

Fall films present drama, quirky relief



By Anne Steyer
Staff Reporter

"And the Oscar goes to . . ."
Fall is typically the season of the great Oscar push. This autumn is no different. October and November are filled with the sensitive films that make for Academy Award nominations.

Fortunately, there are also a few quirky films to be released, giving a little relief from dramatic overkill.

October Highlights:

"The Butcher's Wife": "Love, like clairvoyance, requires a leap of faith." Sound familiar? A little bit like last year's "Believe" from the mega-hit "Ghost"? It's not completely coincidental — the star of that film also stars in this one.

Demi Moore is Marina, the clairvoyant wife of the local Greenwich Village butcher. The gossip starts flying when she doles out predictions and advice to the locals.

Enter concerned psychiatrist Alex Tremor (Jeff Daniels of "Arachnophobia"). The sparks fly as Alex attempts to unravel the mystery surrounding Marina and her psychic powers.

Moore has been making headway dispelling the "Mrs. Bruce Willis" label, especially with "Mortal Thoughts" and "Ghost." This should be an interesting turn for her, long blonde wig and all.

Daniels has been consistently good, turning in solid performances in a



Photo courtesy of Orion Pictures

Left to right: Forest Whitaker, Kiefer Sutherland and Ray Liotta co-star in "Article 99," coming to theaters this fall.

variety of roles. From the philandering husband in "Terms of Endearment" to the screen idol in Woody Allen's "The Purple Rose of Cairo," Daniels has provided sound characters for the screen.

"The Butcher's Wife" also boasts an impressive supporting cast including Mary Steenburgen ("Back to the Future III") and Frances McDormand ("Hidden Agenda").

The film could be carried by its supporting cast, but it will need a strong performance from Moore. The script is also the first for screenwriters Ezra Litwak and Marjorie Schwartz.

"Frankie and Johnny": Michelle Pfeiffer and Al Pacino, together for the first time since "Scarface," star in this tender comedy from Paramount.

Pacino, a six-time Oscar nominee, is Johnny, a short order cook at Nick's

Cafe. It's there that he meets Frankie (Pfeiffer), a waitress with more than a cynical view of love and happiness. The movie chronicles their attempts at a real love affair.

Director Garry Marshall had the magic touch last year with another unlikely romance, "Pretty Woman." That film catapulted Julia Roberts to national attention and gave Richard Gere's career a needed boost.

Marshall has cast Hector Elizondo, a supporting player in "Pretty Woman," as Nick, the cafe owner.

Whether or not Marshall can turn this oddball romance into a hit remains to be seen. He has a good touch with dramatic comedies and he does have two certified stars this time around. It's hard to miss with either Pfeiffer or Pacino.

November Highlights:



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Photo courtesy of Paramount Pictures

Michelle Pfeiffer and Al Pacino serve up romance as the title characters in director Gary Marshall's "Frankie and Johnny."

"The Addams Family": Based on the comic strip and television show of the same name, this film is bound to be a broader, darker comedy than others due out this fall.

Oscar winner Anjelica Huston ("Prizzi's Honor") stars as Morticia



See FALL on 10

Lincoln to get first dollar-theater complex

By Steve Pearson
Staff Reporter

Lincolmites will soon have an economical alternative when they get the urge to go to the movies. Work has begun on Lincoln's first "dollar-theater complex." Star Ship 9, to be located on the south side of Q Street, between 13th and 14th streets, is slated for a March opening.

Prices definitely will be lower than

first-run theaters, she added.

The theater will have "a lot of flash and neon to it," Mardock said.

Mardock said that the lobby will feature mirrors and neon and tracer lights. The outside will be three shades of pink and include a large marquee, covered with lights to create a "galactic effect."

As the name indicates, the complex will include nine auditoriums.

She said that two of the auditoriums will hold 300 and the total theater capacity should be around 2,000. Some rooms will have rocking chairs, and all will have cup holders.

"We're calling it the dollar house, but admission prices have not been set yet," according to Deborah Brehm Mardock, vice president of the Douglas Theater Company.

Mardock said that there would be

a concern about market saturation if this were a complex showing first-run movies, but "since these are not first-run, there would not be a worry."

Although it will be called a second-run house, the films shown at Star Ship 9 will be relatively new.

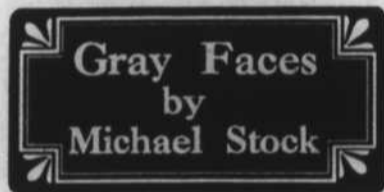
"There is a 30-day window between the time they leave the first-run houses and come to the dollar houses," she said.

The location was chosen with the university audience in mind.

"College students may be a prime audience source for second-run houses," Mardock said. "That's why we wanted it near the university."

Mardock said that the mid-March opening date also was chosen carefully. "About that time the Christmas releases will be available for second-run houses," she said.

Dietrich's star shines bright in 'Desire'



Since Turner Network Television (TNT) seems to be more concerned with the unnecessary broadcast of sports events and self-indulgent original programming, fewer quality films are being shown.

Meanwhile, the A&E Network continues to broadcast more quality classic films. Recently, A&E has concentrated on several early films featuring Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich. Two of these films are "Morocco" in 1930, and "Desire" in 1936.

Although "The Blue Angel" was her first film role, director/mentor Josef von Sternberg intended "Morocco" to be the perfect American introduction to the sultry Dietrich. The Dietrich of "Morocco" was a far more sensual and enticing character than her "Blue Angel" role.

Her identity was created purposefully and carefully by von Sternberg. He was responsible for drawing clear dialogue from her heavy German accent. Von Sternberg feared that if

she mispronounced her lines, audiences would quickly grow disenchanted with her, finding her role comical and unbelievable.

That was the antithesis of von Sternberg's wishes.

He designed every move artistically, creating Dietrich's image into one of Hollywood's finest. Von Sternberg charged cinematographer Lee Garmes with the auspicious duty of capturing her in warm, docile lighting to highlight her "world weary" manner. Dietrich's manner and heavy accent were to carry her headlong into Hollywood stardom.

However, not everyone was immediately captured. The New York Times' review of "Morocco" pronounced that "Miss Dietrich bears a resemblance to Greta Garbo, but her acting hardly rivals that of the Swedish star." The people at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences disagreed. They nominated her for Best Actress, as well as giving nominations for von Sternberg's directing, Garmes' cinematography and Hans Dreier's sets.

Commercially, the film was a success as well. The motion picture did giant business, lending more credibility to the young Cooper's career and a buoyant beginning for Dietrich.

Steinberg recalled in his autobiography that "it should be mentioned that less than a year later Adolph Zukor confided to me that the company had been saved from bankruptcy by the success of this film."

Working with von Sternberg, although rewarding for the young Dietrich's career, was not entirely free of pain. In fact, following the filming of "Morocco," Cooper insisted that he would never work with him again because of the obsessive attention paid to Dietrich.

Cooper was not the only person bothered by the relationship.

Following the filming of "The Devil Is A Woman" in 1935, the von Sternberg/Dietrich association was put to a painful death.

The liberation was a fruitful one for Dietrich. By 1936, she was free to try her hand at the finest of comedies — one directed by Ernst Lubitsch.

In "Desire," Dietrich was free to be Dietrich for the first time. And it fit quite well.

Dietrich makes the best Dietrich. Thank-you A&E, for letting us see her.

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