

## Delicate Balance heavy on talent

It usually doesn't make much sense to comment on a film that has been in town two days, left, and is not returning immediately. But a few words are necessary on *A Delicate Balance*, the first of the eight American Film Theater (AFT) presentations to be shown at the Plaza (V theaters).

*A Delicate Balance* is an engaging, snobbishly clever and marvelously staged motion picture.

Taken from Edward Albee's play about an emotional crisis that enters the lives of a stiff wealthy New England family, the film is overwhelming because of the deep reflective insight its acting performances give it. The cast is small, only six members, but perfect. I don't know if AFT films are eligible for Academy Awards, but if so, I would nominate three persons for best acting honors.

Paul Scofield and Katherine Hepburn are great in their lead roles. As expected (Hepburn's age has become apparent in these last few years, yet her now quivering voice and acting talent still displays her sharp wit and dominating independence). But the biggest surprise was Kate Reid who is brilliant in a difficult role as Hepburn's perceptive, alcoholic sister.

*A Delicate Balance* is theater on film, but it's film nonetheless. The action is confined to several rooms of a house (resisting the temptations of many theaters to film transformations of bringing in all kinds of outside action). Two intermissions divide the film into pseudo acts. Cinematic techniques are subdued yet present, and, for the most part, effective.

I had wondered if AFT's new idea would be as revolutionary as it claimed. Theater on film is nothing new. Jesse Lasky did it more than 90 years ago when he put Famous Players in Famous Plays on the screen.

Recent films such as *Sleuth* are largely in theatrical style. However, some of the hybrids over the years have been less than successful. Harold Pinter, who had a major hand in two of the AFT films, said that if any of the eight "isn't a film, it won't be worth watching. But we're proceeding only from the play's action. The camera is secondary."

Ultimately, the question of whether it is theater or true film is irrelevant as long as what's seen is a worthwhile, thoughtful and meaningful work of art. And *A Delicate Balance* is that.

The biggest controversy instead seems to be the manner in which the films are distributed. Ely Landau, the series' organizer and producer, originally conceived it as a vehicle to bring the world's finest theater to a motion picture market that he thought was not receiving this kind of worthwhile film. As such, it is an excellent and in many ways, a needed venture.

## greg lukow key grip

Landau said that he is aiming AFT "at all those people who stopped going to motion pictures many years ago."

Ironically, \$30 subscriptions, two-day limited showings, and \$4 and \$5 single-admission tickets does not seem to be a good way to pull Americans out of their homes and back in the movie theaters.

At the least, it is alien to the American public's movie going tradition. Broadway reaches few people as it is, and even though AFT is attempting to bring Broadway to the public, I don't think it is doing it effectively. Restricted showings in a medium whose biggest asset is its versatility and capacity for mass unlimited showings is not the answer.

Whether AFT will be successful is difficult to predict. I hope it is, at least for the sake of films like *A Delicate Balance*.



## Allen comedy film to show at Henzlik

Critics have said of Woody Allen's primary strength as a filmmaker is his eclecticism. There's simply no one else who would make jokes about *White Walks in Sports*, Kierkegaard, *Potemkin* and the Chicago Seven trial in the same movie. Allen's comic *Play It Again, Sam* will be the Weekend Film show tonight and tomorrow night at Henzlik Auditorium at 7 and 9 p.m. Admission is 75 cents.

## Vocals, repetition in music spoil disc

Review by Diane Wanek  
Shoot, *On the Frontier*.

This album by a new rock group was a long time in the making. Too bad, because it probably never should have been released.

Shoot is an English group led by Jim McCarty, ex-Yardbird and ex-Renaissance member and Dave Greene. McCarty does most of the group's writing and the lead vocals. Greene is extremely capable on guitar, but his work suffers because the music is unimaginative and redundant.

More than the quality of the music, it is the vocalization which hurts this album. McCarty's voice is weak and uninteresting, and he seems to be straining constantly.

The album has a few redeeming factors. One is Greene's guitar playing. Another is McCarty's keyboard work—it's not remarkable, but it's all right. Craig Collinge, the drummer, gets in a few nice licks, and Graham Preskitt plays a good bluegrass fiddle on "Midnight Train."

There's some potential here, but like many groups today, they probably won't do much with it.

## Weekend Films



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