

FILM REVIEW ~ "Z"

BY MIKE FERGUSON

Of all the films over the last year or so which have proclaimed topicality (*The Graduate*, *Goodbye Columbus*, *Easy Rider*, *Alice's Restaurant*, *Medium Cool*), None have succeeded with the power and intensity as Costa-Gavras' jolting *Z*. These other films generalize "current" events, and become, for the most part, woefully out of focus: *The Graduate* was a slick look at the middle-class college kid in the early '60's; "Columbus" goes back to the late '50's to explore sexual morality in upheaval; *Easy Rider*, for all its realism, presents characters who were most noticeable in the mid-'60's, at the beginning of Haight-Ashbury; *Alice's Restaurant* zooms in on not the Woodstock Generation, but the pre-Dylan folk crowd at Cambridge; and *Medium Cool* struck me as too much of a soap opera to be topical. Only *Z* has truthfully and realistically come down on the issues of the day.

Z succeeds because it presents in striking manner a situation which is immediate and ultimately universal. True, the film deals with the Greek government, but in a fashion which parlays events in that country into a frightening parallel with the U.S. and other political and social disaster areas.

The film concerns a political uprising. Disgusted by the old guard political and police domination, a new liberal force tries to overturn the existing structure. Yves Montand turns in a concise and powerful portrayal as the leader of the movement. And the similarity between his character and our own (fallen) leaders - the Kennedys and Martin Luther King - are apparent and presumably intentional. Montand's creation is something of a combination of these figures, with a dash of Adali Stevenson.

At the peak of his popularity and force, the leader is assassinated at a political rally. The scene is strengthened by the grimly depicted street struggles between supporters of the two rival factions, an insightful view of revolution at work.

The film then penetrates on the efforts of those who followed *Z* (the assassinated figure) to keep up the revolution, the investigation to determine *Z*'s death, and the horrific results.

Costa-Gavras' direction is artful and flawless (almost falling into slickness, but never quite succumbing). A chief investigator is brought in to examine the death of *Z* and he gradually determines

that a planned assassination was afoot. Played expertly and with utter coolness by JeanLouis Trintignant (*A Man and a Woman*) the investigator indicts several police figures in the plot. The investigation scenes are masterful: in depth, convincing, and wholly interesting.

The last five minutes of the film are as terrifying as anything presented on the screen. As relevant and topical a conclusion as I would care to see (and true, based on actual happenings in the Greek government). And to the film's credit, the final portion is handled with intense precision and quickness, denoting the real efficiency of the police state; little room is left for any revolutionary pretensions. Be sure to check the film's final bit of information - a staggering epitaph. Nothing has matched *Z* in contemporary film for its inherent sense of despair; the movement *Z* led is doomed from its outset.

Z is artfully tuned to the times. The performances are excellent (Irene Pappas is magnificent as *Z*'s widow), the direction perfect. The situation may be set in a foreign land, but the occurrences and action are frighteningly real. It is indeed the one film in a long list of many which claim to be important to the lives we are living, that ultimately does so.

MUSIC REVIEW ~ BY BESS PILCHER

New York, Tendaberry, Miss Nyro's third album, is another development of her musical talents. She feels more confident in this album than the previous two. They were shaky and quizzical, as if asking, "will they accept me?" Also, the accompaniment understands and supports her instead of contradicting her as before. Obviously, extra rehearsing and re-taping pays off.

Her musical growth is astounding. As a fifteen-year-old in the Bronx, Miss Nyro sang with a Puerto Rican street band. Her teen years she claims were "unhappy", and poetry comforted her. Eventually the two abilities gelled. At twenty-two, she now creates poetic lyrics for her own remarkable voice.

Fortunately her subject matters are her familiarities. We know that Miss Nyro sings from the inside out never super-imposing a subject. Her emotions flow out instinctively, they are not uncommon for a woman her age, but more intensified. When the feelin is of pain, it is acute pain, either by the sharpness of words, shrill voice, or both.

She sings of lovers, loneliness, honky-tonk women, and New York City. Other subjects serve as over-tones (drinking, parents), but the latter merely affect the primary concerns. Her life has felt or lived them. One love song mentions rubies and smoke rings. In a recent photograph of Miss Nyro, a tremendous ruby adorns a hand holding a cigarette.

The lyrics are always conscious of rhyme scheme, sound, and rhythm. One song, *Bison Street*, perfectly follows an A-B=C-A-C rhyme scheme throughout all three verses. The rhythm count is equally accurate.

The accompaniment never drowns out her voice, or repeats its mood from song to song. It glides with her, suiting her every fancy. The album took ten months to record, even after the songs had been taped as a lonely voice. Miss Nyro must have toiled, repeated, and quarreled with musicians constantly. The time was well worth the outcome. Horns, strings, pianos, drums, and even silence are used throughout.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

No doubt many of you have been waiting for some kind of reply from me concerning some things which were said and intimated in a past issue of this newspaper. Because of this importance to me, and of my emotions concerning them, I delayed any remark until it could be done objectively and fairly.

I have spent five years of my life at NCSA because I loved and believed in everything good it stood for. I gave to it, and it gave to me in return. I stand on my accomplishments those last five years and say simply, if you believe that I could be capable of the things I was accused of by Mr. Fragola - that I would actually feel compelled to join his bitterness - than it was all for nothing, and you really don't know me at all. I

(Con't. on page 5)