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Greta Garbo (center) and Melvyn Douglas (left) in *Ninotchka* (1939).

Garbo star of Sheldon movie

One of Hollywood's classic comedies will be shown this weekend at the Sheldon Film Theater as part of the Women in Film Series. The movie, *Ninotchka*, stars the great, mysterious lady of the '30s, Greta Garbo in one of her finest roles.

"Garbo Talks!" was the publicity gimmick in 1930 when Garbo starred in *Anna Christie*, her first talking picture. Moviegoers held their breath, ready to wince at another of those unpleasant high-pitched or rapsy voices that became the downfall of many a silent screen idol.

greg lukow key grip

They need not have worried. Garbo's throaty seductiveness added yet another dimension to what may be the all-time feminine movie mystique.

Erotic beauty

The image of her we seem to remember most is one of passionate aloofness, her body nestled in the arms of some handsome, mustached lover, her half-closed eyes looking off in reflective disinterest and her firm, turned-down mouth perfectly setting off that erotic sculptured beauty.

Then came *Ninotchka*, and MGM resurrected its old publicity idea and came up with "Garbo

Laughs!" In the movie Garbo plays Ninotchka, a devoted Russian emissary sent by her superiors to Paris so she can check up on three bumbling male comrades who are not pleasing the homeland.

Once in Paris, she meets rich, sophisticated Melvyn Douglas and the comic battle of the sexes, societies and ideologies is on. The two fall in love, but Garbo remains Garbo and, in the words of Women in Film Series curator Molly Haskell, "has the last laugh, both literally and figuratively."

First Garbo comedy

Ninotchka was the first comedy of Garbo's screen career, (she would, in fact, make only one more movie). Perhaps it is because she seems so right in it that we are a bit surprised that no filmmaker has ever put her in a comedy before.

Her collaboration for the movie was with Ernest Lubitsch. He was one of the great Hollywood directors of the late 20s and 30s whose brilliant group of sophisticated, satirical sex comedies were recognized by what became known as "the Lubitsch touch."

Garbo won an Oscar nomination for *Ninotchka* and the movie was one of the brightest of 1939, a year which, incidentally was, probably the best movie year in the history of America cinema.

"Garbo in Lincoln!" Rare indeed; don't miss it.

Showings are at 3, 7 and 9 p.m. this Friday and Saturday in the Sheldon Gallery Auditorium. Admission is \$1.25.

'Autobahn' not mere 'krautrock'

From time to time there comes an album that despite your prejudice against it, you must admit you sort of like. *Autobahn*, a new release by German avant-gardist Kraftwerk, is such an album.

Admittedly, I am prejudiced against the recent flood of German rock albums. "Krautrock" (as it is referred to by the group's promoters) is nothing more than a second-rate takeoff on the now-familiar Emerson, Lake and Palmer routine: take synthesizer, add percussion and vocals, stir in a bit of atonal noise and mix well. The German product is inferior to its British model because it avoids any effort to sustain a melody and turns unnecessarily abrasive at the most disconcerting times.

Kraftwerk has avoided these pitfalls and instead has produced a unified, melodious piece

that falls pleasantly on the ear. The first side is taken up with the title cut, which is a musical evocation of a long trip on a fast highway. Cryptic German phrases are repeated throughout the composition, assuming the feel of a seductive Gregorian chant. The piece succeeds, an evocation of all that is heady and glorious in a long motoring voyage.

Side two is made up of four shorter works, all mood pieces. Of these, "Comet Melody 2" is the best because of its shimmering prettiness. However, the striking electronic interpretation of early morning bird songs that forms the lead-in for "Morning Walk" is good, too.

I thought I'd never like Krautrock, but this album has come pretty close to making me a true believer. Watch out—it might do the same to you.

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