

Volume
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Council Chamber of the Town Hall, 104 Ferguson St, Williamstown, 7.30pm, Wednesday 28th May, 2025.

All That Heaven Allows

Synopsis: Middle-class widow, Cary Scott (Jane Wyman), falls in love with the groundsman (Rock Hudson) of her estate. Her children and country club friends do not approve....



Review: *All That Heaven Allows* is one of cinema's great pictorial expositions with everything from the impeccable set design (Cary's frosty family home compared to the gorgeous, homely mill that Ron renovates) to Douglas Sirk's amazing eye for costume and colour attesting to his reputation as the master of mise en scène. The expressionistic use of colour is particularly memorable: from the vibrant reds of Cary's lipstick and dinner dress that signify her yearning and blossoming, to a deliriously melancholic piece of costume – the turquoise shawl Cary wears when purchasing a Christmas tree off Ron, with its refulgent colour almost howling through the screen in sadness.

Sirk wasn't just an expert in design and décor though as he conjures some wonderfully literate cinematography too. The opening and closing crane shot of the small, suburban town somehow manages to encapsulate the narrative's theme of artfulness (the trees are depicted in all their autumnal splendour) versus mitigation (Cary's yearnings will always be compromised by the society she lives in). The most memorable use of clever framing is the key thematic moment where the camera moves in on Cary's despairing face, staring back at herself from the television screen at Christmas, symbolising that [her de facto domestic entrapment is complete.](#)

Sure, Sirk does prescribe his characters a slightly rushed happy ending (an error Todd Haynes' pseudo-adaptation *Far from Heaven* was to rectify), but the story still has worth as a highly emotive parable of self-determination, and the moral value of following your heart and intuition – not what society believes you should be doing. (*Patrick Nabarro, April 2013*)

If you'd like to delve deeper into a scene from the movie follow this link...

<https://pnabarro.wordpress.com/2013/12/18/scene-analysis-all-that-heaven-allows/>

A second review of All That Heaven allows (because we can)

Rock Hudson and Jane Wyman were so successful in Douglas Sirk's *Magnificent Obsession* that they all reteamed for ***All that Heaven Allows*** (1955) as Sirk became Universal's house melo-dramatist. He turned improbable plots into social commentary and pulling back the covers of middle class hypocrisy with an ironic visual style and an almost operatic emotional pitch. ***All The Heaven Allows*** is one of his grandest films, charting the "forbidden" romance of a middle class widow and society matron with her much younger gardener.

Young hunk Rock is a strapping son of mother nature, a beefcake naturalist who woos middle aged, middle class widow Wyman to the snooty disapproval of her conservative social circle and embarrassment of her self-centered children. Wyman discovers a new life with his open-armed friends and back-to-nature lifestyle, but struggles with life-changing decisions in the face of social pressure and vicious gossip (the always excellent Agnes Moorehead is part of the clucking suburban chorus).

Living the Henry Thoreau dream, Rock's personal Walden is a rustic country cabin by a bubbling brook, a dream house lit by a giant picture window overlooking an idyllic countryside where deer pose just outside the window. Wyman's elegant but sterile suburban home transforms into a tomb after she sacrifices her love for the "good name" of her children and they in turn abandon her to the trappings of lonely respectability. She sees her future in the pale, colorless reflection of the TV screen her kids give her as a consolation prize. But don't despair just yet: Sirk's heroine's are dynamic and resourceful and no Sirk melodrama ends without a heart-tugging, over-the-top twist.

True to form, Sirk centers the film on his heroine. Hudson is really a dimensionless character, part saint and part socially-oblivious idealist. For all his understanding of life, he forgets how it takes someone to make the leap, especially someone with ties. It's Wyman who goes through the emotional crisis and emerges the dynamic character, and she gives a marvelous performance.

German director Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who championed up Sirk as a master and a mentor, remade the film as *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* decades later.

The film was added to the National Film Registry in 1995.

Sean Axmaker streamondemandathome.com

Supper Roster

MONTH	MEMBER(S)	MONTH	MEMBER(S)
		May 28 <i>All That Heaven Allows</i>	Jane Dufty
June 25 <i>The Terminal</i>	Jayne & Mary	July 30 <i>I'm Your Man</i>	Sue Searls
August 27 <i>Red, White & Brass</i>	Jake & Ollie Biram	September 24 <i>The Colour of Paradise</i>	Vicki & Peter
October 29 <i>On A Clear Day</i>	Doug Bews	November 26 <i>The Long, Long Trailer</i>	Dee Falloon

Starbox Results

	5	4	3	2	1	Average
The Train	17	16	4	1	0	4.3

To watch a trailer (& read more) head to the 2024 program on our website

[https://: www.williamstown-film-society.org](https://www.williamstown-film-society.org)