

Document Citation

Title	[Unfaithfully yours]
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Publisher name not available</i>
Date	
Type	book excerpt
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Unfaithfully yours, Sturges, Preston, 1948

In *Unfaithfully Yours* (1948), Sturges makes much the same statement. When a symphony conductor (Rex Harrison) believes that his wife is having an affair, he concocts plans to do away with his wife while he conducts a concert. As each musical piece is played, the camera is slowly drawn into a huge close-up of the conductor's eye. From this point the film becomes an externalization of his elaborate and insane schemes to revenge the imagined infidelity. All the characters created by Sturges in this film are frantic and explosive; but Harrison, as he wanders around his apartment and considers the folly of infidelity, is a particularly acute parody of a driven man. *Unfaithfully Yours*, produced at 20th Century-Fox, is actually the comic embodiment of the noir spirit, both in visualization and narrative implication. Of all the films discussed that contain indications of the noir influence, none rivals *Unfaithfully Yours*, for as Sturges moved away from the intricate dialogue scenes that characterized his earlier films, he moved into the visual style of film noir. Each segment of the film ends morbidly; there is no comic compromise in these vignettes. They are almost noir set pieces. Because the audience knows that they are not real, the absurdity and grotesque complications of the grisly murders merely embellish the satire. But again the underlying effect and the underlying seriousness of Sturges's narrative statement remain unaltered.

Obviously, neither Sturges nor Anthony Mann nor John Brahm, no matter how cohesive their personal vision, could transform a genre piece into a film noir. What the work of such distinguished directors, writers, photographers, and actors both in and out of the noir cycle confirms, is not merely the pervasive impact of what may be termed the noir outlook on American culture but also the ability of film-makers to adapt elements of the noir style to other forms. The results, whether viewed as complex hybrids or simple stylistic gratings, are varied enough to enrich viewer appreciation and perhaps understanding of the noir cycle proper.