

Georgy Girl

Review

Joe Fineman

1967

“Georgy Girl” suffers from the Americanization of Europe. Mediocre photography, a pasty storyline and a camera which adds next to nothing to the telling of the story combine to cook up a movie as flat as a tortilla.

Perhaps Margaret Forster’s milky book is to blame. Basically we are confronted with a flabby, hopelessly homely adoptee who, within the scope of her own unreal world manages to rearrange the lives of her roommate, her roommate’s mate and her benefactor-step-father. As is the American custom, all unreal situations continue through equally unreal conclusions and everyone is left just as they should be. No one has really arrived anywhere.

The soundtrack helplessly floats along behind the mounting enigma before us with only small favors provided by the vocal pleasantries of The Seekers. The script, dialogue et. al. reside on a rather staid and whitewashed level leaving out the familiar cockney utterances which Michael Caine and Albert Finney have at one time or another used so successfully.

The actor’s craft seems also to have gone by the wayside with the lackluster performances of James Mason as Georgy’s step-father and Charlotte Rampling as her roommate. The two resuscitators in this otherwise exhausted offering are Alan Bates and Lynn Redgrave. Lynn, with considerable aplomb and familial coaching ably fills the mold which Patricia Neal and later Rita Tushingham held. Miss Redgrave is just kookey enough and just ugly enough in that attractive sort of way to make one whiney as she french kisses James Mason, forty years her senior, and at the same time smile as her twisted gaze whips us with the absurdity of the situation. She captures our attention. Yet the only drawback is that my attention gasped for breath and sought escape from such a catholic plot.

Alan Bates is wholly convincing as he consorts first with Miss Rampling and later with Miss Redgrave. His speech, movement and entire demeanor all are animated and like Alan Arkin, he fills the screens first with insanity, then boyish charm and finally with mature awareness. In a particularly memorable scene Bates is asleep, then awakened, then in heat and at the climax he mounts his tender morsel all with a mixture of animality, grave determination and active hilarity.

The most that can be said for Mr. Narizzano is that with the talent at hand he did very little. Aside from Georgy’s tender activity with her nursery school wards, the previously mentioned love scene and a final edit showing a clever advance in the temporal climate, Georgy Girl was dead before it hit the screen. The sparks we see are merely the natural neural responses of the expired patient, rigor mortis.

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