

Christie in jeopardy

Don't Look Now taut with psychic mystery

By WARREN CLEMENTS

Julie Christie is back on the screen after a seemingly endless wait since McCabe and Mrs. Miller. Her appearances are always worth noting, since, barring the odd mistake like In Search of Gregory, Christie has good taste in scripts.

Don't Look Now, her latest, is a spooky suspense tale based on a Daphne du Maurier story. (Du Maurier's stories have been used for eight films, three by Hitchcock, including The Birds.)

Christie is teamed with Donald Sutherland, who delivers a repeat of the underplayed, stolid (read "unexceptional") performance he gave in Kluge. The pair play John and Laura Baxter, an English couple whose rustic lifestyle is brutally interrupted by the drowning of their daughter in a sparkling pond. John, through some psychic jolt, foresees the accident but is too late to prevent it.

Cut to winter-time Venice, where John is commissioned to restore an old church. Laura, still shaken by her daughter's death, meets two weird middle-aged sisters, one blind and psychic, who tell her they have seen her daughter in the red raincoat she was wearing when she died, and that "she is laughing".

The mystery begins. The psychic sister warns Laura that John is in danger. Venice is wracked by a series of gruesome unsolved murders. The Baxters' son has an accident in England.

Laura supposedly flies back to nurse him, but John sees her in Venice with the weird sisters. He also sees a little figure running through the alleys in a red raincoat!

Much of the effect, including the gruesome ending, relies on the viewer's willingness to believe in psychic phenomena. But even if you aren't convinced, Don't Look Now is still an absorbing and tense picture.

It's very similar to Robert Altman's Images, released in early 1973, in which Susannah York played Julie Christie's role: the flustered, frightened woman whose world is invaded by

the mystic and bizarre. Both films were crisply photographed, with clockwork sound effects (chimes, footsteps) and ingenious visual cuts (from a red stain on a slide, for instance, to the daughter's waterlogged red raincoat.)

Don't Look Now is a film packed with memorable images by director Nicholas Roeg (Performance). Julie Christie passes out in a Venetian restaurant, pulling after her the table cloth, photogenic spoons, crockery, candles and soup tureens. Christie and Sutherland make passionate love in a series of shots laced with shots of their subsequent dressing for the evening outing.

And most impressive is the eerie view of Venice not as a tourist attraction, but as a bleak, out-of-season city whose romantic canals have become navigational necessities from which the occasional corpse of a murder victim is dredged up.



Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland play the jinxed couple in Don't Look Now, an eerie exercise in psychic terror.

Hilarious Woody Allen film ends in mid-laugh

Sleeper's only fault is that it ends too soon.

It starts as Woody Allen is revived from suspended animation in the year 2173, 200 years after an unsuccessful peptic ulcer operation. Tackling the old chestnut of a 1973 man adjusting to the future is very risky (how many times can you make jokes like "I've got 200 years of analyst's bills to pay"?), but Allen's imagination (he wrote, directed and starred in Sleeper) is equal to the task.

It's a cinch anyone who's seen it will be telling you about every joke in the film. My favourite is Allen's tiny Scottie robot watchdog which waddles timorously about repeating, "Woof woof woof. Hello, my name is Rags."

The film's jokes hang on a slim thread of a story, in which Allen is drawn into a futuristic underground movement aiming for a revolution.

Unfortunately, the film ends long before the story does, and the viewer is caught, so to speak, in mid-laugh.

But it's a hilarious film, and Diane Keaton, Allen's co-star, copes admirably in a surprisingly over-sized role.

(For anyone unfamiliar with the term, "sleeper" refers not only to Allen's 200-year doze, but to any book, film or play of superior quality which, on first release, goes unnoticed by the general public. Examples are the movies Harold and Maude, Head and Bedazzled.)

Staff meeting

Room 111,
Central Square
2 p.m.

Sight and Sound

Return junket for Monty Python

Monty Python's flying circus roars into Curtis LH-L Friday and Sunday at 8 p.m. with And Now for Something Completely Different, including the infamous skits on Hell's Grannies and the obscene foreign language phrasebook. Winters provides the laughs for \$1.25 general, \$1 for Winters students.

Violent Deliverance at Bethune

Bethune movies begin the new year with Deliverance, the gripping, violent drama about four men's journey up a river which turns out wilder than they imagine. A how-not-to guide to nature hikes. Jon Voigt and Burt Reynolds star, and a couple of mountaineers turn up to play Dueling Banjos. Admission is \$1.25 general, \$1 for Bethune students, in Curtis LH-L Saturday and Sunday at 8:30 p.m.. Cartoons too. Next week's attraction is Kubrick's Clockwork Orange. All in 35 mm.

Sister George gets bumped off

The Killing of Sister George will kick off the second series of The Environmental Studies film society tonight at 7 and 9 p.m. in Curtis LH-I. This is the movie version of the stage play about a love triangle between three women: Susannah York, Coral Browne, and, recreating the role of Sister George, the cigar-smoking lesbian, Beryl Reid.

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