

# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ances by Judy Graubart, Madeline Kahn, Austin Pendleton, Fred Gwynne, Max Wright, and Wallace Shawn. (3/10/80) (St. Marks Cinema; through June 5.)

**SLOW DANCING IN THE BIG CITY** (1978)—A boxing-movie-type ballet movie—Rocky as a young ballerina (Anne Ditchburn), who has to learn that she's a champion inside. The man who teaches her is a Jimmy Breslin-like columnist (Paul Sorvino), who works for the *News*. This is a feminine fantasy (written by Barra Grant), yet it's inspired by the tough-guy-with-a-soft-heart school of journalism, and the film aims for our hearts with brass knuckles, in the Breslin manner. It never once lands on target, and almost all the actors seem to be impaled by the camera. The earnestness and shamelessness of the director, John G. Avildsen (whose previous picture was "Rocky"), are so awesome, though, that if the picture fails as romance it succeeds as camp. The ballerina, who has a prissy little-girl voice, talks to her parakeet, whose name is Orville Wright, and when she's loosening her muscles she thrashes around passionately to Carole King's "I Feel the Earth Move Under My Feet"—she's the Patti Smith of ballet, pouring sweat and suffering ecstatically for her art. You don't get scenes like this in every movie. (11/26/78) (Olympia; through June 5.)

**SOUPEOUS**—Married love and some unmarried lovemaking in contemporary Paris, with Jean Carmet and Marie Dubois. Amusingly written and directed by Jean-Charles Tacchella, who gained fame with "Cousin, Cousine." In French. (4/21/80) (New Yorker 2.)

**SPELLBOUND** (1945)—The idea is intriguing: a murder mystery set among a group of psychoanalysts, with a solution to be arrived at by clues found in a dream. It was carried out by one of the most highly publicized collaborations of all time: Alfred Hitchcock and Salvador Dali, with Ben Hecht writing the script. Ingrid Bergman is the analyst, Gregory Peck her amnesiac patient—the murder suspect. Yet, with all the obvious ingredients for success, "Spellbound" is a disaster. It was fitting that the actress who was once described as a "fine, strong, cow-country maiden" should be cast as a good, solid analyst, dispensing cures with the wholesome simplicity of a mother adding wheat germ to the family diet, but Bergman's apple-checked sincerity has rarely been so out of place as in this confection whipped up by jaded chefs. With Michael Chekhov, John Emery, Leo G. Carroll. Academy Award for Best Original Score (1), by Miklos Rozsa. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; June 9.)

**SPLENDOR IN THE GRASS** (1961)—William Inge wrote the baroque primer-Freud screenplay about the frustrations of adolescent sexuality, set in a small town in Kansas in the twenties, and Elia Kazan whipped it up. The picture is hysterically on the side of young love, and this hysteria seems integral to the film's moments of emotional power, its humor, and its beauty. Natalie Wood and Warren Beatty are high-school sweethearts whose parents think they are too young to marry. And so, deprived of love together, the boy turns to a floozy and the girl, maddened by loss of him, goes to a mental institution. The parents are the mean, hypocritical monsters you expect in this sort of youth-slanted picture that pretends to deal with real adolescent problems but actually begs the issue by having the two kids tenderly in love; the movie doesn't suggest that adolescents have a right to sexual experimenta-

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tion—it just attacks the corrupted grownups for their failure to value love above all else. It's the old corn, fermented in a new way, with lots of screaming and a gang-bang sequence and girls getting pawed on their twitching little schoolgirl behinds; Natalie Wood probably has the most active derrière since Clara Bow. The extraordinary cast includes Sandy Dennis, Barbara Loden, Zohra Lampert, Pat Hingle, Martine Bartlett, Audrey Christie, Fred Stewart, Gary Lockwood, and Phyllis Diller as Texas Guinan, and Inge himself as the Reverend. Cinematography by Boris Kaufman; production design by Richard Sylbert; music by David Amram. (Cinema Village; June 13-14.)

**EL SUPER**—A modest, non-polemical film about the adaptation of a small group of Cuban expatriates to life in New York. The main character is Roberto, a building superintendent beset by cold weather, the English language, and middle-age, who decides to move with his wife and daughter to Miami. Directed by León Ichaso and Orlando Jiménez-Leal, and based on a play by Ivan Acosta. Roberto is played by Raymundo Hidalgo. In Spanish. (7/23/79) (Art; June 4.)

**THE THIEF OF PARIS** (1967)—Jean-Paul Belmondo in Louis Malle's slow-paced, romanticized view of the state of mind of a nihilist thief in late-nineteenth-century France. This thief hates the bourgeoisie, yet is so successful he becomes part of it. Malle shows none of the seaminess of thievery; this is a study of compulsion, and though it's well shot by Henri Decae, it lacks substance and is tedious. With Geneviève Bujold. In French. (Thalia; June 11.)

**TILL MARRIAGE DO US PART** (1974)—With Laura Antonelli, directed by Luigi Comencini. In Italian. (Cinema 3; through June 5.)

**THE TIN DRUM**—A very accomplished adaptation of Günter Grass's celebrated novel. The director, Volker Schlöndorff, also helped to prepare the screenplay. The terrifying young hero is well played by David Bennent. In German. (4/21/80) (Cinema 1.)

**TO CATCH A THIEF** (1955)—The suspense plot (reprinted in "The Return of the Pink Panther") isn't much, but the Riviera scenery, Cary Grant, and Grace Kelly are at their most luscious. It's a romantic comedy-thriller about a retired jewel thief—a pleasant minor diversion by Alfred Hitchcock. With Jessie Royce Landis, Charles Vanel, and Brigitte Auber. (Regency; June 12-14.)

**TOKYO STORY** (1953)—One of the most honored of all Japanese films, directed by Yasujiro Ozu, who has made a gentle-natured masterpiece of wonderful complexity out of a simple story about elderly parents who go to visit their grownup children in Tokyo and find that the children have no interest in them. In Japanese. (Art; June 4.)

**TOM HORN**—A handsome, vapid Western starring Steve McQueen as a worn-down gunslinger hired by some Wyoming cattlemen to solve their "rustler problem," who does his work with such gory efficiency that he himself becomes the problem. The title role is roughly based on the life and later times of a

famous government scout, but the script (by Thomas McGuane and Bud Shrake) offers little more than some pseudo-historical ironies and moral tableaux that form a backdrop to McQueen's effortless, entertaining portrayal of another hero-mechanic who is too laconic and pure of heart to survive. Directed by William Wiard, with Slim Pickens, Richard Farnsworth, and Linda Evans. (6/2/80) (Criterion Center... ¶ Paramount, and Loews 83rd Quad; through June 5.)

**THE TREE OF WOODEN CLOGS**—A touching account by Ermanno Olmi of life among the Italian peasantry in the late nineteenth century. The people who work the land can never own it, and they are as much at the mercy of time and weather as the dumb creatures with whom they share their living quarters and their fates. In Italian. (6/18/79) (Cinema Studio 1.)

**TWO OR THREE THINGS I KNOW ABOUT HER** (1967)—Godard's picture, with Marina Vlady as a lower-middle-class wife in the outskirts of Paris who becomes a prostitute—respectably parking her children first—in order to buy bourgeois clothes and American cigarettes. The social irony is simply and swiftly confirmed. The "her" of the title probably refers as much to Paris as to the heroine. In French. (Art; June 8-9.)

**UP THE ACADEMY**—With Wendell Brown, directed by Robert Downey. (Loews New York 2, Loews 83rd Quad, and Loews State 2; starting June 6.)

**URBAN COWBOY**—With John Travolta, directed by James Bridges. (Bay Cinema, Loews Tower East, and Loews State 1; starting June 11.)

**WEST SIDE STORY** (1961)—The Ben-Hur of musicals, with the Bernstein tunes and the Robbins dances. Directed by Robert Wise. (Festival.)

**WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAM**—A raunchy, childlike comedy based on the writings and exploits of "gonzo journalist" Dr. Hunter S. Thompson, whose defense against the Nixon years was to sustain a condition of personal freakiness that matched or exceeded the depressing weirdness of those times. The picture is extremely uneven, often resembling an "Animal House" of politics, but a lot of Thompson's stoned, satiric style comes through, thanks to fine comic performances by Bill Murray as Thompson, and Peter Boyle as his lawyer and fellow-narcissist-provocateur. (5/12/80) (St. Marks Cinema; June 6-12.)

**WIFEMISTRESS** (1979)—With Marcello Mastroianni and Laura Antonelli, directed by Marco Vicario. In Italian. (57th St. Playhouse. No evening performances on Monday and Tuesday, June 9-10... ¶ New Yorker 1; through June 5... ¶ Quad Cinema; through June 12.)

**WINTERSET** (1936)—Maxwell Anderson's most famous verse drama—a blend of "Romeo and Juliet" and the Sacco-Vanzetti case—was widely held to be the supremely eloquent last word on the unconquerable soul of man. Burgess Meredith, who mastered the cadences for Broadway, made his first screen appearance as Mio, giving fine voice and excellent interpretation to the soaring banalities that one night—in a romantic mood—mistake for poetry. Even with Anderson's poetics slightly trimmed by the adapter, Anthony Veiller, the play is still in a grand manner that just won't do on the screen. But there are fine moments in the performances, and there's something childishly touching in the florid dramatic effects. With Edward Ellis as Judge Gaunt, Margo as Miriamne, Eduardo Ciannelli as Trock Estrella, Stanley Ridges as Shadow, Maurice Moscovitch as Esdras, Paul Guilfoyle as Garth Esdras. It's a clue to Anderson's popularity at the time that the actors have been forever identified with the characters they play here. Also with Mischa Auer, Myron McCormick, and John Carradine. Directed by Alfred Santell. (Thalia; June 10.)

**WISE BLOOD**—John Huston's faithful adherence to the text and flavor of Flannery O'Connor's first novel (it was published in 1952) has resulted in a scattered, disconcerting film that has not quite made up its mind whether it wants to be a movie or a literary reading. In the end, the picture works, against all odds, because of its wild, strange humor and its sympathy for the rigors of home-fried Christian passion. With Brad Douvif, Daniel Schor, Ned Beatty, Amy Wright, Harry Dean Stanton, and Mary Nell Santacroce. (2/25/80) (Quad Cinema; through June 5.)



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