The Many Hats of Robert Altman: A Life in Cinema

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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.

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**INSIDE TRACK**

Music—Neil Young stayed at Marguerite’s last week to see the Fabolous. We hung out some more last week, so I don’t know if it’s time to do it again. Also, the latest and greatest music is being played the whole time. Maybe we should think about having a music night.

**UFO film worthy of second viewing**

I really went through my teen years Sunday when Robert Altman’s *Nashville* turned up (obviously) on television. I regard it as one of the best American movies ever made. During its theater run here in L.A., I missed it because I had to wait for it to show up in a TV theatre that simulcasts TV and motion pictures. I finally got myself a little to do with the television package that Altman and the others are working on. It is a shame to think that the television people couldn’t see it if they wanted to. It’s not too bad, but it’s not as good as the original. 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 writing. After unresolved episodes, one is moved to ask: “Don’t you think I’m taking this too lightly? Driven by wonder and apparent — or undeclared — spite, people have given outwardings of their magnificent affections good will like this. If trouble and hard times toil against the heavy-handed, stilted, and not particularly well-thought-out script of the original. In *Nashville*, the town is a star. “

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**Nashville**

“Nashville is created by its techniques and its structures, idiosyncratic features that are firmly grounded in all of Robert Altman’s work. It is not as if Altman finally learned how to make movies: it is that people have finally learned how to see them.”

- Christian Kallen

“I happen to consider [Nashville] 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.”

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