



'Good-bye Girl' follows formula

If you generally like Neil Simon comedies ("The Sunshine Boys," "The Out-of-Towners," "Murder by Death"), odds are you'll like "The Goodbye Girl" (PG). Written by Simon for his wife Marsha Mason, who plays the kiss-off kid of the title, it's a situation comedy with a patter of laughs and one-liners from start to finish. In other words, entertaining.

On the other hand, if "Simon Says" isn't always your kind of game, you might want to know something about the players and the conditions before making a decision.

First of all, note that one of the three principal characters in "The Goodbye Girl" is a precocious kid, Lucy McFadden played by Quinn Cummings. Lucy is a smartmouth who gets laughs by casually using adult words (like the youngsters in "Bad News Bears") and acting blasé about grown-up activities. You know how funny precocious kids are!

Next, consider the novelty of the situation: Elliot Garfield (Richard Dreyfuss), a struggling actor who plays the guitar and chants mantras, is forced by specially contrived circumstances to share a small apartment with a 33-year-old dodo and her daughter.

MARSHA MASON is the dodo (Paula McFadden), a divorced hoover with a sagging but eager body maintained by teenage glands. You can just imagine the hilarity that results from their domestic arrangements.

Then there's the stick of the "play-within-the-play." Elliot has come to New York from Chicago to play the lead in an off-off Broadway production of Shakespeare's "Richard III."

The high-voiced director (Paul Benedict) wants the King played as a queen. Elliot rails against such an interpretation, but finally concedes. Richard III emerges as a lame-footed, hunch-backed fag. There are plenty of howls in this episode, if you like cheap jokes.

Dreyfuss gives an ebullient and energetic performance. Somehow he comes through the film, not only unscathed, but smiling like a rose.

None of this, apparently, is a laughing matter to Ms. Mason, since Paula, who appears as a likable, quick-witted character at the beginning of the film, quickly turns dull and dour and remains so. Paula is a past-per-prime groupie still waiting for Prince Charming, a "pushover," as she describes herself.

SHE'S ALREADY been pushed twice. Her actor-husband simply walked out leaving her with their daughter Lucy. Her actor-lover, with whom she and Lucy lived, not only walked out but sublet the apartment to an actor friend, Elliot. Thus the circumstances are set up for Elliot's move-in.

Of course, the more Paula insists that she's a vermin and she will never look at him again, the more certain we are of the result of this strange cohabitation. When Elliot gets drunk after "Richard III" bombs, it's equally obvious who will be ministering to him with sex and sympathy.

Paula the pushover: Paula the dodo. What a stereotypical image of women, and men too. With one exception, the hero, the prevailing philosophy is "all men are rotten." I wonder what generation of moviegoers Simon is writing for?

Put it all together and you've got "The Goodbye Girl," an overly predictable, crassly commercial, formulaized shmoia of a movie. Still, if you like Neil Simon, go enjoy.

Glimpses

NEW RELEASES

ALLEGRO NON TROPPO (PG). Take-off on Disney's "Fantasia" by Italian animator Bruno Bozzetto.

ANOTHER MAN, ANOTHER CHANCE (PG). Claude Lelouch successfully remakes his own romantic film "A Man and a Woman" as an American western.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND (PG). Stephen Spielberg's megabuck epic about contact with extra-terrestrial beings. Special effects make this another treat for sci-fi fans.

BOBBY DEERFIELD (PG). Not enough scenery for a travelogue, not enough plot for a dramatic film; just a bore with Al Pacino and Marthe Keller.

EQUUS (R). Intense, realistic film of prize-winning play by Richard Brautigan as the self-dubbing psychiatrist treating a boy (Peter Firth) who has blinded six horses.

FIRST LOVE (R). Curly, blond-haired William Katt searches for true, pure love on college campus where phys ed is most popular activity, but not for class credit.

HEROES (PG). TV stars Henry Winkler and Sally Field hit the big screen in comedy about Vietnam vet trying to start a worm farm.

JULIA (PG). Jane Fonda and Vanessa Redgrave excel in Lillian Hellman's deeply moving story of the warm, courageous friendship of two women.

LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBAR (R). Judith Rossner's steamy best seller brought to the screen with stunning impact. Diane Keaton scores as woman who teaches children by day, picks up men by night.

MR. KLEIN (PG). Alain Delon in subtle suspense story about a man mistaken for a Jew in France, 1942.

OFF THE EDGE (PG). Documentary from Jeff Campbell of Birmingham about skiing and hang-gliding. Nominated for academy award for "76."

OH, GOD (PG). Humorous look at the world as God (George Burns) carries on a dialogue with a supermarket employee (John Denver).

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER (R). John Travolta of Koolha's (Swathogs) is the main man in film with plenty of disco action.

SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT (PG). Burt Reynolds in action-comedy as the "bandit" who's trying to bootleg 400 cases of Coors beer from Texas.

STAR WARS (PG). Stereo-comic sci-fi adventure about a rebellion of solar systems in a distant galaxy. Good time movie with laughs and special effects. Two robots steal the show.

SHORT EYES (R). Compelling prison drama of racial and sexual tensions written by Miguel Pinero for his play.

TELEFON (PG). Charles Bronson plays a Soviet agent in this thriller about good and bad Soviet spies.

MOVIE RATING GUIDE

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

Welsh drama will open run

"The Corn Is Green," a stirring and humorous play, will open a four-week run at the Meadow Brook Theatre on at 8:30 p.m. Dec. 29 on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester.

"The Corn Is Green," a drama from the pen of Welsh-born Emyr Williams, is a play of deep-rooted conviction, humor and sustained interest.

It points with beauty, fury and humor the story of Morgan Evans, a young Welsh miner, illiterate and backward, who is redeemed from the inevitable life of drudgery in the mines by a goodhearted schoolteacher who sees in him the spark of talent.

Jeanne Arnold, who scored a triumph as Mrs. Hardestie in "The Shoos to Conquer" and as Rosemary Sydney in "Picnic" at Meadow Brook this season, will portray Miss Moffat, the resolute and generous schoolteacher.

MEADOW BROOK regular Tom Speakman will play the young coal miner, Morgan Evans; Leo Leyden, who will play the self-complacent local squire, comes to Meadow Brook directly from Stratford, Ont., where he was seen earlier this year as Friar Laurence in "Romeo and Juliet" and as Verges in "Much Ado About Nothing."

Others in the cast include Marianne Muellerleile, Patricia Reilly, Mary Benson, Michel Cullen, Peter McRobbie, Curtis Armstrong, Michael Rothhaar, Lori Altadonna, Rob Jones, Steve Lutes and the three daughters of Meadow Brook's Costumeur Mary Lynn Bonnell-Leslie, Pamela and Wendy.

"The Corn Is Green" is directed by Charles Nolte with set design by C.

Lance Brockman, lighting design by Jean A. Armstrong and costumes by Mary Lynn Bonnell.

Opening week performances are scheduled at 8:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 2 and 8:30 p.m. Saturday and 6:30 p.m. Sunday. The following three weeks will offer performances at 8:30

Theater

p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 6 and 9:30 p.m. Saturday, 6:30 p.m. Sunday and 8:30

Wednesday.

Tickets for the preview performance on Dec. 29 at 8:30 p.m. are also available. The theater is dark on Mondays. Tickets for all performances may be purchased at Hudson's or by calling the Meadow Brook Theatre box office at 377-3300.

Satellite to link festivities

A new star of Bethlehem will guide the eyes of the world to seven counties this Christmas Eve at 8 p.m. on Channel 56.

Unlike the blaze of light that led the three wise men to the newly born Christ almost 2,000 years ago, this year's heavenly body will be man-made, a communications satellite.

The satellite is one of six hovering high above the world in a globe-gridding television network that will link up Nativity celebrations as they take place on four continents.

The feat will be a triumph of collaboration among four television networks—the British Broadcasting Corp., which will mastermind the operation from London, FR3 of France, ZDF of Germany and South Carolina ETV. Countries included in the broadcast will be Britain, Germany, France, Israel, New Zealand, Jamaica and the United States.

THE TELEVISION show will be an hour-long program of Christmas music. Hundreds of millions of viewers throughout the world will be transported from deepest night to brightest day, from snow-clad mountains to lush tropical vegetation as the eyes in the

skies "look down on the turning planet Earth."

The American segment, underwritten by a grant from the Sun Co., is set in Columbia, S.C., against the backdrop of the city's modern shopping center.

On Christmas Eve the main attraction will be a choir from the University of South Carolina. Its carols will echo beyond the local shoppers to the world.

The modernism of Columbia will contrast with the ancient fabric of Westminster Abbey in London where Britain's kings and queens have been crowned for the past thousand years. The British segment of the show will feature 22 boy singers who study at the Abbey's Choir School attached to the great church.

Westminster Abbey, founded by William the Conqueror who vanquished England in 1066 and seized its throne, has always boasted one of the finest choirs in the world. Its traditions go back for centuries and documentary references to the choir date from as early as 1429. Apart from singing in the Abbey's daily services, the choir also performs at great occasions of state such as the coronation of the monarch.

IN THE PROGRAM the choir will sing amid the architectural splendor of the King Henry VII chapel with its exquisite fan-vaulted ceiling and the imposing tomb of one of England's greatest rulers who lies buried there.

The seasonal note will be struck by a glimpse of snowy mountains near Bichl, a village in Bavaria in southern Germany, where the Toit Boys' Choir will sing one of the best loved of carols, "O Holy Night."

Another stop in the magic-carpet journey will be the fairy tale castle of Azay-le-Rideau, one of the splendid chateaus that line the languid Loire River in western France. These elegant fortifications were built during the 1500s and a group of vocalists and instrumentalists will perform music of that age.

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