

As I See It

Americana Dreamin'

By Pat Costa



It was as varied a program as you could hope to find on television — alive, full of a special kind of zest, sometimes even bordering on the edge of excitement.

Such was the premiere show of Channel 21's new series, the 90-minute "American Dream Machine" which is seen Wednesdays at 8:30.

The only dull part of the evening came at the very beginning as a montage of flipping photos spelled out America for us followed by an on-the-street interview of children and adults as to what their particular American dream was.

It's been done before, too often, and never very successfully. A comical consumer report with Marshall Efron showing what precisely goes into a Morton Lemon Cream factory-made pie was a great deal more interesting and the result every bit as repulsive as it was meant to be.

Washington columnist Nicholas Von Hoffman then showed us some of the sexy ads for prescription drugs that fill medical magazines and after we laughed, told us it was no laughing matter since more people died from prescription drugs in the U.S. in a year than do from the illegal stuff.

Author Studs Terkel conducted a discussion in a Chicago barroom on politics which served to remind that if you've heard one barroom discussion you've heard them all.

I'm not so sure, however, that a woman always gets the last word as she did in this one.

There were also visits with black freshman congressman Ronald Dellums and singer Nina Simone. A visit to a demolition derby served to inform us that at least one contender competes because he can't beat up his wife but he can smash into "those other cars."

Joseph Castellano, that wonderful father from the movie "Lovers and Other Strangers" showed us his versatility as he played a lonely hard hat who goes to movies a lot and collects autographs but couldn't get the girl.

Ron Liebman and Linda Lav-in showed us what a confession magazine story sounds like come to life. It was even more embarrassing to hear and see it than to read them.

One improvement is necessary at least: do away with the fast moving pictures, letters, titles, ala "Sesame Street." Most of us viewers can read, spell and have a concentration span longer than five minutes.

The absence of cigarette commercials is most noticeable (and most refreshing) if only because there are so many public service messages. To say we have been inundated is to understate the case. Still I'd rather listen to the Rochester police department tell me to lock my car a hundred times a day than put up with the inherent deceit and attempt to fraud in any TV cigarette commercial.

Faini Concert 'Light'

By FRANK CROCIATA

Maria Luisa Faini played what could have been a most interesting piano recital at Kilbourn Hall last Thursday evening (Jan. 7). She was stately in appearance and had an altogether winning smile. In fact everything about her was admirable except her playing.

Miss Faini was decidedly a lightweight player and definitely a miniaturist. This was painfully apparent because of the heroically ambitious program she had chosen.

She began with a witty keyboard toccata of the baroque Italian composer Bernardo Pasquini and followed with a huge transcription (by Tagliapietra) of a passacaglia by Buxtehude.

In the center of each section of her program Miss Faini played miniatures; first two Scarlatti sonatas charmingly executed, and then "Two Contrasts" of the modern Italian Alfredo Cassella. The contrasts were musical jests of the better sort which Miss Faini treated with appropriate wit.

She closed each section with a huge romantic piece. The Schubert "Sonata in C Minor" is a sprawling and descriptively difficult piece for both performer and listener. In the hands of a master it is the whole world of Schubert's melodic gift. In the hands of Miss Faini, beset with technical problems, it was a bore.

Her printed list concluded with the Schumann "Carnival". Again technical problems and plain wrong notes abounded. Moreover she was simply having trouble making enough

noise. The audience could never forget the piano as a mechanical instrument. Her interpretation might have had a plan, but she wasn't sharing it with her audience.

Miss Faini also played a short sonata of the Rochester composer Samuel Adler. It was her best performance of the evening, which was top bad for the work seemed more clumsy than difficult and not remotely musical. Adler lacks the lyricism of Barber, the integrity of Hindemith, the wit of Prokofiev and the inventiveness of Stravinsky; and he borrows freely from all of them. The composer's presence was officially noted in the audience.

The audience was with Miss Faini through all of her struggles and we were rewarded with two lovely encores, a Spanish dance and a magical performance of an ethereal Brahms Intermezzo.

Planetarium Sets Special Program For Children

A unique science program created specially for preschoolers (ages 3-5), about the sun, stars, moon and spacemen will be offered at the Strasenburgh Planetarium Jan. 29 at 10 a.m.

The show, whose visual material is cartoon-like and readily identifiable, has been developed by taking into special consideration the child's short attention span.

At Home with the Movies

FIVE BRANDED WOMEN (1960)

Thursday, Jan. 14 (CBS)

The females of the title are Yugoslavian, and they have been marked—by having their hair shorn off—for having been made love to by a German during the Nazi occupation.

Van Heflin plays the partisan chief and the girls are played by Silvana Mangano, Barbara Bel Geddes, Jeanne Moreau, Vera Miles and Carla Gravina, who spend the film trying to avoid one close shave after another, as the women are forced to flee their town and scrounge for food and shelter—and fight off amorous advances of other Germans. Finally, Heflin takes them back—provided they concentrate on fighting, not loving. Not one of the great war-time films, but lots of action.

The national Catholic film office gave it a rating of B, objectionable in part for all, because of "sensational treatment; suggestive sequences and an amoral philosophy in subplot that tend to vitiate a basically valid theme."

MARRIAGE ON THE ROCKS (1965)

Friday, Jan. 15 (CBS)

Frank Sinatra and Deborah Kerr play a long-married couple whose marriage is in trouble. Sinatra playing a sex-weary businessman who hasn't time to pay attention to his mate, who begins talking about divorce.

She "accidentally" gets a Mexican divorce and is "accidentally" married to, Sinatra's best friend: Dean Martin.

NCOMP rated it B, objectionable in part, because "suggestive costuming is gratuitously introduced in an effort to shore up this weak comedy."

DUEL AT DIABLO (1966)

Saturday, Jan. 16 (NBC)

James Garner and Sidney Poitier star in this violent, brutal Western with a vengeance theme: Garner is out to get the White Man who sold the scalp of Garner's wife when she was killed by Indians. The villain is Dennis Weaver, who is so mean he disowns his own wife when she comes back alive after Indian captivity—because she didn't know enough to kill herself.

Poitier plays a broncbuster, a role he took because Black children should have the opportunity to see Black cowboys on the screen; he once explained. He realized the film was not good, however, and so did the critics.

NCOMP rated this film B, objectionable in part, because "a sympathetic presentation of the hero's complicity in mercy killing creates a moral problem in this violent Western."

WATERHOLE #3 (1967)

Sunday, Jan. 17 (ABC)

A Western satire that hoped to capitalize on the success of Cat Ballou, this stars James Coburn as a card-sharp who sets out to steal gold buried in a waterhole by a bandit. A lot of greedy characters enter the plot, which is filled with "now I've got it" plot turns, some comical moments, but mostly a lot of sex: namely, several seductions of a sheriff's daughter and scenes in a brothel run by Joan Blondell. Most critics dismissed it as a poor imitation of Cat Ballou.

NCOMP rated it B, objectionable in part, observing: "Unsuccessful as a spoof, this film becomes offensive in its frequently crude and suggestive treatment."

CAT BALLOU (1965)

Monday, Jan. 18 (ABC)

One of the most widely hailed comedies in recent years, this is a Western satire, starring Jane Fonda as a schoolmistress who decides to avenge the death of her Dad, killed by a no-

nosed gunslinger. She hires a gunfighter named Kid Shelleen to do the job for her.

The highlight of the film is the portrayal of the last two parts by Lee Marvin (who won an Oscar for it). The film is a putdown of everything from Western ballads (sung by Stubby Kaye and the late Nat "King" Cole) to the mystique of the gunfighter: Marvin plays him as a hopeless drunk. NCOMP rated this A-2, unobjectionable for adults and adolescents.

SECRET CEREMONY (1968)

Tuesday, Jan. 19 (NBC)

Mia Farrow and Elizabeth Taylor are the stars of this psychological horror story about a demented orphan who persuades an aging prostitute to take her into her house and treat her as her own child. Later, the girl's stepfather (Robert Mitchum) appears to claim the child's allegiance. The film ends with the child's suicide and the murdering of the stepfather by the prostitute.

NCOMP rated this A-4, unobjectionable for adults, with reservations, and observed: "Although certain aspects of the plot are unsavory — madness, incest, suicide — and some of the dialogue vulgar and sexually explicit, the film's treatment of these elements is restrained."

More disturbing to some viewers will be the disquieting atmosphere of corrupted innocence which permeates the film but which expresses the mystery of evil implicit in the story's meaning."




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