

Scott Langley

Kids, war and comedy

During the second half of the 1960's, Czechoslovakia became one of the world centers of quality film-making. Artists such as Milos Forman, Ivan Passer and Jan Kadar produced cinema masterpieces, which were nearly all characterized by a delicate tragic-comic or bittersweet observation of human foibles. Their humanity was such that they were applauded and appreciated all over the world. But then the Russian tanks rolled into Prague, and the Czech new wave, as it was called, fell apart. Many of the best directors left the country, and those who remained found severe restrictions on their work.

One of the rare quality films to appear since then is *If I Had A Gun*, a mostly comic story of children in war. This film was chosen last year to open the First Avenue Screening Room, a small theatre in New York dedicated to unusual, non-commercial films. (It has since premiered Memories of

Underdevelopment, Love, and others.) Upon its opening it received unanimously favorable reviews. All critics compared it favorably with the classic French film, *Forbidden Games*, which also dealt with children in war, though in a much grimmer fashion. In a long rave in the New Yorker, Pauline Kael, hardly a fan of Czech films, called it "much the best Czech film I have seen... far better than *Loves of A Blonde* or *Closely Watched Trains*... A classic."

At the same time all the critics lamented the fact that the film would probably be little seen. Czech films, once distributed fairly widely, were no longer in vogue. The film played a week at the screening room, then transferred to another theatre where in a week it managed to attract only 300 people in a city of six million. It then vanished. It will reappear at the Alternative Cinema this weekend in what is, as far as I know, only the

second city it has been booked in.

Seeing the film, one can only agree with Kael's rave (though I still prefer Milos Forman). Director Stefan Uher has managed to recreate a child's view in which events great and small take on the same kind of importance. It is an utterly enchanting and delicate film, well worth your viewing time. Shows are at 2, 7 and 9:30 Saturday in Carroll Hall.

On Sunday the Chaplin series will present Chaplin's most unusual film, *Monieur Verdoux*. In this film, Chaplin actually plays a wife murderer. The comedy turns to the sardonic, though Chaplin doesn't neglect at all his old style of humor and Martha Raye adds to the hilarity as a wife he just can't seem to get rid of. This film has more real philosophical depth than most Chaplin films and is highly recommended. Shows are at 2, 4:30, 7 and 9:30 Sunday in Carroll Hall.



A series of 1930's films, produced by local wife-mother-student Darcy Paletz, will begin Friday on WUNC. The series called "Hooray for Hollywood" will be shown at 9 p.m. on Friday nights for the next ten weeks. This week's film is *Footlight Parade*, a musical starring James Cagney, Joan Blondell, Ruby Keeler, Dick Powell, Guy Kibbee and Frank

McHugh. Paletz, an RTVMP graduate student is excited about the series. "There aren't any second run houses around and the old films usually shown on TV have no coherence. It will be wonderful for people to watch these. It will be an educational, but entertaining, experience," she said.

Entertainment Calendar

Cinema

"The Sting." Carolina Theatre. Con comedy is itself a con with some pretty moldy material being turned into excellent entertainment by some talented hands. 1:50, 4:10, 6:30 & 8:50. \$2. Ends today. Late shows: Friday and Saturday, "The Possession of Joel Delaney." Sunday, "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich." 11:15. \$1.50.

2:45, 5, 7:15 & 9:30. \$2. Ends today. "Conrack." Plaza II. Martin Ritt's story of a teacher in a poverty area has received good early reviews. 3, 5:05, 7:10 & 9:15. \$2. Ends today.

"The Exorcist." Plaza III. 2, 4:30, 7 & 9:30. \$3. Free flicks: Friday, "A Streetcar Named Desire." Tennessee Williams' best play, brilliantly acted, directed and photographed. A great experience. Saturday, "The Ruling Class." A satire on the upper classes. Weak as satire, and rather sloppy, but filled with witty lines, and exceptional performances. Sunday, "The Go Between." (Super Sunday, by subscription only.) A perverse and chillingly beautiful tale of love and deception.

Well done in every respect. 6:30 & 9 in the Great Hall.

Alternative Cinema: "If I Had A Gun." Czech comedy about children during World War II. "The best Czech film I have seen... a classic."—Pauline Kael, New Yorker. Saturday at 2, 7 & 9:30 in Carroll Hall. Admission, \$1.50.

Charlie Chaplin Film Series: "Monieur Verdoux." A biting, sardonic black comedy in which Chaplin plays wife killer. With Martha Raye. Sunday at 2, 4:30, 7 and 9:30 in Carroll Hall. "Swana Tochi." A Japanese film dealing with cross-cultural communications. Presented by the International Student Center. Friday at 7:30 in 111 Murphy Hall. 50 cents.

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—Richard Schickel, Life Magazine

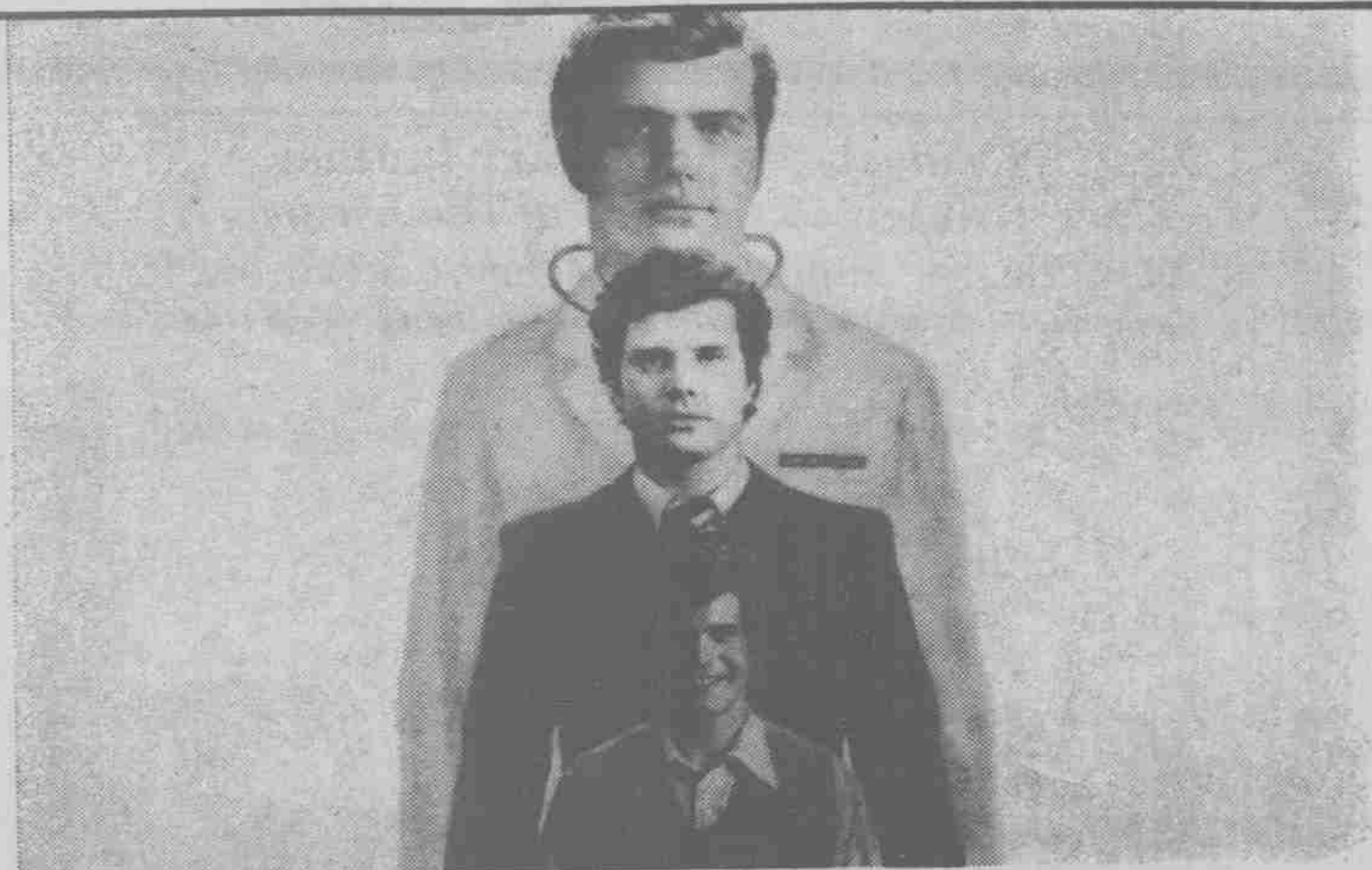


ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN'S ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH

Tom Courtenay in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's "ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH" with ALFRED BURKE/JAMES MAXWELL/ERIC THOMPSON. Music by ARNE NORDHEIM/Screenplay by RONALD HARWOOD/From a translation by GILLON ATKEN of a novel by ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN. Edited by THELMA CONNELL/Photography by SVEN NYQUIST/Executive Producers RICHARD PACK, HOWARD G. BARNES. Produced and Directed by CASPER WREDE/A LEONTE PRODUCTION with NORSK FILMS in EASTMAN COLOR.

Late Show Sunday 11:15

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