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**Come Back To The 5 &
Dime Jimmy Dean,
Jimmy Dean**
(U.S.-COLOR)

Montreal, Aug. 25.

Mark Goodson presents in association with Viacom, A Sandcastle 5 production. Produced by Scott Bushnell. Executive producers, Jerry Chester, Peter Newman. Directed by Robert Altman. Features entire cast. Screenplay, Ed Graczyk, based on the stage play; camera (color), Pierre Mignot; editor, Jason Rosenfield; production designer, David Gropman. Reviewed at Cinema Parisien, Montreal Film Fest, Aug. 25, 1982. Running time: 109 MINS.

Mona Sandy Dennis
Sissy Cher
Joanne Karen Black
Juanita Sudie Bond
Edna Louise Marta Heflin
Stella May Kathy Bates
Joe Qualley Mark Patton

Robert Altman's "Come Back to the 5 & Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean," screened as a film surprise at Montreal, will provide a pleasant surprise for movie-goers. It's the filmmaker's most accessible and enjoyable film since "Nashville."

While hardly a mainstream commercial project, the film, presently without distribution, should have no problem getting theatrical dates. Response in specialized bookings could be enthusiastic.

Story is set in a small Texas town in 1975. Five women, who were part of a James Dean fan club, hold a 20th anniversary reunion, in the local Woolworth 5 and Dime. Sandy Dennis and Cher play characters who remained in the town and at the outset are anxious about which of the old crowd will appear.

Altman had previously directed the story on Broadway with the same cast. However, while the location remains the area of the store, the action is far from claustrophobic. Pierre Mignot's camerawork is extremely fluid and the director's use of space is continually inventive.

The action occurs on two levels with incidents of the reunion run parallel to events of 20 years earlier. Altman uses a wall-length mirror to effect the time changes, with the past unravelling quite effectively in a mirror-image of the present.

The women arrive and each offers her memories of the earlier time. Dennis, the leader of the James Dean devotees, recalls when "Giant" filmed in nearby Marfa and she got to play an extra in the film.

The recollections are, at first, comical and innocent but eventually the characters reveal their most painful secrets. Karen Black, who initially pretends to be a stranger passing through the hamlet, finally reveals she's a former male friend who underwent a sex change operation.

Dennis, who for years maintained her illegitimate son was sired by Dean, confronts the truth of the father's identity. Cher tells the real story behind her marital breakup.

Through it all, the characters, including Sudie Bond who manages the establishment, confront one another with old demons. The material is told with great emotion and Altman gets wonderful performances from his female ensemble. Dennis has the meatiest role but all the actors are outstanding and affecting.

Shot in Super 16mm in a rapid 19 days, the material works very well transformed from stage to screen. Some of the drama is muted by telegraphing but the overall passion of the piece easily overcomes this an-

noyance. As a relatively faithful stage adaptation the film ranks with such similar projects as "A Long Day's Journey Into Night."

The constant technical invention of "Come Back to the 5 & Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean" is a major feat. The production design of David Gropman is exemplary and the editing is seamless.

The film, slated to unreel at the Venice Film Festival, requires specialized marketing but should have no problems performing well in commercial situations. Audience reaction was extremely strong in Montreal. —Klad.