

Zita

by Jane Dalton

Robert Enrico's film *Zita*, portrays a young woman's naive emotions about life and death. The unintended naivete results from the fact that the director and writers have failed to define what reality and existence will mean in terms of the film.

The vehicle used to ap-

proach the life-death question in the film is very clever. *Zita*, a middle-aged woman, became seriously ill. The effect of this illness is seen through the eyes of her niece (Joanna Shimkus), who at this point in her life finally becomes aware of the implications of her own existence.

The final impression left from this film is Enrico's suggestion that death is something against which our minds ought to be protected. He suggests that joyous fantasies taken from previous experiences in life should be applied to death.

Enrico's philosophy about life is beautiful in itself, how-

ever, it brings up a basic question in film-making: should films help the audience to define a realistic 'reality', or teach us how to escape into our own fantasies?

Despite these fundamental problems I enjoyed '*Zita*'. The colour was beautiful, even though it gave a sense of 'su-

per-reality' which is difficult for everyday minds to perceive. The colour of the many dream sequences played wonderful tricks with personal fantasies. The acting in '*Zita*' is quite good, possibly due to the simplicity of the characters and the conception of the film.



Our two lovelies, Kim Novak (below) and Genevieve Bujold (above), have many fans in Canada and the United States.

Which one is Lylah?

by Rick Blair

The Legend of Lylah Clare, now playing at the Yorkdale and several other theatres, is billed as a "real yummy movie-movie," "a satiric put-on of Hollywood". This is the type of publicity which theatres regurgitate in order to persuade all those unsuspecting millions of Doris Day, Sound of Music fans to swarm to the box office hoping to see some other form of crap than that which appears before them.

In fact, "Lylah Clare" makes a serious attempt to portray life in Hollywood's movie kingdom. Unfortunately, the script is too old and the characters stereotyped, so the result is a very blurred reality.

In the story itself, Kim Novak is ideally cast as a movie novice who gets to play Lylah Clare in a biography of this fictitious, Dietrich-like star of the 40's. As a matter of fact the only truly successful part of the movie is Miss Novak's handling of this role. First as Elsa Brinkman who is Lylah's double (in not only looks) and in flashback scenes as Lylah herself, Miss Novak is both startling and credible. She shows her greatness when she begins to act more and more like Lylah did in real life. I don't know whether Miss Novak was able to change her voice to make it huskier or whether her voice was dubbed. But either way, the results were effective.

Peter Finch is disappointing

as Lewis Zarkan, the director who was once married to the real Lylah Clare and hasn't made a movie since her death 20 years ago. His role shows that he should be schizophrenic and paranoid because he led Lylah to her death and he tries to do the same things to Elsa. In the end he says "The only thing we learn from our mistakes is how to make them again." Instead of feeling pity or disgust for this character, Finch makes us feel nowhere, as if we were suspended in mid-air with no hope of touching either the floor or the ceiling.

The remaining characters, as I mentioned before, are stereotypes. Ernest Bornine plays the tough, loud, hard-nosed studio head; Milton Selzer plays the agent who is tired of making just 10% out of people and who desires to do something for the world to remember; Coral Browne plays the wheelchair gossip columnist who receives poetic justice by being ground into the dirt by Elsa at her first press appearance.

The film definitely has flaws. One cannot make a demonic fairyland out of Hollywood today. The public is too aware of what is really going on to be taken in by this. If we consider this attempt at reality to be only the smaller plot and consider the transition of Elsa into Lylah as the truly important point of the film, then *The Legend of Lylah Clare* is a truly haunting experience and certainly worth seeing.

Isabel is a winner for Canada

by David McCaughna

Paul Almond wrote, produced and directed *Isabel*, and in making it used only Canadian actors, technicians, etc. — that in itself is a feat worthy of commendation. But there is no need to condescend to *Isabel* because it's a Canadian film. The film, set in the stark wintry Gaspé is quite good, despite certain flaws in the story development. And what Almond misses in the narrative he makes up for in creating a chilling atmosphere.

Isabel, played by Genevieve Bujold, returns to the family farm from Montreal upon the death of her mother and finds herself caught in the shadow of an ominous family past. Her father, grandfather and brother have all died bizarre deaths. *Isabel's* mother, who raised her so strictly that she is now on the brink of lesbianism, and who was always considered to be an arch puritan, did, *Isabel* discovers, succumb to earthly desires after her father's death.

Alone on the farm with only her uncle and occasional visits from the 'mysterious stranger' (Marc Strange). The rumours and personages from the family past swirl about and haunt *Isabel* — the shrouded figure on the hill, the face in the storm, all those strange noises, the faded photographs on the walls. Even the 'mysterious stranger' bears a striking resemblance to *Isabel's* dead brother.

Unfortunately Paul Almond has not carried the idea through as well as he could have. The film lacks a certain subtlety that is essential to films of this nature (remember *The Haunting?*). The viewer is left with too many unanswered questions. The old time-worn question arises, reality or illusion?

Isabel, aside from being rather fuzzy, especially in the ending, is very well done. Almond has captured the Gaspé atmosphere with

precision — the miles of snow filled fields, the turbulent sea, small futureless villages and the still, dark rooms of the farm house where the memory of the former inhabitants floods the present with the past. The feeling of isolation and loneliness is strong.

Genevieve Bujold, with a wide-eyed innocence, is very effective as *Isabel*. She is slightly sensual but still a girl; she radiates the feeling of vulnerability. For the role of *Isabel* on the verge of

worldliness, Genevieve is perfect.

This is Paul Almond's first venture into film-making. That he could make a film as good as *Isabel* on the first try is an indication that with Almond Canada may have her first director who will receive international acclaim and recognition for full-length films made entirely in Canada by Canadians. Already he is planning his next film, to be shot in Montreal and again starring his wife Genevieve Bujold.

• Don't cry, Rachael • your husband was good in Hud

by October Revolutionary

My prediction for 1969 is that Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward will probably get a divorce right after the Academy Award for best actress is given to her, and the Harvard Lampoon award for worst movie of 1968 is given to him, for each of their contributions to Rachel, Rachel.

Actually, the movie isn't as bad as all that. The casting is good, despite a jarring melange of hippycrits and revivalists, and the script, with a little polish and editing could have been a brilliant psychological study. Cinematography is forgettably good, and setting excellent.

But the movie has one formidable flaw. This is the pace. Either more facets of the main character, Rachel, should have been presented, or the movie should have been edited down to 45 minutes. As it is presented right now, it causes one's theatre seat to become progressively more unbearably hard with each

two-hour long minute. But his is the distaff side.

Let us now turn to the beautiful, the charming Joanne Woodward, who is such a good actress that she was ugly and pitiable in this movie. She does, in fact, deserve some award more impressive for the best female portrayed in memory than a mere Oscar. Out of the limited traits with which Newman has provided her, she squeezes every inch of life until the picture of the lonely, repressed school-teacher dominates the movie.

So good is she in fact that she completely overshadows, Estelle Parsons, her co-star, to the extent that one wonders how the latter ever won an Oscar for best supporting actress in *Bonnie and Clyde*. Hers is a paper-thin performance by comparison.

In short, I found the movie most tedious, but Miss Woodward, you can perform for me anytime at all. Don't go see the movie, go see the broad. It, and she, should be in town shortly.

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