

Emigrant film has simple charm

the daily Collegian arts

By LARRY CHARLES
Collegian Staff Writer

"Hester Street" is an utterly charming tale of the difficulties faced by Russian Jews trying to adapt to the ways of the New World. It illustrates universal human dreams and frailties with such simplicity and grace that it should delight any audience.

Jake (Stephen Keats) is a recent emigrant from Russia, working in New York's Lower East Side in 1896. He has shaven his beard and Americanized his name (from the original Yankel.) He considers himself "an American... a Yankee, that's all!"

in Russia) results in Jake's wife, Giti, and son, Yoselle, journeying to America to join him. Old customs and superstitions are ingrained in Giti (Carol Kane) and she finds the transition to New World ways most difficult.

"I can't go around in my own hair, I'm a married woman!" Giti cries, in Yiddish, when Jake suggests that she stop wearing the traditional wig. Giti is so confused with America that at one point she asks "Where are the gentiles... everywhere Jews, the gentiles keep some other place, eh?"

Giti asks a local merchant for a love potion and still fills

Yoselle's pocket's with sand to "keep the evil eye away," much to the chagrin of her "Yankee" husband. Jake succeeds in demanding that Yoselle be called Joey and even manages to get Giti all done up in Yankee-style clothing once in a while, but these superficial changes do not alter Giti's deep-rooted Old World ways and this enrages Jake. His desire to abandon his heritage and Giti's desire to keep it alive result in an inevitable confrontation.

As the wife-like wife, Kane is an absolute joy. Wasted for five years in tiny roles in major films ("Carnal Knowledge," "The Last Detail," "Dog Day After-

noon,") she finally emerges as an actress of great talent with this touching characterization. Her Oscar-nominated transition from the bewildered, apprehensive immigrant to the Americanized woman who develops a mind of her own and finally masters "Enkelsh" (as she calls the language) is completely disarming. Keats (another actor wasted for years in small roles in films like "The Friends of Eddie Coyle" and "Death Wish") is also quite good as Jake. The supporting parts are uniformly well-played down to the last street vendor and nosy friend.

The atmosphere of the film has been wonderfully

created. Filmed in black and white, the entire movie has the look of an old brown daguerreotype of one's great-grandparents. Two sequences in the film, a dance and an impromptu baseball game, are handled in silent movie-style with exaggerated actions, no dialogue and a single piano for musical accompaniment. These scenes are extremely well-done and help to convey the time period very nicely.

Practically bursting with warmth and enthusiasm, "Hester Street" is an experience everyone should share. It makes life look like a grand and glorious adventure.

'Lipstick' has its gloss, but faults aren't hidden

By JOANNE McLAUGHLIN
Collegian Staff Writer

"Lipstick" is a violent, fast-paced film about a fashion model who is raped. It can hardly be called a boring film, but it can hardly be called a very good one either.

The rape occurs almost immediately after the credits pass, when the audience has barely had time to figure out who the characters are, let alone be able to follow the motivations behind their actions. And no sooner has the model (Margaux Hemingway) been violated by her younger sister's music teacher (Chris Sarandon), when the scene shifts to a courtroom and a farce of a rape trial.

Director Lamont Johnson really let this film get away from him. There's nothing even resembling control.

"Lipstick" seems to gather momentum so early that it can't slow itself down long enough to allow anyone to become involved in what's going on.

David Rayfiel's screenplay is awful and never gives the characters enough time to become any more than caricatures. It's a shame, too, because the film contains some fine, though stunted, performances.

Chris Sarandon is frighteningly diabolical as Gordon, the rapist who strikes once and

Dialogue makes, breaks political novel

By SUSAN FROETSCHIEL
Collegian Staff Writer

A CITY ON THE HILL. By George V. Higgins. Ballantine Books, 213 pp. \$1.75.

George Higgins' novel about Washington D.C., "A City on a Hill," is a continuous string of gossip about wily politicians, their love lives, and falling careers.

The book is primarily dialogue with little action. Through the characters'

gossip, the weak plot slowly develops.

The story is set in late 1973 against the shambles of Watergate and the Nixon administration. Hank Cavanaugh is a young, ambitious public relations man working ruthlessly to re-establish a 1972 Democratic presidential candidate for the 1976 election.

Despite the hard work,

Cavanaugh knows that the candidate is a loser. The situation runs parallel to Cavanaugh's life. His wife divorces him, he has no career future, and no savings. Likewise, Cavanaugh sees all of his friends and acquaintances' careers crumbling the same way and each are constantly

scrambling for better positions with more prestige.

The plot drags because of the confusing and digressive dialogue. Five characters do all of the talking and intimacy is preserved by never having more than Cavanaugh and another character present at a time.

Although the characters are not prominent or in-

fluent themselves, their conversations are representative of stereotyped Washington power-plays.

The book depicts Washington as a place where anyone involved with its politics is dissatisfied and unhappy. However, some of the conversation is effective in its realism and credibility, especially when the characters stop gossiping and analyze their own problems.

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