

## Document Citation

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Paramount Pictures release, produced by Howard G. Minsky; executive producer, David Golden. Stars Ali MacGraw, Ryan O'Neal, John Marley, Ray Milland. Directed by Arthur Hiller. Screenplay, Erich Segal; camera (Movielab Color), Dick Kratina; editor, Robert C. Jones; music, Francis Lai; art direction, Robert Gundlach; set decoration, Philip Smith; sound, Jack C. Jacobson, Bud Grenzbach; asst. director, Peter Scoppa. Reviewed at Directors Guild of America, L.A., Dec. 10, 1970. MPAA Rating: GP. Running time 99 min.

Jenny .....	Ali MacGraw
Oliver Barrett IV.....	Ryan O'Neal
Phil .....	John Marley
Oliver Barrett III.....	Ray Milland
Dean .....	Russell Nype
Mrs. Barrett.....	Katherine Balfour
Doctors.....	Sydney Walker, Robert Modica
Oliver's Roommates.....	Walker Daniels, Tom Lee Jones, John Merensky
Rev. Blauvelt.....	Andrew Duncan

"Love Story" is an excellent film—not just because Howard G. Minsky's rewarding producer debut is another rare breath of fresh air in the smog of contemporary cinema psychoneurosis and not just because Arthur Hiller's sensitive and restrained direction tells a story so touching that tears may be shed without any embarrassment whatsoever. But rather because this gentle romantic tragedy succeeds in conveying some timeless universal human ideals of emotional commitment in a contemporary frame of reference. Ryan O'Neal's previous telefilm and programmer road work has paid off in what will be his personal triumph, and Ali MacGraw's standout performance as the Juliet of this piece is the perfect complement. Made for about \$2,200,000 on Eastern locations, the Paramount release is generally successful on all artistic levels, and, propelled by as much as propelling the best-selling Erich Segal novel written after the original screenplay, a b.o. bonanza is the likely result.

For some years we've been told that what the world needs now is love, and in perspective the appeal is more properly a reminder than some new discovery. Underneath the love beads and the long hair, the quest goes on with perhaps greater desperate fervor than once practiced by those who, numbed and hardened by material security and status, cannot recognize their own former dreams in modern context. But "Love Story" can reach out to all, and trigger without bathos some genuine personal emotions.

Miss MacGraw is top-billed as a girl of poor origins who has worked her way to high academic status; O'Neal, restive in his identity but at the outset just another rich man's athletic-oriented son at the old family college, develops true manliness from his love for her, through their marriage and to the severe challenge of her terminal illness.

Also billed above the title (all credits run at the end) are John Marley, excellent as Miss MacGraw's father, and Ray Milland, outstanding in his welcome return to the screen as O'Neal's cold father. Both men go way beyond the superficial trappings of their roles and make the characters vital to the credibility of the youngsters' personalities.

It's O'Neal's picture by a good margin, and what a satisfaction it is to have the right story, director and female costar to enhance the revelation on the theatrical screen of such acting ability. Miss MacGraw follows up her "Goodbye, Columbus" girlish eminence with a performance that permits her to be a fully-realized woman.

Author Segal has a distinct flair for good dialog, and this must rank as his best work to date. One of the few not-so-serious but notable flaws in the film is an overabundance of entrance lines, which engender by accumulation an artificiality that belies the convincing intimacy of the couple; after all, the lovers are so believably close, why do they greet each other with such snappy patter? Two such as they could relate most satisfactorily at times in life as well as on film by near-silence. The defect becomes obvious as it compounds itself.

As for the couple's slightly unrealistic catapult to demi-wealth

immediately upon his graduation from law school (and estranged from Milland to boot), it may be shrugged off as a harmless artifice. Hiller has directed several recent films demanding a flexibility of talent, and this one, mostly without forced direction (though the circular camera tracking is another's trademark and not worth adopting), reinforces a growing and belated recognition.

Dick Kratina's excellent lensing (prints by Movielab) is responsive and motivated. Robert C. Jones edited to 99 minutes, which Hiller might well have trimmed to eliminate a second-reel tendency towards overexposition after a great opening. Also, one or two musical transition sequences seem to be concessions to something that has little to do with story development; fades are still potent punctuation.

Francis Lai provided an excellent dramatic score, including a good theme that doesn't sound at all like a two-bit riff — another contemporary marvel. Interleaving of some classical pieces (Miss MacGraw is a music student) is logical and aesthetically right. Lai's score provides what once was a standard artistic requisite: music that relates to the action of the moment, with subtle reminders of pertinent scenes past and a hint of things to come. Every so often (but not often enough) a film comes along which revives this tradition, pioneered by men either mercifully gone or cruelly unemployable for lack of that utterly damnable "with-it" nonsense.

David Golden served as exec producer, and among other noteworthy crew accomplishments are Robert Gundlach's art direction and Philip Smith's set decoration. In strong if minor acting support are Russell Nype as a college dean, Katherine Balfour as O'Neal's mother, and Andrew Duncan as a college chaplain who witnesses the couple's self-performed marriage ceremony.

Pic is rated GP in the domestic market, reflecting a facet of the plot as well as, presumably, the overuse of Miss MacGraw's character's favorite slang expression (seven times or more), which tires so soon in needless evocation of nervous laughter. *Murf.*