

Langley reviews 'Pieces' mature

Gone With the Wind - Story of the Old South is a perfect example of the lush Hollywood romanticism of its period, dated only by the performance of Leslie Howard as Ashley, who was himself dated. Still a superior film. - R

Five Easy Pieces - An exceptionally mature study of an immature man, filled with an insight and a creation of mood reminiscent of and worthy of Bergman. Jack Nicholson gives the finest male performance of the past several years. Worth seeing several times as its finer qualities come out even better under repeated viewings. - CH

French Connection - Rarely if ever have the devices of cinema been used with such sophistication to produce such tightly wound suspense. An extremely fine bust-the-dope-ring thriller which should please every type of movie goer. - R, G

The Devils - As usual, Ken Russell has some remarkable images of obsession and frustration, but in this tale of possessed nuns, he does not really seem to take his flamboyance seriously, and the picture degenerates far too often into a campy, hysterical mess. - R

Billy Jack - Obviously sincere tale of youth vs. bigots done with the intelligence of a TV program, complete with stock villains and melodramatic situations. Nice photography and low key acting help some, but not enough. - D, R

Catlow - A computerized Western about which no one seems to have cared very much, especially the director. A waste of time. - G

The following have not been reviewed. Opinions expressed are those of a consensus of critics.

See No Evil - A fairly good Mia Farrow thriller. - R

The Organization - A fairly good Sidney Poitier cop drama. - D

Play Misty For Me - A fairly good Clint Eastwood thriller. - G

Bless the Beasts and Children - Another brainless piece of social significance from Stanley Kramer. - G

The Finz Edge - A skiing movie. No reviews out yet. - CH, D, R, G

Some of My Best Friends Are - An insulting, exploitative movie on homosexuals. - R

Chrome and Hot Leather - A disgusting motorcycle movie. - G

Glass Houses - A disgusting skin flick. - CH, D, R, G

Love-In '72 - Another disgusting skin flick. - D

Daddy, Darling - Yet another disgusting skin flick. - CP

Something Big - A terrible Dean Martin Western. - G

Bruce Mann

Dinner Theatre pleasant

The Village Dinner Theatre features gaslight theatre a-go-go this month with that classic farce, Brandon Thomas's "Charley's Aunt," a giddy show as frenetically paced by resident director Jay Hugueley. Though not a totally satisfying production, "Charley's Aunt" rarely fails to entertain nor properly evoke the Victorian world it was composed for 73 years ago.

Set at Oxford near the turn of the century, the play calls forth a theatrical milieu of gowns and lace finery, of valets and of codes of behavior. On-stage language is billowy and adorned with quaint high society clichés such as "charmed" and "so delighted" and "Thanks, Dad, you're a brick." And the theatrical world is marked by asides, obvious dramatic irony, and thoroughly "risqué" doings.

We first meet the characters in the ornate college rooms of Jack Chesney (Ron Lundmark) and his friend, Charley (William Stroheimer). Both are "nervous, naggy and nonplussed," because they love Kitty Verdun (Barbara Lynn) and Amy Spettigue (Melanie Ross) "more than even cricket," and they would do anything to invite the girls over.

A pretense arises when Charley learns of his widowed aunt's arrival, and the two cheerfully propose, by epistle, that the girls join them. Kitty and Amy arrive, but

the aunt, Donna Lucia D'Alvadorez, does not, and a telegram from her explains. "She's not coming," says Charley. "But she must," proclaims Jack in consternation. "What are we going to do? The girls won't stay without a chaperone." And without further adieu, they impress another roommate, Babs (Leonard Conner), a flitty, giddy champagne-kleptomaniac, to impersonate Charley's Aunt. Babs reluctantly consents, and the farcical complications are set in motion.

Before it's over, Sir Francis Chesney (Raymond McGlynn), Jack's father, and Mr. Spettigue (Dennis Percy) enter the scene, learn of Donna Lucia's millionaire and unmarried status, and attempt to marry the grieving transvestite-Babs. Then, Ella (Wendy Helsing), Babs' former love, arrives with the real Donna Lucia, and the farce winds down, unravelling the complex conflicts as it does.

There are some fine scenes along the way. For example, in the garden (embellished with effectively flowered latticework), Babs-Donna serves tea in a most unfeminine manner, spilling cream and even filling Spettigue's top hat with the brew. And the final ensemble of name-announcing ("Charley!" "Auntie!" "Francis!" "Ella!" ad absurdum) is effective.

But quite often, the stage scenes are

far too busy, as in the garden when the young couples attempt to rendezvous but are thwarted by the chases of Chesney and Spettigue after Babs-Donna Lucia. The continual motion is dramatically excessive.

One cannot, however, complain of any dull moments in "Charley's Aunt," thanks to a capable cast which enunciates clearly and convincingly in the "King's English."

Ron Lundmark is a handsome, properly hyper Jack matched with his radiant cherub, Barbara Lynn as Kitty, make a splendid couple. William Stroheimer's Charley is a bit overdone and not as convincing, but he is energetic, entering every scene as if in the winged sandals of Mercury. Melanie Ross's Amy is prim and pink-cheeked, but generally superficial.

Two of the evening's most entertaining performances are Ellen Kimberly as the real Charley's Aunt and Leonard Conner as Babs. Conner's role, a demanding one, seemed too active and forced at times on opening night, but whether flipping his

(or her) fan, trying to cover for his identity, or singing "I'm in Love with Amy" in falsetto monotone in front of the girls, he entertained the audience well. Miss Kimberly's pursed lips and perspicacity, of course, professionally help to unveil Babs' true identity at the end of the farce.

In subsidiary roles, Raymond McGlynn's Chesney is solid. David Holloway's Brassett, the butler, adds some neat touches and twists to the proceedings. Dennis Percy's Spettigue is spirited. And Wendy Helsing's debut as Ella is aptly done.

"Charley's Aunt" is a play of gesture and stagework, which, because it lacks many solid comedy punch lines, forces the actors to capture the comedy through their gesticulation and enunciation. The humor is broad, and slapstick is prominent, but altogether, "Charley's Aunt's" antics are pleasant!

A note: "Man of La Mancha" has been rescheduled by the dinner theatre for nine performances beginning Jan. 1.


Duke Chorale set to appear at UNC

The prospects for such exchanges, among choral groups from campuses across the state, has been greatly enhanced by UNC's Dr. Lara Hoggard, Kenan Professor of Music and conductor of the Carolina Choir.

Last spring, Hoggard invited choral instructors from throughout North Carolina to UNC to discuss the possibility of establishing small-vocal ensemble institutes for high school students in the state. As a result of his initiative, eight such institutes will be conducted this year from Mars Hill in the west to East Carolina at Greenville.

"Some of the directors were rather cool toward the idea at first," Hoggard said, "but I was very pleased to see that so many of them decided to follow through with the institutes after all."

This year's Duke-Carolina exchange will be completed with the Carolina Choir performing a Christmas concert in Duke Chapel on Dec. 12.



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