

Allen's Oedipus Wrecks best New York story

New York Stories ★★★
Famous Players Westmount

review by Jennifer Vollrath

New York stories is a collection of three films by well known directors about different styles of life in New York. First there is "Life Lessons" by Martin Scorsese, a story about the life of a successful artist in New York, Lionel (Nick Nolte), who falls in love with his assistant, Paulette (Rosanna Arquette); "Life Without Zoe," directed by Francis Coppola, the well-to-do life of 12 year old Zoe; and finally "Oedipus Wrecks," Woody Allen's portrayal of the universal theme of a son's feelings of embarrassment and inability to cope when dealing with his mother.

"Life Lessons" is an amusing look at the obsessive life of famous painter Lionel Dobie and his struggle to meet the three week deadline until his next show. He is obsessed with this young girl who completely rejects him. Dobie's quest for her love is both funny and sorry. He takes out his frustrations by painting and playing loud music.

While not an intellectually deep movie, it is typical of Scorsese to emphasize the emotional and bring out the humour in life. Scorsese uses lots of odd angles and close-ups to point out the feelings and

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attitudes of Lionel towards his current love Paulette (Arquette) a method which is overdone and tends to cut into the smoothness of the action. In spite of some faults, though, "Life Lessons" is an absorbing look at love, humanity and life.

The second film, "Life without Zoe," can be considered the low point in the movie. While the others manage to portray bits of life in New York, Francis Coppola gives us the fantasy life of a 12-year-old which any child would dream of. Zoe has a world renowned flautist for a father, and



Woody Allen and his onscreen mother Mae Questel steal the show in *New York Stories*, a film which feature short segments from three well-known directors.

a professional photographer for a mother; she lives in a hotel with a nearly unlimited allowance and a butler/guardian. The plot deals with the unrealistic adventure of Zoe trying to return a priceless diamond earring to an East Asian princess, Soraya, to help save her parents' marriage. It does have its moments but altogether "Life without Zoe" is made up of cliches and sappy sentimentalism. I would expect more than a fairy story from the director of *Gardens of Stone*. *Life without Zoe* would be fine.

Finally, after these two, is the gem of the movie, "Oedipus Wrecks." This Woody Allen film is the hilarious story of Sheldon Mills (Allen) trying to live with his overbearing, interfering mother. Allen makes us laugh with his portrait of a 50-year-old man trying to live his own life and still being embarrassed by his mother at the worst moments, something everyone can identify with. The film also stars Mia Farrow as Lisa, a divorced mother of three and Sheldon's fiancée. One of the best performances in the film was given by Mae Questel playing Sheldon's mother. What makes this segment so funny is that it is based in everyday life and thus touches a chord of sympathy in all of us.

All in all, *New York Stories* is well worth the effort. I can recommend it in spite of the flaws in "Life without Zoe." It's a movie to see on a quiet evening out. It offers something for the mind as well as

something for the funnybone. While Woody Allen in "Oedipus Wrecks" unsurprisingly outshines the rest, "Life Lessons" is a terrific portrayal of the ob-

sessiveness of an artist in New York and runs a close second. The vividness of life in New York is well shown and *New York Stories* is a movie to see.

Harrison Ford

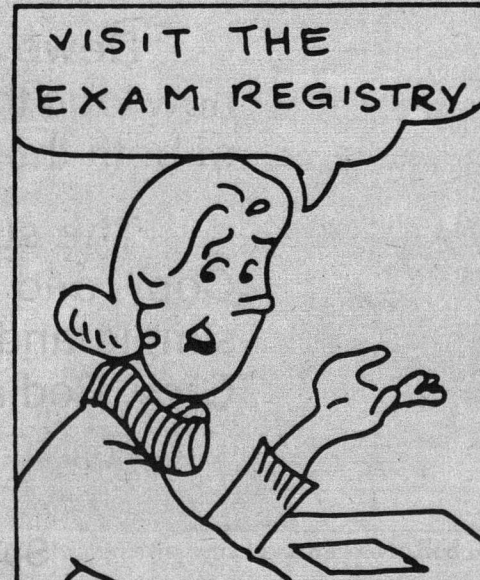
will not be at the

Gateway Staff Party

but everyone else will be

Thursday, 3:30
Back Room Bar
(Power Plant)
NO GRAD STUDENTS ALLOWED

the Exam Registry



ROOM 150

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