

Document Citation

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Title | A child is waiting |
| Author(s) | Tube. |
| Source | <i>Variety</i> |
| Date | |
| Type | review |
| Language | English |
| Pagination | |
| No. of Pages | 1 |
| Subjects | |
| Film Subjects | A child is waiting, Cassavetes, John, 1963 |

A Child In Waiting

Affecting study of mentally retarded children. Grimness of dramatic topic may limit b.o. appeal, but intelligent treatment and good marquee names will help.

Hollywood, Jan. 7.

United Artists release of Stanley Kramer production. Stars Burt Lancaster, Judy Garland; features Gena Rowlands, Steven Hill; introduces Bruce Ritchey. Directed by John Cassavetes. Screenplay, Abby Mann, based on his story; camera, Joseph LaShelle; editor, Gene Fowler Jr.; music, Ernest Gold; assistant director, Lindsley Parsons Jr. Reviewed at Directors Guild of America, Jan. 7, '63. Running time, 104 MINS.

| | | |
|-------------------|-------|------------------|
| Dr. Matthew Clark | ..... | Burt Lancaster |
| Jean Hansen | ..... | Judy Garland |
| Sophie Widdicombe | ..... | Gena Rowlands |
| Ted Widdicombe | ..... | Steven Hill |
| Reuben Widdicombe | ..... | Bruce Ritchey |
| Mattie Goodman | ..... | Gloria McGehee |
| Paul Stewart | ..... | Paul Stewart |
| Douglas Benham | ..... | Lawrence Tierney |
| Miss Fogarty | ..... | Elizabeth Wilson |
| Miss Brown | ..... | Barbara Pepper |
| Holland | ..... | John Morley |
| Mrs. McDonald | ..... | June Walker |
| Dr. Lombardi | ..... | Mario Gallo |
| Dr. Sack | ..... | Frederick Draper |

Again, as in "Judgment at Nuremberg," producer Stanley Kramer has dipped into productive source of live television drama and come up with a poignant, provocative, revealing dramatization of a topic that merits attention and concern. And again it is writer Abby Mann whose original work has spawned the effort. This time it is the subject of mentally retarded children upon which light is shed and, thanks to Mann's knowledgeable, penetrating and compassionate scenario and John Cassavetes' artful, arresting and sensitive direction, the result is a deeply moving and beneficial motion picture achievement.

Skillfully executed and tastefully performed though the film is, there are, nevertheless, bound to be those who sense an almost intolerably depressing experience in

store and will tend to shy away from such an emotionally demanding visit to the cinema. But "A Child Is Waiting" is the sort of distinguished attraction that could, if vigorously and intelligently, sold to trade and public, override such commercial limitations. The names of Burt Lancaster and Judy Garland are certain to aid in this regard.

The film focuses intimately on one profoundly touching case, around which are woven heart-rending and often shocking illustrations of behavior and activity in institutions for the mentally retarded as well as academic discussions of the role in society to be played by the afflicted, and society's responsibility to them. There is no hokiness in the dramatization. It has been done honestly, directly and informatively, and succeeds in erasing certain misconceptions.

Lancaster delivers another firm, sincere, persuasive and unaffected performance as the professionally objective but understanding psychologist who heads the institution. Judy Garland gives a sympathetic portrayal of an overly involved teacher who comes to see the error of her obsession with the plight of one child. That child, a deeply touching "borderline case," is played superbly by young Bruce Ritchey, a professional actor who manages to fit believably into a youthful cast that consists, for the most part, of actual retarded children who are patients of Pacific State Hospital in Pomona. As the lad's two troubled parents, Gena Rowlands (the director's wife) and Steven Hill pitch in with two exceptionally vivid and convincing performances. Miss Rowlands has one especially memorable scene. Others who register soundly are Paul Stewart, Gloria McGehee, Elizabeth Wilson, Barbara Pepper, John Morley, June Walker, Mario Gallo and Frederick Draper.

Joe LaShelle's camera is an agile, alert, adaptable and ever-inquisitive observer. Gene Fowler Jr.'s editing puts the right scenes in the right places, manipulating and molding the drama to maximum emotional advantage. Rudolph Sternad's production design has both character and natural simplicity. In James L. Speak's sound reproduction, there is clarity and sensitivity. An expressive and deeply affecting musical score by Ernest Gold is a vital factor.

Tube.