



ARTHER REVIEW

IT TOOK TWO

By Charles Apple | THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Songwriter, singer and producer Lionel Richie was in the process of leaving his longtime association with the Commodores and heading out on his own for a solo career. Diana Ross had done the same with her former group, the Supremes, a decade before.

The two teamed up for a romantic ballad to be featured in a movie. “Endless Love” would begin a nine-week run at No. 1 on Aug. 15, 1981 — 45 years ago.

A ROMANTIC DUET FOR A ROMANTIC FILM

In 1981, noted filmmaker Franco Zeffirelli was making another in a long string of romantic films — this one starring 16-year-old phenomenon Brooke Shields.

Meanwhile, Lionel Richie had risen from playing saxophone to becoming the primary songwriter for his group, the Commodores. His rise created a rift in the group, however: Richie excelled in the style of music typically featured as “adult contemporary.” The Commodores preferred funk. Richie had written “Lady” but his bandmates protested by refusing to record it. So he gave it to Kenny Rogers instead.

Zeffirelli hired Richie to compose and produce the soundtrack for his film. In particular, he wanted to feature an instrumental — something along the lines of Henry Mancini’s 1971 theme to “Love Story.”

Richie hauled out a song he had written for the Commodores but had never recorded. Richie played piano. His Commodores pal, Thomas McClary, played lead guitar. Gene Page was hired to arrange the string section.

Zeffirelli liked the result but now he wanted lyrics for the track. And he suggested Richie bring in Diana Ross to sing them.

Diana Ross had found great success in the 1960s as the lead singer of the vocal trio the Supremes. In 1968, Motown changed the name of the group to Diana Ross and the

Supremes. Two years later, Motown supported her setting out as a solo artist.

But by 1981, Ross had parted ways with her longtime label and had signed a \$20 million contract with RCA Records: The most lucrative recording deal in history, at the time.

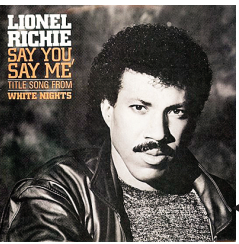
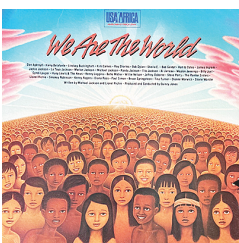
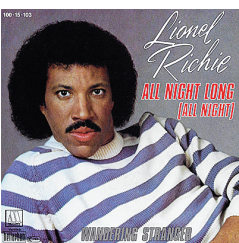
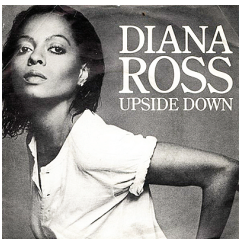
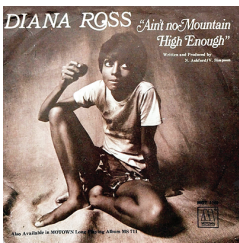
Richie had difficulty in matching up schedules with Ross. They finally got together on May 8, 1981, in Reno, Nevada. Ross had performed that evening in Lake

Tahoe. Richie flew in from Los Angeles. They began recording at 3:30 a.m.

By that time, Zeffirelli had changed his mind yet again: He wanted a duet, featuring Ross. Richie volunteered himself to sing with her. They immediately ran into another issue: Richie wanted to sing the part Ross was planning to sing. Richie said later he had to “kind of make her part up because I can’t sing in that key. What you hear on the record is what happened on the day as it had to go out the next day for the movie.”

The duet became the second biggest-selling single of the year, behind “Bette Davis Eyes” by Kim Carnes. It was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Song. Ross and Richie sang it at the Oscars ceremony but the song lost to “Arthur’s Theme.”

“Endless Love” also earned three Grammy nominations, including Song of the Year for Richie.



THEIR NO. 1 SINGLES And weeks at No. 1

June 17, 1964	2	Where Did Our Love Go The Supremes
Sept. 17, 1964	4	Baby Love The Supremes
Oct. 27, 1964	2	Come See About Me The Supremes
Feb. 8, 1965	2	Stop! In the Name of Love The Supremes
April 15, 1965	1	Back in My Arms Again The Supremes
Oct. 6, 1965	2	I Hear a Symphony The Supremes
July 25, 1966	2	You Can't Hurry Love The Supremes
Oct. 12, 1966	2	You Keep Me Hangin' On The Supremes
Jan. 11, 1967	1	Love is Here and Now You're Gone The Supremes
March 20, 1967	1	The Happening The Supremes
Sept. 30, 1968	2	Love Child Diana Ross and the Supremes
Oct. 14, 1969	1	Someday We'll Be Together Diana Ross and the Supremes
July 16, 1970	3	Ain't No Mountain High Enough Diana Ross
May 3, 1973	1	Touch Me in the Morning Diana Ross
Sept. 24, 1975	1	Theme from Mahogany Diana Ross
March 16, 1976	2	Love Hangover Diana Ross
June 18, 1980	4	Upside Down Diana Ross
June 26, 1981	9	Endless Love Diana Ross and Lionel Richie
September 1982	2	Truly Lionel Richie
Aug. 31, 1983	4	All Night Long (All Night) Lionel Richie
Feb. 13, 1984	2	Hello Lionel Richie
March 7, 1985	4	We Are the World USA for Africa
Oct. 29, 1985	4	Say You, Say Me Lionel Richie

9	Endless Love Diana Ross and Lionel Richie	June 26, 1981	1
14	I'll Make Love to You Boyz II Men	July 26, 1994	2
	How Deep is Your Love Bee Gees	September 1977	3
10	We Found Love Rihanna featuring Calvin Harris	Sept. 22, 2011	4
	Silly Love Songs Wings	April 1, 1976	5
14	I Will Always Love You Whitney Houston	Nov. 2, 1992	6
9	Let Me Love You Mario	Oct. 4, 2004	7
	Because I Love You (The Postman Song) Stevie B	Sept. 1, 1990	8
	Best of My Love The Emotions	June 9, 1977	9
	I Can't Stop Loving You Ray Charles	April 1962	10

TOP 20 LOVE SONGS OF ALL TIME

In February, Billboard magazine compiled a list of to top 50 songs with the word “love” — in their titles. Songs about non-romantic love were not included. Songs were rated by weeks at No. 1 and weighted by era. Here are the top 20 songs from that list.

11	Sept. 16, 2007	4	Bleeding Love Leona Lewis
12	March 23, 1973	4	My Love Paul McCartney & Wings
13	Feb. 19, 1996	6	Because You Loved Me Celine Dion
14	Dec. 7, 1979	4	Crazy Little Thing Called Love Queen
15	September 1958	3	To Know Him is to Love Him The Teddy Bears
16	January 1968	5	Love is Blue Paul Mauriat
17	Nov. 8, 2018	3	Someone You Loved Lewis Capaldi
18	Aug. 16, 1980	3	Woman in Love Barbra Streisand
19	Aug. 21, 1990	3	Love Takes Time Mariah Carey
20	Dec. 2, 1987	2	It Must Have Been Love Roxette