

Mystery and nostalgia highlight new films

By WARREN CLEMENTS

Gene Wilder makes a very good leading man, Richard Pryor is an extremely funny con artist, and Jill Clayburgh is a most engaging heroine. But *Silver Streak*, the film into which they pour their talent, is a turkey.

The script has some inspired moments — mainly when Pryor is onscreen — but it degenerates in the final third of the film into a cops-and-robbers shoot-em-up which jettisons all traces of the imagination and humour that went before. Patrick McGouhan (*Danger Man*) and Ray Walston (*My Favorite Martian*) are wasted in their roles as villains, and Clayburgh's promising part dissolves at the halfway mark into

mere window dressing.

The *Silver Streak*, a Turbo-like train en route from Los Angeles to Chicago, winds up at what is supposedly Chicago's Central Station. It was, however, shot in Toronto, and the 'Union Station' signs are in full view. That carelessness is typical of the latter part of the film: it's in such a blind panic to get to the last scene that it forgets why it was going there in the first place.

Network is an intelligent film, wildly funny in parts and with excellent performances from the cast. That alone is more than most other current films can offer. In the first few minutes the network TV anchorman (Peter Finch), fired because of poor ratings, announces that he is going to blow his brains

out on camera in a week's time. The network has two choices: take him off the air or leave him on as a curiosity in the hopes that ratings will soar. It does; they do.

Network's scriptwriter Paddy Chayefsky alternates between punching television and preaching against it for its "bread and circuses" direction. The plot is exaggerated and carried to extremes, but even when the targets are a bit obvious or the preaching a bit thick, the film maintains its exhilarating momentum.

The *Seven-Per-Cent Solution* isn't good Sherlock Holmes, but it's a good adventure yarn with chases, swordfights on top of trains, and mysterious kidnappings. The meeting between Holmes and Sigmund Freud is auspicious in that the two actors — Nicol Williamson and Alan Arkin — play their parts well, but they could as easily be playing the Hardy Boys for all the relevance it has to the plot.

It's a shame that Joel Grey, Laurence Olivier, and Vanessa Redgrave appear on screen for a combined total of about ten minutes. Nevertheless, if you don't mind the great sleuth and the eminent psychologist being reduced to the level of 19th century



Robert Duvall and Faye Dunaway, in a scene from *Network*.

James Bonds, it's a fun film.

Nickelodeon isn't as good as I'd hoped it would be. Ryan O'Neal is a terrible actor, and he hasn't improved with age. Brian Keith, normally a good actor, hams it up to disappointing degree. And I can't say I'm wild about Tatum O'Neal, although that may be a matter of taste.

The film is a mixture of slapstick and history-cum-nostalgia about the early days of silent film. It's easy-going, and has a knock-down, dragged-out fight between O'Neal and Burt Reynolds, which gets the show rolling after a somewhat awkward start.

Reynolds is in fine form. Stella

Stevens unfortunately seems to have been meted out lines the way *Oliver Twist* was doled out lunches, but she makes the most of the few she gets. Jane Alexander is pert and winning, and from a certain angle, looks jarringly like Cybill Shepherd. Yes, the director is Peter Bogdanovich, and it's his affable salute to the pioneers of film. Light fare, but digestible.

Good news is that the Hyland Theatre is showing a beautifully animated short based on Mordecai Richler's *The Street* on the same bill as *Nickelodeon*. Evocative, low key, and painted frame by frame with a wash technique, *The Street* is a marvel.

Fiesta

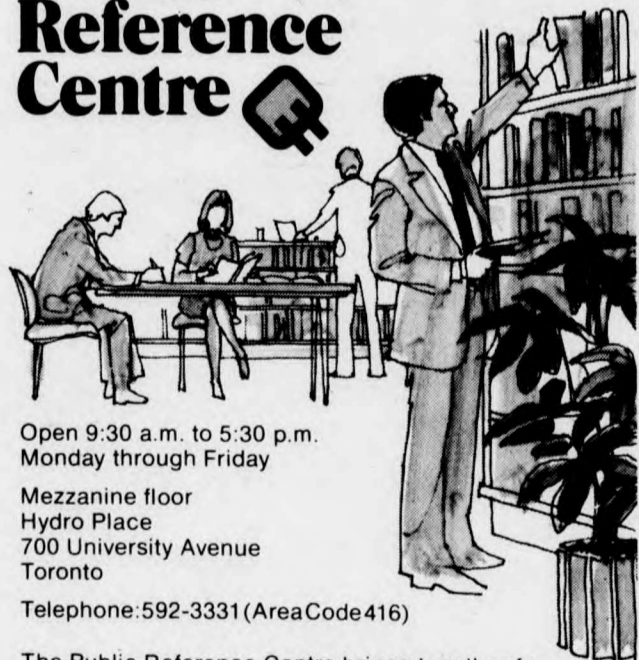
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Dance show was a pleaser

By MARILYN M. BOUMA

The York University Dance Department offered an evening of tremendous talent and variety on Thursday December 16, at the Burton Auditorium. A collage of dance works were presented, which included traditional ballet pieces, Merce Cunningham-flavored works, Scottish dancing, and most important of all, new and exciting individual pieces.

The evening began with a piece which involved blue and mauve clad dancers filling the stage by their sheer numbers. The dance itself technically was shaky and synchrony did not exist where it should have. The dance was more a visual pleaser because of the filmy, pretty-colored costumes rather than holding its merit on the dancing itself.

The following piece was an interesting variation on a classical pas de deux which combined point dancing with somersaults, twists, and other body manoeuvres on the floor. This dance was juxtaposed with the following, performed by a

woman soloist. Her dance epitomized the lyrical, romantic quality of the classical dance. She emanated a haunting melancholy which lingered in the atmosphere even after her exit.

The atmosphere however was quickly shattered by the electronic music of the next piece, which stimulated five female dancers in striped costumes and suspenders to "beep boppity doo" to the sounds. Their bodies molded from one form into another via gymnastic movements and dance steps, sometimes appearing as a metamorphosing caterpillar and other times as a prison chain gang.

The program then returned to a classical ballet, followed by a Scottish clad dancer who performed in the traditional Scottish style which involved intricate footwork and a swinging kilt which kept time to the bagpipe's rhythm.

The first half of the evening's program was completed by a spin-off on the Merce Cunningham technique of choreography. The dancers were doing movements

and wearing costumes unique to their own personality. This resulted in a riotous collage of colors, styles, and movements and proved to be a very successful piece because the rhythm unified the dance. It was a visually stimulating work and left smiles on the audience's faces.

The final half of the evening's performance featured a movement away from traditional dance forms to strike out on individual tangents. A spidery creature in red sat on what appeared to be a window ledge in a castle. A grey-clad dancer appeared on stage below the creature and did a dance filled with spasmodic and violent movements. The dance conjured in my mind the deathdance of the maybug whose final movements are frenzied and erratic until its death. Weaving his way down the window curtain the spidery creature descended on his victim to cause violent end.

After this jolting piece came the pas de deux scene from the great and tragic ballet, *Giselle*, providing a sharp contrast in movement, form, and meaning. Lyricism and romanticism were the qualities of the dance and it proved to be a pretty piece.

The ensuing work was one of mystery and perplexity. Sitting cross-legged at a huge iron pot was a man rubbing a wine bottle around the edge which created a novel sound. Two dancers scantily clad in red leotards moved, crawled, turned, and twisted synchronously.

Three pairs of lovers amidst a horde of blue-clad dancers best described the work that followed. This piece seemed to symbolize the concept of love in a fast-paced, whirling society. The lovers disregarded the world around them and had attention only for each other. The dance was well choreographed with strong lines of movement created by the chore interlaced by the pathways of the couples. A most charming dance featured a beautifully designed chair of iron lacework. Four women in long silvery grey gowns danced their encounter with the chair which was rocked, dragged, carried, and rolled through the dance. The chair itself lent such focus and charm that the dancers were complimentary to it.

The entire evening was tremendously entertaining and it displayed a wide range of ideas in choreography and dance.

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