



Quebecois

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for affection. Sadly, he wonders whether it is he or the machine that will be retired in 20 years. He fears that, like most of his relatives, he will go mad before then. Marie-Louise hopes that he will so that she can sit and knit in front of the t.v. for the rest of her life.

While the couple's dialogue takes place in the 60's, their two daughters converse in the 70's. It has been 10 years since their parents died in a car crash along with their younger brother. They both know it was a suicide / murder which their father committed. Manon, still haunted by child-

hood memories, has adopted her mother's religious fanaticism. Wanda Buchanan is a crisp and self-righteous Manon.

Severely clothed and coiffed, she persists in nurturing an image of her mother as a saint. Her sister Carmen's patient exhortations to abandon her past and move out of the family home are without effect. She accuses the latter of being a "whore on la rue St. Laurent", the worst insult she can possibly think of. Carmen's reply, like her general attitude and manner, is brusque and free of social niceties. "I'd rather be a whore on la rue St. Laurent than an old maid playing with her candles," Carmen answers.

Carmen is free of her sister's religious obsession and of her remorse. She alone realizes the unhappy circumstances of her father's life as well as her mother's. Susan Stackhouse made Carmen as languorously flippant as any French Canadian cabaret singer. Dressed in flamboyant "rodeo" clothes, she was the most alive of the characters.

Coldy, she has erased her past and insists that her sister do the same. "My 25 year old sister is so hooked on religion that she can't stand her own body", she exclaims. Like Marie-Lou, Carmen is escaping her childhood for a new independence. In the 70's, her options are much greater than her mother's were. Manon, however, too secure in her muffled memory world, finally thanks God that her sister is leaving for the last time and will leave her in peace.

One clinging to the old Québec society and the other venturing into the new one? Perhaps...

The cast and crew are students in Dalhousie's theatre program, which is seeking to give them optimum training by restricting the casting of this year's productions to theatre students. "Marie-Lou" is the first French-Canadian play put on by the drama school, but judging from audience responses at last Sunday's performance, it won't be the last. The stark, functional decor and the French ambience music before the show were especially appreciated touches.

Film

Buster

by William Dodge

There were two loves in his life, his engine and his girl.

After a pause in the schedule that left local film nuts high, dry and blue, the Dalhousie Film series resumed last Sunday night with a screening of Buster Keaton's "The General."

Director/actor Buster Keaton blusters his way through this endearing spoof on a civilian railroad engineer named Johnny Gray whose valiant efforts to enlist in the Confederate Army are thwarted.

Keaton's failure to enlist does not impress his sweetheart, played by Marion Mack, whose innocent domestic stupidity provides a perfect foil throughout the film.

"Please don't lie," she mouths. "I don't want you to speak to me until you're in uniform."

When his beloved locomotive 'The General' is kidnapped, Keaton tries to retrieve the machine behind enemy lines and in true comic form, ends up helplessly lost, helplessly cold and hopelessly hungry.

Through a hilarious chain of perfect accidents, Keaton retrieves his engine and his girl, eludes the enemy in the 'Great Locomotive Chase'—on which the film was based—burns down bridges, and forewarns the Confederate camp of the advancing enemy.

Johnny gets his just reward, enlistment in the army and a promotion to the rank of Lieutenant.

"In 'The General' it is less the gags you remember than the image of the lonely, brave, beautiful, foolish little figure..." says David Robinson quite aptly, in the New Cinema Supplement.

More macho

by donalee moulton

Jane Fonda has risen in the movie scene from a sexy but stupid Barbarella to a powerhouse woman with a mind and ability of her own. It was Julia that claimed her as one of the finest actresses today and *Coming Home* which acted as reinforcement. And now there is *Comes a Horseman* and its back to *Barbarella*.

Comes a Horseman is a western, a story of the small but good homesteader against the evil empire builder. The only new twist to this old theme is the good homesteader happens by some mistake to be a woman. However, we know it is a mistake because good is not strong enough to overcome evil, just as woman is supposedly weaker than man.

The turning point comes when Fonda gives up her inhuman and unrealistic independence and falls in love with the mighty James Caan. We know then that evil has

been defeated and all is in its proper place. We know because Fonda turns in her jeans for a dress and her outspokenness for subservience.

It is ironic that when women are finally granted the opportunity to play the typical man's role and show that maybe sex isn't the determinant of everything, that the movie industry creates macho, the superior power. It is now weak to be male, you must be macho. And Fonda doesn't have a chance.

Comes a Horseman has a weak plot, an old overused and tired plot. It has two fine performers whose only asset in this film comes from undoing their respective top buttons. The highlight of the show is the characterization and acting of the "old man", but like all highlights they eventually fade, or in this case die, and with his death goes the only redeeming feature of *Comes a Horseman*.



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