

The Reel World

NINE TO FIVE

By Rick Morrison

"Nine to Five," starring Lily Tomlin, Dolly Parton, and Jane Curtin, is back in the area at several theaters. For those of you who missed the film the first time around, here is a review.

"Nine to Five" is a story of three misused secretaries who take matters into their own hands in order to change their miserable working conditions which are the cause of a multitude of frustrations.

Violet (Lily Tomlin) is used by the boss as a waitress, as a gift buyer, and she is denied promotions which she feels she deserves. Doralea (Dolly Parton) is sexually harassed by the boss while she is in his office to take dictation. Judy (Jane Curtin) wreaks havoc in the office copying room and the boss yells at her for her lack of competence in operating the machinery.

Eventually the boss, Mr. Hart (played by Dabney Coleman) hurls one too many insults and the women leave the office to get stoned to relieve their frustrations. What follows is a silly, giggling pot smoking scene where the women trade ideas on how each of them would like to do the boss in.

At this point the film's weak character development begins to show through. This poor character development does not invite the viewer to empathize with the three dizzy dames.

Violet accidentally poisons Mr. Hart's coffee at the office one day. After he is rushed to the hospital, the gals show up to check on his condition. Unknown to them however, the boss was taken to the hospital because he bumped his head on his desk, not because he drank the poisoned coffee.

The women mistakenly think Mr. Hart has died in the hospital emergency room and they kidnap the body to avoid the inevitable autopsy which would reveal the poison. Later, they discover they have stolen the wrong body and they find a way to return it to the hospital.

This body snatching sequence is one of the many attempts at using slapstick to move the women through the plot and humor the viewer about their situation. This sequence, along with the other slapstick gags, does not accomplish either objective very well. The slapstick is sluggish and only helps to make the weak story more obvious.

When Mr. Hart shows up for work the day after the body snatching, the merry maidens are shocked. When he threatens to have them arrested, they make him a hostage in his own home where they bind and shackle him to the bedroom ceiling for a couple of weeks.

During Mr. Hart's absence from the office, the three women take over and use forged memos to institute new working conditions which end up improving efficiency.

In general, these women have fought back against a system which has made their lives miserable. Specifically, they have fought back against the boss who has stripped them of their human dignity. However, this film does not make the viewer feel good about the triumph these women have achieved. They have reached a temporal victory through slapstick humor and by behaving like dizzy dames which the film should find deplorable but rather supports it.

Additionally, "Nine to Five" has two important messages to communicate but both get lost along the way to the end of this comedy.

First, the most important message, that the working conditions of some

women need improvement, is belittled by the slapstick gags. For example, in response to the sexual harassment that Doralea suffers, she fantasizes about returning the same favors to an equally unwilling Mr. Hart. This kind of gag brings no respect to the plight of this character in her attempt to improve her life.

Lily Tomlin's character is a poor example of the leader of the group that she is supposed to be. One wonders what the reason is for Jane Curtin's purposely underplayed, nauseously naive character. One would have to suppose that the script is at fault here as this is not the typically strong independent character that Curtin portrays; the same character which brings to light various causes or interests and then demolishes the opposition in the way of those causes.

The second message of the film, that company-sponsored changes in the working environment can improve productivity, is lightly serenaded and comes almost too late in the film to be meaningful.

There is some good set design in "Nine to Five," the best of which is the deep, cold-looking gray office interior where the women work. The design and lighting work effectively to convey an impression of the company's impersonal attitude toward its employees.

Finally, only Dolly Parton's hit recording of the picture's title song will be remembered long after the film is shelved and sold to television, to be replayed on all-night movie festivals thirty years from now. Frankly, the song-like the film--doesn't leave a pleasant memory either.

FORT APACHE--THE BRONX

By Shirley Stevens

This film should capture the attention of next year's Academy Awards nominating committee for its social relevance, dramatic performances, and screenplay.

You have to give Paul Newman his due. He has proven that he is capable of more than car racing. As an actor he is returning with style.

Among many Bronx dwellers, this film has generated an understandable defensive posture about being depicted in a demeaning fashion. Granted, defeat, enemployment, and squalor are all present in the film. But perhaps of greater significance is the question of how the Bronx inherited its afflictions. Moreover, what can be done about the problem. "Fort Apache" is less an attempt to exploit the conditions of the Bronx than it is an attempt to explore them.

All in all, a very good film.

HARDLY WORKING

By Rick Morrison

The new Jerry Lewis film, "Hardly Working," is somewhat inappropriately titled. It should be called "Hardly Funny." The picture will surely be near the top of the most disappointing films list of 1981.

In this film, Lewis' character attempts to evoke sympathy and understanding for himself, as well as an occasional laugh. He is an out-of-work circus clown who is trying to make it in the "real" world by getting a regular job. Unfortunately there is no sympathy for the character, Bo Hooper, and he is hardly funny.

After losing his job with the circus, Bo goes to live with his sister who is living a comfortable life with her hus-

band and two children. She is the only person in the film who understands Bo in his early transition from performer to person.

It is hard for the audience or the film's other characters to have a feeling for this man because of the weak character development in the script, which Lewis co-wrote. In order to create more of a feeling for the loss which this clown suffers when the circus closes, the script should have shown us more of what this way of life meant to the person. This could have made some of Hooper's later efforts to find a job more meaningful and funny.

Although Bo Hooper doesn't hold many of the jobs he gets very long, we see him in little vignettes at his work stations. He is a gas station attendant, a disco nightclub d.j., a chef at a Japanese restaurant, and a postman, the job he almost finally succeeds in holding down.

All of these scenes are essentially humorless although they had the potential to be very funny. The best scene could have been in the disco, with its dizzying array of characters, any one of whom Lewis (as Hooper) could have chosen to poke fun at. He could have shown just how out of place his character was, juxtaposed to these "beautiful" people, but who would work anywhere just to have a job.

Lewis has filled this film with too many commercial plugs. It is obvious that his Japanese restaurant segment is intended to take place in a Benihana franchise. He even goes so far as to have the famous Budweiser Clydesdale-drawn beer wagon deliver a six pack to him when he needs something cold to drink.

This film offers a few good performances from most of the cast. Its weak script and storyline are disappointing as we need more comedy films in this country than are presently being made. Perhaps Lewis will try again and be more successful.

RAGING BULL

By Shirley Stevens

This blunt and bloody biography on the life of Jake LaMotta, who succumbed in the boxing ring to Sugar Ray Robinson, depicts the fighter as a man of uneven disposition. As a human being, he is incorrigible, brutal, and simple-minded. He is also indomitable in both strength and spirit. Life is not always kind or easy, but regardless of the circumstances, LaMotta does not necessarily read limited or negative self-worth into his misfortune. Given his bullish determination to succeed, he can readily cast off misfortune and begin to carve out a new career, even after two marriages, a terminated boxing career, and the loss of his brother's guidance and affection. His brother was the man who managed him into the limelight, while at the same time enduring the endless indignities inherent in the job of managing a boxer of LaMotta's temperament.

Robert DeNiro has been cast in the title role, with Kathy Moriarity showing great potential as his second wife. The language and action are explicit, yet they are integral components of this intense film.

On The Beat?

By Keith N. Gantz

Reesa & the Rooters, a relatively unknown band from New Jersey who dares to call its sound New Wave, has recently begun playing in clubs around the local area.

Last week, Rumpelstiltskin's of the Union Deposit Mall hosted Reesa and the gang. Future dates for the band will be listed in the Calendar of Events for those of you who are into M & S. The reason why this band contacted us here at the C.C. Reader appears rather dubious. It seems one of their latest single releases is entitled "OYTM." This fact, when considered together with the fact of our geographic location, leads me to deduce that they are trying to take advantage of us naive academics here at Capitol Campus.

After previewing the aforementioned single and its flip side "Ultraman in Surf Villa," I can only say that I don't think

this one will sound better after a number of repeats. The Rooters handle their instruments with all the grace and expertise of an inanimate object. Their style indicates--at least to this listener--an understanding of music theory and practice worthy of a group holding Doctorates...or M.D.s (mental deficient). Their playing could be further defined as undisciplined and devoid of talent, or as an exercise in bad taste.

I shouldn't be so hard on them. Perhaps they haven't begun their music lessons yet. My only advice to Reesa and the band would be to ask Bill and Dave for the definitions of harmony, melody, and symmetry. Can you help them out boys?

My advice to anyone interested in hearing this band would have to be to see the nearest psychologist immediately.

Until next time--D. Capo

Personalities...

Campus Digest News Service

RONALD REAGAN has been making a lot of people laugh with his off-the-record comments, but it has been learned that Reagan has hired a comedy writer who has been on the payroll of comedians Milton Berle and Bob Hope.

Hope reportedly convinced Reagan to hire a comedy writer to give the bland candidate a sense of humor. Reagan hired Jay Burton, who is a Democrat but was turned down when he volunteered to write comedy for Jimmy Carter.

So now it's Reagan who has the last laugh.

