

films

Critical reactions to *Georgy Girl* (at the Odeon) have been mixed, and my own impressions of the film are mixed too.

You probably have already become aware, since the jukeboxes seem determined to stuff the title song into our ears day in and day out, that the film concerns one Georgina (Lynne Redgrave) who is big and fat and ugly but has a heart of gold.

She lavishes this heart on little children—first the members of her dancing class, then on a baby born to her room-mate Meredith, who is one of the finest incarnations of bitchiness I can remember seeing on the screen.

Georgy gets involved with Meredith's rather casual husband Joss (Alan Bates, cavorting rather tiresomely along the lines of the photographer in *Darling* who was so delightful) and also with her father's millionaire fiftyish employer, Mr. James (James Mason, splendid as usual).

The social milieu in which Georgy operates seemed very strange to me. Conceivably somebody is saying something profound about English class structure, but more probably the master-servant business is just an undigested bit of content from the novel the film is based on.

People have generally been talking about the film as one of a group which includes *Morgan* and *The Knack*, as a glossy, kinky British comedy. I think this is a mistake.

Georgy Girl borrows the odd device from these films, but basically, below all its uncertainties, it's the latest in what has seemed a moribund genre, the British "kitchen-sink" realistic drama which encompassed such films as *Room at the Top*, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, and that much finer hybrid, *Billy Liar*.

Hence its power comes from the unease which it instills in us by reminding us of certain things we'd prefer perhaps to forget: that some people aren't loved very much, that some women hate their babies, and so forth.

Its weakness lies in its never coming to terms with these problems, always slithering off into cuteness or "style" or simple confusion.

Nevertheless, I guardedly recommend the film, if only because for me the unease did come across very powerfully in spite (because?) of the film's uncertainty. And who knows? You might even find it funny.

—John Thompson

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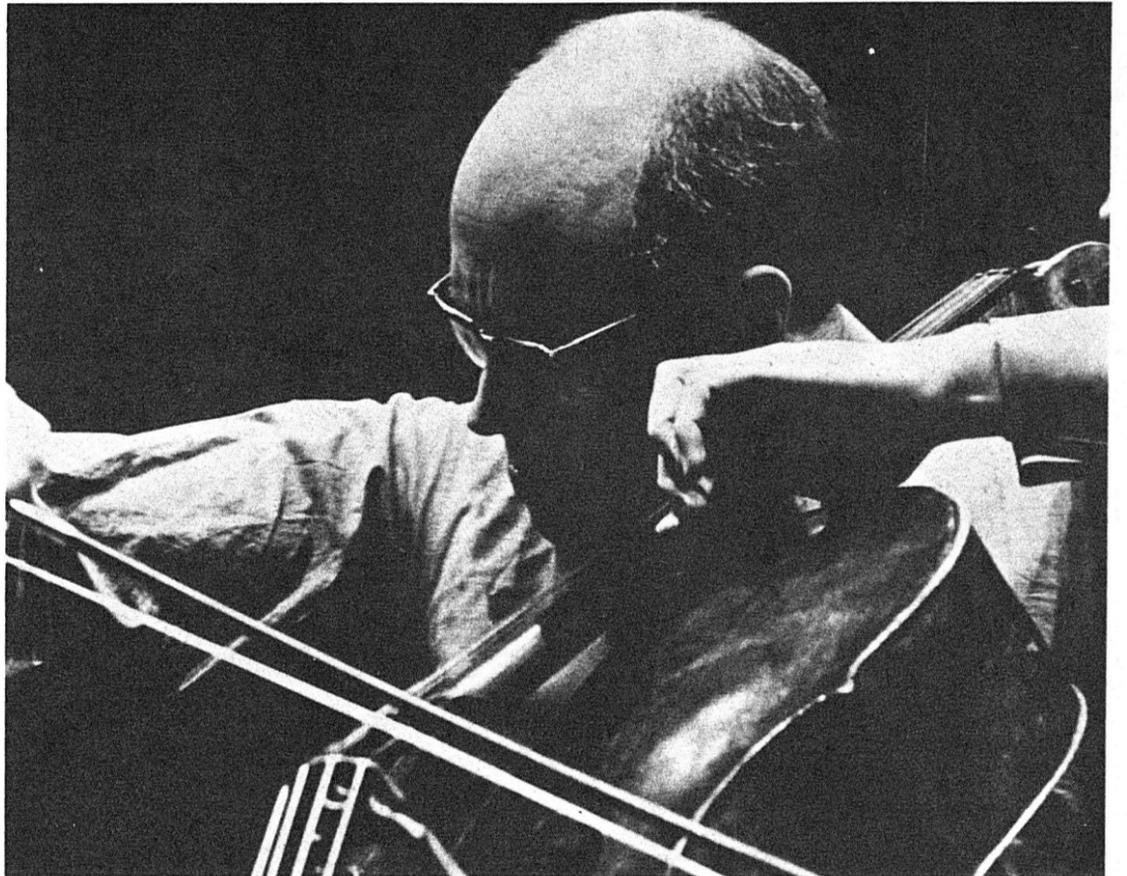
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—Jim Griffin photo

ROSTROPOVICIOUS—This is another picture of not Brian Priestman. You guessed it, Rostropovich again, this time displaying the sort of fierceness with which he frightens his cello into submission. It was just after this point in the music that he is reported to have decimated the first violins with a single mighty sweep of the bow.

EOA si! Charles Gounod!

A packed Jubilee Auditorium reacted like ecstatic football fans to an overwhelming performance of Gounod's *Faust* last Friday evening.

"It was the most professional performance I've ever seen in Edmonton," gushed one opera-lover while her escort battled through crowds of dollar forty-nine day magnitude to retrieve her coat.

Actually, I saw more of a blonde upswept hairdo sitting in front of me than I did of the opera, but the admirably performed music and occasional glimpses of Phil Silver's striking set drastically revised my opinion of opera.

A theatre and symphony fiend, I had previously considered opera to be a god-awful hybrid fit only for status-seeking intellectual snobs.

But alleluia, the EOA has converted me!

To quote my capable competition from across the river, Ermanno Mauro has a beautiful voice. He is also an excellent actor. Although I cannot understand French, I found his capable projection of expression more than adequate to compensate for my unfortunate shortcoming.

Richard Cross was a delightful Mephistopheles. He was uproariously funny at times, but was the perfect figure of disgusting satanic wickedness when his role called for it.

Heather Thompson was an excellent Marguerite, and Cornelis Ophof did an admirable job portraying the impossible role of Valentine. His interminable death scene was rather boring, although I suspect this was more Gounod's fault than his.

Brian Priestman and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra outdid themselves. Very rarely did they drown out the singers.

The lighting was excellent in the scenes where block lighting effects were employed, as in the chapel scene. The spot work, however, was rather sloppy, as more than once the technicians missed cues

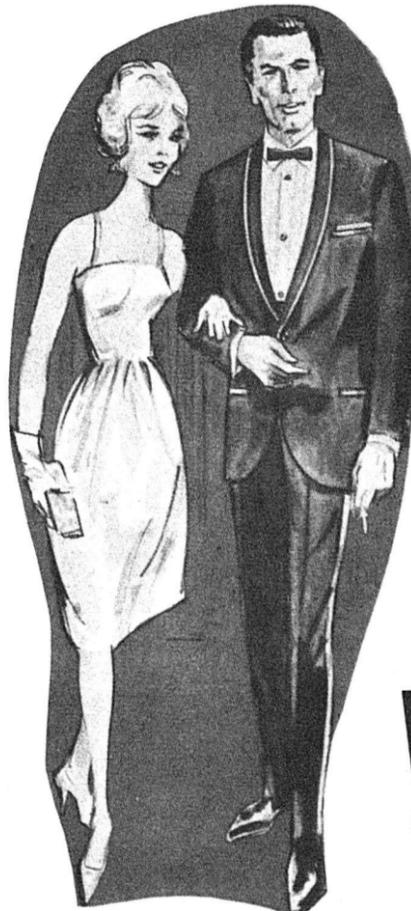
and hit the curtains.

The dancers, although good for Edmonton, looked rather sick beside the professional polish of the major cast and the chorus. Obviously Edmonton's forte is in

choral singing rather than dancing.

To sum up, it was a great evening. If next November's production of *The Barber of Seville* is half as good, it should still be well worth seeing.

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