

# CINEMATERS

by Charlie Moore

What can you write to describe a really good motion picture? In this wordy age when superlatives have been over-used to the point of becoming inane and meaningless, one is hard pressed to write a favourable critique without sounding likewise. Suffice it to

say: "Nicholas and Alexandra" is an entertaining and worthwhile flick.

For those of you who flunked Russian history, Nicholas is Nicholas Romanov, the last reigning Russian czar and Alexandra is his German-born czarina. The story, which is reasonably factual, historically,

is set in the last days of Imperial Russia.

Early in the film, the contrast between the affluent Russian nobility and the destitute peasants is brought home clearly by scenes of both the elegant splendour of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg and the squalid existence of the factory workers. Even so,

Nicholas is portrayed not so much as a heartless tyrant, but as a naive and stubborn 19th century-style monarch whose idealism is pitifully anachronistic in relating to the 20th century world. If anything, he is a tragic rather than a cruel figure, whose sensitivity and gentleness are stifled by his position.

Alexandra, portrayed as somewhat of a neurotic, suffers from an overpowering guilt complex because of her son's hemophilia. Her overwrought state of mind leads her to become dependant on the Monk, Rasputin, who more or less hypnotizes her into believing that he is the only one who can keep her son alive. The role of Rasputin is superbly done and is for my money, the best acting performance of the film. He is suitably villainous and debauched to fit the part.

There are minor appearances

by Lenin and Trotsky although they are primarily historical window-dressing and play no strong major part in the film.

Tragic from beginning to end. "Nicholas and Alexandra" taxes the emotional stamina of the viewer. There are no really happy sequences and even in the vaguely cheerful spots, there is always some ominous shadow lurking in the background.

Photography is well done, but with no panoramic wide-screen shots or other camera gimmicks. Costuming is sufficiently good to have won the Academy Award in that category this year. The music score is competent if not outstanding.

The film has no political bias and is good history rather than rabid propaganda. As I stated before, "Nicholas and Alexandra" is good entertainment and no one will regret seeing it.

## Local films stink

by Stephen R. Mills

"Nicholas and Alexandra", reviewed above, is the only movie presently worth seeing in the Metro area with the possible exception of "Butterflies are Free" at the Oxford. This situation is more than discouraging and more should be done than simply tolerating it. It is time some alternative was sought to the second rate commercial crap Famous Players and Odeon (the companies which own all the theatres in Halifax-Dartmouth) offers the public.

Film societies, such as Dalhousies' and those sponsored by other universities offer some relief — Dal's program

featuring works by Truffault, W.C. Fields, Kurosawa, and others looks good this year — but they are short-lived and somewhat restrictive as they only screen one night a week.

What is needed is a good 16-mm. cinema which varies it's programs periodically. Or even sporadic showings of current films (the current films in

Halifax are all second rate or have been here so long they're not current anymore — witness "What's up, Doc?") in rented halls or even houses.

If anyone has ideas or plans I'd appreciate hearing about it and will report such to interest Dal people.

(Dal Film Society memberships \$4, call 424-2298.)

## Help! Help!

Help Line needs help. The number of volunteers which Help Line — metro's information and referral service — requires to serve the community, has declined to the critical level in the past few months; thus we urgently need volunteers.

Help Line receives a wide range of calls and accordingly, volunteers must be mature (at least 18 years of age), understanding and responsible.

An extensive training program is provided for those interested in serving their community. Please call 423-7151, effective Monday, September 18, 1972, if you want to find out how to become a Help Line volunteer.

For further information, please contact Mr. Jim Ross, Help Line co-ordinator, at 422-6864.

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