

'Friends' sequel dull

Michelle and Paul back

by Harvey Elliott
Film Critic

Paul and Michelle, the two kids who ran away to the south of France and lived a romantic existence—loving and conceiving and birthing a baby—in Lewis Gilbert's 1971 film *Friends*, are back, three years older and a lot less interesting.

Not that they were very interesting to begin with. The earlier film managed to succeed mainly because of the intrinsic curiousness of a situation in which very young teenagers were required to act like adults. *Friends* had a good deal of charm and always managed to stop just short of mawkishness.

Now that Paul and Michelle are older teenagers required to act like older teenagers, there is no intrinsic curiousness, and what's left are the bare bones of a love story, padded with trendy relevance and weighted down with dialogue of unrelieved triteness.

In case you've been waiting to find out what happened after Paul's family whisked him back to England to finish prep school back in 1971, *Paul and Michelle* recapitulates the intervening events with all the speed and subtlety of a soap opera. It even throws in a few flashbacks, with footage, naturally, from the first film. (Gilbert has directed Chapter Two, too.)

Anyway, Paul finishes prep school, to his father's joy. To his father's horror, however, he takes off immediately for the Continent to find Michelle. She, meanwhile, has been living in Nice with her child (the one who was born in the Camargue cottage in *Friends*) and an unctuous American airline employee, played in a cool, affected manner by Keir Dullea.

A little is made of the girl's divided loyalties between Paul and Garry, but not much. (Just as little, but not much, is made of Michelle's divided attitude, later in the film, toward her second pregnancy.)

In fact, the only thing that seems to matter to Paul and Michelle (and even Garry)—and the director treats this not only with seriousness but with downright reverence—is sex.

It's what their whole relationship here is based upon, and it nullifies and makes the earlier film false.

They never seem to have a prolonged conversation about anything. After Paul and Michelle are reunited—and they've been together for a couple of hours—Michelle asks him, "Have I changed?" With a glint in his eye, Paul replies "Let me see you," and she unbuttons her dress.

She is still disturbed about her divided loyalties to her men, but after lovemaking with Paul for the first time in three years, she says simply "How could I for one moment

have doubted?" Everything between them is physical, so it's hard to work much sympathy up for their trials, their separations, their hardships. There hasn't been one intelligent conversation in the film!

Whenever it leaves the central characters for a few moments, the film flounders in its own unoriginality. Paul's father is brought on for two scenes of generation-gap mania.

After Paul and Michelle go to Paris where he is enrolled at the Sorbonne, we are treated to one pot-party scene and one rioting-student-demonstrators scene, both to no purpose whatsoever.

By way of additional characterization, we are given two reunions of Michelle and Garry, who has suddenly turned into Mr. Nice Guy, understanding all. A few medical students appear intermittently.

The end of *Paul and Michelle* leaves director Gilbert with a big opportunity to make still another installment. Apparently, he's even planned it for 1977, since there's a lot of talk about "in just three years..." during the last few minutes of the movie.

The Tar Heel Features

Films, Records, TV

It's a personal thing he's working out. Not a director noted for his artistry—his biggest commercial hits have been *Alfie*, *You Only Live Twice* and *The Adventurers*—Gilbert did achieve an amount of respect for *Loss of Innocence*, a 1961 film which dealt with adolescence, as did *Friends*.

Friends wasn't an enormous hit. It supposedly did very well in Mexico and Japan, but these markets are hardly lucrative enough to warrant a sequel (or two). Gilbert, in fact, seems to be much more interested in Paul and Michelle than is the rest of the world.

It's a pity he can't transmit that fascination to us.

All that jazz

by CB Gaines
Asst. Features Editor

Passport—Looking Thru (Atco)

And now, from the country that brought you Ludwig van Beethoven, we proudly present Klaus Doldinger. European jazz with a classical influence.

The album begins with Doldinger on the Moog and Mellotron creating a mood similar to that of Walter Carlos's *Clockwork Orange*. Then Kristian Schultze of Passport lays some jazzy organ riffs on top of the Moog sounds, and *Eternal Spiral* takes off.

A quiet, little electric piano statement is all there is to be found in *Zwischenspiel*. Anyone who can wait this long through the album gets his reward when Doldinger picks up the soprano sax and begins *Rockport*.

Side two is where he really saxes up the music up beginning with *Tarantula* which rivals *Rockport* as the best cut on the album.

On this side, the ghost-like echoes of the saxes haunt the music, and themes are repeated frequently. The final song, *Things to Come*, has the Beethoven-*a la Clockwork Orange* influence that was in *Eternal Spiral*, but it has a musical theme similar to that in *Rockport*.

The real classical influence of the old German music on this group is the minisymphony that begins with *Rockport* on the end of side one and continues on the second side. All these songs have a coherence of theme and instrument that is enough to make one believe that if Beethoven were alive today, he'd be recording on Atco.

TV Notes

Don't miss *Captain Kangaroo* tomorrow morning. The *Captain* babysits for Priscilla, a baby chimp.



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