

'Out-of-Towners' and Fun City

New Film Praised by NCOMP

As I See It

Patty Duke Hurts Image

By Pat Costa



The initial impression I always get after watching an awards telecast such as the Oscars or the Grammys or the most recent Emmys show is one of simple indignation:

How could I possibly have stayed up late to watch the same people I can see all week on television get tributes I usually don't agree with anyway?

The impression remained constant after watching last Sunday's Emmy extravaganza but there was an additional source of irritation.

One of my favorites, for once, had won and then had ruined the pleasure of seeing her rewarded.

Patty Duke who had done a lovely job with "My Sweet Charley" and deserved the vote for best actress was a source of embarrassment to those in the industry and to those at home.

Either considerably ill or determined to provoke attention, she generated the only really awkward moments of the too-long ceremony.

Both hosts, Bill Cosby and Dick Cavett, are intelligent, comfortable men to be with. They handled their roles neatly and with good taste and some humor.

If there are some awards this viewer found it difficult to support, others received wholehearted agreement.

"Sesame Street" deservedly won. But there should have been recognition for "Captain Kangaroo," who does some wonderful things and has been doing them for upwards of 15 years.

The "Forsyte Saga" should have merited more attention than the supporting actress award garnered by Susan Hampshire.

Other drama, notably that of "Prudential's on Stage," the NBC offerings which won't be back this coming season, could have been earmarked for excel-

lence in its attempts if nothing else.

If one sees little hope for the medium when "Marcus Welby" grabs off several major awards, then there is also hope when an hour such as "Laugh In" comes away with next to nothing.

Shortened to half its length, the Emmy Awards show would have profited enormously.

On the other hand, it is some kind of testimony to the medium, when so many of us will spend two hours late at night to watch a bunch of actors patting one another on the back for efforts which in a couple of cases ("My World and Welcome To It") and ("The Ghost and Mrs. Muir") won't even be back next year.

For Father's Day -- Odd Notes From All Over

Old spirits or new slippers, fishing gear or a hobby kit may seem like appropriate gifts for Dad — but an African Dinka Tribesman would strongly disagree.

He anxiously awaits the moment when he can receive the one "perfect" present from his son: the skin of the first lion the young man kills!

It's not just what children give their sires, but what fathers pass on to their children, that varies in fascinating ways around the globe.

Tchambuli boys of New Guinea learn that doing tribal dances and carving ritual masks is man's work—that it's mama's job to grow the crops and catch the fish that feed the family!

Does Dad spoil the child by sparing the rod? The Arapesh, neighbors of the Tchambuli, would recoil in horror at the thought of striking their offspring. To them, a child's tears are a tragedy. One of Dad's big-

gest jobs is to see that his children never cry. Parental "don'ts" are few. Yet the Arapesh youngsters emerge not as little monsters, but in the image of their mild parents.

In contrast, Ossete tribesmen of the Russian Caucasus are so stern that they never play with their babies. Strict Puritan parents sometimes insisted on being addressed by their offspring as "honored sir," instead of merely "father." A Trobriand Islander also wouldn't dream of calling his sire "father" — but for a different reason. This South Pacific son believes that spirits are the true fathers of mankind. He addresses Dad by a title that means simply "my mother's husband!"

In parts of the Near and Far East, father has almost complete authority over his children, but must still defer to grandfather. Several generations may live under one roof, and the old patriarch dominates them all. But among some South Sea tribes, the uncle is

praised in the current Catholic Film Newsletter as "a big movie comedy that has just about everything going for it," the movie gets stars Jack Lemmon and Sandy Dennis into outrageously funny predicaments sure to bring terror to the heart of anyone who ever considered braving the big city for the first time.

Everything possible goes wrong for George and Gwen Kellerman — the Ohio couple Lemmon and Dennis portray. George must go to New York to finalize an important promotion and he brings his wife along. Their plane gets fogged out of New York so they land in Boston where they lose their luggage. They take a train which stops serving dinner just as they sit down in the dining car and finally arrive in New

York in the middle of a driving rain storm.

Naturally a bureaucratic foul-up has canceled their hotel reservations, so they spend their first night in Central Park eating cracker jacks.

Unfortunately for the Kellermans, getting there was just the beginning of their misadventures. Things get progressively worse—and funnier—as they meet some of the stereotyped characters every potential New

York tourist dreads—obnoxious hotel clerks, fawning street corner con artists, bored police desk-sergeants.

"The Out-of-Towners" scatter-gun screenplay by Neil Simon jumps from one nightmarish situation to the next for the poor Kellermans.

But the thing that makes the film so funny, says the Catholic Film Newsletter, "is that it is all so impossible and outrageous that it has the ring of truth."



Father and son, hand in hand . . .

head of the household. An odd social structure requires that people choose their mates from outside their native village, but continue to live in their own village after marriage. That is, Dad lives in one hamlet, Mama and the kids in another. A man has authority not over his own children, but over his sister's offspring.

To more than 50 million American families, however, it's father who will be the big man on June 21. Father's Day is said to be the invention of a grateful daughter, Mrs. John Dodd, who wished to honor her father, William Smart, for his devotion and kindness in rearing six motherless children. The holiday was first celebrated in 1910 in Spokane, Washington.

From its modest beginnings, Father's Day has become such an important occasion to Amer-

can families that they are expected to spend more than one billion dollars this year on gifts for Dad.

To the man who has everything, a longevity robe might be nice. In Old China, a son could think of no better present than a silken robe embroidered with the characters for "long life." The robe was considered most effective if sewn by a young person.

There is one exotic custom that American men might like to adopt. Some African and South American tribes fear that a father might endanger the health of his newborn child by engaging in hunting, fishing and other workday pursuits.

Therefore, although Mama returns to her usual tasks almost as soon as the baby is born, Dad takes to his bed for a few days or even weeks, and does absolutely nothing.

Marasco

And Terrible Children

New York — (NC) — As "Child's Play" nears its 100th performance here, the author rates the best location in Sardi's, the show business restaurant where seating denotes a person's current standing.

Robert Marasco, 33-year-old Catholic school teacher-turned-playwright, once denounced from the pulpit for a varsity musical and now acclaimed for his Gothic thriller, has claimed enormous success with his first Broadway play.

During the two hours the curtain is up at the Royale Theatre on West 45th Street, an air of satanic evil pervades the dim, oaken, almost-shrouded setting — a Catholic boys' school, seemingly possessed. Boys creep up and down staircases, torture choice subjects and scare hell out of the audience.

The show and its top-notch cast do their jobs so well that it won five Tony awards this year. New York Times critic Clive Barnes raved in his Feb. 18 review, and the opening night audience called "author! author!" after the show.

Marasco now can make in a week the salary he once made in a year as a teacher. Only 24 months ago he was teaching Latin and Greek at a Jesuit high school in Eastside Manhattan.

What school served as the setting? Without hesitating, Marasco answered: "Regis."

But he added that it served only as the physical setting of the play. He loves Regis, where he attended high school and, after college taught for about nine years. The tale itself is something he dreamed up and put together.

What actually spurred the play's theme of evil was "a newspaper clipping about a teacher at Fordham who gave his students some work and then jumped out the window," Marasco explained.

Then he saw Ingmar Bergman's film, "Torment," which fired up his already smoldering idea. What has happened since is that an average career has turned into an outstanding one.

Bob Marasco comes from a large Italian family in the

Bronx. He attended Blessed Sacrament school there (the setting of his next play, he says) and went on to Regis, then Fordham University. He now has an apartment in Flushing.

In 1958, as a senior at Fordham, he wrote a varsity musical, called "Life of the Party" — "a wild kind of satire," which ran three hours but should have run one hour and 15 minutes. "It was an Elsa Maxwell-type of thing about which I know nothing," he said.

But, he continued, "It caused quite a ruckus. In fact I got denounced from the pulpit."

After Fordham, he tried Columbia graduate school, but dropped out without getting a degree. Then he went to teach at Regis on East 84th Street.

An actor friend, the only person in the theatre he knew, kept asking him: "When are you going to write a play?"

In 1967, about age 30, he rented a vacation place, locked out the world and began writing. "I decided that no one is really ready to write a play until he's 30," he reasoned. He

paced the floor, as he still does, writing dialogue he hoped would be believable.

Contrary to some reports, the "elegant conviction" set by the evil tone of the play "was all very, very deliberate." He continued the work the next summer, again sweating out the writing which he finds "rather painful."

He continued to teach at Regis until June, 1968. After being wrapped up in his play for so long he said he was having something of an identity crisis — feeling more like a playwright than a teacher.

His actor friend took the finished play to an agent. "The agent didn't like it, so I took it to another agent and he liked it," the friend reported.

The play wound up in the hands of a very prominent producer who liked it but had trouble casting it. The legendary hand of Merrick then picked it up, cast the parts, and Robert Marasco — though he enjoyed the days of oak and ivy — was on his way to four weeks of grueling rehearsals, rewrite jobs and a new career.

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