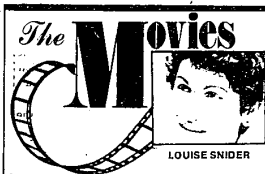




Jill Clayburgh as Caterina Silveri, a famous American opera singer, in "Luna." The 20th Century production opens Oct. 26 in the Detroit area. Barry Matthews debuts as her son.



Stingy plot works for 'starting over'

This seems to be an age of statistics. Sometimes the most trivial information is given numerical status as if, somehow, it's an important parameter of our civilization. For example, the number of third-down conversions quarterback Bunk Roundpaw made when he played on his home field and the temperature was below freezing. See what I mean?

Well, I've unearthed a statistic just as meaningful: The number of times Jill Clayburgh has played a woman whose life was determined by some fateful event at Bloomingdale's. Twice. In "An Unmarried Woman" her husband leaves her for a woman he met at the shirt counter. In "Starting Over" (R) her lover gets an anxiety attack and starts to hyperventilate while shopping for a sofa. She quickly grasps the import of his indisposition. He feels guilty about setting up house with her; he is still in love with his ex-wife.

No earthshaking event here, just a stingily plotted film with as much impact as the Bloomingdale statistic. "Starting Over" is your old romantic triangle given a hip facade because it involves a divorced male. Burt Reynolds is the man in the middle — torn between his new love (Clayburgh) and his attachment to his ex-wife (Candice Bergen).

Reynolds, his macho swagger tucked away, is a discarded husband. Since one assumes that a professional actor should be capable of projecting a variety of personalities, I'm not sure why his toned down image should stir anyone to exalted remarks about his acting, but it has.

Birmingham residents in 'A Toast to Dolly'

Several Birmingham residents will appear in the 1979 South Oakland County Chapter of Sweet Adelines, Inc., show, "A Toast to Dolly" at Our Lady of Mercy High School, Eleven Mile Road at Middlebelt Road, Farmington Hills, on Oct. 26-27 and Nov. 2-3. Show time is 8:15 p.m.

Nora Van Deven will play the role of Minnie Fay, the vivacious young lady in Mrs. Molloy's hat shop. Ms. Van Deven will portray Minnie on the nights of Nov. 2-3 and will sing with the chorus during the first two performances, Oct. 26-27, when this character will be played by another member of the cast, Sally Burns of Troy.

"A Toast to Dolly" is a barbershop-styled musical patterned after the famous Broadway hit "Hello, Dolly!" Because of the many chorused songs in its production, several South

Silent clowns featured in film theater classics

The mute comics of yesterday are with us even today as Detroit's Silent Theatre continues with its Silent Cinema Film Festival, through Nov. 11.

Classic entertainers like Charles Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd still capture audiences with their expressive silence portrayed in a multitude of unpredictable situations. On Friday, Oct. 26, at 7 p.m., two of Chaplin's classics will be shown, "The Idle Class" (1921) and "The Kid" (1921), along with a Harold Lloyd production, "The Kid Brother" (1927). All of the films will be presented in the Detroit Institute of Arts auditorium,

Actually, Bergen is much more of a surprise and a delight in her comic performance. She has embraced the single life so that she can express herself and develop her career as a singer and songwriter. She scores a hit with a pseudo women's lib song which she sings in an abominably flat, caterwauling voice.

The film is at its best in moments like these when it pokes fun at our cherished characteristics, such as the popular taste for bad music or tolerance of uncouth psychology. When Charles Durning and Frances Sternhagen, as Reynolds' psychiatrist brother and sister-in-law, project those "We share your suffering, we understand your hurt" looks, you just want to punch them out.

Those are the high points of the comedy; the rest gets low marks for wit. Clayburgh gets dunked in a tub of water. Reynolds get accosted by a blind date. (It might have been funny if the date were really blind, but that would have been a Monty Python production, not an Alan J. Pakula one.) Even so, the film might have been passable if it preserved some truth in its characters. When Clayburgh, as the insecure, dowdy school teacher is shown charming the wrists off a handsome pro-basketball player — about two feet taller and 10 years younger than she — that's stretching credibility too far.

Most people probably won't mind the comedies, because "Starting Over" has a strong cast and a smart look. It's a hedge podge of conservative values masquerading as risqué, and that's usually a winning combination.

Wayne Brumm of Birmingham will appear in the role of Rudolph, the meticulous head waiter. Brumm is a member of the Oakland County Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc., and is one of several members of that organization who will participate in the barbershop spectacular.

For reservations, call 689-0026. A percentage of the show profits will be donated to the current chapter charity, The Michigan Cancer Foundation.

52000 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

The Silent Cinema Film Festival has been organized with the approval of Raymond Rohauer, a distributor of the silent wonders. Rohauer has 1,000 films on tap in Los Angeles, 2,000 in Paris and several hundred in London.

Although Rohauer acknowledges a current nostalgia boom, he doesn't believe it's the singular cause of a widespread interest in his film collection. The series runs every Sunday at 7 p.m. Each program consists of two features and a short, with the work of at least two comedians showcased each night.

Spook film sets stage

The Birmingham Temple Film Series presents "The Night of the Hunter" at 7 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 28.

This is Charles Laughton's only film as a director. The screenplay tells the story of a ruthless hymn-singing, mad preacher in relentless pursuit of two children, who innocently carry the secret of hidden stolen money.

For ticket information call 477-1410.

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