

= Jailhouse Rock (film) =

Jailhouse Rock is a 1957 American musical drama film directed by Richard Thorpe and starring Elvis Presley , Judy Tyler , and Mickey Shaughnessy . Distributed by Metro @-@ Goldwyn @-@ Mayer (MGM) and dramatized by Guy Trosper from a story written by Nedrick Young , the film is about a young man sentenced to prison for manslaughter who is mentored in music by his prison cellmate who realizes his musical abilities . After his release from jail , while looking for a job as a club singer , the young man meets a musical promoter who helps him launch his career . As he develops his musical abilities and becomes a star , his self @-@ centered personality begins to affect his relationships .

The wife of producer Pandro S. Berman convinced him to create a film with Presley in the last role . Berman delegated the casting to Benny Thau , head of the studio and Abraham Lastfogel , the then president of William Morris Agency . Berman hired Richard Thorpe , who was known for shooting productions quickly . The production of Jailhouse Rock began on May 13 , 1957 , and concluded on June 17 of that year . The dance sequence to the film 's title song " Jailhouse Rock " is often cited as " Presley 's greatest moment on screen " .

Before pre @-@ production began , songwriters Mike Stoller and Jerry Leiber were commissioned to integrate the film 's soundtrack . In April , Leiber and Stoller were called for a meeting in New York City to show the progress of the repertoire . The writers , who had not produced any material , toured the city and were confronted in a hotel room by Jean Aberbach , who locked them into their hotel room by blocking the hotel room door with a sofa until they wrote the material . Presley recorded the soundtrack at Radio Recorders in Hollywood on April 30 and May 3 , with an additional session at the MGM Soundstage on May 9 . During post @-@ production , the songs were dubbed into the films scenes , in which Presley mimed the lyrics .

Jailhouse Rock premiered on October 17 , 1957 in Memphis , Tennessee and was released nationwide on November 8 , 1957 . It peaked at number 3 on the Variety box office chart , and reached number 14 in the year 's box office totals , grossing \$ 4 million . Jailhouse Rock earned mixed reviews , with most of the negative reception directed towards Presley 's persona . In 2004 , the film was selected for preservation in the National Film Registry .

= = Plot = =

Construction worker Vince Everett (Elvis) accidentally kills a drunken and belligerent man in a barroom brawl . He is sentenced to between one and ten years in the state penitentiary for manslaughter . His new cellmate , washed @-@ up country singer Hunk Houghton (Shaughnessy) , starts teaching Vince to play the guitar after hearing Vince sing and strum Hunk 's guitar . Hunk then convinces Vince to participate in an upcoming inmate show , which is broadcast on nationwide television . Vince receives numerous fan letters as a result ; but out of apparent jealousy , Hunk ensures they are not delivered to Vince . Hunk then convinces Vince to sign a " contract " to become equal partners in his act . Meanwhile , during an inmate riot in the mess hall , a guard shoves Vince , who retaliates by striking the guard . As a result , the warden orders Vince to be lashed with a whip . Afterwards , it was discovered that Hunk attempted to bribe the guards to drop the punishment , but to no avail .

Upon Vince 's release 20 months later , the warden gives Vince his fan mail . Hunk then promises Vince a singing job at a nightclub owned by a friend , where Vince meets Peggy Van Alden (Tyler) , a promoter for pop singer Mickey Alba . Vince is surprised when the club owner denies him a job as a singer but offers him a job as a bar boy . Undeterred , Vince takes the stage when the house band takes a break and starts singing " Young and Beautiful . " But one of the customers laughs obnoxiously throughout the performance , enraging Vince , who smashes his guitar on the customer 's table and leaves the club . Peggy follows Vince and persuades him to record a demo so that he can listen to himself sing . Vince records " Don 't Leave Me Now , " which Peggy takes to Geneva Records . The manager seems unimpressed , but he reluctantly agrees to play the tape for his boss in New York . The next day , Peggy informs Vince that the song has been sold . She then takes him

to a party at her parents ' home , but Vince leaves after he offends a guest he mistakenly believes is belittling him . (The guests were talking about progressive jazz , a genre that Vince hates as much as Elvis himself hated jazz , which he could not understand in real life .) Angry and offended , Peggy confronts Vince , who kisses her brutally . Peggy resentfully calls the gesture " cheap tactics , " to which Vince replies , " Them ain 't tactics , honey ; it 's just the beast in me . "

Later , Vince and Peggy visit a local record store to check out Vince 's new single , but they are shocked to discover that the Geneva Records manager gave the song to Mickey Alba , who recorded and released the song himself , thereby stealing Vince 's song . Outraged , Vince blurts , " He stole my style , my arrangements , my EVERYTHING ! " With that , Vince storms into the label 's office and confronts the manager , violently slapping him around . To avoid making the same mistake twice , Vince suggests that he and Peggy should form their own label . They do , naming the new label Laurel Records and hiring an attorney , Mr. Shores (Vaughn Taylor) . Vince then records " Treat Me Nice " and begins pitching it , but it is universally rejected . Peggy convinces her friend , disc jockey Teddy Talbot (Dean Jones) , to air the song . He does , and it becomes an immediate hit . Later that evening , Vince asks Peggy out to celebrate the success of his new single , but is disappointed when he learns that she has accepted a dinner date for that evening with Teddy .

Meanwhile , Vince makes arrangements for another television show . During a party , Hunk visits him after being paroled and persuades Vince to give him a spot on the upcoming show . Prior to taping , Vince rehearses " Jailhouse Rock " in a stylized cell block (a performance Elvis himself choreographed) . Hunk 's number is cut because of his outdated music style . Afterwards , Vince informs Hunk that according to his lawyer , the above @-@ mentioned " contract " they signed in prison was worthless . However , as a consolation , and never forgetting that Hunk tried to intercede on his behalf when he was punished for striking the prison guard , Vince offers Hunk a job with his entourage for a fee equal to ten percent of Vince 's annual gross , which Hunk accepts .

Within a few months , Vince officially became a star . However , Peggy is no longer on speaking terms with Vince , as his success has made him arrogant . Vince then signs a movie deal with Climax Studios . The studio head asks him to spend the day with Sherry Wilson (Jennifer Holden) , the studio 's new leading lady , for publicity purposes . The conceited actress is less than thrilled with her co @-@ star at first ; but she eventually falls in love with Vince after shooting a kissing scene , saying that she 's " come all unglued " (indicating that she 's no longer " stuck up ") .

Meanwhile , Hunk grows tired of Vince 's self @-@ centered attitude . When Peggy shows up unexpectedly at another of Vince 's parties , Vince is happy to see her at first but becomes upset when she says the purpose of her visit is to talk about business . Mr. Shores then approaches Vince with an offer from Geneva Records to purchase Laurel Records and sign him to a rich contract . Peggy refuses to sell , but Vince announces that he will close the deal since he owns a controlling interest , which deeply devastates Peggy . Enraged by Vince 's attitude ? and his treatment of Peggy ? Hunk provokes Vince to fight , who refuses to fight back . Hunk then strikes Vince in the throat , endangering his voice and therefore his singing ability . Vince is then rushed to a hospital , where he forgives Hunk and realizes he loves Peggy and she loves him . After being released from the hospital , Vince 's doctor informs him that his vocal cords are fully recovered , but Vince is worried that his voice might have been affected . To test it , he sings " Young and Beautiful " to Peggy , which reassures him that his fears are unfounded .

= = Cast = =

Elvis Presley as Vince Everett , a prisoner who , after being released , becomes a star for his singing talent . Producer Pandro S. Berman 's wife convinced him to make a film with Presley starring in the leading role . Berman contacted Presley 's manager , Colonel Thomas Parker , and asked if he could send Presley or Parker the script to read it . Parker was uninterested and denied the request . Berman asked Parker under which conditions would he take the project , to which Parker replied that he was only interested in the music score of the movie and owning the rights for record sales and publishing royalties . Presley 's payment was settled at US \$ 250 @, @ 000 and 50

% of the royalties from the distribution of the movie .

Judy Tyler as Peggy Van Alden , a music promoter who helps Vince build his career and eventually becomes his lover . Tyler was previously known for her part as Princess Summerfall Winterspring in the television show Howdy Doody and her role as Suzy in the Broadway musical Pipe Dream (1955) . Tyler took a three @-@ month leave of absence from Howdy Doody to shoot the movie . Tyler and her husband were both killed in a car crash on July 3 , days after production of the movie was completed and before the movie premiered . For this reason , Presley refused to watch the film .

Mickey Shaughnessy as Hunk Houghton , Vince 's cellmate and a former country and western singer . He teaches Vince to improve his guitar skills , and after his release from jail becomes Vince 's assistant . Shaughnessy was known for his role as Leva in From Here to Eternity (1953) . He was also a comedian ; Variety reported before the production of the film that during one of his shows in Omaha , Nebraska , Shaughnessy performed a forty @-@ five @-@ minute routine that derided Presley . Elaine Dundy , author of the book Elvis and Gladys (1985) , considered that his casting was an " odd choice " , and a product of Berman 's disinterest and his decision to delegate the casting of the actors .

Vaughn Taylor as Mr. Shores , an attorney whom Vince and Peggy hire to manage Vince 's financial affairs .

Jennifer Holden as Sherry Wilson , a starlet of Climax Studios and Vince 's co @-@ star . The movie was Holden 's debut ; she auditioned for the role at MGM in May 1956 and was selected immediately for the role . She studied drama with Lillian Roth and participated in a small role in a play at the Palace Theatre in New York City .

Dean Jones as Teddy Talbot , a disc jockey who plays Vince 's debut record as a favor to Peggy . Jones himself was formerly a blues singer , and he was coached for the role by disc jockeys Ira Cooke and Dewey Phillips .

" Jailhouse Rock " co @-@ writer Mike Stoller (of the Leiber and Stoller songwriting partnership) and Presley 's regular band during that period ? Scotty Moore , Bill Black and D. J. Fontana ? appeared as Vince 's band throughout the film , but were uncredited .

= = Production = =

Jailhouse Rock was Presley 's third film and his first for MGM . It was filmed at the MGM studios in Culver City , California . Filmed in black @-@ and @-@ white , the film was the first production that MGM filmed with the recently developed 35 mm anamorphic lens by Panavision . The film was originally titled The Hard Way , which was changed to Jailhouse Kid before MGM finally settled on Jailhouse Rock . It was not listed with the studio 's planned releases for the year , which it published in Variety magazine , because it was based on an original story by Nedrick Young , a blacklisted writer . In addition , the studio traditionally did not produce any original scripts that were not adaptations of already @-@ successful works such as books or theater plays . During the production of the movie , Pandro Berman 's attention was centered on another of his productions , the 1958 film The Brothers Karamazov . He let the head of the studio , Benny Thau , and Abe Lastfogel , president of the William Morris Agency , decide the cast . Richard Thorpe , who had the reputation of quickly finishing his projects , was chosen to direct the film .

The first scene to be filmed was the title dance sequence to the song " Jailhouse Rock " . Brett Farmer places the " orgasmic gyrations " of the dance sequence within a lineage of cinematic musical numbers that offer a " spectacular eroticization , if not homoeroticization , of the male image " ; it has often been cited as Presley 's greatest moment on screen . Alex Romero , who created moves inspired by Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly , choreographed the sequence . Presley was not convinced by Romero 's initial choreography , so Romero played some music and asked Presley to dance , using his own moves to choreograph the final sequence . Impressed with the dance sequence , Kelly himself applauded one of the rehearsals during a visit to the set .

Shooting of the film began on May 13 , 1957 , with the newly created choreography . Presley 's characteristic hairstyle and sideburns were covered with a wig and makeup for the scenes in musical number and those set in the jail . During the performance , one of Presley 's dental caps fell

out and became lodged in his lung . He was taken to the Cedars of Lebanon Hospital , where he spent the night after the cap was removed . Shooting was resumed the next day . Throughout the film , Presley mimed the songs , which had been previously recorded in the studio and were added to the finished scenes . Thorpe , who usually filmed scenes in a single take , finished the rest of the movie by June 17 , 1957 . Jailhouse Rock was Judy Tyler 's last film ; she died in an automobile accident that also killed her husband two weeks after shooting was completed . Presley , moved by the death of his co @-@ star , did not attend the film premiere .

= = = Soundtrack = = =

Before the production began , rock ' n ' roll songwriting partners Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller were commissioned to create the film 's soundtrack . The writers , who accepted the work , did not send any material to MGM for months . In April 1957 , the studio called a meeting with the writers in New York City to be updated on the progress of the work . Leiber and Stoller , who had not written any material , traveled to New York where , instead of working , they toured the city . They were confronted in their hotel room by Jean Aberbach , director of Hill & Range music publishing company , who asked to see the songs . When he was told that there was no material , Aberbach decided to lock the songwriters in their hotel room by blocking the door with a sofa . Aberbach told them that they would not leave the room until they had created the material . Four hours later , Leiber and Stoller had written " I Want to Be Free " , " Treat Me Nice " , " (You 're So Square) Baby I Don 't Care " , and " Jailhouse Rock " .

Presley recorded the finished songs at Radio Recorders in Hollywood on April 30 and May 3 , 1957 , with an additional session at the MGM soundstage in Hollywood on May 9 for " Don 't Leave Me Now " . Leiber and Stoller were invited to the recording session of April 30 , where they met Presley . During the session , Stoller helped Presley with the song " Treat Me Nice " and taught him , using a piano , the method he should use while recording the song . Presley was impressed by Stoller and convinced MGM to cast him as the band 's pianist in the film .

The following songs in the film were performed by Elvis unless otherwise noted :

" One More Day " (Sid Tepper , Roy C. Bennett) ? performed by Mickey Shaughnessy

" Young and Beautiful " (Abner Silver , Aaron Schroeder)

" I Want to Be Free " (Jerry Leiber , Mike Stoller)

" Don 't Leave Me Now " (Aaron Schroeder , Ben Weisman)

" Treat Me Nice " (Jerry Leiber , Mike Stoller)

" Jailhouse Rock " (Jerry Leiber , Mike Stoller) ? dance routine was also choreographed by Elvis Presley

" (You 're So Square) Baby I Don 't Care " (Jerry Leiber , Mike Stoller) - Presley also played electric bass

= = Release = =

Jailhouse Rock premiered on October 17 , 1957 , at Loews State Theater in Memphis , Tennessee . It opened nationally on November 8 .

= = = Box Office = = =

The film peaked at number 3 on the Variety box office chart , and reached number 14 for the year at the box office .

According to MGM records the film earned \$ 3 @. @ 2 million in the US and Canada and \$ 1 @, @ 075 @, @ 000 elsewhere during its initial theatrical run , resulting in a profit of \$ 1 @, @ 051 @, @ 000 .

In 1957 , Presley was ranked the fourth leading box office commodity in the film industry . According to Variety , by 1969 , Jailhouse Rock 's gross income in the United States and Canada was comparable to that of The Wizard of Oz (1939) .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Despite the success in the box office , Jailhouse Rock earned mixed reviews from critics . It was looked upon as scandalous once it was released because it portrayed Vince Everett as an anti @-@ heroic character , presented a convict as a hero , used the word " hell " as a profanity , and included a scene showing Presley in bed with co @-@ star Tyler . The Parent @-@ Teacher Association described the movie as " a hackneyed , blown @-@ up tale with cheap human values . " The New York Times criticized Guy Trosper for writing a screenplay where the secondary characters whom Mickey Shaughnessey and Judy Tyler acted out were " forced to hang on to the hero 's flying mane and ego for the entire picture . " Cue magazine called the film " [an] unpleasant , mediocre and tasteless drama . "

Some publications criticized Presley . Time criticized his onstage personality , while The Miami News compared the film with horror movies , and said , " Only Elvis Presley and his ' Jailhouse Rock ' can keep pace with the movie debut of this ' personality , ' the records show . In estimating the lasting appeal of their grotesque performer . " Jazz magazine Down Beat said Presley 's acting was " amateurish and bland . " British magazine The Spectator described Presley 's evolution from his " silly " performance in Loving You to " dangerously near being repulsive . "

Other reviewers responded positively to the film . Louise Boyca of the The Schenectady Gazette wrote that " it 's dear Elvis that gets the soft focus camera and the arty photography . " Boyca remarked upon the low production costs of the film , and said that Presley was " in top singing and personality form . " The Gadsden Times said , " Elvis Presley not only proves himself as a dramatic actor ... but also reveals his versatility by dancing on the screen for the first time . The movie ... also contains Elvis ' unique style of singing . " Look favored the movie , describing the reception of an audience in a Los Angeles theater that " registered , loud and often , its approval of what may accurately be described as the star 's first big dramatic singing role . "

Author Thomas Doherty wrote in his 2002 book Teenagers and Teenpics : The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s : " In Jailhouse Rock , the treatment of rock ' n ' roll music , both as narrative content and as cinematic performance is knowing and respectful ... The elaborate choreography for the title tune , the long takes and uninterrupted screen time given to the other numbers , and the musical pacing ? the rock ' n ' roll builds in quality and intensity ? all show an indigenous appreciation of Presley 's rock ' n ' Roll . " Critic Hal Erickson of AllRovi wrote that the film " is a perfect balance of song and story from beginning to end " . Mark Deming , also a critic for AllRovi , wrote that Jailhouse Rock it was " one of [Presley 's] few vehicles which really caught his raw , sexy energy and sneering charisma on film . "

= = = Accolades = = =

In 1991 , Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller were awarded with an ASCAP Award for Most Performed Feature Film Standards for the song " Jailhouse Rock " . In 2004 , Jailhouse Rock was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry , as it was deemed " culturally , historically , or aesthetically significant . " The film is famous for the dance sequence (also choreographed by Presley) in which Presley sings the title track while on stage , cavorting with other " inmates " through a set which resembles a block of jail cells . The sequence is widely acknowledged as the most memorable musical scene in Presley 's 30 narrative movies , and is credited by music historians as the prototype for the modern music video . Jailhouse Rock ranked 495th on Empire 's 2008 list of the 500 greatest movies of all time . The review aggregate website Rotten Tomatoes gives the film an overall 79 % " Fresh " approval rating based on 14 reviews , with a rating average of 6 @. @ 9 out of 10 .