

## **‘Slightly Overlooked Professionally’: Popular Music in Bridget Jones’s Diary**

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### **Poster Abstract**

A genre more often regarded as money-making entertainment than serious cinema, romantic comedies have long been overlooked academically. Although recent research by film scholars such as Leger Grindon and Tamar Jeffers McDonald has begun to explore the underlying complexities and historical value of the genre, the musical components of romantic comedies remain under-researched. Using the influential film *Bridget Jones’s Diary* (2001) as a case study, my research explores the often intricate use of popular music in romantic comedies as a method of providing narrative clarity for general audiences while enhancing the film’s broad appeal. *Bridget Jones’s Diary* further highlights the potential functions of popular music in romantic comedy, employing foregrounded songs both as narrative elements and framing devices. On one level, the songs in *Bridget Jones’s Diary* act as an extension of the title character’s narration – as an aural extension of her eponymous diary. Furthermore, songs such as Aretha Franklin’s “Respect” (1967), Diana Ross’s “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough” (1970), and Van Morrison’s “Some- one Like You” (1987) act as structural and narrative frames for Bridget’s relationships. The popular songs consequently immerse the viewer into the film narrative and provide an emotional bond with the title character. Finally, I examine how *Bridget Jones’s Diary*’s musical model set the stage for future romantic comedies such as *Sweet Home Alabama* (2002) and *Love Actually* (2003) to expand the role of popular music.