

At Home With the Movies

GUNFIGHT AT THE O.K. CORRAL [1957]
Thursday, Dec. 20 [CBS]

Classic "Hollywood" Western about the gunfight between a posse headed by Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday and the lawless Clariton family gang in Tombstone, Ariz., in the 1870's. Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas are appropriately efficient lawmen killers as Wyatt and Doc, respectively. Rhonda Fleming and Jo Van Fleet play the ladies. The action is mean and furious, with the low-down critters and other varmints getting shot all to pieces. The narrative here is cleaned up a bit from the true story, to make the marshal and the dentist more respectable. Too bad the rest of the movie wasn't as sanitized. **B**

THE CHAIRMAN [1969]
Friday, Dec. 21 [CBS]

Gregory Peck plays a Nobel Prize-winning scientist who becomes mysteriously (to him, at least) embroiled in a cold war plot concerning a super enzyme that could revolutionize agriculture. The Red Chinese have the enzyme, supposedly, and the various other super-powers want it, presumably. Peck is an unwilling CIA man, with a

transmitter in his brain, yet, and equipped to self-destruct should things go wrong. Hence there is considerable mystery and tension, despite a basic preposterousness. **A-III**

THE ARRANGEMENT [1969]
Saturday, Dec. 22 [NBC]

Kirk Douglas stars in Elia Kazan's semi-autobiography of the emptiness of "the good life." An \$80-grand-a-year ad man, Douglas reviews his life as a sham, a series of give-take, love-hate "arrangements" with people such as his wife (Deborah Kerr), and mistress (Faye Dunaway). His job, naturally, has lost all meaning for him; he has lost touch with his "roots." Douglas, as always keeps us fascinated with the character. Most of the rough language and nudity, hopefully, have been deleted for TV. **B**

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG [1968]
Sunday, Dec. 23 [CBS]

Watchers who like their movies with a little salt beware. This film is pure sugar. The fun-packed fantasy takes widowed, erstwhile Dick Van Dyke, his two children, and girlfriend, Sally Ann Howes (whose movie name is Truly

Scrumptious) on a magical mystery tour of story-telling involving "evil" barons, cavernous castles in the air, rescued children, and a flying car from which the movie takes its title. Have fun, all you with sweet-teeth.

MY SWEET CHARLIE [1970]
Monday, Dec. 24 [NBC]

It is encouraging to see a film dealing with the relationship between a young white girl and a young black man that brushes sensationalism aside and instead gets down to basic issues that lead to honesty and understanding. The two people in question, played by Patty Duke and Al Freeman, Jr., are fugitives trapped by circumstances in a vacant Gulf-coast beach house. She, pregnant and frightened, has been disowned by her family; he, a Northern lawyer come back to the South to trace his origins, is on the run for killing a white man in self-defense. Both lash and backlash with fear and prejudice until, worn out and getting nowhere, they gradually recognize each other as human beings. This story line easily lends itself to melodramatic treatment, but My Sweet Charlie avoids this, mainly through the excellent acting of Duke and Freeman. **A-II**

Golden Mass Tops Mercy's Christmas

The "Golden Mass" that traditionally marks the end of Mercy High School's Christmas charity drive will be celebrated at 9 tomorrow morning. The theme, devised by Patty Kenny and Nancy Grady, co-presidents of the Christian Action Movement, and their moderator, Sister Jane Schur, will be "the two-fold concept of giving — our gifts and the gifts given by God."

Each homeroom at Mercy provides Christmas gifts and food for a needy family and the students visit the family, trying to stretch their friendship beyond the holiday season.

Last Sunday, more than 100 children from Mt. Carmel parish were entertained at a party arranged by the student council. The music department gave a concert Dec. 13 for faculty and friends, and in addition, the glee club entertained at a nursing home and the Rochester State Hospital. The Mercy Christmas celebration began with a family Mass and social hour Dec. 8.

AS I SEE IT

Pat Costa

Some weeks ago the New York Times Sunday magazine ran an article by writer Anne Richardson Roiphe who landed heavily on one of television's most popular shows.

Mrs. Roiphe charged that the "The Waltons," the autobiographical series by Earl Hamner Jr. about a large, poor Virginia family during the Depression, was essentially phony.

To prove her point her article was accompanied by a picture of a real family of sharecroppers taken during the Depression. Misery as misery is seldom portrayed stared out of that picture. Despair, dire poverty, filth, hunger and disease looked us in the face.

And as if that were not enough, Mrs. Roiphe charged that the sweet, gentle, understanding mother, the strong, wise and compassionate father portrayed by Miss Michael Learned and Ralph Waite could not possibly have been real. Rather, they are only the parents we all dreamed of, fairy tale people, she said.

This past week the letter writers had their say starting with two of the original Waltons, author Earl Hamner Jr. and his sister, Marion Hamner Hawkes, named Mary Ellen in the series. Bolstering their arguments that they were not in the same dire need as Mrs. Roiphe's sharecroppers was a picture showing the Hamners as happy, clean, alert children whose eyes did indeed "sparkle."

This was to be expected. Unexpected was the avalanche of letters from viewers across the country decrying Mrs. Roiphe's charges: the phroness of family love, that happiness can't exist in a large and poor family and that parents never attain such saintly images here on earth.

Ferocious in their support of the show and of the graceful life it portrays, the letter writers in many instances went on to name large families of their own acquaintance who had led just such loving, peaceful, happy existences.

Why the magazine chose Mrs. Roiphe, a divorcee who (if memory serves me right) not too long ago was attacked in print by her own stepdaughter in this same publication, is a puzzlement. Author of "Up the

Sandbox," a novel about a young mother who daydreams away her child-entrapped life, Mrs. Roiphe obviously has not and never has had anything in common with a family such as the Waltons or the Hamners.

And just as obviously the letter writers recognized that fact just as millions of viewers recognize the truth that is inherent in the series.

Perhaps the scriptwriters have gilded and simplified the original characters as originally described by Hamner. We do not hear the father cussing, the mother screaming or the children fighting among themselves.

Undoubtedly they did at times. But that does not negate the love, the simple values, the unity that existed. And it is because these virtues have survived the telling that so many have taken the show to their hearts.

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BROCKPORT CONCERT
Choral groups have been invited to take part informally in the Brockport Symphony Orchestra concert Sunday afternoon, Dec. 16. The audience also will be asked to join in singing the Hallelujah chorus from Handel's Messiah, and the traditional Christmas carols that will follow. The free concert will begin at 4 p.m. in the lobby of the Fine Arts Building on the Brockport State College campus. Ascher Temkin conducts the orchestra.

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