

Postcards heads for the Oscars

Film documents negative aspects of Hollywood life

by Floyd J. Csir
The Collegian

Three Oscar nominations for one film? Not a common occurrence, but then again, *Postcards From The Edge* isn't ordinary. It's outstanding.

What are the ingredients for a three-Oscar film? Add plenty of Meryl Streep as Suzanne Vale, a pill-popping movie star in desperate need of self-identification, pour in some Shirley MacLaine as the aging alcoholic singer gone jealous, sprinkle in bits of Dennis Quaid as the bedroom hopping "Producer," and slices of Gene Hackman, the rational father-figure "Director," and bake for an hour and a half. You'll come out

studio lot. Even the name "Vale" could represent a "veil" of imagined personality and purpose.

In one scene, Vale is coaxed into singing. She chooses "You Don't Know Me," while her mother upstages her performance with "I'm Still Here." Each song indicates a character's thinking about her own life status. This movie explores the idea of parents letting their children grow up and of adult children looking after their maturing parents.

Director Mike Nichols prevents *Postcards* from getting bogged down with soap-box morality and allows Streep to unleash her tongue-in-cheek humor. Without her comic wit, this film wouldn't be as

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with a refreshing film experience.

Based on the life of actress-turned-screenwriter Carrie Fisher, *Postcards* displays "Life in Working Hollywood" as less than the glamorous grand illusion fans believe it to be. This is a Hollywood that has prematurely lost so many talented performers to drugs and alcohol that one only wonders if Vale will be the next to overdose.

The plot revolves around Vale's drug rehabilitation, the social stigma for recovering addicts and her struggle to establish her own identity. For most of her life she has been overshadowed by her mother's success, and when Vale finally gets her chance to shine, conflict erupts.

"I want life to imitate art," says Vale, a true reflection on her life that had become as false as a backdrop in some Hollywood

enjoyable (Oscar Nominee #1).

Shirley MacLaine, portraying Fisher's famous mother, Debbie Reynolds, balances her deceptions between feigned friendliness and resentment of her daughter, the heir to her fame. And yet, probably one of the best scenes in the movie occurs when Streep tenderly applies rouge, eyeliner, and false eyelashes to MacLaine's face (Oscar Nominee #2).

Mike Nichols, who hasn't directed a commercially successful film since *The Graduate*, delivers *Postcards* with palatable wit, conflict and diversion. He has elicited tremendous performances from this inspired cast. (Oscar Nominee #3).

So, if you're hungry for something more than a turkey like *Rambo III*, go for the Three Oscar Deal. *Postcards* is the stuff great films are made of.

Entertainment

Dylan misses his mark Talented guests fail to save release

by Gary L. Nolan
The Collegian

An air of excitement always surrounds the album release of a rock and roll legend. Certainly, Bob Dylan commands this type of respect. His current release, *Under the Red Sky* was created with the help of many musical guests.

Dylan is accompanied by a diverse list including George Harrison, Slash, Bruce Hornsby, Elton John, and the late Stevie Ray Vaughan. If one was to just glance at the credits and guests, the album looks excellent on paper.

Unfortunately, no amount of guests or rock and roll greats can rescue this release. It seems that through all the hype and potential, the music has fallen short.

Dylan has always had a great talent for uniting and speaking for an audience, while remaining aloof himself. It was through his incredible lyrical expression that he set the stage for an entire generation.

The nasal-throated singer was never one to rest on his virtues and appease fans. It always seems that just when Dylan and his fans finally meet on common ground, Dylan escapes to find a new form of self-expression.

Critics are all too lenient on Dylan, fearing that he always remains several steps ahead of them. They always seem afraid to chastise him in any way, expecting him to unite yet another generation, despite their words.

Therefore, their preconceived notions guide them into an uneasy lack of understanding. Critics seem unwilling to admit

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that Dylan has missed the mark. Just as critics could never admit, if by some stroke of luck, the New Kids on the Block could release an inspired single.

As unthinkable as it sounds, if any inspiration would ever befall a member of New Kids, critics would dismiss it as blind luck, and continue their bashing.

Dylan suffers from just the opposite prejudice. Critics

assume anything that he puts his name on will be a classic. This prejudice leads many to rate his music highly on his name alone.

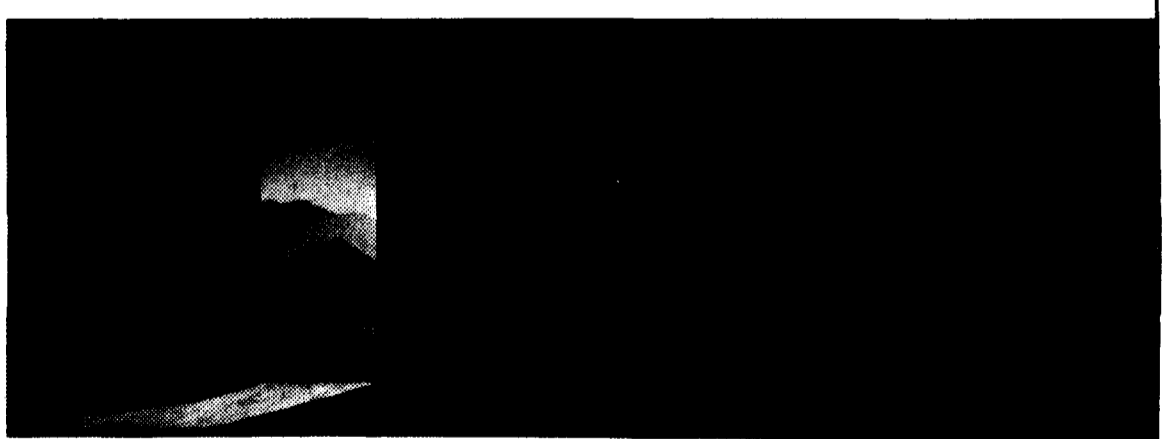
The Minnesota-born singer is not without his share of recent triumphs. His latest release, *Oh Mercy*, was quite the acclaimed work. Fans expected a new era of Dylan forthcoming.

Dylan has, however, lost touch with his audience on this release. His lyrics remain boring and uninspired. Typically, Dylan's lyrics are both poignant and masterful. They always seem magnified by the inspired music and delivered with passion. That passion is missing on *Under the Red Sky*.

Dylan's musical guests do nothing to save this work; if anything, they hinder the artist. They prove to mask any inspired moments. It seems that through the myriad of musical guests on this release too many cooks have indeed spoiled the pot.

The only hope remains that this is not a symbol of the decline of another middle-aged rocker. However, if Dylan had a hit record for every time someone suggested his inspiration is waning, he would remain a permanent part of *Billboard's* charts. But then again, Dylan would never be comfortable with that anyway.

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