

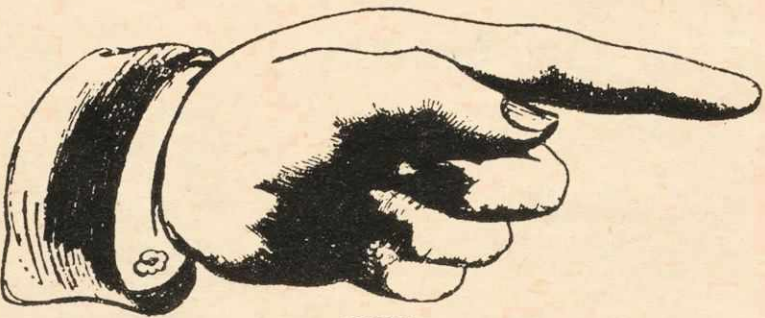
the Dalhousie Gazette

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noticed a lack of any mention of Steve Martin in this review, or Bernadette Peters, for that matter. That's because, as good a dancer as he is, Steve Martin just isn't a serious actor. He does a good job - better than could be expected - but there are a few times when he just can't get the right emotion down, or when his face just seems too damned funny for the role. Bernadette Peters has no such problem with credibility. She is shimmering here, and I don't say that for lack of a better adjective.

Still, the best performance in the film is given by Jessica Harper, as the sexually repressed wife of Steve Martin's song salesman, Arthur Parker. Her portrayal of Joan Parker brought into focus the bitter, empty aching that the movie

wanted to show, and did it far more poignantly than any of the big \$\$ musical numbers ever could. It's sad that the film couldn't have focused on her more, for, after all, she represented the people in America that were most trapped by the whole lie of the "better life" - the housewives. They had nothing but the dreams that Hollywood and Tin Pan Alley fed them; to these women, there existed not even the opportunity to test the mirror to see if the illusion was real.

But, major faults and all, **Pennies From Heaven** is a film that's damn hard to shake. Because of this I might like to call it a "failure that succeeds" or some such wishy-washy term (come to think of it, I just did), but that would only make it less than it is, which, after everything, is an admirable effort. So go to see it, already!

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