

Citizen Kane meets with success

Citizen Kane 'masterpiece'
by Nigel Allen

Orson Welles' masterpiece *Citizen Kane*, which he stars in and directs, played to a responsive Halifax audience more than a quarter-century after its premiere.

Kane is a highly-developed study of the life of one man, a twice-married newspaper magnate, who literally tears up his youthful statement of principles after all but one of his staff lie in order to agree with him.

The plot is the search for the meaning of Kane's dying word, "Rosebud", a name associated with neither of his two wives. In a deeper sense, it is a search for the meaning of Kane's life.

Flashbacks are linked by interviews with the people in Kane's life. The picture of Kane seems clear, but no-one who knew Kane knows the meaning of "Rosebud".

Kane, playing in the snow with his sled at eight years, rebels ineffectually at his mother's plan to send her newly enriched son away. Kane reaches adulthood, and is about to reach his 25th birthday thus coming into control of his fortune. He tells his bankers he is not interested in his large industrial portfolio, but that he thinks "it would be fun" to run a small New York daily he learned he owned.

On his first day as publisher of

the fictional New York Inquirer, Kane writes a crusading, idealistic set of principles. He marries the president's niece and seems an almost certain winner of the election for New York governor, until his criminally corrupt opponent tells Kane's wife about a young would-be singer Kane has fallen in love with. Kane is offered the choice between withdrawing from the race or seeing his name dragged in the mud. Kane chooses the second alternative, trusting that the voters will elect him anyway. They don't.

Kane marries the young singer, for whom he builds an operahouse. But she is no more than an incompetent amateur, and she realises it. Kane does not. Only Kane's oldest friend has the courage to say so, and Kane fires him for that courage. Kane ages and hardens, and it becomes evident that his new wife, initially fascinated by him, now wants the freedom and excitement of her own youth. Kane clearly, does not. Finally, she leaves Kane to die alone, rich yet unhappy.

In the words of one character, Kane was trying to prove something, trying to buy people's love, even though Charles Foster Kane's only real love was Charles Foster Kane.

As Kane ages relinquishes his youthful ideals, we become aware of Welles's suspicions of age. Wells

was relatively young when he directed *Kane*, and his depiction of the old Kane, although as convincing as the rest of the film, is hardly that of an older director.

The theme of the search for "Rosebud" runs through the film. This scheme is an effective unifying force in the film and it adds to the impression that something was lacking in Kane's life. He had two wives, but who or what was "Rosebud"?

When *Kane* premiered, viewers were quick to compare the lives of Kane and the real-life newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst, who ordered his newspapers not to review the movie, so close were the resemblances. Most of the Halifax

audience, however, perceived Kane as an independent dramatic character and not as a shadow of Hearst.

The film returned to Halifax under the auspices of the Atlantic Filmmakers' Co-op, which will present another of Orson Welles' films, *The Trial*, this Saturday. Although favourably received, it has not met with the success of Welles' masterpiece, *Citizen Kane*.

Citizen Kane returns this Sunday at 7:30 p.m. in a double bill with *It Happened One Night*, starring Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert. Admission to the showing in the McInnes Room is \$1 for students and \$1.50 for non-students.

Bujold and Lemmon disappointing in film

by donalee moulton

The most striking feature of 1976's movies was the lack of originality. Unfortunately the trend has not ended with the year and one of the better examples of banality is the currently playing *Alex and the Gypsy*.

Jack Lemmon is Alex, a bail-bondsman. Inherent in this title is the character of a typically hard, unemotional, unfeeling, and in this case a deeply in love, man. Boujould as the Gypsy is the depthless feminist, the epitome of what liberationists have been fighting - a stereotype.

With only four days before facing a prison term, the Gypsy asks her one time lover to post the \$30,000 bail. As absurd as Alex purports this request to be, there is no doubt about his complying. The remainder of the movie is merely a series of the "free untamed" spirit and "closed aggressive" type being together.

The threadbare plot allows no room for ingenuity or innovation and both Lemmon and Boujould appear mediocre. They are not total personalities rather a part of one. Each has some characteristic the author and or the director wanted depicted and this is all the audience is given. Alex and the Gypsy does not even have the potential a soap opera does for entertainment, let alone suspense. The outcome of the tale is as predictable as the actions of the one faceted Alex and Gypsy.

Boujould as the Gypsy offers few inspirations. At moments her lines are humorous and she has the talent to make them, and to some degree the movie itself, comical. Jack Lemmon gives a consistently dependable, bordering on common performance. Neither star offers any release from the ordinary and no insight into the refreshing.

The film itself is of little merit. The plot reflects a desire to be modern and up-to-date via the "free-spirited" woman. In essence it does nothing for the moral or the goals of today's woman. It does even less for today's man. We are all to love Boujould for her soul and sympathize with Lemmon's for his. What happens, however, is a disgust with the sickeningly one part woman and one part man. With much imagination the movie could be said to offer a perspective of the imprisoned soul versus the free soul however if the conclusion of the movie is an indication of this outcome one is better off unimaginative.

The film opens with laugh lines to give not only the appearance of an entertaining evening but of a worthwhile one. This facade soon falls apart and the audience is left with the fragments of a plot and of "personalities" to enliven it. *Alex and the Gypsy* is merely a pretentious manouever reflecting a commercial, common, and crass attempt at artistry.

MacDougall report late

The grievance committee report on the firing of Ken MacDougall has not yet been released.

Ken MacDougall, former night manager of the SUB was fired for "attempting to organize a union among the Grawood staff." As his firing was unjust, the Dalhousie Student Union has been ordered to pay him \$700 as compensation.

Mildred Royer, chairperson of the committee, initially said the report should be ready on January 7. She

has been contacted at various times throughout January, each time informing the *Gazette* that the report would be out the following week.

The contents of the report from the three-member committee has not-yet been made public but Royer expects no problems with it being approved by her committee.

Mildred Royer, on Tuesday, told the *Gazette* that the report will be out 'next week'.



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