

Arts & Entertainment

'Lianna': An honest look at a difficult choice

By Eric Peterson

The first film of the new Sheldon season is an honest and heartening look at how a woman's life opens out. "Lianna," directed by John Sayles, will show tonight through Sunday night at the Sheldon Film Theatre at 7 and 9 p.m., with Saturday and Sunday matinees at 3 p.m.

For the title character, played by Linda Griffiths, becoming a lesbian is much more than a sexual



Film Review

decision; the implications, sometimes unforeseen and unanticipated, run in every direction.

At the start, Lianna is married to a film teacher named Dick, which seems somehow fitting. He sleeps with precocious students and has Lianna do his research; Dick regards her as a kind of childraising and sex machine, despite the university liberal world in which the couple lives.

Leaving him for a woman is thus a kind of personal decision which has political consequences. When Lianna tells him she has had an affair with her child psychology professor, Dick laughs and laughs at her lesbian nature. He promptly kicks her out: "You've given me a perfect escape route, honey, I'm taking it."

The arms of her new lover Liz, beautifully played by Jane Hallaren, are not exactly open in all senses. There are her professional peers to think about, and there is a lingering commitment to another woman. Lianna finds that she has to form her new life alone.

Wonderful scenes

Some of the scenes showing Lianna's emerging sexuality are wonderful. Her first time with Liz is slow and softly lit, with muffled whispers, some of them in French, weaving in and out for a hypnotic sensual effect. Both the conversation leading up to Liz's approach, when Lianna tells of her sexual awakening at summer camp, and the subsequent whisper-dream are an achievement of great beauty.

All will not be the same serene exploration for them, however. We see Lianna's realization of the world of women around her in a lighthearted jaunt to Liz's place; everywhere she looks there is a

beautiful woman — buying tomatoes, passing on the street — Lianna simply revels in a suddenly discovered joy. She is so caught up in the exhilaration of it that she greets Liz affectionately and publicly, with her arm around her, and is brought up short by Liz's embarrassment and coldness.

For the most part Liz is a supportive and warming lover. She takes a very scared Lianna to the My Way bar; and we feel with Lianna the excitement and trepidation. The bar is not an overly glamorous, "Saturday Night Fever" creation; it is a very ordinary and realistic, even mediocre place. Yet there seems to be a somewhat clumsy attempt to duplicate the glitzy effects of a disco picture. The camera shots are quick, in sync with the music — and one woman's boldly staring eyes are shown in an apparent attempt to convey sensuality and menace.

When Lianna speaks about what has happened to other people, she is careful to stress that she left Dick because she had to, and not only because she fell in love with a woman. "We should have done it long ago."

She views her sexuality partly as an expression of her feminism, a response to her husband's obnoxious friend who comes on to her as soon as he

learns she is living apart. "I'm from California and that kind of stuff doesn't faze me," coolly responds the guy, played by Sayles himself, when he learns one of the reasons he was turned down.

References to feminism recur in the film because they are part of what she uses to put her life together. She reads Radclyffe Hall's "Well of Loneliness," an early lesbian novel. When she has settled into her new place, Lianna whimsically says, "I always wanted a room of my own," referring to Virginia Woolf's great feminist essay and putting herself in a tradition of female independence. And when Lianna goes to meet Liz at the start of things, she hesitates and decides not to wear a bra. Sleeping with a woman is part of recognizing herself as a woman.

Difficult decision

The difficulties of her decision are very great indeed. Moving out at first turns Lianna's little daughter against her, and Dick does try to prejudice both her children. Lianna's old friend Sandy turns cold and strange — Lianna has been deprived of most of her old friends and her community. Worse yet, her own love life is not a cure for all problems, nor secure in itself. "I thought when I found somebody everything would be all right," she wistfully tells Liz.

What Lianna has to get through is her own well of loneliness. We see her watching the TV alone and eating alone, evening after evening. There is the aching embarrassment of going out again to the women's bar, alone this time. There is a wonderful segment in which she runs upstairs to seek companionship from some people she doesn't know that well, finds them gone and runs back down with the camera lingering on the closed door.

Two of the last scenes end the film beautifully. Lianna finds Sandy, her estranged friend, in the park and goes to talk to her. We see them tentatively return to their old friendship, which both have sorely missed; Lianna is comforted as she blurts out how she feels after Liz has left — "So awful... I just feel so awful."

Lianna's loneliness is underscored and generalized by the final scene in which she watches two dancers performing to Otis Redding's "I've Been Loving You Too Long." Her tears show her own agony and link it with that of anyone who has felt a similar loss.

Section highlights weekend attractions

You may have noticed some extra bulk to today's Arts and Entertainment section. It's not your imagination. From now on, Thursday's Entertainment section will be expanded to allow maximum coverage of the weekend's entertainment events, including concerts, movies and art exhibits.

Too often, Lincoln is dismissed as being a dull little town, with nothing to do but attend classes. Within this section, however, you will find news about movies, restaurants and a complete listing of the weekend's happenings.

We hope you save today's Arts and Entertainment section for future reference. If you have any comments, complaints or questions, please feel free to write Arts and Entertainment Editor, Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, or call 472-1756.

Have a great weekend!

Zepplin's Plant branches out, thrives as solo

The Principle of Moments
Robert Plant
Atlantic

When a major band breaks up, it's only natural for the members to go their separate ways as solo performers. It's not quite as natural, however, for those same performers to find success without the other band members there to back them up.

It seems that the formula for gold records, hit songs and No. 1 albums just can't be found in a new environment.

Once in awhile, however, a performer can pull off the double play as both the member of a successful group and as a solo performer. Robert Plant is a case

in point.

As the front man for Led Zeppelin throughout the 1970s, Plant belonged to one of the most popular British hard-rock bands of all time. With his second release, *The Principle of Moments*, Plant also is destined to become one of the most popular solo acts of the 1980s.

Plant's strength is his voice. He takes the listener on a roller coaster ride with a range not often found among today's vocalists. While most of the time is spent in a somewhat higher octave, Plant can dip a couple of ranges to stun the audience with heart-felt emotion.

Continued on Page 11

'Everybody's Rockin' recreates '50s sound

Neil Young
Everybody's Rockin'
Warner Brothers

Once in a great while a truly superb album is released — one that a lot of different kinds of people will like. And if anyone is capable of this, Neil Young is. In *Everybody's Rockin'*, Young returns to the roots of rock 'n' roll. In fact, if this album has been released in 1958, no one would have known the difference.

One of the best songs on the album, "Rainin' in My Heart," creates a vivid visual image of a high school gym during a dance, with girls in poodle skirts and boys with greased back hair swaying to the music. Young plays a jazzy harmonica in this cut with a sound that resembles Stevie Wonder in the early days of his career.

"Mystery Train" is a great contrast from "Rainin' in My Heart." There's a hint of Johnny Cash, but not too much. The touch of Nashville sound does much for this cut.

"Wonderin'," is the first single to be released from

the album. Its beat moves the song along at a slow, steady pace. Another song which flows well is "Cry, Cry, Cry."

"Betty Lou's Got a New Pair of Shoes" is a nice, upbeat dancing song which also serves well as a sing-along. This is the very basic rock that Young excels at.

The other songs on *Everybody's Rockin'* are of the same ilk. Young has made an album that is both fun to dance to and easy to listen to.

Of the 10 songs on the album, Young wrote or co-wrote six of them. He should be commended for his excellent ability to reconstruct the sound of the '50s.

All of the songs on this album are short, sweet and to the point. The album is appropriately named. This is good, old-fashioned rock 'n' roll and a must for every lover of '50s rock, as well as Neil Young fans.

Everybody's Rockin' proves that Young will be around for a long time.

— Stephanie Zink

robert plant
the principle of moments



Neil Young

