

Excellent comedy/thriller

Eyewitness
directed by Peter Yates
Avenue and Capilano Cinemas

review by David Orrell

A New York janitor by the name of Darryl (William Hurt) discovers the murdered body of his Oriental boss in *Eyewitness*, and by pretending to know more about it than he does, manages to attract the journalistic attentions of the pretty news reporter Antonia (Sigourney Weaver) upon whom he has had a crush for several years, simply from seeing her on T.V. Unfortunately he also attracts the non-journalistic attentions of a whole host of other people, and from that moment they all follow him in an effort to find out exactly what he *does* know.

All of them, that is, but the police, who are preoccupied in following his friend, Aldo, who wittily reacts by assuming the behavioral pattern of a dangerous and unstable neurotic. The audience, however, knows he is innocent; so does Antonia, who takes Darryl to bed in a last attempt to squeeze his knowledge out of him.

"He's using you," her mother advises, after having her daughter tailed. "She's using you," Aldo tells his friend, after spending the night outside his house.

While Antonia and Darryl continue to use each other, a group of Orientals stand around in business suits looking impressive and sinister, carrying out what appears to be a competition to see who can make the least facial expression. They impassively listen to recordings of Darryl's voice (which have mysteriously arrived on their dictating machine) and impassively set off, armed, in a big car to capture Antonia, who manages to hold them off with her purse long enough for

Darryl to arrive and most unimpassively slay them with a piece of chain.

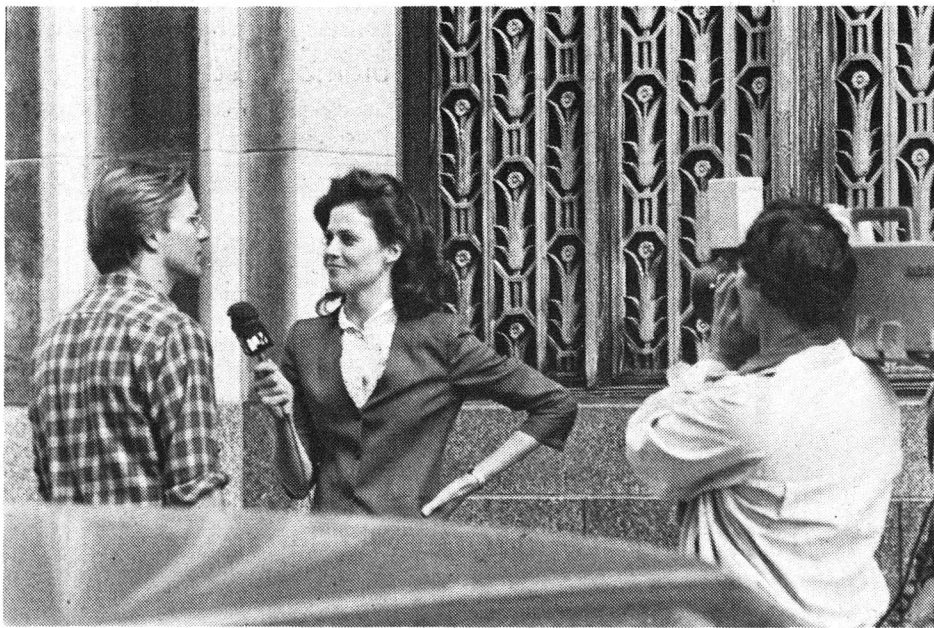
I think they used to work for the murdered man, but I'm not sure because they drop out of the film at this point to make room for a new antagonist. And so on.

The thing that holds together what begins and continues as a pretty ludicrous plot is the attention to detail and characterization that has been put into the film. All of the characters appear as real people; the glamorous Antonia is shown to be not so glamorous as she spends long hours in the cutting room scrambling her pieces of videotape. And she is good looking to just the right degree; not enough to be unbelievably ravishing at all times, but enough to confirm one's suspicions that Knowlton Nash is neither sexy nor attractive.

The relationship between her and Darryl is funny and believable, and there is gentle humor present in the portrayal of the minor characters. Darryl's old girlfriend informs him "it's like-you-know I-don't-know like-I'm-going-through a goddam Freudian phase or something." Darryl's father, sitting fat and drunk and ugly against the wall of his son's apartment mutters about his former wife — "That woman used to *adore* me."

The movie also succeeds well as a thriller, with some exciting moments and a few good fight scenes. However, it isn't really "in the Hitchcock tradition" as claimed by its advertisement. The pace is easier, and the type of wit different. It does, however, share the literacy of that director, not just in its screenplay (by Steve Tesich) but in the visual "literacy" of its really fine cinematography.

Eyewitness, therefore, has enough substance to be recommended not only for its thrills, but for its intelligence and accomplished technique.



News reporter Antonia tries to pump janitor Darryl for information about a murder, but her task proves harder than expected.



photo Ray Giguere

Lew Tabackin and Toshiko Akiyoshi started slow, but by the time this picture was taken they had obviously hit their groove.

Raccoon jazz

Akiyoshi Tabackin Big Band
SUB Theatre
Friday, March 6

review by Michael Skeet

I was fully prepared to walk out after two numbers, but I'm more than glad I stayed. Last Friday night, the Toshiko Akiyoshi-Lew Tabackin Big Band thoroughly revived my flagging interest in that bizarre hybrid, big-band jazz.

At its worst, this musical format has neither the cohesiveness of a true swing band, nor the flair for individuality that is the mark of true jazz. The A-T Band was guilty of uninspired solo and ragged ensemble playing in those first two numbers, but when the band shifted into a new Tabackin tune (about legendary Japanese raccoon-like animals with a fondness for assuming human form and then getting riotously drunk - no kidding!) everyone suddenly seemed to find their feet. The remainder of the 95-

minute concert passed astonishingly quickly, and the band was called back for an encore.

The musical highlights of the show were the two Japanese-flavored pieces (and you'll forgive the lack of further detail - I've managed to lose my notes). As the raccoon-song is included on the upcoming album (the band's eleventh), it may well be worth picking up. Akiyoshi, during one of her lengthy between-numbers talks, spoke of almost packing it in last year, and some of her lack of enthusiasm has obviously rubbed off on the band; a good part of Friday's early show lacked the spirit of the band's performances at the Jazz City Festival last August.

I hope the committee working on the 1981 Festival (and there *will* be a 1981 Festival) has the good sense not to invite the band back. Big draw or not, four performances by this band within a year are quite enough.

Jawbone connected to the funnybone

Royal Canadian Air Farce in Concert
SUB Theatre (Saturday, March 7)

review by Wes Oginski

Though it was possible to catch them earlier in the day or later the next day on the radio, I certainly did not mind spending a Saturday evening with the *Royal Canadian Air Farce in Concert*.

Air Farce has been a regular feature on CBC-Radio since 1973 and is about to begin a ten-episode run on CBC-Television March 18. It features the talents of Roger Abbott, Dave Broadfoot, Luba Goy, Don Ferguson, John Marley, and John Morgan.

The format of the concert Saturday was basically that of a comedy revue. Performers would come on stage and act a skit with a minimum of props. They even displayed a radio studio style in the early portions of the show. Regardless of the format *Air Farce's* talents were in perfect form.

Many of the sketches were *Air Farce* standards, with the names changed to fit the location. The places were not important; the audience loved the jokes just the same.

Broadfoot played Sergeant Renfrew of the Mounted, or "as they say in Quebec, dem telephone buggers." And the evening would not have been complete without Morgan's undertaker and pizzeria owner Hector Bagglely.

The show also contained subtle pokes at the constitution and sharp jabs at old age.

This last skit is really heavy-duty stuff and too deep for this type of show, though it does make the audience look back on the rest of the skits.

Some of the audience complained that the old-age sketch was only token social comment, but the other sketches were also forms of social comment. It was just that they were subtle and hence more socially acceptable.



The new Students' Union executive? The Nose family? Five middle-aged farts? A pack of cards?...