



Projecting the Archive

Sleeping Car

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Directed by: Anatole Litvak

Presented by: Gaumont-British Picture Corporation

Distributed by: Gaumont-Ideal Ltd.

Producer: Michael Balcon *

Unit Production Manager: G. Boothby

Production Personnel: R.B. Wainwright,

Angus MacPhail, George Gunn

By [Screenplay]: Franz Schulz, Anatole Litvak

Scenario: Michael Gordon

Dialogue: Roland Pertwee

Photography: G. MacWilliams, Gunther Krampf

Film Editor: Hann Rust

Art Direction: Alfred Junge

Jewellery By: Lacleche Frères

Theme Song: Noel Gay

Musical Score: Louis Levy

Lyrics: Clifford Grey

[Sound] Recordist: A.C. O'Donoghue

Recorded by: British Acoustic Film

[Recorded] at: Shepherd's Bush Studios

Cast:

Madeleine Carroll (Anne Howard)

Ivor Novello (Gaston Bray)

Laddie Cliff (Pierre Concombe)

Kay Hammond (Simone)

Claude Allister (Baron Delande)

Stanley Holloway (Francois Dubois)

Ivor Barnard (Durand)

Vera Bryer (Jenny, Anne's maid)

Johnny Singer (page boy) *

Yvonne Dulac *

Pat Fitzpatrick *

Bobbie Comber *

UK 1933

82 mins

35mm

* Uncredited

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+ intro by Michael Williams, author of *Ivor Novello: Screen Idol*

Train attendant Gaston has a girl in every city and juggles them with farcical results. Ivor Novello effortlessly made the transition from silent to sound stardom and this romantic comedy demonstrates how perfectly he suited the genre. Anatole Litvak directs with a light touch and more than a nod to the tradition of European filmmaking that provided his training. The Continental feel is cemented by the cinematography of Günther Krampf and Alfred Junge's art direction, including a replica of a luxurious train on the set at Shepherd's Bush. It's a film so lavish, even the jewellery gets a credit.

Contemporary reviews

Judged by British standards, and taking into consideration the drawing power of Ivor Novello and Madeleine Carroll, who are starred, *Sleeping Car* is first grade. It is a splendid production with attractive Parisian settings, with first-rate lighting and direction. Editing would promote speed and make for entertainment. The story is an implausible *Taming of the Shrew* yarn of a wealthy young widow who falls for the rush love tactics of a railway conductor while travelling on his Continental train. Film is overboard on 'atmosphere'. Novello is accepted here as a ladies' man. and Madeleine Carroll is beautiful. Dialogue is designed to be witty, but is interspersed with old-time wisecracks. A lot of money has been spent on this picture, and there is every indication that it will yield a handsome profit.

Variety, 27 June 1933

For various reasons this might almost be called a comedy *Rome Express*. It begins and ends in a Continental train, it very nearly has an all-star cast (counting stage stars with film stars), and it has all the technical polish which smoothed the passage of its more serious forerunner from the same studio. But the comparison cannot be stretched any further. *Rome Express* was pure melodrama. This is pure frivolity... It is a curious tale, because it starts off as a flirtatious comedy and reaches its climax somewhere in the more dubious by-ways of bedroom farce. But there are some bright moments between the light comedy beginning and the farcical finish-up ... The film has comedy, if not wit, and piquant characters, if not real people. Pictorially, it is lavish and ingenious.

John Gummie, *Film Weekly*, 16 June 1933

Sleeping Car is a gay comedy with a wealth of laughter arising from its many original and piquant situations. The story deals with the attendant of a sleeping car who has a sweetheart at every station until one day he meets the one girl. The situations that must be unravelled before this carefree young man can settle down with the lady of his heart will keep you in constant chuckles of delight. I recommend *Sleeping Car* to everyone with a sense of humour.

Sunday Pictorial, June 1933