



Woman, cast adrift, struggles to achieve independent life style

In the first quarter of the 19th century, Lord Byron could write of women: Few changes e'er can better their affairs. Their being an unnatural person. In the fourth quarter of the 20th century, writer-director Paul Mazursky can present us with "An Unmarried Woman" (R), the story of a woman who finds herself in an "unnatural" situation, but who uses it as a springboard enabling her to take charge, make numerous changes and become "an independent person."

Jill Clayburgh, in her best performance to date, is Erica, the woman of the title. After a comfortable marriage of 17 years her husband (Michael Murphy) abruptly announces that he's leaving her for a young woman he met at the shirt counter at Bloomingdale's.

Her husband cries the he's not a bad guy, just a nebbish, she throws up and they split. Her non-status gives her an immediate identity problem. Her last distinction as Erica was graduating from Vassar. Since then, she's been defined by her relationship to a man; she Martin's wife.

ERICA EXPERIENCES a flood of emotions from initial hurt and anger to uncertainty, loneliness and loss of confidence. Mazursky has the novelist's eye and ear for observing life around him and recording its funny-sad realities on film. Thus the changes in Erica's mental attitude and feelings are revealed through her relations with others.

There are her three, close women friends (played by Kelly Bishop, Linda Miller and Pat Quinn), her club which she refers to as "part Mary Hartman, part Ingmar Bergman."

There is her teenage daughter Patti (Lisa Lucas) with whom she has an open and candid relationship. There is a persistent stud named Charlie (Cliff Gorman) and a steady-eyed, excitedly dressed psychiatrist named Tanya (Penelope Russianoff). Finally, there is the bright and understanding artist Saul (Alan Bates).

At the psychiatrist's urging, Erica starts dating again. The first date is disastrous, but she hangs in there and is soon approaching life with more gusto than you'd find in an x-rated beer commercial.

When she meets Saul, she's prepared for, demands and gets a relationship between equals. Mazursky doesn't moralize about her actions. He presents an open-ended situation and lets viewers reach their own conclusions. In so doing, he gives them a lot to work with.

HIS MATERIAL comes from the milieu he knows best. Educated, sophisticated people in an urban, upper middle-class setting. He infuses the whole film with his enthusiasm. He draws excellent performances from the entire cast. He shows New York City in an energetic and positive way, using the art galleries and studios of Soho and an exciting backdrop for the story.

Finally, he captures the physical thrill of the artist's creativity as we watch Saul maneuver acrobatics on a large canvas in the style of contemporary painter Paul Jenkins.

Jenkins' actual paintings appear in the studio scenes and provide a rich and fitting setting to this jewel of a film.



Erica (Jill Clayburgh) and Saul (Alan Bates) share a loving relationship.

Glimpses

AMERICAN HOT WAX (PG). Story of rock 'n' roll era with guest shots by Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis. Tim McIntire plays deejay Alan Freed.

THE BIG SLEEP (R). Robert Mitchum and Sarah Miles in unnecessary and undistinguished remake of the 1946 Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall film about hard-boiled private eye.

BLUE COLLAR (R). Tough, realistic drama of three auto workers whose small-time rip-off produces drastic results.

CASEY'S SHADOW (PG). Sensitive movie about impoverished Cajun (Walter Matthau), his three sons and the horse that becomes pivotal to their future fortunes.

COMA (PG). Scary and unpleasant movie about some strange goings-on at a hospital. Genevieve Bujold is the plucky doctor who uncovers a fiendish arrangement.

CROSSED SWORDS (PG). Adaptation of Mark Twain's "The Prince and the Pauper." Star-packed cast in story about royal impersonation, romance and ruffians in the 18th century.

THE FURY (R). Director Brian DePalma unleashes the special effects in gory film about secret government agency and two teenagers with strange psychic powers.

GRAY LADY DOWN (PG). Suspense as Navy attempts to rescue sunken submarine. Charlton Heston is the sub's skipper; David Carradine is among the rescue team.

HIGH ANXIETY (PG). Mel Brooks tips his hat to Hitchcock in this lunatic romp at the Psycho-Neuro Institute for the Very, Very Nervous. Liberal visual "quotations" from Hitchcock in this howler.

HOUSE CALLS (PG) Walter Matthau and Glenda Jackson in entertaining comedy about amorous adventures of widowed doctor and complications in hospital politics.

THE MOUSE AND HIS CHILD (G). Award-winning full-length cartoon feature with voices of Peter Ustinov and Cloris Leachman.

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

STRAIGHT TIME (R). Dustin Hoffman in true story of ex-con battling tough odds when he tries to go straight.

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.

Fine objects, fun stuff auctioned

From steam irons to steamships, from fine art to fine wine, everything, including the kitchen sink, goes up for bid when the annual Channel 56 Auction returns to Detroit television Friday, April 7, at 7 p.m.

The 10th annual Great TV Auction runs for nine days through April 15 and will be televised live from the Channel 56 studios in midtown Detroit.

WJH's Marc Avery and the Detroit Free Press' Bob Talbert will kick off the 10th annual fundraiser for Channel

56 along with Honorary Chairman Louis Allen, president of Manufacturers Bank of Detroit, and General Chairwoman Joan Hicks, an auctioneer veteran of 10 years. This year, the auction goal is to raise \$600,000, the most ambitious target in its history.

Channel 56 volunteers, called go-getters, have been combing businesses in the metropolitan Detroit and Windsor areas. By showtime, the station hopes to have amassed 7,000 items for bidders in southeastern Michigan and

southern Ontario.

BRAND NEW merchandise with a minimum value of \$50 is still needed. The station asks that merchants contact Channel 56 Auction Central at 873-7200 to donate.

Viewers bid by phone on merchandise to be auctioned. The merchandise includes practical wares such as coffee makers, live plants, easy chairs, sports gear, stereo systems and vacuum cleaners.

The special board at this year's auction will provide five cars for bidding. Viewers can vie for a Cadillac Seville, an Oldsmobile Cutlass Salon, a Chevy Chevette, a Plymouth Volare or a Ford Futura.

Other top-of-the-line items include a London show tour, a Hobie 12 sailboat, a wooded lot in upper Michigan and a four-day cruise on a Great Lakes freighter.

For art lovers, the auction will feature selected works of art all day on Art Day, Sunday, April 9. Works by such artists as Marshall Fredericks, Max Shaye, Claes Oldenburg and Ray Fleming will share the spotlight throughout the day with the regular auction fare.

IN ADDITION, opportunities up for bid will include dream dates with local celebs, a chance to be a clown with the Ringling Bros. circus, practice and lunch with the Detroit Red Wings, and a chance to be a judge of the annual stone-skipping contest held on Mackinac Island.

Past auctions have contributed more than \$3.5 million to the support of non-commercial Channel 56. Proceeds help make possible the broadcast of shows like "Sesame Street," "Dick Cavett," "Monty Python's Flying Circus" and "Masterpiece Theatre."

Here's how to bid for goodies

As the Channel 56 Auction draws near (April 7-15) the TV station offers some useful tips to help viewers get the items they want.

Bidders will have more than 7,000 items to choose from during the nine-day sellathon for public television including an assortment of fine wines, a catered Greek party for 150 people, Lord and Taylor gift certificates and five automobiles.

To bid, viewers should keep in mind these steps:

1. Keep pencil, paper and phone close to the TV set.
2. Spot a desired item and jot down its board and item numbers.
3. Grab the phone and dial the number shown on your TV screen as quickly as possible. It's important to bid high and fast. The higher the bid, the greater the chances for success.
4. Once you've placed your bid, keep watching and try to keep cool.
5. The highest bid will be announced on the air and the highest bidder will receive a confirming phone call. Instructions for pick-up are given at the time of the call-back.

Local celebrities who will act as auc-

tioners and emcees during the event include Marc Avery, Bob Talbert, Paul Christy, Betty Carrier and Jimmy Lanza.

One million viewers are expected to tune in Channel 56 during auction week, based on estimates from previous auctions. Here is the schedule of the telecast:

Friday, April 7—7 p.m.-2 a.m.
Saturday, April 8—Non-2 a.m.
Sunday, April 9—2 p.m.-12:30 a.m.
Monday, April 10, through Thursday, April 13—1 p.m.-12:30 a.m.
Friday, April 14—1 p.m.-2 a.m.
Saturday, April 15—Non-2 a.m.

Editor takes auction bids

Among the auctioneers at the upcoming Channel 56 Auction will be Elmer Simmons, entertainment editor for the Observer & Eccentric newspapers. She will be on camera to take bids Monday, April 10, at 2:30 p.m.

Production 'Cole' begins rehearsals

Broadway, television and motion picture choreographer John Sharpe is staging the Meadow Brook Theatre's forthcoming Midwestern premiere of "Cole," the musical entertainment based on the songs of Cole Porter, which will open April 20 at 8:30 p.m.

Earlier in his career he was a member of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet and appeared in more than 4,000 performances in 12 Broadway shows including "The Most Happy Fella," "The Music Man," "Little Me" and "Sweet Charity."

Also in New York, Sharpe was assistant to three of the country's most famous choreographers, Bob Fosse, Michael Kidd and Ooma White. Since

then he has directed and/or choreographed the New York City Center revival of "Where's Charley?" three national touring companies, three Las Vegas productions, several dozen industrial shows and more than 100 productions in musical stock.

In Hollywood, Sharpe was assistant choreographer for the film versions of "Sweet Charity" starring Shirley MaLaine and the Oscar-winning "Cabaret" starring Liza Minnelli.

Sharpe is now conducting rehearsals for "Cole" with Musical Director James Hohmeyer and Meadow Brook's artistic director, Terence Kilburn.



Benefit performance slated

The comedy-drama by Leonard Gersch, "Butterflies Are Free," has been selected for a benefit theater party Tuesday at Will-O-Way Repertory Theatre, 785 W. Long Lake Road (near Telegraph) in Bloomfield Hills.

The 8:30 p.m. production of the

Broadway and film hit will benefit members of the Oakland Press Newspaper Guild and Pressmen's Union, on strike since Dec. 29, 1977.

Tickets, priced per person or per couple, are on sale at strike headquarters, 333-7680, or Will-O-Way, 644-4418.

Oscar night

This is the night the Oscar, Hollywood's symbol of excellence, will be awarded, and Bob Hope will be back in his familiar role as emcee for the Academy Awards broadcast. Live coverage of the 50th annual event will start at 10 p.m. on ABC-TV, Channel 7. Winners in the Observer & Eccentric's Oscar contest will be announced in the Monday, April 10 issue.

DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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