

Sweet Sugarbaby ; sour Friends

Sugarbaby
King International
Princess

review by Jerome Ryckhorst

Sugarbaby is a German comedy about a mortician (Marianne Sagebrecht) who comes to life amidst her mundane surroundings. It is witty and funny in a subtle way, not at all like Hollywood fare.

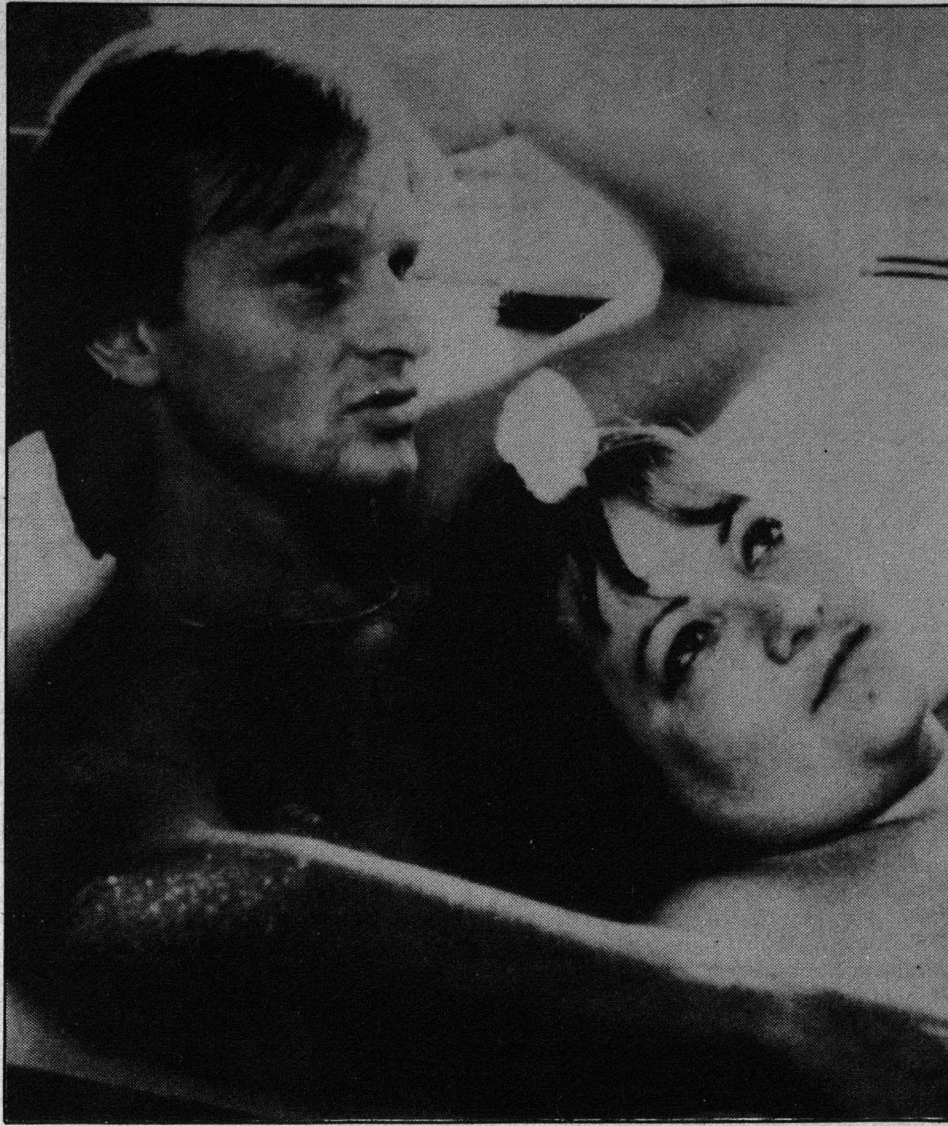
The film is written, directed, and produced by Percy Adlon, who steps away from his usual documentary style in this work. Adlon also directed Sagebrecht in a previous undertaking. She became the inspiration for the story of *Sugarbaby*.

One day Marianne becomes infatuated with the voice of a subway driver (Eisi Gulp) on her usually dull ride home. She takes time off from work to find out everything she can about this man and to prepare herself for the confrontation. She even discovers his favorite chocolate bar. By the vending machine, Marianne makes her move with a candy bar in hand. Pick-up line: "I pulled the wrong one." Marianne thinks of every detail, has everything planned, but when the emotions spill over, the laughs start.

In this film everything contributes to the interpretation of the emotions. The camera remains stiff and solidly in place to film the woman's dull life. As she starts to live, the camera angle becomes more unusual, livelier, until the moment she finally makes contact with the subway driver. Marianne finally gets him alone in her apartment; small talk sputters out and the now moving camera pans/swings off to one side as Marianne removes their clothing. But wait! The camera swings playfully back for a second, third, fourth teasing look.

The brilliant colours, like the camera movement, also reflect the changes in emotion. The psychological, symbolic, and poetic parts of the script are all told in colours. Johanna Heer, director of photography, calls it "painting with light."

Overall, *Sugarbaby* is extremely enjoyable. Even the serious conversations between the two main characters — discussions about work, death, and family — are encouraging;



Eisi Gulp and Marianne Sagebrecht getting cosy in *Sugarbaby*

lite should be faced head on. That is exactly what Marianne does, in spite of the complications in the affair. She swallows her pride, overcomes her injuries, and goes after what she wants. In this lies the film's most inspirational message.

Just Between Friends
Tri-Star Pictures
Plaza

review by Suzanne Lundrigan

Just Between Friends looks like it slid off

the television screen, snuck out the back door, and crawled onto the big screen where it does not belong.

Purported to be a ground breaking film about women's friendships, this film misses on all counts.

Holly (Mary Tyler Moore), a happy housewife from suburbia, befriends Sandy (Christine Lahti), a brash television reporter, at an aerobics class. Within days they become best friends.

Implausibility follows implausibility as the two women find out that they have more in common than their aerobics classes. Sandy is having an affair with Holly's husband, Chip.

Chip dies leaving the two women alone to sort out their differences... among these "differences" is the child which Sandy is carrying... yes, it is Chip's.

The cat fights which ensue as the two women come to grips with Chip's indiscretions bely the "deep" friendship which they had supposedly cultivated. Sandy and Holly spend half their time stomping up to one another's doors knocking and stomping away. Apparently you haven't come a long way baby.

To add insult to injury, director Burns tugs shamelessly at the heart strings. Perhaps he should have run subtitles encouraging the audience to bring out their handkerchiefs. That part of the audience which was not alienated by the flaws in the plot gets lost in the sticky sentimentality.

Burns, of Mary Tyler Moore Show fame, can't seem to leave the television set behind. Though he wrote the screenplay with Moore in mind, actress and screenplay do not connect. Moore as the sweet naive Holly is merely an extension of the reporter Mary. Nothing new here, and rather disappointing given Moore's performance as the uptight tense-lipped mother in *Ordinary People*.

Christine Lahti showed flickers of intelligence, even comic timing, as she flung one-liners at Holly. Again, the flashes are lost in the drivel.

Just Between Friends is a disappointment; it tells us nothing new about women's relationships, rather what it tells us is the same old, and may I add, inaccurate story.

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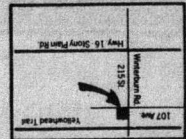
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