



Jack Lemmon's the funnyman, a Broadway press agent, facing a life crisis in "Tribute."



the movies

Louise Snider

'Tribute' grabs your attention with theatrics

It is very easy to get caught up in "Tribute" (PG) and just as easy to become disenchanted with it. The situation and the leading character are attention grabbers from the beginning.

Scottie Templeton (Jack Lemmon) is a hammy, colorful theatrical press agent whose response to everything is a joke. If you don't know what to do in a situation, just drop your pants and make everyone laugh. The whole world is his straight man.

He has an ex-wife (Lee Remick) who, although remarried, still cares about him and an estranged 20-year-old son, Jud (Robby Benson), who doesn't.

Scottie finds out he is dying of cancer and suddenly it looks as if the joke is on him. He's going to be playing straight man.

TO MAKE MATTERS worse, he is filled with regret about his dismal relationship with his son, and there isn't much time left for remedying it.

Scottie not only wants to reconcile with Jud but to leave him something of value. Nothing material, since Scottie is a spendthrift with no estate to speak of. Scottie has excelled always at one thing—having fun. As his legacy, he would like to teach the sourpuss Jud how to have fun.

He also would like to teach him to approach life with passion. Can you imagine this coming from a man who admits he never made an emotional commitment? But it's a good line and makes good theater, which is where this movie came from.

Jack Lemmon recreates the character he played on Broadway for nine months in Bernard Slade's play. It's a role that was written with Lemmon in mind, and he does it justice. Scottie demands a virtuoso performer who can be dejected or jubilant, scared or hysterically funny, crying or laughing.

Lemmon is expert in the sad clown persona. His performance in "Tribute" is a tribute to his acting skill. It has all the requisites for another Academy Award nomination.

THE DISENCHANTMENT with the movie, therefore, is not prompted by the acting (even though Benson never seems to get inside his character), but by the script. Slade has stacked the deck so obviously that each turn of events is predictable and the resolution of the father son schism inevitable.

The only twist in the generation-gap dilemma is that "Tribute" reverses the usual stereotype and gives us a prudish, serious son telling his frivolous father to grow up.

When Jud would like to see a photography exhibition his father proposes they go to a nude mud-wrestling match. So much for values in this film.

You can see, though, why winning Jud's love and respect is not going to be easy. And getting him to loosen up is another tough problem, especially since the author never suggests that Scottie should bend or meet his son halfway. All the ground-giving comes from Jud.

It must be a great comfort to middle-class parents to observe that Scottie prevails without having to give an inch. Parental guidance lesson: Dismiss your offspring's interests and opinions as unimportant. Make them see things your way, by God.



Robbie Benson's the straightfaced son, who adjusts and learns to love his offbeat father.

what's at the movies

NEW RELEASES

ANY WHICH WAY YOU CAN (PG). Clint Eastwood, Clyde (the orangutan) and team of "Every Which Way But Loose," united for more comic mayhem.

A CHANGE OF SEASONS (R). Superfluous film about changing values in adult relationships, but nothing about this is very adult.

THE ELEPHANT MAN (PG). Largely true story of grossly deformed man rescued from sordid life by compassionate doctor. Fine acting by John Hurt, Anthony Hopkins and John Gielgud balances out directorial shortcomings.

FLASH GORDON (PG). Campy space fantasy intersperses a lot of laughs among the adventures of the clean-cut hero, all to the music of Queen.

THE FORMULA (R). Mystery thriller about international cartel keeping formula for synthetic fuel off the market. Stars George Scott, Marlon Brando and Marthe Keller.

THE JAZZ SINGER (PG). Ridiculous remake magnifies all the faults of the first talking motion picture made in 1927. The story doesn't get any better. The songs get worse.

NINE TO FIVE (PG). Comedy with Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin and Dolly Parton as three secretaries who scheme to get rid of their boss.

ORDINARY PEOPLE (R). Robert Redford's directorial debut is a

smash in this extraordinarily well-acted, moving film about a perfect family trying to cope with each member's imperfections.

POPEYE (PG). It will take more than spinach to save this "Popeye" from defeat brought on by slack direction, a highly forgettable musical score, and a generally mean conception of characters and situation.

PRIVATE BENJAMIN (R). Goldie Hawn joins the army to escape and find herself.

RAGING BULL (R). Top performance by Robert De Niro in brutally realistic film about boxer Jake La Motta. Two-plus hours highlighting the life of a loathsome person.

SEEMS LIKE OLD TIMES (PG). Goldie Hawn, Charles Grodin and Chevy Chase in comedy about a lawyer, her ex-husband who robs a bank, and her current husband, the district attorney.

STIR CRAZY (R). Comedy with Richard Pryor and Gene Wilder as a couple of stranded show biz types who get framed for a bank robbery.

MOVIE RATING GUIDE

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

To be April 3-11

Dick Purtan hosts Channel 56 auction

Channel 56's Auction Cowboy and Official Host, Dick Purtan (of CKLW radio) and Auction General Chairman Andi Wolfe have announced the Go-Getting Chairmen for this year's Auction, to be broadcast April 3-11.

The chairmen — Janey Meade of Grosse Pointe, Judy Spellman of Ann Arbor and Mickey Balog of Union Lake — will supervise the solicitation of Auction donations in their parts of the metropolitan area and lead the volunteer training sessions at the Go-Getting Kick-Off on Feb. 14 at the Roostertail in Detroit.

Ms. Meade is in charge of eastern Wayne and Macomb counties. Ms. Spellman is in charge of western Wayne and Washtenaw counties and Ms. Balog is responsible for Oakland and Livingston Counties. "We're out to round up the best selection of items in Auction history," Ms. Balog said.

"The drive for merchandise donations is the heart of the Auction effort," Ms. Meade said. "Items are needed to provide the necessary operating funds for Channel 56."

MS. SPELLMAN adds, businesses

that donate not only receive on-air credit to an Auction week audience of more than one million people but tax benefits as well.

This will be the 13th annual auction on Channel 56. During the nine-day sellation, thousands of bidders shop by phone as merchandise is auctioned off by celebrities from the worlds of sports, TV, radio, civic affairs and the press.

All items donated should be new and have a minimum value of \$50. To donate, call Auction Central at 873-7200.



DICK PURTAN

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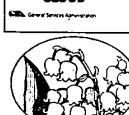


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