

the girl can t help it

The Girl Can't Help It is a classic film that continues to resonate with audiences more than six decades after its release. Directed by Frank Tashlin and starring Jayne Mansfield, the movie is a vibrant celebration of rock and roll culture in the 1950s. Not only is it a significant piece of cinematic history, but it also serves as a cultural touchstone that highlights the era's music, fashion, and social dynamics. In this article, we will explore the film's plot, its impact on popular culture, the performances of its stars, and the lasting legacy of "The Girl Can't Help It."

Overview of "The Girl Can't Help It"

"The Girl Can't Help It," released in 1956, tells the story of Jerri Jordan, portrayed by Jayne Mansfield, who is the girlfriend of a mobster. The plot centers around Jerri's struggle for recognition as a singer, as her mobster boyfriend is more interested in her looks than her talent. Desperate to help Jerri achieve her dreams, her boyfriend hires a down-on-his-luck publicist, Tom Miller, played by Tom Ewell, to transform her into a star.

As the story unfolds, Jerri's charm and beauty captivate audiences, leading to a series of hilarious and romantic events that showcase the era's vibrant music scene. The film features a host of legendary rock and roll performers, making it a must-see for music lovers.

Key Themes

Music and Celebrity Culture

One of the most prominent themes in "The Girl Can't Help It" is the intersection of music and celebrity culture. The film showcases numerous musical performances, highlighting the rise of rock and roll during the 1950s. Some notable acts featured in the film include:

- Fats Domino
- Little Richard
- The Platters
- Gene Vincent

These performances not only serve as entertainment but also reflect the changing landscape of American music and the burgeoning celebrity status of rock and roll artists.

Gender Roles and Female Empowerment

"The Girl Can't Help It" also engages with themes of gender roles and female empowerment. While Jerri begins as a character defined by her beauty, her journey throughout the film reveals her desire to be taken seriously as a musician. This aspect of her character resonates with the feminist movements that emerged in the following decades, as women began to assert their independence and challenge traditional roles.

Impact on Popular Culture

Fashion and Style

The film is often remembered for its striking visual style and the fashion choices of its lead actress, Jayne Mansfield. Known for her glamorous appearance and signature style, Mansfield became an icon of 1950s fashion. Her outfits in the film, which include stunning dresses and trendy hairstyles, influenced a generation of young women and helped to define the aesthetic of the era.

Influence on Later Films

"The Girl Can't Help It" has had a lasting influence on subsequent films, particularly those that explore themes of rock music and youth culture. Many movies of the 1960s and beyond have drawn inspiration from its style and narrative structure. For example, films like "Grease" and "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" incorporate similar elements of music, comedy, and romance, echoing the formula that made "The Girl Can't Help It" a success.

The Performances

Jayne Mansfield as Jerri Jordan

Jayne Mansfield's performance as Jerri Jordan is a standout aspect of the film. With her captivating screen presence and comedic timing, Mansfield

delivers a memorable portrayal of a woman striving for success in a male-dominated industry. Her ability to blend humor with vulnerability makes Jerri a relatable and endearing character.

Tom Ewell as Tom Miller

Tom Ewell's portrayal of Tom Miller adds depth to the film's narrative. As the publicist who believes in Jerri's talent, Ewell's character represents the everyman struggling to navigate the complexities of show business. His interactions with Jerri offer both comic relief and a touch of romance, enhancing the film's overall appeal.

Legacy of "The Girl Can't Help It"

"The Girl Can't Help It" remains an enduring classic, celebrated for its contributions to film and music history. Its unique blend of comedy, romance, and rock and roll has left an indelible mark on popular culture. The film's legacy can be seen in various aspects:

Musical Homage

Many artists and filmmakers have paid homage to "The Girl Can't Help It" over the years. From music videos to theatrical productions, the film's influence continues to inspire new generations of creators. The iconic title track, performed by Little Richard, has been covered by various artists, further cementing its place in music history.

Preservation and Recognition

In recognition of its cultural significance, "The Girl Can't Help It" was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress in 2002. This honor reflects the film's status as an important work that captures the spirit of its time.

Conclusion

In conclusion, **The Girl Can't Help It** is more than just a film; it is a vibrant snapshot of a transformative era in American music and culture. Through its engaging plot, memorable performances, and lasting impact, the film continues to entertain and inspire audiences today. As we revisit this classic, we are reminded of the power of music, the importance of female

empowerment, and the enduring appeal of rock and roll. Whether you're a fan of vintage cinema or simply looking for a delightful film experience, "The Girl Can't Help It" is a timeless treasure that should not be overlooked.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the plot of 'The Girl Can't Help It'?

'The Girl Can't Help It' is a 1956 musical comedy film about a struggling publicist who tries to turn a beautiful but talentless woman into a star to win back his ex-girlfriend.

Who stars in 'The Girl Can't Help It'?

The film stars Jayne Mansfield as the lead character, Jerri Jordan, and Tom Ewell as the publicist, along with notable cameos from famous rock and roll artists of the time.

What is the significance of 'The Girl Can't Help It' in cinema history?

The film is significant for its role in popularizing rock and roll music in cinema and showcasing the charm of Jayne Mansfield, making it a classic of the genre.

How did 'The Girl Can't Help It' influence pop culture?

The film influenced pop culture by introducing a vibrant style of music and fashion of the 1950s, and it has inspired numerous references and parodies in later films and shows.

What are some memorable musical performances featured in the film?

The film features memorable performances from artists like Fats Domino, Little Richard, and The Platters, contributing to its status as a musical landmark.

Was 'The Girl Can't Help It' a box office success?

Yes, 'The Girl Can't Help It' was a box office success and received positive reviews for its music and comedic elements, solidifying its place in 1950s cinema.

What themes are explored in 'The Girl Can't Help It'?

The film explores themes of fame, love, and the superficial nature of celebrity culture, as well as the challenges of the entertainment industry.

Has 'The Girl Can't Help It' been preserved or restored?

Yes, 'The Girl Can't Help It' has been restored and preserved as part of the National Film Registry due to its cultural, historical, and aesthetic significance.

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