of him makes.....and say', she looks dreamily at her mop. Camera dissolves from a soap in the cinema to mop and suds on the floor of the kitchen. Chorus 1 is voice over sequence of her doing housework; she can't concentrate on it because she keeps going into a trance. Hence milk boils over, she hovers the cat, iron burns clothes, etc. She emerges grubby and exhausted. Dissolve back to cinema at beginning of Verse 2. She is pawing at the Critic in her passion. He is not pleased. At end of verse 2, back to the semi. As she is up to her elbows in flour, she suddenly looks up and out of the window, suffused with joy. Rod is coming down the road, in cowboy gear. Cut between the two. She flings open the kitchen door. He comes in, on his horse, dismounts, takes her in his arms. In dance sequence at end of chorus 2, she dances in billowy chiffon with Rod in spangled Roy Rogers outfit. Over chorus 3, he leads her to his horse, puts her behind him in the saddle, and they ride into a (studio) sunset. At 'If you'll only say I'm yours', we're back in the cinema, where Housewife is out of control, in tears, reaching up to the screen like a Beatle fan at the height of Beatlemania. Critic is most peeved and motions her to sit down.

7) Chirp

Rhythm section is created by crisps (Fem.OAP), coughs (M. OAP), nose running (Schoolboy) and spitting (Dirty Old Man) The organs in question should be seen in huge close-up, cutting in rhythm. The action is all in the cinema, and dictated by the words.

8) Interval

Background suggests the adverts you get in cinemas. Script still to be written. Lights come up, Dolores hastily stops snogging with the Greaser, adjusts her bra strap,

and picks up her tray. Shots of seats tipping up. 'Intermission' sign flashes on the screen. Pensioner goes to buy ices, followed by Housewife. Schoolboy goes to the loo, followed by the Dirty Old Man. Roker starts to carve his name on the wall, Critic tries to dissuade him pointing out the splendid architecture. Roker gives him a mouthful. OAP thinks he's been overcharged, Dolores says it's right. They argue. Housewife starts getting annoyed at not having an ice. Schoolboy comes back out of the loo, and as he passes Dolores he nicks an ice. Female OAP joins in argument with Critic. Dolores discovers theft, chases schoolboy, followed by the Housewife who is still trying to catch her attention. Quick cut shot to Peabody frantically winding film up. Dolores forces money out of schoolboy. Dirty Old Man comes back out of the loo, sees trouble Schoolboy is in, and goes back in again. Cut shot of Peabody wrapped in miles of film. Female OAP and Male OAP commiserate about cost of living. Roker threatens Critic, who backs off with as best grace he can. Housewife finally gets her ice. As Critic passes Schoolboy, he flicks cigarette ash onto his ice cream. Schoolboy seethes helplessly. Peabody finally manages to rewind film. As lights go down, the Old Lady comes in, almost unnoticed.

9) Outcast

Over the intro, Dirty Old Man comes out of the loo, skips down the aisle. The camera follows him. He addresses it furtively at first, then with increasing confidence. Most of the song takes place in the cinema, except 'Flash, flash, flash', which is a film parody of the Trolley Song from Meet Me in St. Louis, and Some Enchanted Evening, which is in Romantic Laze across a crowded room etc. Sensationalist press headlines of the most absurd kind should be used over 'Exhibitionist/child molester/baby snatcher'. Last section of each verse 'But it's lots of fun' etc very confidential and oddly strong direct to camera, very still, in closeup. During music at the end of the song, he skips to seat next to schoolboy, and sits winking at him. Schoolboy is uncomfortable.

10) Greaser

First verse in cinema. Greaser sings to camera while groping Dolores (rather unwilling). First verse he is up in the aisles and swaggering. Dolores is the backing vocal, female OAP for all her disapproval has a bit of 'if-I-was-fifty-years-younger' about her. Male OAP disapproves. Second verse as voice over. Dissolve to Bullring Shopping Centre or similar. Greaser wandering cockily round, enjoying the effect he has on other shoppers in his gear. We see him sitting astride a motor bike in a bike shop, and getting shooed off by manager. Regretfully goes away. Into a supermarket. He nicks a trolley and starts riding it outside. Second chorus, back to the cinema, where he is ripping up a seat as he sings. Backing vocal is Dolores and Female OAP. Third verse is back to shopping centre, where he is still riding trolley. Cashier of supermarket notices that it is missing, and chases him. He runs into an Old Lady, who is furious and starts hitting him over the head with her umbrella. He runs off howling. Cashier reclaims the trolley huffily. Third chorus we're back to the cinema, but it is fantasy, lights up, no film showing. Dolores, OAP, Critic and Housewife are onstage doing chorus routine, Greaser is apotheosised as fall Rock Star. Rest of song filmed as for 'Top of the Tops'. Male OAP and Dirty Old Man join chorus line for 4th Chorus, and Schoolboy appears above doing high soprano line for Chorus 5. At end, Cinema turns back to reality, film is running, and they are all watching the movie silently as if nothing has happened.

11) Partner

An internal song, sung entirely as voice over. Camera pans to the late arrival, who looks at the film with eyes drooping. She is about to fall asleep. Fade to series of stills of the interior of her house, shabby and deserted. Slummy kitchen. Old bedstead, patched quilt. Lace curtains, peeled plaster. Finally her with kettle in her hand, filling a hot-water bottle and looking distressed up at damp patch on the ceiling. Stills are black and white. Fade back to cinema at end of the verse, she is asleep, snoring. She is gently prodded awake. Fade back to stills after two lines of verse 2, to show more of her activities. Queue in the Post Office, pension book in hand; in corner shop, persuading the grocer to let her have a quarter of a pound of butter. Having a cup of tea in a sleazy cafe, finally outside a hospital gate, looking up at the sign. Back to cinema at end of verse as before. Stills for 3rd verse from 3rd line. Along hospital corridor, in doctor's room. Behind screen, stripped to her skin, looking saggy and very old. Examination. Grave doctor. Leaving hospital. Fade back to the cinema at the end. Critic goes to shush her, but housewife stops him charitably.

Camera Action

ii) Film soundtrack suggests movie is going to a climax. Here characters actually sing to each other, as in 'Quiet', and the visuals are tied purely to the action in the cinema as suggested by the lyrics. A lot of closeups of reactions.

Wasn't it a lovely movie?

ii) At housewife's screen, ^{the End} ~~the End~~ appears onscreen and everyone is very aware of the way things have got out of hand. Main chorus done as voice-over, as in 'Rainy Wednesday Afternoon', with lines of individual characters sung onscreen. It is followed by the film credits, which are the 'Wednesday Matinee' credits, and as the character's names appear, we see them from the back silhouetted against the credits, then making for the exit. In verses 3 AND four we follow them out into the foyer and out down the road. Dolores shuts the doors and the camera lingers on the road, deserted and forlorn again. We follow her again into the cinema, now quiet, down the aisle, taking off her ushettee coat. She notices the old lady asleep. Wakes her up, leads her to the side door over the last dialogue. Shuts it behind her. Camera stays on exit door for reprise of last song's last verse and any remaining credits.