

Prodigal: movie with a message

By IAN CAMPBELL
Brunswickan Staff



The provocative advertising of a new film release *The Prodigal* says: "He's the last person anyone would expect to meet in a theatre." There are many responses to that statement, but the producers of the film have only one in mind. And that answer will be discovered by minority. *The Prodigal*, although a film about interpersonal and spiritual conflict in middle class America, is a mystery above all.

The film put out by World Wide Pictures has a Christian message. It follows its predecessors *Joni*, *The Restless Ones*, *Time To Run* and *The Hiding Place*. All films designed to teach and entertain. And it is entertaining.

As the title suggests the film is based on Christ's prodigal son parable about the lost son who takes his share of the estate and leaves. He spends his share quickly and carelessly on prostitutes and wine. After poverty claims him he returns to his father who gladly welcomes his son with a feast beyond his precedence. *The Prodigal* is not filled with as much debauchery, nor is the prodigal son as clearly identified as in the parable.

We follow the lives of a Christian family, the Stuarts, who are falling away from each other. Elton, the father, is steeped in materialism and the status system of the office; consequently, he misunderstands the needs of his family. His wife Anne played by Hope Lange, Dick Van Dyke's wife from the New Dick Van Dyke Show, feels neglected. She finds comfort in a series of literature seminars held by flamboyant, middle aged author Riley Wyndham complete with ascot and antique M.G.. He even makes advances to her which is a dilemma. The other two

members of the family are sons Greg and Scott. Scott, the seminary student struggles with Greg's lifestyle which includes all the sensual pleasures his local fame allows; he is a ranked tennis pro. Before attaining that fame however, the handsome 21 year old lived on an island and studied Thoreau's *Walden* in the company of Swedish-blonde co-habitant Ursula Karlson.

Some of the characters and relationships are cliches as you no doubt can already tell. The end is also predictable. But the development of the plot is not so easily forecast, Greg, the protagonist, shares the spotlight with his family and it is by his story that theirs is determined. It is a well matched and well timed performance, especially when Academy Award winner B.J. Thomas finally sings the melodic theme song which until that point was an instrumental looming over the plot. Its a bit melodramatic so be prepared for tears.

Some might consider this a propaganda. Film with only one thing to say. Well, there is certainly some of that in it. But the presentation of the gospel is gentle and not bombastic. It is a well presented introduction to Christian love. Whatever your

opinions of Christianity you should not let them inhibit you from enjoying the film. It has a cultural message too.

If you have ever turned on a television set on Sunday morning and were turned off by the preacher, but still you have an interest why people listen to such men then go to *The Prodigal*. It may answer some of your questions. It is an old story but a good story if told tastefully and that's where *The Prodigal* succeeds. The film is not a masterpiece, but it is intriguing and genuine.

The Prodigal will be showing at the Nashwaaksis Cinema's starting today and running until the 21.

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TOP 30 AS OF MARCH 15, 1985
By DEREK NICHOLS

1. Velvet Underground--VU--(1)
2. Various Artists--London Sampler--(2)
3. Simple Minds--Don's You (EP)--(3)
4. *Friends of the Razor--Demo Tape--(12)
5. Waterboys--Mini LP--(4)
6. *Northern Pikes--Northern Pikes--(5)
7. Cabaret Voltaire--Micro Phonies--(11)
8. *Strange Advance--2WO--(6)
9. *Grapes of Wrath--Grapes of Wrath (EP)--(8)
10. The Smiths--Hatfull of Hollow--(9)
11. Comsat Angels--Day One--(7)
12. *Parts Found in Sea--Seat of the Writing Man--(10)
13. *Skinny Puppy--Remission--(13)
14. XTC--The Big Express--(14)
15. Howard Jones--The 12" Howard Jones--(15)
16. Tears For Fears--The Big Chair (12 in)--(19)
17. *Moev--Alibis--(17)
18. Dalis Car--The Waking Hour--(18)
19. Tears For Fears--Songs From The Big Chair--(New)
20. Bluebells--Sisters--(26)
21. *Doug and the Slugs--Popoganda--(21)
22. This Mortal Coil--It'll End In Tears--(22)
23. Mike Oldfield--The Killing Fields--(23)
24. Everything But The Girl--Everything But The Girl--(24)
25. Big Country--Steeltown--(25)
26. Flash and the Pan--Early Morning Wake Up call--(New)
27. *Gordon Deppe--Listen To The City (Sndtrk)--(27)
28. Matt Bianco--Whose Side Are You On--(New)
29. Lloyd Cole and The Commotions--Rattlesnakes--(20)
30. General Public--All The Rage--(30)

*Canadian Content

Livesay to read her poetry today

The winner of the Governor General's Award for poetry in 1944 and 1947 will read from her work this Friday at 4:00 p.m. in the University of New Brunswick's Memorial Hall.

Dorothy Livesay, currently residing in British Columbia, started life early as a poet, but later became, as well, a journalist, social worker, teacher, editor, broadcaster and university professor.

In 1931, she earned a B.A. in Modern Languages at the University of Toronto and proceeded to the Sorbonne, Paris, to do a Diplome d'Etudes Superieures, which she received in 1932. She graduated from the School of Social

Work, University of Toronto, in 1934. Later degrees: Master of Education, University of British Columbia, 1965, and D.Litt., University of Waterloo, 1973. She is an Honorary Fellow of St. John's College, University of Manitoba and of Trinity College, University of Toronto. Athabasca University conferred an honorary degree upon her in 1983.

In a long career in teaching and social work, Livesay has held positions in Montreal, Fredericton, Toronto, New Jersey, Vancouver, Edmonton, Victoria, and Winnipeg, as well as in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) with Unesco. She has

been writer in residence at the universities of New Brunswick, Manitoba, Ottawa, Simon Fraser and Toronto, and has read her poetry across Canada and the U.S.A.

Her published poetry includes: *Green Pitcher* (1928), *Signpost* (1932), *Day and Night* (1944), *Selected Poems* (1957), *The Unquiet Bed* (1967), *The Documentaries* (1968), *Collected Poems: The Two Seasons* (1972), *Ice Age* (1975), and *The Raw Edges* (1981). A new "selected", *The Woman I Am*, appeared in 1978. Two prose books are *A Winnipeg Childhood* (1973) and *Right Hand Left Hand* (1977), a collage of unpublished poems, stories, and articles from the Thirties. 1983 saw a selection of poems, *The Phases of Love*, by Coach House Press. Her most recent book is *Feeling the Worlds*, published by Fiddlehead Poetry Books in October 1984 to coincide with her 75th birthday.

Disarmament 85

A WORD sponsored debate between the Campus Liberal, P.C. and NDP reps on the disarmament issue. The film 'Gods of Metal' will be shown.

Film: 7:30
Debate 8:00
Room 26, SUB
Monday, March 18

'Peace through Education'

Peer

Alcohol

Education

(PALE) says:

Some People Think the Best Parties
Are the Ones They Can't Remember

