Flicks

Movie review: Alfred Hitchcock's 'Vertigo'

By Arthur J. Johnson

"Psycho" — that's the film most people think of when you mention the name of the late film director Alfred Hitchock. Its blood-curdling shower murder has been deeply etched on the psyche of audiences of all ages. Other Hitchcock films such as "Strangers On A Train," "The Birds", "Marnie", "Frenzy", "The Wrong Man", "The Trouble With Harry", "Rear Window", "39 Steps", "Rebecca" and "North by Northwest" successfully combined elements of suspense, psychology and horror — real or imagined.

Before his death in the late 1970s he took steps to legally block the re-release for theater or television of several of his finest and best-loved films of the 1950s such as the recently reissued "Rear Window" (starring James Stewart and the late Grace Kelly); "The Trouble With Harry" (starring Shirley McLaine); and 1958s "Vertigo" which is the second Hitchcock treasure to return to the large screen.

Almost 30 years after its initial release, "Vertigo" not only holds up in comparison to contemporary films but surpasses most films of today both thematically and stylistically.

James Stewart portrays Joe, a San Francisco police detective who discovers he has an acute fear of heights (vertigo) which prevents him from saving the life of a fellow officer in the line of duty. Guilt-ridden and depressed as a result, he resigns from the force, vowing to overcome his disability, until a very wealthy old school chum asks him to tail his beautiful but increasingly bizarre-acting blonde wife Madeleine (Kim Novak) who cannot account for some of her actions or even remember them.

Madeleine is slowly being possessed by the spirit if her dead grandmother, who committed suicide many years before. The same spirit now seems to be urging Madeleine to choose an identical fate. Joe struggles with her apparent mental disorder and falls in love with her, seemly powerless to save Madeleine from herself or proddings of the spirit of her grandmother.

She finally does fulfill her dead grandmother's wish, causing a second trauma in Joe's life and sending him to a mental hospital.

Upon his release, Joe meets a working class redhead named Judy who is a dead ringer for Madeleine. He proceeds to make her over — clothes and hair — into Madeleine to build a classic Hitchcock climax full of irony, and breathtaking suspense that would not be fair to potential viewers to reveal here.

"Vertigo" is a fantastic mix of melodrama and mystery that builds slowly but deliberately to its first climax (yes, there are two climaxes!) about three-quarters of the way through — much like a symphony.

A master of the camera, Hitchcock believed that the image, the pictures themselves, should "speak". Thus are long scenes of almost no dialogue in which the images — Novak's enigmatic icy cool exterior occasionally broken by her penetrating gaze full of knowing sensuality; the deliberate use of colors both in nature and in the costumes and sets that give the film a vivid dream-like intensity; the beautifully unusual locations that became as important as the characters — all become integral pieces of the mysterious cinematic puzzle Hitchcock wants us to assemble. By the end of the film all the the pieces do fit, and quite perfectly.

Although his actors complain that Hitchcock offered then little or no guidance with their characterizations, Stewart is letter perfect as the bewildered detective who has been rendered powerless by his fear of heights.

And Kim Novak, who has often been criticized for being little more than a gorgeous sex symbol, plays her dual role with an intensity and conviction that proves she was as skillful in playing to the camera with her face and eyes as her fellow Swede, the great Garbo. When she portrays the street-wise Judy in the second half of the film you realize how good she was as the rich, pampered high class Madeleine in the first half.

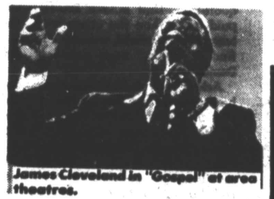
"Vertigo" delivers visualiy, too. Unlike other films of the 50's that were shot in color, "Vertigo" uses its color scheme deliberately to manipulate our reactions to people, places and events. Hitchcock seems to control everything we see on the screen in an effort to master our emotions amd proved he had no vertigo about reaching the heights of filmmaking. See this film if you see nothing else this season!

DANCE CONNECTION NIGHT
PRESENTS
Dance Connection Special Night
(each Wednesday)
at Breezes Metro Club
2335 Bladensburg Rd., N.E.
Washington, D.C.
From 9 p.m. - until
(seen each Sat. on Channel 32)
The Dance Connection Dancers will perform and hold open auditions for dancers and models to appear on a nationally syndicated dance show.
Admission: $4.00

Biggest Gospel Program
Bethel AME Church
Druid Hill and Lanvale
Sunday
February 12th...3 p.m.
Shirley Caesar
and the
Caesar Singers
John R. Bryant
Inspirational Choir
Host
Ms. Pauline Wall Lewis M.C.
and
Rev. John R. Bryant, the pastor
tickets — $6.00
Call
Brother Billy Taylor
366-5373 or 366-1402

WE WANT TO SHARE OUR SECRET GARDEN WITH YOU.

Share the secret of a sparkling sunlit lake, magnificent greenery and truly elegant dining. The Trellis Garden Restaurant, serving lunch and dinner. Complimentary dinner parking. Reservations suggested; 528-1234.
THE TRELLIS GARDEN
In the Hyatt Regency Baltimore, On the Inner Harbor



James Cleveland in "Gospel" at area theatres.

At Area Theatres

Dorothy Stratten (Mariel Hemingway) does a stint as a Playboy Bunny on her way to stardom in "Star 80" at area theatres.

FRIDAY PLUS'S
NIGHT LIFE GUIDE

CED's Bar & Package Good
403 N. Gay St.
featuring: CED's Upper Rainbow Room
(Available for Parties, Cocktail Sips)
Kitchen Open 7 Days—11 AM-1:30 AM
Featuring the Best Fish on the Eastside

Vine St. at Smallwood
Open Mon.-Sat. 8 AM-2AM
Sun 6 AM-2AM
SUNDAY BREAKFAST SHOW
8 AM Upstairs Lounge
Open Thur-Fri & Sat 9-2
Kitchen open 7 Days
10 AM-2 AM 945-7398

5 Mile House
FIVE MILE HOUSE
Meeting and Luncheon Room Available
For Appointment Call: 542-4895
5302 Reisterstown Rd. • Baltimore, Md. 21215

Pete's Place Bar & Lounge
522 N. Franklintown Rd. (at Franklin)
DISCO Dancing Fri. & Sat.
Oldies but Goodies Sunday 5 P.M. - Until

Sounds

SHANNON

'Let the Music Play'

By Carl Matthews

First, a 12-inch single that burned up the airwaves and clubs. Then a hot 45-rpm single that's climbing up the R&B AND pop charts. Now the album, entitled "Let The Music Play," showcasing the hip voice of Shannon.

The album is full of the kind of sound that's happening today—so let the music play as you dance to the rockin' sockin' sounds of the title cut, "Give Me Tonight" and "My Heart's Divided" (a "Let The Music Play" sound-alike). Or take it easier on the mellow cuts "Someone Waiting Home" and "It's You."

There are two versions of the hit here. Side one opens with the same version of "Let The Music Play" that you get on the 7-inch 45 (abridged from the 12-inch). The album closes with a brand new re-mix of the song.

Other cuts include "Sweet Somebody" and "One Man."

This is the kind of crank-it-up party-hearty jam disk a lot of you folks have been waiting for, I'm sure.

Most of the sounds you'll hear on the album are courtesy of Shannon and Rob Kilgore, who plays guitar, keyboards and percussion. Spacy synthesizers and drum machines are the rule here. Other personnel: Carl Sturkin and Charlie Strut on guitars, Curtis Josephs on keyboards, Tony Bridges on bass and Ed Palermo on sax. "Someone Waiting Home" features Herley Johnson Jr. on additional vocals.

The album was produced by Mark Liggett and Chris Barbosa.

Steve Arrington's HALL OF FAME

"Positive Power"

Steve Arrington's Hall Of Fame is about to become famous once again with their new LP release, "Positive Power." The album features eight 5- and 6-minute positively powerful cuts.

The former Slave member continues in the tradition of his last LP which included "Way Out," "Nobody Can Be You" and "Weak At The Knees."

The Hall Of Fame has its own distinct sound that most likely won't be mistaken for Slave although both groups have similar styles. "Hump To The Bump," for instance, is pure fun, the kind of jam you can just enjoy without taking it too seriously. Nobody can "ho wo wo wo!" like Steve can.

Pick and choose your favorites among these: "15 Rounds," "Money On It," "Sugar Momma Baby," "What Do You Want From Me," "Young And Ready," and "Positive Power."

It must be difficult for artists to come up with new and original intros to dance tunes. Check out the intro to "Mellow As A Cello"; you won't hear intros like THAT very often. (And you thought the intro to Shannon's "Let The Music Play" was weird!).

The Hall of Fame lineup: Steve's on lead and background vocals, keyboards, guitar and bass. Roger Parker is on drums. Other keyboards, guitars and background vocals are supplied by Charles Carter, Buddy Hankerson, Arthur "Butch" Rhames, Sam Carter, Gary Jackson and Paul Chaplin. The album was produced by Steve Arrington, Jimmy Douglass and Charles Carter.

Steve's message on the album cover may give you a clue as to what he's like: "Brothers and Sisters, in the middle of this album a change came over me. I found God."

Best bets

HERITAGE THROUGH STORIES, with griot Mary Carter Smith, Lillie Carroll Jackson Museum, Thursday, Feb. 9, 3:30 p.m. Free.

EUBIE BLAKE memorabilia, including the baton that he used in conducting 'Shuffle Along,' at the Museum and Library of Maryland History, 201 W. Monument St. also, prints and photographs that illustrate black history in Maryland.

African dance by Rashida Bandele, Kibbi Ajanku and Kauma Mujamal at 2 p.m. East indian blessing dance by 6-year-old Sarah Swattee at 2:30 p.m. Weaving demonstration from noon to 4 p.m. Cloisters Children's Museum. $2 for adults.

LOOK OUT!!!
BALTIMORE, D.C., VIRGINIA
The GOSPEL TRAIN
Just Keep On Rolling
Every Monday Night
"GOSPEL SKATE"
With Your Hostess
Ms. Joconda Barnes
Admission $2.50
Skate Rental $1.00
At
SHAKE & RATTLE
Family Fun Roller Rink
"Maryland's No. 1 Roller Rink"
at
Glenn Doughty's
SHAKE & BAKE FAMILY FUN CENTER
1601 Pennsylvania Avenue
Baltimore (301) 728-7606

FREE FRAME SHOW
Come to a
Spectacular Fashion Event
Try on the new Faceted Frame (as seen in Vogue!) and get the same, opulent look as faceted lenses, at a much lower price.
Meet the Tura fashion consultant and learn how to create all kinds of exciting looks with Tura frames — this year's most important accessory!
(Date)
(Time)
Thursday, February 16th 3-7 pm
Saturday, February 18th 1-3 pm
R.S.V.P.

Tura
TRA MARK 84
R. WRIGHT OPTICAL
Corner of Eutaw & Mulberry Streets
685-1030

F.R. AND B.W. ASSOCIATES PRESENT
THE HOMECOMING

REDD FOXX
XXX RATED
and
SLAPPY WHITE

WITH "THEIR" LADY
MISS DAMITA JO
TWO BIG NITES
FRIDAY, FEB. 17TH/SATURDAY FEB. 18TH
8 P.M.
TOWSON CENTER at Towson State University
$12.50 and $15.00
TICKETS ON SALE AT: The Towson Center Ticket Office, All Balto. & Wash. Hecht's Stores & Balto. Civic Center.
For Ticket Information: 321-2244