

films

Valley of the Dolls (at the Odeon) sets off on a whirlwind tour of the best-selling novel by Jacqueline Susann, swinging from the dirty depths of Broadway to the dirty depths of Hollywood and back, but the story is left somewhere in the arid wastes of Nevada.

Barbie (doll) Parkins plays the naive but classy Ann, who comes from a picture-book New England town to the big city to make good. She is dragged into the quagmire of the big city and Broadway by the big stars, and especially by one big handsome agent, Lyon Burke (Paul Burke).

He is really in love with her but his Playboy Advisor subconscious will not let him marry her for he doth love freedom more. He succeeds in convincing her for a while that this is the big city style of courtship, but it doesn't work back in the quaint home town where she insists on an old-fashioned wedding.

He is sufficiently rebuffed by these queer customs to run off and write that-book-I've-always-wanted-to-write-but-never-found-time which he dedicates to her. Touching.

Miss Parkins has been admirably grounded in the nitty grime of "Peyton Place," and her experience in these matters shows through in one of the more natural performances in the movie. Her part is burdened with its share of melodramatic lines like the one she delivers to Lyon when he returns begging her to marry him: "For many years I prayed for this moment. Now that it's come, I don't feel a thing." So ends the standard tragic love phenomena turned cold by bitter, lonely years of prayer. But wait—there's more.

Patty Duke plays that talented Neely O'Hara who, at the outset, is thrown out of a Broadway play because the jealous star, Helen Lawson (Susan Hayward), doesn't want to be upstaged.

Despite the setbacks, Neely is on her way up, but the struggle changes her into a conceited vixen who takes pills to go to sleep at night, more pills to wake up in the morning, and a few extra for dramatic effect all of which she swashes down with Liberal portions of bourbon. "Yea," she snarls at Ann, "I use dolls." Yea, right then I could have used one too—any kind.

In a long series of guttural obscenities, she makes a strenuous attempt at proving what a horrid person she is addicted to dolls, struggling from husband to husband, bed to bed in a drunken stupor. In the end she becomes another crude and jealous Helen Lawson and throws a talented new girl out of her show because she doesn't want to be upstaged. We leave her in an alley screaming for her first husband, or God as an alternative, and finally herself, but she has been doing the same thing for so long that we are unconvinced that there has been any change.

Sharon Tate plays the most enjoyable character in the movie. She is the beautiful blonde with the bod, but not enough talent to go very far on Broadway. She falls in love with a handsome singer, who, it is later discovered, has some disease inherited from his father which is characterized by a gradual physical and mental weakening. She goes to France to make "art" films to support his stay at a sanitarium. This hint at human kindness in all the ordure is at least touching.

She even gains some sympathy when she discovers that she has breast cancer and decides it is better if it all goes than just part of it, and commits suicide—more pills.

Every once in a while a beautiful piece of photography will flash across the screen and the theme song is pleasant, but it seems a small reward. These three tender love stories of guts, hate and dolls are apparently three different ways of looking into the grimy abyss of the glittering Broadway, but they form and insoluble juxtaposition which rolls on for two tear-wreching hours. The dolls are only so many tiny power granules in the old Brand "X" laundry soap.

—Gordon Auck

The art, er, decorations in SUB

It's beautiful, but what does it mean? asks critic Pasnak

There are paintings on the walls of SUB. They have been there almost since the beginning of the year. Now that everybody has gotten used to them, they are, you might say, fair game.

In writing about these works, I am put at a certain disadvantage, because to the best of my knowledge, they have not been catalogued. I believe that they are fully described and catalogued only in the mind of Mr. Ed Monsma, a shadowy place where one does not venture unchaperoned.

I am reduced, therefore, to writing in generalities, and those who are interested may apply them to the specific paintings at their leisure.

Most of these paintings either are a reflection on modern society or a product of it; it is difficult to tell which. In any case, they manifest a high degree of consciousness of technology. Almost without exception, they share an overwhelming concern for technique.

The artists represented here are finding and exploring as many dif-

ferent ways as they can of putting paint on canvas. They have a corresponding number of effects on the viewer.

We have some abstract expressionism, some op-art, some hard edge abstraction, one construction of nails, some which cannot be classified except in very esoteric and partly arbitrary and meaningless terms.

The reason for this is that there has been a separation of form and content. These artists are finding new forms, new ways of expressing something, without evolving new things to express. This fault cannot be justified by saying that this represents the dehumanization process, the blank impersonalization of our culture. An "artist" with such a view would be more effective making machines or producing nothing at all.

This is of course a generalization. There are a few of these works with content as well as form. However, the emphasis on form rather than content remains.

As technical exercises, the paintings are all interesting. They are well designed. They are balanced. They use color, and in some cases, line, well. They are in fact quite pleasing to look at.

And in these qualities lies their chief merit. They are tools of the decorator, colorful and arresting. They serve as points of interest to break up the cold white virgin walls of SUB. They would be as appropriate on tea-towels or silk scarves.

They are also, perhaps, status symbols. They represent the work of rising young artists, artists in the mode. This is not necessarily a censure upon those who bought these works. When an organization deals in works of art, it often falls into this error of buying decoration.

Such is the case here in SUB. The value of these paintings as works of art is marginal. Their lack of feeling leaves them meaningless and without significance.

—Bill Pasnak

Arts calendar

Musical tonight, tomorrow

The Jubilaires continue with their annual Varsity Varieties program tonight and tomorrow. The play is the musical comedy *Finian's Rainbow*, and is at the Jubilee Auditorium at 8:15. Tickets

are available in SUB for \$1.50-\$3.00.

At the Citadel, the comedy *The Owl and the Pussycat* continues for the next few weeks; see page C-8 for details.

At the Centennial Library Theatre, *The Hollow Crown* starts tonight and continues next week. The play deals with the life and times of several British monarchs.

Next Tuesday a documentary film will be shown in TB-11 (The Tory Turtle) at 8:00 p.m. The film, entitled "Good Times, Wonderful Times" contrasts comments at a cocktail party with flashbacks of war.

A student quartet will play this Sunday evening in Convocation Hall. They will play Haydn's Quartet in D, Op. 76, No. 5; Beethoven's Quartet in G, Op. 18, No. 2; and, with a second cellist, Boccherini's Quintet in C. That's at 8:30 p.m.; no charge.

On Wednesday, members of the Edmonton Chamber Music Society can hear the Edmonton Chamber Music Players in Con Hall.

On Wednesday, in the SUB theatre, the West Indian Society presents a night of music: "Caribbean Cruise". Tickets are at SUB, \$1.00 and \$1.50. The show starts at 8:00 p.m.

Guitar stylings bring nostalgia

Country and western singer Nasal Slimbones made a fine appearance at the Auditorium last Tuesday. He plucked and sang his way through such old favorites as "San Antonio Tumbleweed", "Horsehair and Sourdough", and "It's No Cinch When It Comes Undone".

Tears came to the eyes of many in the audience when he joined the Homestead Coulee Harmonics in singing that sentimental old melody "When the Prairie Chicken Moults".

The theatre was filled with a unique aroma as Mr. Slimbones strode on the stage dressed in a sequined pink-and-lavender buckskin jacket. He was accompanied by his faithful horse Pinko, so called because he always leans to the left.

Mr. Slimbones will follow up his tremendous success here with a concert tour to Hairy Hills, Manyberries, and Etzikom.

—Zebediah Pullplow

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