

# 'Tell Me A Riddle'...

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In order to show Eva's growing affinity to her home (which was her enemy when her seven children tracked in mud, spilled milk, cried for attention, etc.), eye level interiors are used. And David's increasing alienation from the home is presented in exterior shots in which he is struggling over railroad tracks, as he goes back to the house after visiting friends (the woman still stays at home while the man goes out). There is also a superb low angle shot of the house from David's point of view on the ladder.

While the home finally becomes a haven for the woman it has oppressed, it overcomes its "master" who is too old and tired to make the needed repairs. One can therefore understand why the wife wants to keep the house while the husband wants to get rid of it. Cinematographer Fred Murphy has done an excellent job of using visual imagery to convey ideas that dialogue cannot express.

Needless to say, the performances were all very good. Lili Kedrova's expressive eyes and quivering voice (along with frequent use of silent flashbacks shot in hues of antique gold) add meaning to Virginia Woolf's idea that every intelligent and creative woman needs a room of her own.

With seven children and a

husband in one house, Eva used her books and mind as a refuge. One can understand why Eva begs one of her daughters not to bring up the past even though she dwells there constantly. The past is her private room.

Not much more can be said about Melvyn Douglas,

who died last July. In the last twenty years he has performed in some excellent roles such as *Hud*, *The Candidate*, *I, Never Sang for My Father*, *The Seduction of Joe Tynan*, and *Being There*. With this body of work, Douglas' career can be summed up in four words: politics, aging, dy-

ing, and death. His performance in *Tell Me A Riddle* has a subtle powerful dignity that younger actors would do well to emulate.

Lili Valentyn, as the widow Mrs. Mays, who is totally forgotten by her eight children, is very touching. Although the character

of Jeannie was too updated and hip, one can admire Brooke Adams for the sheer vitality she has brought to this film.

With *Tell Me A Riddle*, as with her acting career, Lee Grant has proven that she can make acceptable compromises without sac-

rificing integrity. One can only hope that *Tell Me A Riddle* will not just fade into obscurity as something she directed before going completely commercial.

The Sheldon Film Theatre will present showings of *Tell Me A Riddle* tonight at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.

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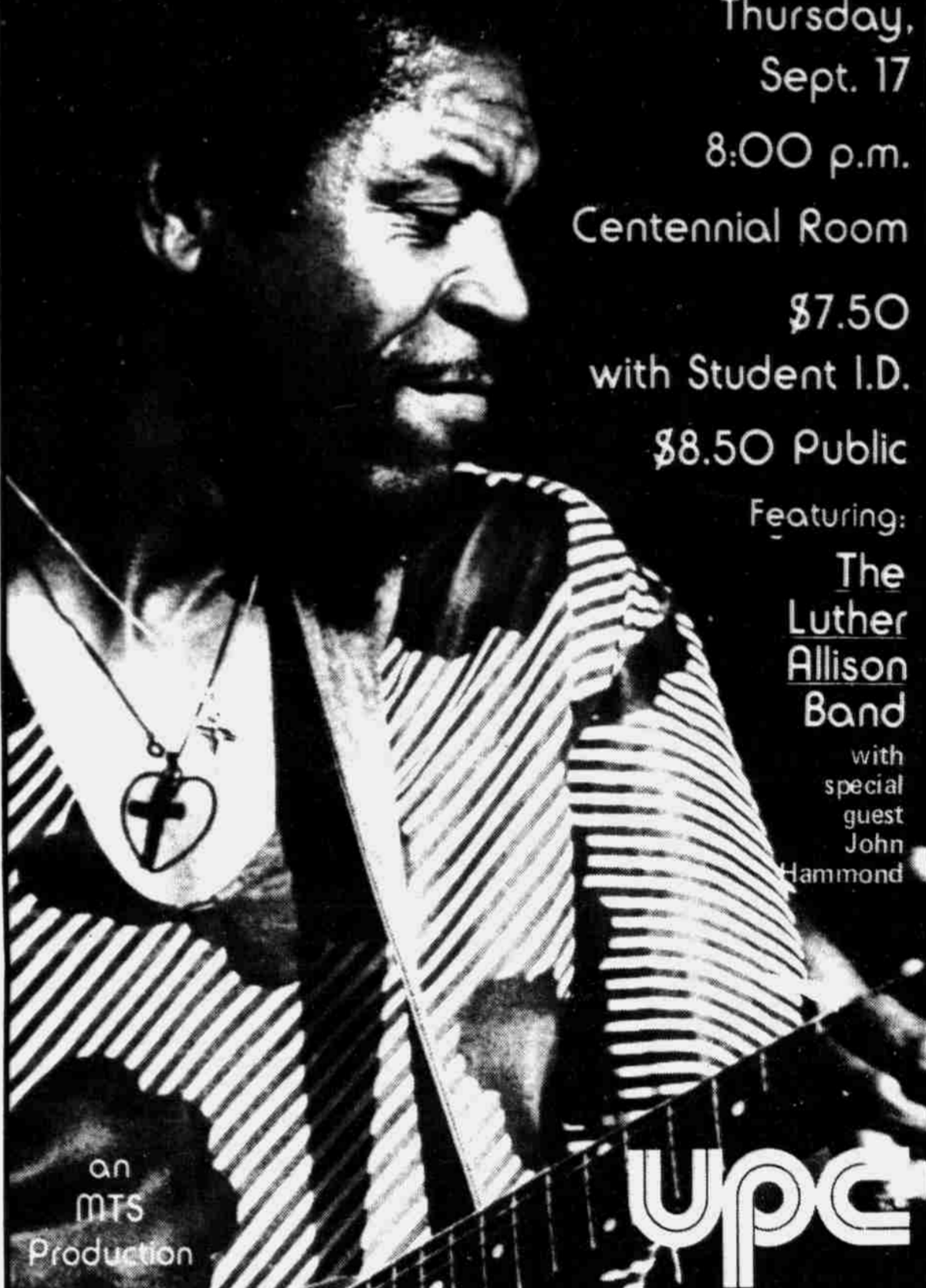
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