

# Woody Allen out of shape

by donalee Moulton

Woody Allen's back for another nite of good entertainment, good comedy and a good movie-or so one would expect. Unfortunately not.

This time Woody Allen is serious-he's not laughable or satirical.

The movie is "The Front" and it revolves around the blacklist, the people who effected it and the people whom it affected. Blacklisting was a device employed by the upper echelons of moviedom to insure that communists, and communist sympathisers could not get work within the industry. The slightest suspicion of a communist

connection and a writer, director, producer, was effectively and totally out of work.

Allen plays a no-time cashier who exploits a number of blacklisted men. Fronting for these writers he becomes part of the industry, famous, and greedy. Ultimately he sees right from wrong but it takes the whole of the movie.

The movie is well acted, the plot is dramatically tight. Technically it holds together but emotionally it falls apart.

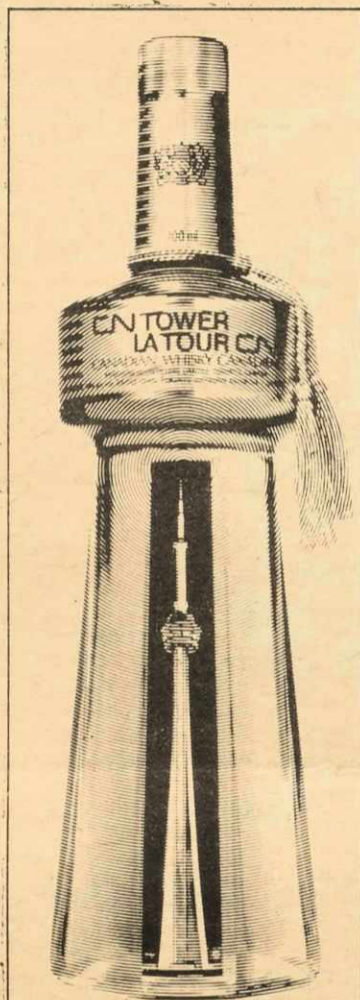
A majority of those involved in the making of the film were at one time blacklisted and this becomes

blatantly obvious throughout the film. One is left with the feeling that the movie had two aims. First, to inform audiences about blacklisting and its "devastating" consequences, and secondly to get back at those lousy bastards who so cruelly destroyed the careers of men and women and then the men and women themselves. Its the black-listees' revenge and they're really letting loose. This element of spite debases the purpose and effect of the film. Talent should stand apart from the emotions of a plot -privately they may be involved; publically never.

The other major fault with the production was the choice for lead--Allen himself. The public has cast him in the mold of comedian and this character disfigures that mold. Audiences, unfortunately will not accept this other Allen. When they see Allen's name connected with a film they more than expect comedy-they demand it.

Allen has shown himself, especially in "The Front", to be a versatile and high quality actor. He's good but he's not funny and hence he's not acceptable.

"The Front" didn't make it as a movie and Allen wasn't allowed to make it as anything but a comic. If you want to see a different version of a diverse personality then see "The Front". If you want to see Allen as he's supposed to be, by public demand, then stay home. You'll only waste your money.



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# Blood, guts and confusion

by Valerie Mansour

Marathon Man, starring Dustin Hoffman and Lord Lawrence Olivier isn't my kind of entertainment. Granted, as the billing says, "it is a thriller," the lengthy confusion the viewer goes through doesn't help the film's effect at all.

The story centers around Thomas Babington Levy, a history student and long-distance runner at Columbia University. His claim to fame was that his father had committed suicide after being incited and tried in the height of the McCarthy Era. Babe is in the process of writing his history thesis on political power in America.

The disturbing plot, featuring international assassination swatches back and forth between New York and Paris. One of their hapless victims, brutally executed, is Babe's brother.

Life has now become confusing for Babe, lacking understanding into exactly what is going on. In this respect he and the viewer have something in common.

We are to discover that Dr.

Christian Szell, a Nazi wartime criminal is behind all of this. He has come out from hiding to recover his briefcase of diamonds which has been in safekeeping since the war. Dr. Szell uses his dentistry techniques to prove Babe's lack of knowledge of the hidden wartime plunder. This character is none other than the illustrious Lord Olivier who very efficiently portrays the evil Dr. Szell.

Dustin Hoffman's acting also is superb. The story, directed by John Schlesinger, would have very little to offer without him.

Good photography techniques are evident throughout, especially in the scene where the camera, aimed from below, is focused through a plate of glass covered with glistening diamonds and onto Dr. Szell's face, glowing down at his loot.

The action was fast, and the killing frequent. The gory details were about all that remained in my mind as the movie ended, as even having top actors in the show did not make up for the sensibility the movie lacked.



# Theatre of the Arts Guild

by donalee Moulton

Theatre of the Arts Guild is currently presenting "We Who Are About to...an entertainment on marriage." Unlike the better known Halifax theatres and their productions the Guild is not composed of professionals and this is reflected in their performance.

"We Whom Are About To" is a series of sketches on marriage and on being married. The sketches are excerpts from works by well-known

authors such as **Night** by Harold Pinter and **Countdown** by Alan Ayckbourn. The title of the production, taken from the well known "We who are about to die salute you.", suggests a satiric tone. However such is not the case. The thematic structure of the performances runs from the farcical to the melodramatic or so one would interpret from the acting.

Each sketch had a minimum of props; the background is not

relevant to the theme or content. What is central is the acting. In this production success rests solely here. It is only through the acted word that the intent of the author and director becomes clarified or obscured. And unlike professional theatre it is quality acting which is lacking. Potential quality acting-yes, but polished quality acting-no.

The first three sketches went progressively from good to bad to disastrous. In the latter two the term acting can only be loosely applied. Invisible cue cards were shown to the actors and they strained to read the words--read not perform.

Naturalness is not part of the scene--they were struggling to act a part not portray a character. Its like Little League Baseball where every kid gets a chance at bat and you can only hope its not a crucial moment when a lousy player comes up.

But for every treasure ship that sinks there's a salvage company and in this case its the second act. Here the acting secedes potential and delivers quality. This may in part be due to the tone of the last three sketches which ranged from comic with serious to the lighthearted. Comedy may be no easier to act but it is more readily responded to.

"We Who Are About To" is an entertainment on marriage and anyone with an interest in theatre and 'theatre in the making' should plan to attend. The first half may be an unsuccessful struggle but it only takes one beacon of light to save the ship.

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