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Courtesy of Columbia Pictures

Doris Mann (Shirley MacLaine), center, greets movie producer Jack Falkner (Dennis Quaid) who is pursuing Mann's daughter, Suzanne Vale (Meryl Streep), in "Postcards From The Edge."

Postcards

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Hackman), she begins to believe in herself again.

Suzanne also begins to sing in public and in private, for her movies and for herself. Her mother (who sang in her own films) has encouraged Suzanne's singing for years.

Doris to Suzanne: "You could be a much bigger star than that Madonna person. She hasn't got half your voice."

After listening to the raw emotion and beautiful range in Streep's voice as she sings her final song, one is almost tempted to agree with Doris.

Although this movie deals with subjects that many directors and screenwriters would make dramatic and depressing, director Mike Nichols and

Fisher make the subjects funny. Fisher's characters have certainly mastered the art of the snappy one-liner.

One complaint with the writing: the lines are funny, but at times the characters are so intent on popping out the funny lines that they forget life is not a constant stream of witty remarks. One wonders if Streep's Vale and MacLaine's Doris were born snapping witty comments at each other, even when they're fighting over Suzanne's drug addictions and Doris' alcoholism.

Streep is believable as the completely neurotic, unsure Suzanne. She plays Suzanne on a fairly shallow level, with less emotional depth than many of her past characters, but then Suzanne is a shallower character than many of Streep's past characters. Streep's singing voice is beautiful;

she performs several songs throughout the movie, and her voice gets surer and stronger each time -- just as her character does.

MacLaine is a riot as Doris, the overbearing stage mother. Deep down, she's just as nuts -- if not nuttier -- than her daughter. But MacLaine's Doris likes to exhibit control and show how emotionally superior she is to her daughter. Doris' carefully staged shows of affection toward Suzanne are both funny and pathetic.

Overall, "Postcards" is funny and entertaining, but without much substance. Still, it's a good time, and worth the price of the movie -- if only to hear Streep sing.

"Postcards From The Edge" is playing at the East Park Plaza Theatre, East Park Plaza Mall, and at the Douglas 3 Theatre, 13th and P streets.

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Painters: Midwestern artists no longer are cut off from rest of the art world

OMAHA (AP) - Artists in the Midwest no longer are isolated from the rest of the art world, according to a panel of artists who gathered here over the weekend.

With the array of art publications that circulate nationally and visiting artist programs, no part of the country is cut off from the artistic mainstream, said Patricia Degener, art critic emerita for the St. Louis Post Dispatch.

"There is no such thing anymore as regionalist art," she said.

The panel was part of a symposium held in conjunction with the opening of "Midlands Invitational 1990: Painting and Sculpture," at Joslyn Art Museum. The exhibition consists of 61 works by 16 artists from Nebraska and its surrounding six states.

Degener said more and more art-

ists are staying in the Midwest because they simply can't afford to live in New York, the traditional destination for aspiring painters and sculptors.

Jon Keith Swindell, professor of art at the University of Kansas, said he has lived on both coasts and eventually chose to live and work in the Midwest.

"We position ourselves where we want and need to be," he said.

The Midwest offers teaching possibilities for artists, he said, and these universities in turn provide a support system. Most of the artists in the invitational teach at a college or university.

By living in Lawrence, Kan., which is within an hour of Kansas City, Mo., he said, he has access to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and the Kansas City Art Institute as well as a

major airport.

Jeff Freeman, assistant professor of art at the University of South Dakota-Vermillion, said being an artist in a city of about 10,000 people can be a benefit and drawback.

On one hand, he said, his work is "very personal" and "meditative" and requires the time alone that isolation can provide. But outside of his contacts with other members of the art department and his students, he has little interaction with other artists.

In addition, he said, the Midwest has few collectors, and those who do exist tend to have unsophisticated tastes. Most of the major galleries and outlets for art tend to be on the coasts.

"How do you go about marketing your work or getting exposure?" he asked.



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