

Review Board Defends 'Woolf' Rating

New York — Because of an "overwhelming" amount of written and telephoned protests on its A-4 classification of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures has released a breakdown of the voting by its reviewing staff and, for the first time in its history, put together what it calls a "distillation" of the comments made by its reviewers after seeing the film.

(The National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, formerly the Legion of Decency, is the official movie reviewing board founded by the Bishops of the United States.)

The film, subject of extensive coverage in the mass media and the first picture ever to be voluntarily self-classified by the motion picture industry, was seen by 91 reviewers for NCOP.

The votes cast were:

Condemned: 18

B (Morally objectionable in part for all): 14

A-4 (Morally unobjectionable for adults, with reservations): 44

A-3 (Morally unobjectionable for Adults): 9

In addition, 1 voted for A-2 (Morally Unobjectionable for adults and adolescents), 1 was split between A-3 and A-4, 2 were split between A-4 and B, 1 was split between B and C, and 1 was undecided.

The NCOP's original observation was that the film "dramatizes man's need to face the challenge of reality, in order, by achieving self-knowledge, to build a capacity for love" and that "adults must also be advised that the theme of 'Virginia Woolf' may prove confusing and its language offensive to the casual film-goer."

But, because of numerous requests for further comment, in both letters to the editor and in letters to NCOP (some of which suggested that NCOP's two priest executives should be "defrocked" for not condemning

the film), the office issued, in response to a request from Catholic Press features, the following observations:

1. "The 'reservations' we make in A-4 classifications are a warning to adults that they ought to consider carefully whether they should see the film. The function of NCOP is not to take over the role of individual conscience, but to offer moral guidance to assist this individual to make a personal, responsible decision."

2. "Some of the language is admittedly coarse, vulgar, 'obscene' and 'blasphemous.' The decision to use such language in a filmed drama may also be questionable. But the consensus from the review staff was that in the context of this drama and its characters, the 'obscene' and 'blasphemous' language is not used obscenely and blasphemously."

"Moral theologians would point out that it is the intention of the speaker rather than the words used which convey him of obscenity and blasphemy. But in spite of what we say here, we do wish to note that the language will nevertheless continue to pose a problem for sensitive viewers."

3. "We believe that many will be prejudiced against the film and our rating because of the reputations of the persons involved in the making of the film (a reference to stars Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor: ED). The policy of the national office is not to judge a film in terms of the personal lives of those who contributed to its making."

"In the case of 'Virginia Woolf,' it is not valid to force a homosexual interpretation on the film because of the alleged deviation of its author." (NCOP was specifically referring here to a review in a recent issue in NEWSWEEK, and is a reference to author Edward Albee.)

A number of people have questioned how Warner Brothers

intends to enforce its announced policy of permitting to enter the theater only persons over 18 years of age unless accompanied by a parent. NCOP observed that Warner Brothers has written into its contract with exhibitors and can "lift" the film from an exhibitor who violates the contract.

Also, that Pinkerton detectives have been hired by the company for checking purposes, and that those who observe young people entering the theater without a parent should notify the company or NCOP. The film office has noted that this admission policy was a determining factor in awarding the A-4 classification.

In its "distillation" of comment from its reviewers, NCOP stated:

"The evolution of our motion picture industry has admittedly been one geared to 'pure entertainment' for the most part. 'Mass' communications by definition are not aimed at a limited audience. The commercial needs and nature of the art form cause it to be advertised as appealing to the widest possible audience. For these reasons, and for many others, it has been only in recent years that attempts at serious drama, intended for mature adults, have reached the screen with any regularity."

"Corresponding to this development with the motion picture medium has been the growth of a more critical and mature audience who can profit from such dramas."

"Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" is such a drama. Basically, Martha and George's vehement exorcism is a statement about persons whose love and hate are mixed and interdependent, and about the ultimate futility of living in a world of illusions where truth and falsity are scarcely distinguishable. It is not for children, and not for all adults. The language is harsh, and the violence of emotion can be upsetting, but it is an honest presentation, and a moving one, devoid of sensationalism, in the usual sense of that word.

"Violence has always been a literary device to suggest purification or redemption. In classic literature we have Oedipus the King, and King Lear. In modern times we have the work of Flannery O'Connor. But all of these have treated violence with aesthetic distance and rather highly symbolic. The violence of 'Virginia Woolf' is directly portrayed and is psychologically oriented. But basically the intention seems to be the same."

"It is characteristic of persons who love one another that they know how to most effectively hurt one another. The love of George and Martha is tempered by feelings of self-contempt and awareness of each other's weakness. In this sort of mutual defense, they have constructed, over the years of their marriage, a world of private myths within which they can attack one another and still come out safe."

"But under the exceptional circumstances of the young couple visiting in the early morning, Martha breaks the rules. She mentions their most personal myth, their 'son.' The violent repartee flows outside the walls of their private world, building to a shouting crescendo to the point where Martha also betrays her husband through an attempted infidelity. This is the motivation for George to strip away their last illusion: he decides to 'kill' their 'son.'"

"Through the course of the evening Martha and George had been tearing away at the contrivances that had made their knowledge of one another supportable, and now in the climax, the last illusion is stripped away when George announces that he has received a telegram saying their son is dead. No longer confusing truth with reality, they are left only with themselves. There is no more

needed for lashing out. They face one another honestly, without rancor.

"Did you have to?" she asks. "Yes." In the final handclasp is the hope that they look forward to more direct love, and acceptance of themselves and of one another." (Catholic Press Features)



ELIZABETH COOK, Alice in Storytellers' Summer Playhouse musical production of Lewis Carroll's famed fantasy, looks on Wonderland for the first time. Watching her is Wanda Vicente, one of the tighty boys and girls participating under the direction of Sister Claudia in the children's theater program at St. Agnes High School. Curtain time is 8:15 p.m. each Thursday and Friday evening in July.

'Alice' Musical—Next at St. Agnes

"Alice in Wonderland" will be presented by Storytellers' Summer Playhouse as its second musical of the season next Thursday and Friday evenings, July 21 and 22, in the auditorium of St. Agnes High School. The eighty-member cast will offer the final performance of "Once upon a Time," tonight (July 15), an operetta version of "Rumpelstiltskin."

Title role will be played by Elizabeth Cook with her brother Joe in the part of Father William.

There might have been others eleven musically minded brothers and sisters participating in the summer music theater program had their summers not been previously committed. The children of Mr. and Mrs. Jerome C. Cook of 1384 Highland Ave. all except the four youngest are piano students at the Hochstein Music School, and eight-year-old Richard and six-year-old Virginia are beginning their lessons in September. Besides piano, the older children study, violin, cello, flute, oboe, or viola, and all of them sing — spontaneously at home, guests report — and in area musicals as well.

Mary Jo, 18, who recently played the Mother Abbess in Nazareth Academy's production of "The Sound of Music," has just begun a European tour, a graduation gift she received this June. Seventeen-year-old Michael also recently left for Europe to study French with a group of his fellow McQuaid students. And John, 15, is spending his summer at Chautauqua Music Institute, for which he won a scholarship in piano study.

The two Cook pianos are rarely silent. They often are

Ever-Popular 'Oklahoma!' Billed at Town & Country

Town & Country Playhouse will present "Oklahoma!" opening Monday, July 18 at the air-conditioned East Rochester auditorium. "Oklahoma!" has been one of the most popular, most widely produced around the world musicals in theatrical history.

Its New York run of over five years was greater than any other in stage annals, until it was surpassed thirteen years later by "My Fair Lady," and "Oklahoma!" still holds the second longest run record.

Producer Barry Tuttle has announced that the cast includes: James Hurst as "Curly," Linda Fields as "Laurey," Danny Dayton as "Ali Hakim," Carleton Carpenter as "Will Parker," Maryann Kerrick as "Ado-Annie," Dan Hannafin as "Jud." The production will be directed by Bill Carrozo.

Songs from "Oklahoma!" by

Family Rosary Radio Leaders

The Family Rosary for Peace is broadcast nightly at 7 p.m. by Rochester's radio station WSAY Auburn's WMBO-FM and through the facilities of the TV cable companies in the following cities: Elmira (Channel 8), Hornell (Channel 5) and Corning at 8:75 M.C.

Friday, July 15—A representative of the Third Order of Mt. Carmel.

Saturday, Feb. 18 (Mass will be celebrated)—Louis Kretzmer, St. John the Evangelist, Greece.

Sunday, July 17—Lawrence M. Burton, Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Monday, July 18—A representative of Knights of St. John Commandery No. 17.

Tuesday, July 19—Joseph Huck, St. Helen.

Wednesday, July 20—Elmer Bloomer, St. Louis, Pittsford.

Thursday, July 21—Father Leonard Kelly, pastor of Assumption Church, Fairport, accompanied by Sacred Heart Ladies of that parish.

Susan Hayward Becomes Catholic

Pittsburgh — (NC) — Susan Hayward, 47, Academy Award winning movie star, has been converted to the Catholic Faith.

The widow of Floyd E. Chalkey, who was a Catholic, the actress received her first communion in St. Peter and Paul church here. She took instruction and was received into the Church by Father Daniel J. McGuire.

Miss Hayward won the coveted "Oscar" for the best actress in 1958 for her work in the film "I Want to Live!"

International Film Awards

Berlin — (RNS) — The International Catholic Cinema Office presented its Berlin Film Festival prize to an English motion picture, "Georgy Girl," produced by Silvio Narrazio, Italian-born Canadian director.

The award of the International Evangelical Film Center was given to a French film, "Les Coeurs Verts" (The Green Hearts), produced by Edouard Lantz.

Also in the cast are: Anthony DeMare as the caterpillar, Thomas Flaherty as the white rabbit, Mary Sullivan as the Duchess, Christine Zukowski as the Cheshire cat, Annette Sleyman as the Queen of Hearts, William Cayley as the King of Hearts, Paul Camardo as the March hare, George Elkins as the mad hatter, Kevin Cawley as the dormouse, Paul Greenlee as the gryphon, Douglas DeVos as the mock turtle, and Thomas Head as the knave of hearts.

Curtain time for all performances is 8:15 p.m. Tickets may be purchased on mail order or directly at the box office of St. Agnes High School, 300 East River Rd.

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Dancing Nuns!

San Antonio, Tex. — (NC) — Dancing nuns! Yep — that's right. Twenty-five of them, in religious garb but with ballet slippers, and they danced all over the place in a birthday celebration. They're Sisters of Divine Providence. They took part in an historical pageant here in Municipal Auditorium in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the coming of the first nuns of the community to Texas.

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The Russians' Is Here! PAUL FORD stars in Norman Jewison's farce "The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming," currently being shown in the Rochester area. The film carries A-1 rating.

FILMS ABOUT TOWN

A MENTION OF MOTION PICTURES OF MORE THAN ROUTINE INTEREST.

Born Free — "A sociable lioness named Elsa is as winning on the screen as she was in Joy Adamson's celebrated animal biography." —Time.

Juliet of the Spirits — "Another glorious plunge into the grab bag of Federico Fellini's fantasies, here thinly disguised as those of a suburban Roman housewife. With Giulietta Masini, Sandra Milo, and Mario Pisu." —New Yorker Mag.

Dr. Zhivago — "Boris Pasternak's novel has been turned into a romantic epic of the Russian Revolution and its effect upon the individual. Julie Christie, Omar Sharif, Alec Guinness, Rita Tushingham and a number of other fine stars struggle to live in difficult circumstances. Robert Bolt's script concentrates on individual values disrupted by the pressure of external events. David Lean succeeds in making it a visual delight in color and wide-screen." —Catholic Film News-letter.

The Russians Are Coming — "The undertaking of a screen comedy is dangerous, for there is no way of telling within the relative silence of a studio set or a location whether the supposedly funny stuff is going to work in a theater. I am pleased, therefore, to be able to report that 'The Russians Are Coming' worked fine when I saw it with a large audience. It is with gratitude that I pay my compliments to Norman Jewison, the director, and to William Rose, the screenwriter, for what is probably the funniest American comedy to come along in many months." —Saturday Review.

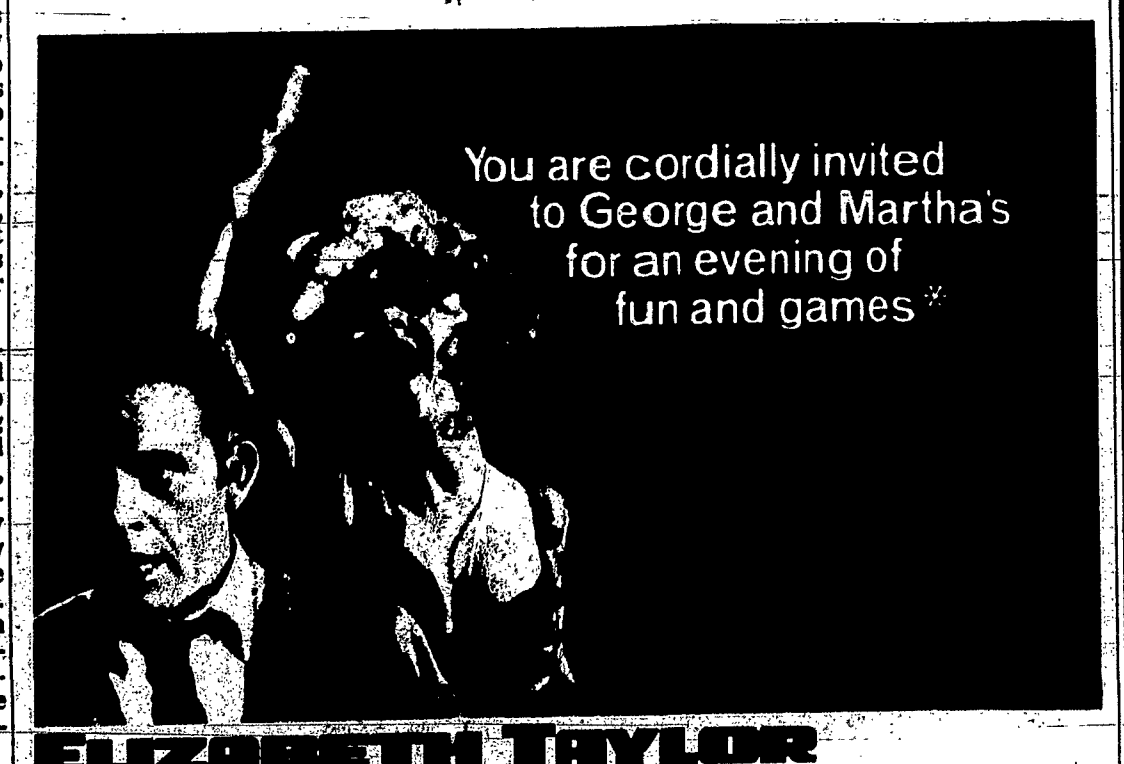
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? — "Under Mike Nichols' direction, the Albee play has retained all its savage vitality in the move from stage to screen, and the reduction of its length from three hours to two is all to the good. Ernest Lehman is responsible for the skillful adaptation. Richard Burton, Elizabeth Taylor, Sandy Dennis, and George Segal appear at their best. Mr. Burton's best is extraordinary." —New Yorker Mag.

Sound of Music — "As the irrepressible Maria in The Sound of Music, Julie Andrews adds to her growing list of outstanding performances on both stage and screen. She dazzled Broadway, and later London, as Eliza Doolittle in the unforgettable My Fair Lady and went on to new triumphs as stately Guinevere in Camelot, again on Broadway. Her motion picture debut in Mary Poppins charmed audiences and she garnered rave reviews for her film role in The Americanization of Emily." —RCA.

Mays — "John Fante's script emphasizes the many rights and sounds of the fabled sub-continent (India) as seen through the eyes of a young boy from the plains of Wyoming. John Berry's direction of this color-film made entirely on location is simple and fast-moving. The story will fascinate youngsters." —Catholic Film News Letter.

IN THE WINGS
Torn Curtain — Alfred Hitchcock's latest thriller with Paul Newman and Julie Andrews.

How to Succeed in Business Without Really Knowing It — William Wyler's sophisticated comedy stars Audrey Hepburn and Peter O'Toole as a couple of smart operators who give a lesson in love and larceny.



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