

MOVIES

'Swing Shift' an Exceptionally Fine Movie

By Michael Gallagher
 In "Swing Shift" (Warner's), Kay Walsh (Goldie Hawn), a young housewife in Santa Monica, Calif., is devastated when her husband Jack (Ed Harris)

enlists in the Navy the day after Pearl Harbor. When Jack ships out after his boot camp training, Kay faces up to the inevitable. Pulling herself together, she goes to work as a riveter in an

aircraft factory. She soon makes friends with a co-worker, Hazel Zanussi (Christine Lahti), an aspiring singer who has a knack for falling for the wrong kind of man.

In making an overture to Hazel, Kay is already asserting her independence. Hazel has been a neighbor for years, but Kay never dared speak to her because Jack disapproved of everything about Hazel.

Soon Kay is doing things that Jack would approve of even less. A personable young man named Lucky (Kurt Russell), exempt from military service because of a bad heart, begins asking her for dates. Although she refuses, her refusals carry less and less conviction as the months go by.

Finally, she and Lucky fall in love and Jack, home on a brief pass, discovers the affair.

Directed by Jonathan Demme and written by Rob Morton (actually a pseudonym for Nancy Dowd, the plot of whose "Coming Home" much resembles this), "Swing Shift" is a superbly acted, quite moving film which wonderfully recaptures the hopes, the fears, the aspirations and idealism of a now vanished era.

The story is simple enough and had the picture been made in the period in which it's set, it would be much too slight. Demme, however, is a director of great sensitivity, ever alert to those little touches that have such significance in our lives.

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Kay. Miss Lahti, an actress of great warmth and dignity, is excellent as Hazel. Kurt Russell, though his role is defined less well than it should be, conveys Lucky's flawed decency. Harris and Fred Ward, who plays Hazel's faithless lover who finally shapes up after he ships out, give fine performances in roles that could also be much better defined.

Opera Star To Sing Benefit

International opera star Anna Moffo will give a benefit performance for the Casa Italiana of Nazareth College, 8 p.m., Saturday, May 12, in the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse Chapel, 4095 East Avenue.

Miss Moffo will sing selections by Rossini, Lehar, Leoncavallo, Tosti and de Falla. Tickets are \$10 and are available at the Casa Italiana and the Nazareth Arts Center box office.

According to a press announcement, Miss Moffo, during her visit to Rochester, will also receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree at the 57th commencement exercises of Nazareth College beginning

at noon on Sunday, May 13. President Robert A. Kidera announced that the college will honor Miss Moffo "for her brilliant international career as a performing artist, the inspiration she has given to Nazareth's music and drama students, and the example she has set for all young people, especially those of Italian ancestry."

Miss Moffo's awards include The Commendatore of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Italy, the "Liebe Augustin" Award from the City of Vienna, Rome's "Maschera d'argento" and the prestigious Michelangelo Award.

Capsule Movie Reviews

'Friday the 13th: The Final Chapter' (Paramount)
 A maniac on the loose again, with the usual gore and violence mixed with crude language and much nudity. One hopes that the subtitle is accurate. Written by Bruce Hideni Sakow and directed by Joseph Wito. The U.S. Catholic Conference has classified it O — morally offensive, and the Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

'Iceman' (Universal)
 Talented Australian director Fred Schepisi has too little to work with in a script by Chip Proser and John Drimmer about an Arctic expedition revivifying a frozen Neanderthal man. There is a running argument between a scientist-as-humanist (Timothy Hutton) and a more clinical type (Lindsay Crouse) as to what to do with him, but it fails to generate enough heat to thaw out anything. The movie slows down after some initial excitement, despite a good performance by John Lone as the Neanderthal. Some mild vulgarities. The U.S. Catholic Conference has classified it A-II — adolescents and adults. The Motion Picture Association of America classification is PG — parental guidance suggested.

TELEVISION

'McNeil-Lehrer Newshour' Deserves Its High Marks For Alternative Reporting

By Henry Hers
 New York (NC) — Whatever its failings, public television has done well in providing viewers with a meaningful alternative to commercial broadcasting. Its strength stems from a diverse schedule including cultural programming, public affairs documentaries and independent film or video productions.

That recently however public television offered viewers an independent alternative to the nightly news was a first. The case now that "The MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour" can be seen Monday through Friday, 7-8 p.m. EDT on PBS.

When the program began last fall, it needed no introduction to PBS viewers who were already familiar with the journalistic quality of the discussions that made up "The MacNeil-Lehrer Report." Unlike the network variety of news coverage, each evening this half-hour program focused on the day's top story from a variety of viewpoints. It took the time to explore the complexities of a given issue, and people representing various sides of the matter were interviewed intelligently.

"The MacNeil-Lehrer Report" brought depth by reporting on a story's significance in contrast to the nightly headline-with-pictures hodgepodge of commercial newscasts.

Both Robert MacNeil and Jim Lehrer are professional journalists of considerable skill. There seems to be a genuine compatibility and a dynamic balance between the cool and objective personality of New York-based MacNeil and the more aggressive but homespun style of Washington-based Lehrer.

Expanding this half-hour single-issue format into an hour-long program covering the news of the day along with several in-depth discussion pieces was an enormous undertaking. The enlarged staff had to learn to work together; sources of video news had to be established and the relationship between the various parts of show had to be tried out.

Complicating matters was Lehrer's heart attack and double bypass surgery in January. Filling in as co-anchor during his absence was Judy Woodruff, a seasoned political correspondent who now that Lehrer is back, has rejoined Charlayne Hunter-Gault and Kwame Holman in reporting stories from the field. A fourth correspondent will be added in the near future.

Over the first season, there have been a number of changes, especially in enhancing the look of the program and its pacing. The first shows offered little in the way of visuals and graphics. There is now much greater use of both. Various features have been added to the format, including a weekly book review.

Among the journalists who contribute material to "Newshour" is Charles Krause whose reports from Central America have focused on the people as well as the politics of that increasingly important region. His have been the kind of thoughtful pieces that are all too rare in the fragmentary nature of most nightly newscasts.

In any event, the risk involved in taking the successful format of "Report" and stretching it into the news discussion commentary of "Newshour" seems to have been justified. There was never any question that the show's journalistic quality was unassailable and that it served a small but steady segment of the viewing public.

Whether that was enough to justify its high costs, served by the most expensive of PBS offerings, was answered during the April meeting of public television stations which voted to renew "The MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour" for a second year. In a time of financial retrenchment, this represents a significant commitment on the part of the stations to providing their viewers with a meaningful alternative to commercial newscasting.

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Beatification Process Begun For TV Priest

Rome (NC) — Steps toward the beatification of a Capuchin priest-television star have been taken, Capuchin officials announced in Rome.

The television star, Father Mariano Roasenda, was host of a weekly religious broadcast from 1955 to 1972 and popularized the program's slogan, "peace and goodness to all." He was known to his viewers as Father Mariano.

Currently, data on his life is being gathered as part of the process towards his beatification, said the Capuchins.

On March 1, during a meeting with Capuchin superiors, Pope John Paul II called Father Roasenda the "announcer of love" and a builder of peace.

Father Roasenda was born in Turin, Italy, in 1906 and died in Rome in 1972, only 20 days after his final television show.

Jobs Program

CYO's Hispanic Employment Program is accepting applications from Hispanic youths, 16 to 20, at 50 Chestnut St., 11th floor. Further information is available from Blanca or Alex at 454-2030.

The Debate Brews Over Children's TV

By Cindy Liebhart
 Washington (NC) — Proposed legislation to increase the amount of educational children's programming on network television has stirred impassioned support from more than 140 consumer, educational, professional and religious organizations.

But the measure has not evoked similar favor among broadcasters.

Known as the Children's Television Education Act, the bill would require commercial TV stations to air a minimum of one hour of educational or instructional programs for children each weekday.

Among its backers is the U.S. Catholic Conference, public policy arm of the U.S. bishops, which called the proposal a reasonable attempt to respond to "the almost total vacuum of quality children's educational programming on TV."

Proponents hope the measure will be enacted into law as part of wider broadcast deregulation legislation now being negotiated in the House telecommunications subcommittee.

The USCC, in a March statement by Richard Hirsch, secretary for communication, said no legislation could guarantee "educationally suitable as well as entertaining" children's programming. He said if the bill were passed, the success of its objectives would depend on the good-faith efforts of broadcasters.

Supporters of the measure, which also include the National Catholic Educational Association, the American Jewish Committee, the American Academy of Pediatrics and others, argue that television has both the responsibility and the potential to help stem a decline in education in the United States.

They point to statistics that the average child spends up to 15,000 hours watching television by the time he or she graduates from high school — more time than is spent in the classroom. They also point to a recent National Science Board report which calls television "the most pervasive medium of informal learning today."

The legislation is necessary, said Peggy Charren, president of Action for Children's Television, because commercial broadcasters "have turned their backs on young audiences."

And Rep. Timothy E. Wirth, D-Colo., chairman of the subcommittee and sponsor of the proposal, said the legislation "presents the last real opportunity to assure that broadcasters provide, in return for the substantial deregulation they would receive, some meaningful amount of programming aimed at enhancing the educational needs of this nation's 44 million youngsters."

But the National Association of Broadcasters contends that requiring specific

amounts of children's programming "violates broadcasters' First Amendment rights" and borders on censorship.

"Will the government next decide how much and what type of programming minorities, women, the handicapped and others want and need?" the NAB said in a statement. The broadcast group said the government on the same grounds could also decide "how much entertainment and sports programming are appropriate."

The NAB maintains that a sufficient amount of children's programming is available through many broadcast outlets — including network, public and cable television — and that "marketplace forces insure that programming targeted toward children always will be a part of broadcast schedules."

To make its point the NAB released in March a "Guide to Innovative Children's Programs for Television" designed to show what the NAB says is the wide variety of local children's programming available around the nation.

But Ms. Charren, citing a telephone survey her organization took of the same stations listed in the NAB guide, said at a news conference in April that the guide was "a heartless exercise in premeditated deception."

Of 101 regularly scheduled, locally produced children's programs listed in the guide, Ms. Charren said she found that 24.8 percent of the shows were not being aired; 5.9 percent were actually only short segments, not programs; 3 percent were not regularly scheduled; and 1 percent were not termed children's shows by the station.

Of 40 locally produced special programs in the NAB guide, Ms. Charren said 35 percent of the specials aired more than 2 year ago and 7.5 percent were never aired.

The broadcasters' association "misleads the public and government into believing that there is plenty of children's programming available on TV," she said.

The NAB denied the assertion and said that the information in the booklet was collected in the spring of 1983, which according to the NAB explains why some of the programming was not being aired at the time of Ms. Charren's survey.

The NAB's senior vice president of television, Dick Hollands, said it was coincidental that the guide was distributed at the same time the House subcommittee was considering the legislation. But Ms. Charren said that with the guide the NAB had "issued false data and hindered Congress' efforts to advance the public interest."

Whatever the ultimate fate of the congressional proposal, the debate over children's television looks like it will not end soon.