

# 'Cuckoo's Nest' starkly realistic

By Ryan Scott

Writing a critique of Milos Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* presents a paradox. Though the film should be highly regarded for its presentation of a dynamic and powerful story, it is disappointing that the film does not quite deliver the impact of either the novel or stage version that preceded it.

Don't be mistaken, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* is undoubtedly one of the finest and most important films of 1975. Both the excellence of the story and the performances of the cast make it an outstanding film.



Based upon Ken Kesey's 1962 novel, *Cuckoo's Nest* is the story of the free-spirited, rough-and-tumble R.P. McMurphy (Jack Nicholson), and the general havoc and disorder he wreaks upon a ward in the Oregon State Mental Hospital. McMurphy is temporarily confined there for "testing and observation."

McMurphy bets the fellow ward patients he can psychologically undermine the ward's symbol of institutionalism, "Big Nurse" Ratched (Louise Fletcher). His "game" quickly turns serious, eventually spelling his destruction.

While Nicholson is good in his role as McMurphy, the talent of the supporting cast is amazing. Broadway star

William Redfield as Harding, the patient, is the only "name" actor in the bunch. The remainder of the cast is comprised of virtual no-names, many of whom are making their acting debuts in the production.

### Heightened by realism

They are totally convincing in their craziness. Not a single performance seems staged. The supporting cast's skillful acting heightens the movie's effectiveness, giving it a shocking degree of realism.

In fact, some of the film's extras actually are patients and the administrator at the Oregon State Mental Hospital, where the production was filmed.

Although Nicholson's performance is good, a heavier dose of pompous brashness might have made it better.

McMurphy is supposed to be a loud-mouthed, rude, crude, aggressive type. Nicholson's interpretation is almost too polite. But I suspect the character was toned down by either director Forman or the script writers. There is no apparent reason for this toning down except to present McMurphy as a more human, and hence more tragic, figure.

In any case, it is easy to like McMurphy, and one is ready to side with him against Ratched.

Nicholson's performance is creditable and he deserves his Oscar nomination.

### Character underdeveloped

Louise Fletcher's performance as Nurse Ratched is disappointing because of the gross underdevelopment of her character.

Tension between Ratched and McMurphy is fundamental to the progression of the story. It is important that one hates Ratched as much as one likes McMurphy because it establishes the former's "evil" and the latter's "good" roles.

Fletcher's excellence is her line delivery. She is able to match the exact degree of personality, sterility and noncommittal coldness expected of Ratched.

The movie often breezes over what were important moments in the novel and play. For example, the movie offers no insight into the character of Chief Bromden, who is second in importance only to McMurphy and Ratched.

On numerous occasions in the novel and play, one is allowed to "listen" to Bromden's thoughts revealing that his disorder stems from being beaten by the white man's prejudice.

### Happy ending

McMurphy gives Bromden the strength to realize that he is a man. The ending therefore is happy, as well as tragic.

The movie also makes it difficult to see that McMurphy's attack on Ratched is not solely the result of the suicide of ward patient Billy Bibbit. The suicide is only the breaking point for McMurphy, the culmination of the hateful tension between him and the nurse.

The attack is the film's dramatic peak. The tension leading to the attack should have been more carefully brought out.

## arts & entertainment

### HORSEFEATHERS

1/2 Priced Drinks  
For Girls

Tonight Thursday Feb. 26

The Student Y  
2nd Annual Body  
Awareness Week

presents

A film you won't see on television for a long, long time.

THE  
BEST OF  
THE  
NEW YORK



EROTIC  
FILM  
FESTIVAL

In color from Saliva Films.

Rated X. Under 17 not admitted.

Friday, February 27

Saturday

February 28

7:00 and 9:30 p.m.

Nebraska Union

Ballroom - \$1

SHeldon  
FILM THEATER

Sheldon Art  
Gallery, 12th & R St.  
The Films of  
Jean Renoir

UNE PARTIE  
DE CAMPAGNE

(A DAY IN THE  
COUNTRY)

France 1936

37 Minutes

plus a second feature

LE BAS-FONDS

(THE LOVER DEPTHS)

France 1936

91 Minutes

Friday & Saturday

February 27 & 28 only!

Screening at

3, 7 & 9:15 p.m.

Admission \$1.50

## HAIR ART LTD.

A Cut Above The Others

2441 N. 48th

Appts. Preferred: - 464-8559

Quality Cuts & Styles

Tom Comer

Lyle Miller

Kirk Lieswald

Practically  
Everything Is  
Marked 10 to 40  
Per Cent Off at:

## SPORTS CORNER

Glass Menagerie

Now Through Saturday  
(used equipment, too)

THE ALL NEW  
Emmanuelle

### The Joys of a Woman

...nothing is wrong if it feels good.

hollywood & vine  
IN COLOR A PARAMOUNT PICTURE  
1:30 3:30 7:30 9:30

---

2 COMEDY CLASSICS  
Double Feature STARTS  
FRIDAY

Peter Sellers and Ringo Starr at their craziest in  
"THE MAGIC CHRISTIAN" (uncensored) with additional material and performances by 2 of Monty Python's Zany Troup!

"Jesus Christ" riding a tricycle?  
BETTER THAN "CUCKOO'S NEST"

73 Best Actor Nominee  
PETER O'TOOLE  
THE RULING CLASS

---

Last Day **JAWS** 4 OSCAR Nominations including BEST PICTURE  
2:00 7:00 9:30