

REEL REVIEWS

By CHRISTIE WALKER

Back in September, people lined up all over North America to see one of this past summer's sleepers. Trailing behind a long list of hugely successful flicks which included "ET", "Poltergeist" and "Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan", Paramount Pictures probably didn't have great expectations for "An Officer and a Gentleman". Sure, Richard Gere is a box office draw, although he's not particularly popular with the critics, and sure, Debra Winger has nice eyes, but still no one expected too much. They sure didn't expect six Academy Award-nominations, huge box office receipts and a hit song. But that's what they've got, and now "An Officer and a Gentleman" has been re-released just in time to get blood boiling and tears flowing again before the Academy's.

"An Officer and a Gentleman" works for several reasons, not the least of which is the excellent acting by all concerned. Richard Gere (Zack Mayo) is utterly convincing as a desperate, restless loner who doesn't believe in love, in relationships or in people. Debra Winger (Paula), is so lovely to look at, so much in love with Zack and so unhappy with her dismal nine-to-five life that her desires become ours. As Sargent Foley, Lou Gosset, Jr. is a big, strong man; the eye of a tiger and the heart of a kitten. Finally, David Keith (Sid) plays a small town country boy doing things for all the wrong reasons and then paying the price.

Although the story is anything but original, the screenplay by Donald Day Stewart, is so finely crafted, so urgently acted that every word seems to come straight from the heart.

Also reassuring is the fact that Richard Gere is not just a pretty face. He definitely looks good on the screen, his eyes still smoulder, but Gere can act. The scene where Foley is trying to make him quit and Mayo yells out "You can't do this. I've got no place else to go," is probably Gere at his best. He actually looks ugly and he really looks like he hasn't got anyplace else to go.

The scenes between Gere and Winger are hot, too. They look as though they need each other, but are too afraid to say so.

"An Officer and a Gentleman" deserves the worthy praise it has been receiving from critics across the country. There is no doubt that this is the movie that will propel both Winger and Gere into super stardom.

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Ballet plans eastern tour

A colourful evening of dance awaits Fredericton audiences when THEATRE BALLET OF CANADA makes its annual return to The Playhouse on March 29.

Featured are the Fredericton premieres of Lawrence Gradus' "SIDE BY SIDE", Margery Lambert's "SCENES AND DANCES" and Antony Tudor's "FANDANGO."

Artistic Director Lawrence

Gradus has been acclaimed as one of "a rare breed of highly musical choreographers", whose work is based on the classical vocabulary and displays high energy and lyrical elegance (The Gazette, Montreal). Gradus' "SIDE BY SIDE", set to a fusion of Mozart and Haydn symphonies, was recently described as "poetic... beautifully danced" with the

"cool grace and elegance of a Balanchine chamber piece" (The Spectator, Hamilton).

A former principal dancer with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Ballet Mistress Margery Lambert has been working with Lawrence Gradus since 1975, and makes her choreographic debut with "SCENES AND DANCES". Benjamin Britten's "Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge" is the musical selection for Miss Lambert's "promising debut piece". Its "striking imagery includes hands clenched behind heads, a line of dancers bowing to the back wall before breaking up and beginning to dance again and a moment of shyness in an intense love duet" (The Globe and Mail).

"FANDANGO", Tudor's display piece for five women to a composition by Padre Antonio Soler, was first performed in Canada by The National Ballet in 1971. According to Celia Franca, "It is a difficult ballet requiring technically competent dancers who must be sensitive to the characterizations." True to the Tudor tradition, FANDANGO's five characters are very clearly defined. In his choreographic notes Mr. Tudor even specifies each senorita's scent, and they range from Arpege to Jungle Gardenia.

THEATRE BALLET's engagement in Fredericton is part of an Eastern Canada tour subsidized by the Touring Office of The Canada Council. Other dates are as follows:

Halifax, Rebecca Cohn Auditorium - March 19
Wolfville, Acadia University - March 20
St. John's, Arts and Culture Centre - March 22
Alberton, Westisle Theatre - March 26
Moncton, Moncton High School - March 27
Saint John, Saint John High School - March 30

The company performs one evening only at The Playhouse - Fredericton on Tuesday, March 29, 8:00 p.m.

Tickets, \$8.50 and \$7.50 (\$1.00 discount for Students and Seniors), are available at The Playhouse Box Office, phone 455-3222.

Success continues solo

By WILFRED LANGMAID
Brunswickan Staff

The sound of Michael McDonald is one of the most distinctive in contemporary music. It provided the backbone for the success enjoyed by the Doobie Brothers in the late 1970's with such albums as *Minute by Minute*.

Ever since the dissolution of the Doobie Brothers, McDonald's first solo album has been anxiously anticipated. After a considerable wait, one can enjoy *If That's What It Takes*.

The trademarks of the late Doobies sound (perhaps no other big group in recent memory experienced such marked changes as did the Doobie Brothers from the beginning until the end of their existence; thus the label "late" Doobies) are all on this solo album. The crisp pop-funk sound we came to know and enjoy so well serves as the perfect showcase for McDonald's vocals, which are regarded as among the most earnest and fervent of any contemporary male vocalist.

Though *If That's What It Takes* is indistinguishable from the late 1970's Doobies on a first listen, closer scrutiny will reveal that McDonald has certainly not stood still since that time. The similarities remain, and properly so, but what we have on this pioneer solo album is thoughtful pop. The first single culled from this album is "I Keep Forgettin'", a rigorously tight pop funk song. It tells about a man's difficulty accepting the fact that his lover of old is no

longer his lover, perhaps because he may stand a chance to get her back. It is very different from the title track "If That's What It Takes", which McDonald penned along with Jackie DeShannon; this is a noticeably less restrained song, but McDonald maintains the slick tightness that is his trademark nonetheless.

McDonald maintains an optimistic outlook throughout the album. This is perhaps most obvious in "I Gotta Try", where his optimism persists despite the less than pleasing things going on in the world around him. Like he does on each cut, McDonald handles the ivories as skilfully as he does his vocal cords. He is aided on vocals here by long-time musical buddy Kenny Loggins.

"Losin' End" is worthy of note, as it is a Doobies song from the mid 1970s which is given a deliciously slow treatment here by McDonald. The other slow track on the LP, "I Can Let Go Now", stands alone in that McDonald's voice is joined only by his own piano accompaniment.

Still, these slower numbers are not McDonald at his best, and an upbeat cut like "Believe In It" is just a bit too poppish to be optimal McDonald. He particularly shines on middle of the road numbers like the forementioned "I Keep Forgettin'" and the super album opener "Playing By The Rules." Such songs are the backbone of this album, which as McDonald's solo debut should start off his new career on the right foot.

Quest for the Crown of Trent was not available this week, but will continue next week.