

Same Time, Next Year

Let's go on meeting like this

by Cheryl Downton

Take one happily married woman with two children, add one happily married man with three children, fold in a cozy evening in February at a rustic California Inn, and you have two people in love, making love, while the radio turns out "If I'd Known You Were Coming I'd Have Baked a Cake". A second look at this unlikely combination reveals the beginnings of a relationship to last a lifetime.

Same Time, Next Year is the story of Doris and George: two people who celebrate a yearly anniversary though each is married to another. They meet every February to spend a weekend together at the Sea Shadows Inn, where they recap the preceding

year's ups and downs, joys and pain. The two share their children, spouses, memories, and pangs of growing older. They give of themselves, suffer the guilt, and revel in each other's happiness.

Bernard Slade's stage play has enjoyed a long run on Broadway, and has been included in many a theatre company's repertoire. (Nephtune Theatre performed **Same Time, Next Year** as part of its 1978 Spring lineup.) The movie features Ellen Burstyn and Alan Alda, the two responsible for the Broadway hit. They could easily have been the Doris and George visualized by Slade when writing his play. Burstyn's Doris is transformed from the gullible and inexperienced young wife and

mother to the middle aged lady of poise and classic beauty without a hitch. Alda's George does not grow as gracefully, but his sardonic wit and sense of proportion carry the characterization to successful culmination.

As contrasts can be seen between a movie and a book, comparisons can also be made between the screen and the stage. In the case of **Same Time, Next Year**, little has been lost in the transaction. Most likely the author of the stage play and the screen play are one and the same person. This movie follows the original stage play very closely, and the few differences are found in background sets rather than character dialogue or disposition. The stage sets allow

a closer, more detailed observation, and minute changes (such as a different bedspread or a fresh coat of paint) give a more convincing feeling of a passage of time. The movie settings seem too much in the background, and provides little more than a blur of objects and colours.

The instrument used to bind the scenes together is necessarily different in stage and film. The theatre production uses musical memories to bridge the years, while the movie version employs a visual newsreel effect to span the passing of time. As is deemed necessary with many of the films of this decade, **Same Time, Next Year** has a theme song: "The Last Time I Felt Like This", sung by

Johnny Mathis and Jane Olivor. It is surprisingly non-overpowering and lends a mellowed romantic note to the production.

If more successful stage plays could survive the journey from stage to celluloid as competently as **Same Time, Next Year**, entertainment and enjoyment value would be doubled.

Slice of life

On Sunday, February 18th, at 3:00 p.m. in the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, the Dalhousie Music Department will launch a new venture in operatic performance: 'Opera in Concert'. Puccini's one-act melodrama, *Il Tabaro* ("The Cloak"), will be presented complete, sung in Italian with piano accompaniment.

This will be the third in the Dalhousie Music Department's 'Sunday Series' of concerts.

Puccini's *Il Tabaro* gives Metro opera lovers the opportunity to hear Dalhousie's Jefferson Morris in the type of virtuoso tenor role that brought him excited acclaim in Europe. The cast of community and student soloists is headed by Eleanor Burton and Ray Grant. Pianist is Tietje Zonneveld.

The concept of 'Opera in Concert' has already become popular with audiences in several Canadian cities. They enjoy informal readings of complete operas in the original language, with an introductory commentary to increase appreciation of the opera's plot and background. Freed of the expenses of orchestra, scenery and costumes, singers and audience can experience more frequent performances of a broader range of operas from many different traditions.

In *Il Tabaro*, Puccini brings to a "slice of life" on a River Seine barge his customary lyric ardour, gripping drama, and evocative atmosphere suitable to a grim story of frustrated hopes, jealousy and murder. Dalhousie's presentation follows its highly successful productions of Puccini's 'Gianni Schicchi', staged last month to capacity audiences.



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