

A Little Bit of Heaven

US : 1940 : dir. Andrew Marton : Universal : 87 min
 prod: Joe Pasternak : scr: Daniel Taradash, Gertrude Purcell & Harold Goldman
 : dir.ph.: John Seitz

Gloria Jean; Tommy Bond; Butch & Buddy
 Robert Stack; Hugh Herbert; C Aubrey Smith; Stuart Erwin; Nan Grey; Eugene Pallette;
 Billy Gilbert; Frank Jenks; Noah Beery Sr; Sig Arno; Monte Blue; Rafaela Ottiano

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	≠	M	☺	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5832	2.5	3	2	667	-	-	-	-	-	No	unseen



The stretch limo had its humble beginnings too. Gloria Jean here with Tommy Bond Source: Moving Picture Boy

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001 review:

"Jean has a vocal outing as a 12-year old singer supporting her family. OK vehicle. ***"

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review – identical to above, as usual mistranslating "OK" as "not bad"

Halliwel's Film Guide review:

"A 12-year old girl becomes a singing sensation but runs into family opposition. Predictable vehicle for a young star being built up as a stop-gap Deanna Durbin. Story by Grover Jones. Music: Charles Previn"



Nan Grey and a barely recognisable Robert Stack

Source: The Universal Story

The Universal Story review:

“ **"A LITTLE BIT OF HEAVEN"** was a starring vehicle for Gloria Jean who, while displaying a relaxed versatility, could hardly be said to set the screen ablaze. A corny, sentimental comedy, it featured Gloria as a talented neighbourhood kid who is rocketed to sudden fame on radio, bringing wealth – and its attendant difficulties – to her large family, hitherto poor but happy, in the tenement district of New York.

The run-of-the-mill screenplay by Daniel Taradash, Gertrude Purcell and Harold Goldman (story by Grover Jones) was pepped up slightly by a quality supporting cast that included Robert Stack, Hugh Herbert, C. Aubrey Smith, Nan Grey, Eugene Pallette, Butch and Buddy, Frank Jenks, Noah Beery Sr, Sig Arno, Monte Blue and Rafaela Ottiano. Andrew Marton (a European making his first American film) directed with no noticeable distinction for producer Joe Pasternak and associate producer Islin Auster. The old song which gave the movie its title was by Ernest Ball and J. Keirn Brennan, and the other numbers were: *"What Did We Learn at School?"* By Vivian Ellis, *"Dawn of Love"* by Ralph Freed and Charles Previn, and *"After Every Rain Storm"* by Sam Lerner and Frank Skinner.”

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. Gloria Jean herself was 12. The earliest film I can find for her was "**THE UNDER-PUP**" in 39, followed by "**IF I HAD MY WAY**" with Bing Crosby, and "**PARDON MY RHYTHM**" in 1940, "**MOONLIGHT IN VERMONT**" in 1941, and "**SHE'S MY LOVELY**" in '42. None of them set the box-office tills ringing inordinately, and six films in four years was not an impressive output if the studio were grooming her to be another Deanna Durbin. Perhaps she was more regularly heard on forties radio.

Butch Lenhart and Buddy Brown (also with her in "**THE UNDER-PUP**") were 9 and 8 respectively, a musical double act on the cello and accordion (shudder) who notched up ten films over the same four-year period, among them "**NEVER GIVE A SUCKER AN EVEN BREAK**" (41) with W. C. Fields. Tommy Bond, here 13, is best remembered as the glowering bully of the **OUR GANG** shorts, though he made many mainstream features besides, and was a useful bit-player, for example with Laurel and Hardy in "**BLOCK-HEADS**" (38), until he incarnated Superman's office-boy sidekick Jimmy Olsen in the 1948 and 1950 serials. He was also one of the "**FIVE LITTLE PEPPERS**" in a series of homey sitcoms 1939-1940.

See subject index under **CHILD PERFORMERS / CHILD STARS** and **MUSICALS**.