



Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox

Marlee Matlin and D.B. Sweeney sign to one another in "Hear No Evil."

Flick starring award winner too predictable, humorless

'Hear No Evil'



In a lame attempt at suspense, "Hear No Evil" (Plaza 4, 12th and P streets) has arrived. This is not the typical "woman chased by killer" plot, but a twist of the victim being deaf is added for suspense purposes.

It doesn't help. Marlee Matlin (1987 Oscar winner for "Children of a Lesser God") plays Jillian, a hearing-impaired personal athletic trainer that unwittingly comes into possession of a stolen coin from one of her clients (John C. McGinley from "Point Break").

Jillian and her friend Ben (D.B. Sweeney from "Fire in the Sky") attempt to stay one step ahead of Brock (Martin Sheen), a corrupt police lieutenant who has a penchant for listening to opera music during an interrogation.

Everything culminates in Jillian turning her handicap into an advantage while being stalked

by her masked assailant. Hm. Will it work? I just do not know!

It's a shame to see an Academy Award winner like Matlin stuck in a mess like this, but it seems to be required of every talented performer to make at least one unforgettable piece of crap (e.g. Dustin Hoffman in "Ishtar").

Director Robert Greenwald ("The Burning Bed") tries to give the moviegoer a sense of suspense by giving us Jillian's silent auditory point of view during the tense sequences, but everything here is just too predictable.

No suspense, movie-of-the-week acting, and extremely limited humor (signs for "orgasm," "breasts" and "asshole") make "Hear No Evil" a movie to pass on.

If you want to catch a great flick with a handicapped woman attempting to turn the tables on her captors, go rent "Wait Until Dark" with Audrey Hepburn and Alan Arkin.

It is by far superior to "Hear No Evil."

— Gerry Beltz

Ups, downs of marriage are heart of good movie

'Married to It'



"Married to It" (The Lincoln, 12th and P streets) suffers a mid-life crisis halfway through, but pulls itself out in the end.

The movie is an ensemble piece, following three couples, their interpersonal relationships and the evolution of their unique friendships.

On a grander scale, it's also about the triumphs and tribulations of married life. And marriage is no picnic — well, maybe a picnic with mucho ants perhaps.

Cybill Shepherd is Claire, a rich, self-indulgent savvy businesswoman and step-mommy to husband Leo's (Ron Silver) spoiled daughter, whose PTA meetings are the vehicles for Claire to meet Iris (Stockard Channing) and Nina (Mary Stuart Masterson).

Hippie-throwback Iris is the president of the parent/teacher association, whose husband John (Beau Bridges) spends his days as a social worker still angry at the system that screwed up with the Vietnam war.

Nina is the school counselor, her husband

Chuck (Robert Sean Leonard) is an investment broker. They're the requisite young, glucose-overdosed upwardly mobile couple.

The evolution of the group's friendship is funny and even occasionally touching. The three pairs are all so different that the awkward beginning is very humorous. But they find a connection and hold onto it.

The characters' individual relationships present a fairly realistic look at contemporary marital problems: the waning glow of newlyweds, the tarnished outlook of soulmates, and the difficulty in balancing parenting with a new spouse.

The entire ensemble is good. Masterson in particular presents her naive lowan waif with amazing innocence. She's a far cry from her role in "Fried Green Tomatoes." Channing, a long-underused actress, is delightful as the peacenik mom who cares about everything and everyone.

The movie gets a little bogged down in the middle, suffering from too many stories and not enough screen time for them all. But the sort-of sappy ending pulls it all together, especially for the sentimental fools in the audience.

— Anne Steyer



It's a busy week for video releases:

"Gas Food Lodging" is the critically acclaimed character study about a family coping with life in a small New Mexico town.

The opportunity to see "Gas Food Lodg-

ing" on the big screen has not yet passed. UNL's Mary Riepma Ross Theatre will show it April 1-11.

"The Player" is director Robert Altman's Oscar-nominated, brilliant Hollywood satire filled with a bevy of Tinseltown's best and brightest.

"Under Siege" makes the giant leap to video. Believe it or not, this is the third Oscar-nominated film — for sound and sound-effects editing.

All titles available Wednesday.

— Anne Steyer

'Unforgiven' sweeps Oscars

The 65th annual Academy Awards presentation was overwhelmingly disappointing. The too-long, three and one half hour program was overwrought with bad jokes, bad singing, requisite bad production numbers and technical glitches, not to mention the shocking upset in the best supporting actress category.

There were some bright spots however, among them: the opening montage saluting women; the special awards for Humanitarian Achievement presented to Elizabeth Taylor and the late Audrey Hepburn; acceptance speeches by Emma Thompson and Al Pacino; and the end of the program.

The winners in the major categories were: Best Supporting Actress: Marisa Tomei,

"My Cousin Vinny"
Best Supporting Actor: Gene Hackman, "Unforgiven"
Best Actress: Emma Thompson, "Howards End"
Best Actor: Al Pacino, "Scent of a Woman"
Best Director: Clint Eastwood, "Unforgiven"
Best Picture: "Unforgiven"
Best Foreign Language Film: "Indochine" (France)
Best Original Song: "A Whole New World" from "Aladdin"
Best Original Score: "Aladdin," Alan Menken composer
Best Costume Design: Bram Stoker's "Dracula"

Turtles out of the sewers, off to Japan in third film

'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Turtles In Time'



Although the third time isn't exactly the charm, "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Turtles In Time" (Edgewood 3, Lincoln 3) still works.

The amphibious foursome of Raphael, Michaelangelo, Donatello, and Leonardo are back, along with their rat sensei Splinter, and their human friends April O'Neal (Paige Turco) and the athletically-inclined Casey (Elias Koteas, from the first "Turtles" movie).

Instead of facing the mondo-evil Shredder, this installment in the "TMNT" series has April getting sucked into a time-travel thingy, and

those terrific turtles must go back in time to save her (before the time-space connection dissipates, as required in a time-travel flick).

"Dudes! Check it out! We're in Shogun!" says Donatello upon arrival amid a huge battle. The fight scenes are much more infrequent than in the first two films, but they are still wonderfully choreographed and should provide enjoyment for the little ones.

In place of some of the fighting, director Stuart Gillard gives some screentime to developing the personalities of the turtles, with particular attention to Raphael, the hothead of the group.

The best part of the movie (next to the martial arts choreography) are the turtles themselves.

Nonviolent enough to take your Turtle-watching kids to and fun enough for the adults to watch, this one may be worth a look.

— Gerry Beltz



David Badders/DN

American remake offers female Rambo-type action

'Point of No Return'



"Point of No Return," (Stuart, 13th and P streets) Hollywood's remake of the highly acclaimed "La Femme Nikita" is a direct hit.

Bridget Fonda stars as Maggie, a heroin addict who gets the death sentence for murdering an officer during a drugstore robbery.

Just when she thinks she's met her maker, Maggie is offered an option by a CIA-type operative. Bob (Gabriel Byrne) tells her he will let her live if she will train as a government assassin.

So Maggie becomes polished, loses the black hair, gray skin and teeth, needle tracks and unruly behavior. She learns the intricacies of a .22-caliber rifle and pistol.

She leaves the East Coast for California to carve out a new life for herself, receiving the occasional assignment as the operative, code named Nina.

What she didn't bank on was a beachfront love affair with a sensitive, gorgeous photographer (Dermot Mulroney).

As directed by John Badham ("Bird on a

Wire"), this movie is replete with Adrenalin-pumping action sequences, some beyond belief, but exciting nonetheless.

Fonda, as always, is wonderful. She gives Maggie a vulnerability that causes the audience to support her new life, sans killing, and hope she comes out on top.

Byrne is not really smarmy enough for the government agent role, but Bob is supposed to be sympathetic to Maggie's plight. Byrne translates that well on screen.

Anne Bancroft (the famed seductress, Mrs. Robinson) does a nice turn as the woman who transforms Maggie from ugly duckling to stunning assassin.

Perhaps it should be celebrated that here is a female character who kicks serious butt without losing her edge as a woman. Sure, Fonda handles all the action with aplomb and rises above the gun-toting cardboard assassin role, but does the world need a female Rambo?

Philosophic ramblings and bloody gore aside, "Point of No Return" offers an interesting idea, despite the finality of its title: A person can always start over, regardless of the mess made of his or her life. That alone makes it worth seeing.

— Anne Steyer