

# See 'McCabe and Mrs. Miller'

The treat in town this week is "McCabe and Mrs. Miller." Up until now I have not been convinced of Robert Altman's talent, but with this one movie he lays claim to being the finest director in America.

It's an exquisitely beautiful, meticulously done trip into an entirely different world, with absolutely perfect jobs turned in by everyone. This one is definitely not to be missed.

For those who want to be "entertained," there's "Plaza Suite," a trio of Neil Simon comedies that fares much better than it did on the stage. The second playlet is still a total loss, but in the other two the director has toned down Simon's atrocious one-liner approach and has tried to add depth to the characters.

Walter Matthau doesn't give performances, he gives personal appearances, but the ladies are extremely fine, especially Maureen Stapleton, who should be up for an Oscar. By far the best of the Neil movies.

There's not much else in town. "Billy Jack" is an obviously sincere movie which looks at important issues with the intelligence of a television program. It's filled with cliches, stupidities and just plain falsehoods. Nice photography and low key acting help some, but not enough.

"Mad Dogs and Englishman" is cheap imitation Woodstock. The use of split screens is entirely arbitrary and the film fails totally to capture the rhythm and drive of the music. The only real asset of the picture is Joe Cocker, who tends to get rather lost amid the rather self-conscious cinema-verite subjects.

Bringing up the rear is "The Hunting Party," which gathered in a very bad set of reviews.

Playing in Raleigh is a real treat, the original subtitled version of "The Confession," directed by Costa-Gavras, who made "Z." This picture is far superior to "Z" because it does not make symbols of its characters, but allows both sides to remain human.

For those who are put off by art films, I should mention that it is just as exciting and entertaining a movie as has ever been made. This exploration of a recent historical event is a fantastic movie, perfect for all kinds of audiences. Since it will never play here, my advice is to get into your car now and head for Raleigh.

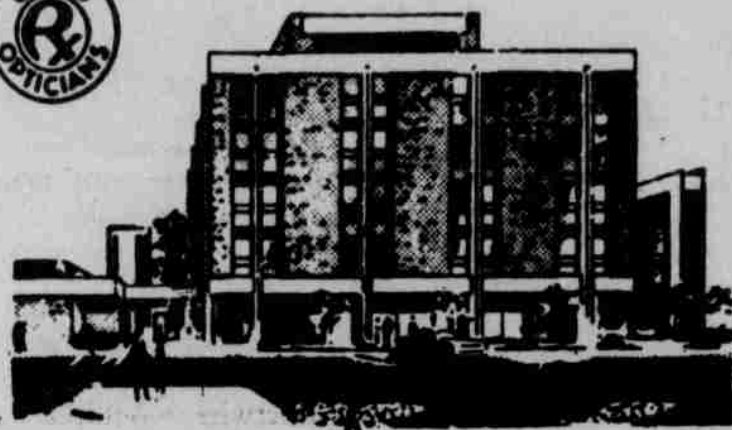
The last free flicks include: Tonight, "Forty-Second Street," an amusing and eye-dazzling musical which is much better than camp-followers would have you believe; Sunday, "McKenna's Gold," a truly stupid western redeemed only by some nice special effects (Godard did not say that quote on the Blue hand out sheet); "The Belles of St. Trinians," an amusing British comedy; Tuesday, "Wait Until Dark," a highly entertaining, suspenseful and scary movie; and Wednesday, some comedy shorts which are among the worst jobs done by the comedy masters involved.

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