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The Many Hats of Robert Altman: A Life in Cinema

Daub, Peggy; Gomis, Melissa; Hallman, Phil

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There were many differing points of view in relation to Altman’s film Nashville. It was critically acclaimed by many at the time of its release and was considered one of “the great American films.” Reviews and personal letters show that the film indeed had a strong fan base, but there was some negative critique as well. The country-music industry and residents of Nashville, Tennessee, thought the film ridiculed them and found the film offensive. In the end, the film was nominated for five Academy Awards and nine Golden Globe Awards, and was named to the National Film Registry of the U.S. in 1992.


Don Morrison, “UFO Film Worthy of Second Viewing,” Minneapolis Star, January 11, 1978. Though this review is ostensibly of Close Encounters of the Third Kind, it starts by paying homage to Nashville, and talks about its surprisingly quick appearance on television.

‘I regard it [Nashville] as one of the best American movies ever made… I couldn’t bear to see it chopped up by commercial breaks, especially because the original ‘Nashville’ had been pared down to the bare bones of staccato narrative that was tenuously, but brilliantly, held together by the sheer impetus of its editing.”
- Don Morrison

“I happen to consider [Nashville] the most important American movie since ‘Citizen Kane.’ Like ‘Kane,’ ‘Nashville’ is both a metaphor and a microcosm of the American scene. And also like ‘Kane,’ it is couched in a fresh cinematic language that may well foreshadow films to come.”
- Arthur Knight