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Fonda sacrifices politics for laughs in new film

By Pete Schmitz

In the last 12 years, Jane Fonda's career has been indicative of the problems and limitations endemic to mixing art and politics in America.

After 10 years of acting in mediocre-to-poor movies, where she survived on her heritage and looks, Fonda made her artistic breakthrough in *They Shoot Horses Don't They* (1969), in which she played a tough-as-nails waif who gives up on life after years of being beaten by Depression-era poverty. The critical acclaim she received for that role gave her the confidence to catch "The Pollywood Bandwagon", just when other celebrities were getting off after deciding that politics wasn't chic anymore.

When *People Magazine* proclaimed that "America loves Jane again," offers for movie roles came pouring in. With another Oscar in hand, and two additional nominations, the prodigal daughter of Hollywood was back to stay, but only if she learned to behave herself.

For the last few years then, it has been interesting to view the latest Fonda flick just to see how she manages the task of using film as a political platform without coming off too strong. Her most recent movie, *Nine to Five*, which co-stars Lily Tomlin and Dolly Parton, has been considered a disappointment by the critics, but it has done well at the box office. This is not surprising, because

the movie has great entertainment value which sadly undermines its political potential.

Nine to Five is about secretaries who work for a company called Consolidation Incorporated. Tomlin plays an office supervisor who is continually passed up for promotions by those she has trained. Fonda is a newly divorced woman who has never worked a day in her life, and Parton is the sexually harassed private secretary of the big boss.

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During the early 70s, Fonda shocked and enraged talk show audiences with her radical rhetoric. After she received an Oscar for *Klute* (1971), she visited Hanoi and was seen in a poorly made anti-war satire called *Steelyard Blues* (1972). All this made the public so angry that an effective movement emerged to keep her out of work as well as to keep her movies out of the theaters. After being jobless for two years, she played Nora in the film adaptation of Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* (1974). Because the distributors couldn't find anyone to show the movie (although a large audience was waiting), it finally got put on television for one night.

Fonda changes image

Then she changed midway through the 70s. She gave interviews to magazines she formerly dismissed as repressive and reactionary. She got back on the talk show circuit, but instead of exposing the underside of the American way of life, she extolled the virtues of marriage and the family as well as love of one's country. While she had conservatives convinced of her patriotism (she even posed for pictures with John Wayne), she made it clear to the relief of the left that there still was much to be done in order to further justice in America.



Photo courtesy of 20th Century Fox Film Corp.

Lily Tomlin, Dolly Parton and Jane Fonda star in the 20th Century-Fox film *Nine to Five*.

ETV plans to broadcast studio concerts this spring

By Cydney Wilson

The Nebraska ETV network will tape four free concerts in January.

The local bands are Little Jimmy Valentine and the Heart Murmurs, Jan. 19 at 8 p.m.; Blackberry Winter, Jan.

21 at 8 p.m.; the Neoclassic Jazz Orchestra, Jan. 25 at 3:30 p.m.; and the Sandy Creek Pickers, Jan. 27 at 8 p.m.

The project began in late September when ETV began circulating an announcement that it was looking for four bands to perform jazz, folk, country, and rock.

The shows will be aired in a four-part series. The groups were asked to submit a tape of their work, background information, a publicity photo, and a two-month schedule of their bookings.

From the appeal, Gene Bunge, senior producer for Cultural Affairs at NETV, received 60 responses from all over Nebraska, as well as from Iowa and Oklahoma. Then he selected a panel of five members: three from NETV, one from a local newspaper, and one from the Music Department at UNL. Then the panel selected four groups and two alternates.

Not looking at ratings

"In producing a show such as this, we don't just look at the Nielsen ratings. There is a need for different kinds of broadcasting, not just symphony and ballet," Bunge said.

"There is not a great deal of expressed or written interest in the kind of music represented by the four concerts, yet with the increasing number of clubs with live music, there is a definite need for this type of programming."

Bunge said the exposure "will be a marked improvement within the musical community. Country and bluegrass music are always popular in Nebraska. Everytime we have a show, such as the *Grand Olde Opry*, we get a lot of mail. This is not so true of the others. Yet I believe there is an interest, it is just not expressed in quite the same way."

Response to this series already has been tremendous. Jan. 5 was the first day for reservations. After an hour, the Zoo seats allotted for each concert were taken. In addition, there is a waiting list.

Two minute sets of each group will be edited into a 35-minute program.

Bands which are union members will be paid minimum union scale. Bands that are nonunion will negotiate with Bunge, and probably will be paid the same as for a local job. All financing for the series is through Nebraskans for Public Television.

Bunge and the other directors, Michael Farrell and Harvey Stewart, have listened to the bands perform, and have discussed the tapings with panel members. Bunge said he wants to "showcase the bands' best."

Concert-style format

The format will be similar to that of a concert. Bunge said he wants the studio crowded because it will create an atmosphere like *Saturday Night Live*. The audience will sit four or five to a table. A dance floor will also be provided.

"We could have done the shows remote (on location), and perhaps we will do so in the future," Bunge said. "Yet when you set up in a bar, with the lights and all, you eventually turn the club into a studio."

"There is not a whole lot of expenditure with these concerts, as we're using the same set, only the background piece will change. We're also taping them every other day, so the set won't need to be set up for each concert."

After editing the programs, in which the bands will have some decision, the shows probably will be aired in April or May. The title will be *Wednesday Showcase*, and starts at 8 p.m.

Bunge could not be definite because the series has not been taped.

"It could be that we might decide to show both of a band's sets, or the tapings may not work at all. If, however, they are successful, I can foresee doing more concerts in the future, perhaps some on remote, for we still have many more bands out of the 60 from which to choose. Or we could open it all up again, as there are new bands forming all the time."



Daily Nebraskan Photo

Sean Benjamin of the Heart Murmurs.