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Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean

USA 1982, 109 min.

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DIR Robert Altman **PROD** Scott Bushnell **SCR** Ed Graczyk **CAM** Pierre Mignot
ED Jason Rosenfield **MUS** Allan F. Nicholls **CAST** Sandy Dennis, Cher, Karen Black,
 Sudie Bond, Kathy Bates

ROBERT ALTMAN: FILM SOCIETY AWARD

FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN DIRECTING

At the box office, as with critics, Altman had slipped by the early '80s, with *A Wedding*, *Quintet*, *A Perfect Couple*, *Health* and *Popeye*. He heard about this small, rather old-fashioned play, *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean*, written by Ed Graczyk, about the 1975 reunion of some Dean zealots. He decided to present it on Broadway (his first play) and gathered Sandy Dennis, Cher and Karen Black as his cast. Then the play's backers retreated. Altman invested a lot of his own money, but the play had to close after a short run. So Altman decided to use the run as rehearsal for a movie version, made for less than a million dollars and shot on Super16. That history reflected the director's characteristic defiance of show business expectations, just as the play was a reminder of his 1957 documentary, *The James Dean Story*. Altman finds great rewards in the provincial setting (a Woolworth's in McCarthy, Texas!) of the play, the contrast between raw memory and mythic edifice, and in the intense company of unresolved women. The camerawork is beautiful and the acting displays the ease with which Altman can link awkward, improvised actuality with our archetypes.

—David Thomson



Robert Altman (b. Kansas City, Missouri, 1925) See filmography on page 27.

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