

Foreign Film Review

By DAVID MACDONALD

Two Women

Vittorio De Sica's *Two Women*, an Italian film made in 1961, is notable mainly because it is the only non-English performance ever to win an Academy Award; Best Actress honours were captured by Sophia Loren for her work in this film.

This very unusual event was no doubt possible because Loren was fairly well-known to American audiences at the time (and even in this decade, she can be found playing Walter Matthau's love interest in *Grumpier Old Men*). Even without these circumstances, it could still be said that this performance is a fine one in a fine film.

The film takes place in World War II Italy. Loren's character, like the other citizens of Rome, have to deal with constant air attacks on their city, one of which occurs right as the film begins and when people are doing their everyday business. Eventually, out of concern for her distressed teenage daughter, Loren decides enough is enough and they both leave Rome. They find themselves in a very remote village, but even there, away from Rome and the centre of the country, one cannot escape the influence of the war.

Loren has many good moments during the film, conveying many complicated feelings through her facial expressions, and quite honestly, allows her character to be more interesting than all of the others in the film. Without her, the film might not be quite as good as it is.

Although Italy was on Germany's side during the war, I wouldn't mistake this film for any sort of justification of war. In fact, a few lines are clearly infused with irony, at least for the audience (An old woman, after seeing Loren's rage at the possibility of being taken away by German soldiers and forced to work for them, actually says to her: "They're respectable people. They're fascists!") And, indeed, the whole point of the film seems to be that in the war between states and leaders, the citizens are caught in the middle. This is clearly an attack on not just the side of the fascists, but on the Allied side as well, which is made painfully clear in a shocking moment near the end of the film.

De Sica, the director, seems to have a strong interest in Italy during this time period. His famous *The Bicycle Thief* (1948) dealt with the desperation and poverty of post-war Italians, and the story of the brilliantly photographed *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* (1971), dealt with a rich Jewish-Italian family and their deliberate self-delusion about the true feelings toward Jews by the fascist countries before the war. This film is certainly another good example of this subject matter.

***1/2

Join the Cadre
Main 06

Acorn stages play to chase dream

By BRIAN HERRELL

In the past year, many advancements have been made for theatre on the UPEI campus.

Examples of these advances are several, including the recent creation of a UPEI theatre minor, the building of the thrust stage in the alumni gym and Mickey Acorn.

Acorn is an arts student at UPEI who will soon be entering the world of professional theatre. He has been accepted to A.R.T.T.S (Advanced Residential Theatre Television Skill centre) International, a prestigious acting/directing school in England.

To help fund his trip overseas, Acorn has decided to stage a play that he wrote while here at UPEI.

The play is called *Standing Up for Yourself*, and according to Acorn, it has a

checkered past.

"It started out as a one act play for Theatre 232, but that didn't really do it justice," he says. The play has evolved for some time now.

"Over the summer I didn't do too much with it, I just kind of thought about it. When I took Advanced creative writing, I added a couple of scenes. The actors didn't really see it until the third week of September," Acorn says.

Standing Up for Yourself is a quirky comedy about comedians. The lead character, Stanley Larson, has always wanted to be a comedian.

The only problem is that he isn't funny.

Stanley slowly becomes increasingly frustrated as his material bombs again and again. Throw in some coarse language and mature subject matter, and you've got an

amusing few hours.

This play has a serious side though. Stanley questions himself and others about their roles in life, and ponders the topic of metadrama – one's role onstage as opposed to off-stage. It becomes a commentary on modern life.

According to Acorn, there has been outstanding support for this project, including the backing of friends and family as well as that of faculty and local businesses. In a truly altruistic move, the Barn has been given to Acorn for free.

Acorn is seeing the play in an optimistic, if not philosophical, light.

"I'd like it to go well, but [if not] at least I took a swing," he says. "You can hit the ball or strike out, but you have to take a swing first."

Standing Up for Yourself runs at the Barn from November 26-28 at 8:00 pm.



Standing up for Yourself

Left to right: Aynsley Batherson, Dennis Elsworth, Peter Forbes, Todd MacLean, Mickey Acorn (above)