movie

Striking new techniques mark Cassavetes’ "Faces"

By Robert France

"You've never seen a movie like it before" — certainly that's a well worn advertising phrase. Radical advances in the cinema seem to be announced almost continually. Yet most of them (if they are any good at all) are just slighter or more inspired variations of what has gone before. When a film is really conceptually different, the differences are hard to miss, so, for instance, in John Cassavetes' "Faces," one of the most striking American films in many years.

Faces maps a crisis in the lives of a middle-aged, middle-class Californian man. He is a failure as a husband, a father, and a director. The next day, he concludes that he is having a good and, sets off to find the woman of his dreams. He does, though not without some trouble with ideas, and they spend an enjoyable night together. Meanwhile, his wife also goes out, and returns with a young man (plus three other women who soon leave). She finds the experience much more exhilarating, and in desperation takes on the mammary piercing, leading a life of sleeping pills. When her husband arrives in the morning, he is outraged, despaired of his own wife; the film ends with their realization that now they must attempt something much more constructive.

Sticking technique

Of course, what makes all this sticking as the way in which it is portrayed. Like any effective technique, you can't get an accurate description if you haven't seen it; and even if you have, it's hard to find just what it is. A knowledge of how the film was made is so helpful, though. After setting on an idea, Cassavetes turned over several hundred pages of "Janaissance" writing as a sort of first draft of the script. On this basis, the cast (John Mortley as the man, Lynn Carlin as his wife, Gemma Rovellie as the woman he much) was chosen, and a final script was prepared. The director went to further, however; the characters' actions were left to the actor to decide. Up to six cameras were placed in different locations, so they could do as much or as little as they felt with them for certain sequences. When the woman arrives in the morning, he is outraged, despaired of his own wife; the film ends with their realization that now they must attempt something much more constructive.

Sticking technique

Photography, finally, is a point that can hardly be missed. In most movies, characters are generally shot at medium distance; close-ups are reserved for moments of great emotion, since their overload tends to make the impression too obvious. Cassavetes, however, uses close-ups almost continually. The success of it, if nothing more, surprising; but, then, the film is concerned with the interplay of emotions, which are most effective at close range, encompassing not only the characters, but the objects around them as well. As close does is the film's most distinctive, persuasive feature, and they are used continually throughout the film.

Faces, in conclusion, is basically a film about a middle-aged suburban couple, and some people round them. It means the most to the sort of people it is about. It is not the attention of the world, therefore, that you're probably never really known anything like it.

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Sutherland and Vrenios at Symphony Hall

By Steven Shukav

"Faces" as an example of how the cinema is changing. It's not just that the range from a film its deepest meaning, rather than the surface things that are immediately apparent. In the same way, "Faces" is not just a technical exercise, but a film that explores the depths of the human condition.

Close-ups dominate

Frank Langella's performance in "Faces" is a case in point. He plays a man who is about to lose his family, and his performance is intense, almost overwhelming in its emotional power. The close-ups allow Langella to explore the character's inner world in a way that would not be possible in a less detailed film.

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"Magical Mystery misses as the Beatles bomb big"

By John Verden<br>

The credit at the end reads "Direction of photography by Brian M.B.C." If you hadn't known the Beatles didn't bother to get a professional to do it. And I don't mean a low-budget affair. The filmmakers have taken the trouble to produce the film, and the result was disappointing. The music was good, but the film itself was a disaster. It's a shame, really, because the Beatles have always been great at making films. I hope they'll try something different next time.

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"Marksmen cop GBL title, close to second crown"

By Roy Roan

The target was a man in a green shirt and white trousers. He was standing in the middle of a field, with a gun in his hand. The marksman aimed his rifle at the target and pulled the trigger. The bullet hit the target. The marksman was the winner of the competition. The competition was held in a large stadium and was watched by thousands of people. The marksman had trained for many years and had become very skilled at his craft. He had won many medals and awards for his accuracy and precision. The competition was held to determine the best marksman in the country. The winner would receive a special title and a large cash prize. The competition was very intense and exciting, with many spectators watching. The marksman was the clear favorite and was expected to win the competition. The marksman did not disappoint, and he won the competition easily. The competition was a great success and was enjoyed by everyone who was there.