



'Three Women' provocative film

"Three Women" (PG), written, directed and produced by Robert Altman, is a strange, enigmatic film. It opens in the dusty deserts of California where Pinky (Sissy Spacek) has applied for a job at a therapy center for geriatrics. Millie (Shelley Duvall) is the experienced girl who shows her around.

Like the bleached, bare desert, the clinic is very white, stark and severe-looking. Old enfeebled people with slack flesh are guided through hot baths and therapy routines by young, blank-faced female attendants. The scene resembles a Last Judgement vision, with a white Hell rather than a fiery one.

In contrast, Pinky, straight out of small-town Texas, is fresh, scrubbed and friendly. She wears a pink eyelid cotton dress and carries a little white plastic purse. To Pinky, Millie is the image of sophistication, an idol to be admired and emulated. "You're the most perfect person I ever met," she tells Millie.

Millie accepts the raise stoically. "I'm famous for my dinner parties," she admits. Her dinner parties are a gourmet's nightmare, an Alka-Seltzer high. Almost everything is a convenience food from a can or jar: Pringles, chocolate puddings, shrimp in ugly "reusable" glasses, and the piece de resistance, pigs in a blanket.

HER APARTMENT, where Pinky moves in as her roommate, is all cutesy yellow and white. In its own everything-in-place, color-coordinated way, it's as aseptic as the therapy center.

Self-deception is Millie's script. Socially outgoing, she's a non-stop talker to whom no one ever listens or replies. Yet, Millie rationalizes every slight and ignores every rude remark or action directed toward her. She is the most pathetic character in the movie, but she also proves to be the most resilient.

The third woman, Willie (Janice Rule), is a morose, silent artist. She is the pregnant wife of an aging cowboy stud who was once a movie stuntman. Willie paints frightening anatomical murals on walls and the bottom of a swimming pool. The dialogue and action in the film seem as pregnant as Willie.

The three women, so different outwardly, are united in their isolation and loneliness in a masculine world: Authoritative doctors at the clinic, a philandering husband, and off-duty cops who ride dirt bike trails and practice pistol shooting at an "Old West" bar and ranch.

The women's personalities like their names (Pinky's real name is Mildred, which is Millie's name, which rhymes with Willie), seem to interpenetrate and merge. Eventually they become a matrarchal family unit. They live together in a symbiotic relationship in a world where males have mysteriously vanished from the scene.

ALTMAN PRESENTS the characters in a detached, dispassionate way. The dramatic tension arises from within, from the conflict between the women's surface personalities and their strong underlying needs and drives, of which they seem unaware.

Consequently, the movie winds its way through a psychological maze of which we see only a part. A viewer is either caught up in it or doesn't enter at all. "Three Women" might be pretentious. Certainly, the music is heavy-handed with significance whenever the camera pans across the murals, and the sterile dialogue sets an agonizingly slow pace. Nevertheless, the total creation stands as a provocative film from a highly individualistic and provocative director.

Glimpses

NEW RELEASES

AIRPORT '77 (PG). A disaster film that combines air and sea operations by crashing a 747 into the ocean and then trying to raise the plane or lower the ocean—something like that.

ANNIE HALL (PG). The best Woody Allen film yet. Truth and comedy go hand-in-hand in this touching, contemporary love story. Diane Keaton is also at her very best as Annie.

BLACK SUNDAY (R). Sick thriller of inflated terrorism from a blimp at the Super Bowl. Robert Shaw and Marthe Keller are the capable adversaries. Fine acting by Bruce Dern as the berserk pilot.

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM (PG). Hemingway's posthumously published novel about an aging artist and his reassessment of his life and values is given color but not much vitality in spite of fine performances by George Scott and three young actors who play his sons.

THE LATE SHOW (PG). Comedy and suspense tangle in this melodrama about a kooky girl (Lily Tomlin), a missing cat (identically unknown), and an over-zealous private eye (Art Carney) who still knows a trick or two.

NASTY HABITS (PG). Screen adaptation of Muriel Spark's Watergate parody set in a convent. Geraldine Page and Sandy Dennis star.

NETWORK (R). Fierce satire attacking the television industry and mass media generally. Top performances by Peter Finch, Faye Dunaway and William Holden in fast-paced, grimly humorous film.

ROCKY (PG). Human warmth and exciting drama combine in this stirring film about a no-name boxer who gets a chance at a title bout. Acting accolades to entire cast and especially Stallone as Rocky.

SLAP SHOT (R). A comic and cutting look at the violence of professional hockey and the chaotic lives of the players and their wives. Paul Newman as the amoral player-coach smiles beguilingly as he utters every obscenity in the book.

SWEET REVENGE (PG). Stockard Channing steals little cars to support her addiction to big ones. Sam Waterston, her passive attorney, tries to turn her on to fishing.

MOVIE RATING GUIDE

G General audiences admitted.
PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.
R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.
X No one under 18 admitted.

4 series of attractions

Music Hall announces season

Taking the Renaissance of Detroit as both a theme and a goal, Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts will offer four different series of attractions for the 1977-78 season.

Artistic Director Dr. David DiChiera has announced the slate which includes two new series, The Renaissance Series and Young People's Series, a Pop and Jazz Series, and Music Hall's perennial success, the Dance Series.

Season tickets can now be ordered for all series at discount savings of up to 40 per cent.

The Pop and Jazz Series spans 70 years of contemporary music, ranging from the turn-of-the-century music of the Preservation Hall Jazz Band to the modern sounds of Peter Nero and Buddy Rich and his Big Band Machine. The intervening years of great music, much of which they themselves created, will be provided by Mel Torme, the Newport Jazz Festival All-Stars and Peggy Lee opening with Count Basie and his orchestra.

THE RENAISSANCE Series, according to Dr. DiChiera, is named for both the Detroit symbol, The Renaissance Center, and for the original Renaissance man, who pursued the enjoyment of all the arts. The new series therefore presents a full offering of the performing arts including dramatic musical comedy, ballet, choral and instrumental music.

Keynoting the series is a modern day Renaissance man, Michel Legrand, whom the Music Hall will showcase as a composer, pianist, singer and raconteur. Legrand is best known for his movie compositions for "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg," "Summer of '42" and "The Thomas Crown Affair," which earned for him a number of Motion Picture Academy nominations and two Oscars. The drama to be staged will be Tennessee Williams' humorous fantasy, "Camino Real," as presented by John Houseman's The Acting Company, and the musical comedy is Broadway's recent "The Robber Bridegroom."

The Oakland (Calif.) Ballet will be seen in a full-length production of "The Nutcracker," and the famed Vienna Choir Boys will give its con-



Peggy Lee will sing with Count Basie and his orchestra.

cert which includes a costumed opera.

The Renaissance Series will be capped by duo-pianists Ferrante and Teicher, one of the most popular concert attractions in Detroit history.

The new Young People's Series, a Sunday afternoon adventure, will provide a sampling of the performing arts, including theater, ballet, mime, dance and opera. Each attraction was selected, not only with the idea of intriguing the younger mind but with the aim of presenting professional theater that can be enjoyed by the entire family.

ON THE YOUNG People's Series is Late Goulard's Pantomime Circus, which utilizes dance, drama and humor to explore the problems of ants, mushrooms and people. For opera in English, Detroit's own nationally acclaimed Michigan Opera Theatre will stage an all-new production of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" at Christmas time, and the Oakland (Calif.) Ballet offers a magical "Hansel and Gretel," also during the holiday season. The Paper Bag Players, called "the



Ferrante & Teicher will appear on the Renaissance Series.

barometer of excellence in children's theater," spark a child's imagination as they transform everyday objects into things wonderfully different.

Topping this series is the surprise hit of the 1976-77 season, the Swiss mimes called Mummenschanz. Their inventive use of masks and their unbelievable body control have appealed to audiences of all ages.

Music Hall's fifth consecutive Dance season will offer five of six companies in their Music Hall debut. The sixth is Detroit's all-time favorite, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.

The series offers a variety of classic, contemporary, modern and ethnic programs. These range from the new Elton Field Ballet to the Paul Taylor Dance Company, whose string of suc-

cesses spans 20 years and more. The classic Pennsylvania Ballet can be contrasted with innovative Tayla Sharp Dance Foundation.

THE FINALE of the Dance Series will be the Pishobius Dance Theatre utilizing a gymnastic approach to dance.

Discounted season tickets for all four of the announced series can be ordered by calling 963-6943, or in person at the Music Hall, 350 Madison and Brush. Savings of at least 20 per cent, compared to the single ticket prices, are available in some cases. The savings are as high as 40 per cent.

A free season brochure, containing additional information, prices and dates, can be obtained by calling 963-7622.

Actor to visit

Dick Van Patten, star of the ABC Television Network's series "Eight Is Enough" will participate in this spring in Michigan's oldest and largest festival, the Blossom Time Festival in Benton Harbor. Along with Jo Ann Harris (Sgt. Kate Mannen of ABC's "Most Wanted" series), Dick and his wife Pat will be honored at a special reception May 20. On May 21, Dick and Jo Ann will preside over the Grand Floral Parade in the afternoon and will be guests of honor at the Grand Floral Ball in the evening. "Eight Is Enough" airs on ABC TV on Tuesdays 9-10 p.m.

Families featured

The final three programs of "Six American Families" air this month on Fridays at 9 p.m. on Channel 56. Each program centers on a different, yet typical, American family. Subjects making up the last of the series are: An low farm family, the Stephens (May 20); and a Southern mountain family of more than 20 children and in-laws, the Burks (May 27).

Series on jazz

"Jazz Alive," a weekly "in performance" series from National Public Radio, will preview eight pilot programs on WDET-FM, 101.9.

The 90-minute programs will feature contemporary jazz artists recorded at clubs, festivals and concert halls in the U.S. and Europe.

Headlining the pilot series will be such musicians as Keith Jarrett, Anthony Braxton, Earl "Fatha" Hines, Gary Burton, Tad Jones and Mel Lewis.

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