

# 'Memoir' reflects film's collaborators

By HELEN ZUCKER

## Review

In 1975 Shirley MacLaine and Claudia Well went to China with the first American Women's Friendship Delegation. The result of this collaboration was the film "The Other Half of the Sky: A China Memoir." It was nominated for the Academy Award-Best Feature Documentary in 1975.

The MacLaine-Well movie, sponsored by Oakland's University's Film Club, Cinema, will be shown at 3 and 7 p.m. on Dec. 3 in the school's Dodge Hall Amphitheatre—Room 201.

Shirley MacLaine produced and planned the film. Having been impressed with Ms. Well's work for "Sesame Street" and for New York's Public Television Station, WNET-13, Ms. MacLaine asked Ms. Well to go to China with her. Out of this joint venture came an extraordinary work that traces the relationships that arose between American women who had nothing in common but their desire to see China and to learn about Chinese women. Along the way the women learn a great deal about themselves, as well as about their Chinese counterparts.

"The Other Half of the Sky: A China Memoir" enabled Ms. Well to get Warner Brothers to back her current hit movie, "Girlsfriends."

"Girlsfriends" is Ms. Well's first attempt at a "fictional" film, and her experience in working on "A China Memoir" and on documentaries of all sorts has paid off handsomely.

### Jazz group to perform

The Detroit Jazz Concert will appear at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3, at Brace Elementary School in Southfield. For the young women in reservations or information, call 354-4864.

workers in the vineyards: One girl is a struggling photographer, her friend is a struggling writer. We get the feeling these girls really mean business concerning their professions. They grow to understand the tremendous odds they are working against, the price they are both going to have to pay along the way. They look like people we see in streets, classrooms, shops.

Yet "Girlsfriends" is nicely balanced. Touches of humor abound: There is nothing heavy in the film's feminist point of view. The movie is beyond polemics. Instead (as in "A China Memoir"), we get real people dealing with everyday problems, with loneliness, with their need for men, with the human reality of needing friends.

The groundwork for "Girlsfriends" was, in many ways, planned during the making of "The Other Half of the Sky." The American Women's Friendship Delegation, fumbling in their relations to one another and to the Chinese women they meet, are often touching in their disparities, in their longings to understand one another and in the realization that understanding is a thorny path.

"The Other Half of the Sky: A China Memoir" is a highly unusual documentary. It is not a "women's film" any more than "Girlsfriends" is. It is a highly competent, beautifully photographed piece of work meant to be seen by both sexes. Teenagers interested in China will enjoy it too.

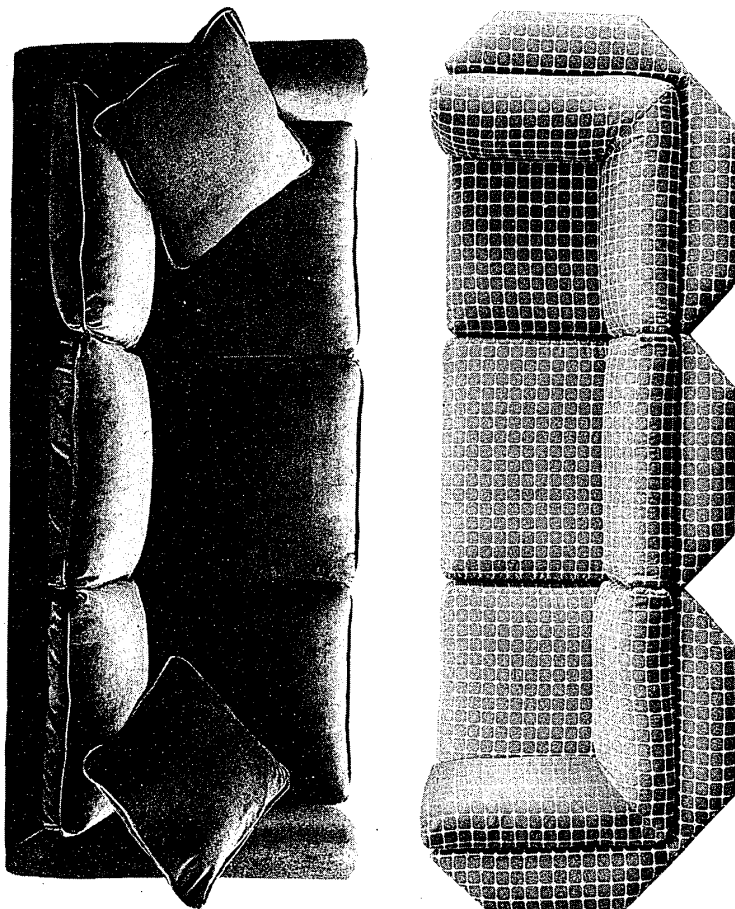


## Nutcracker

New York's Eglevsky Ballet will present eight performances of Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite" in Detroit's historic Music Hall, beginning Wednesday, Dec. 6.

Ingrid Fralley will be a special guest artist in the Detroit performances and will dance the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy. Ms. Fralley is a lead dancer with the Joffrey Ballet and former lead dancer with the American Ballet Theatre.

Children 12 years old and younger will be admitted to the Music Hall at half price. Matinees have been scheduled for 1 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 7, and 2 p.m. the following Saturday and Sunday. Evening performances are at 8:30 Wednesday through Saturday, and at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday. For information, call 963-1680. For information about group rates, call 963-7622.



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