

"Good Morning Vietnam"
Starring Robin Williams
Directed by Barry Levinson
Rated R

"Good Morning Vietnam" stars Robin Williams as Airman Adrian Cronauer, a disc jockey sent to Saigon to cheer up the troops. The American involvement is in the beginning stages of its "police action" and concern is mounting as more and more troops are sent into action.

The general in charge of the action in Saigon has heard Cronauer's show in Crete and is impressed with his sense of humor. He kindly transfers Cronauer to Vietnam, which angers the men in charge of the radio station. They don't like Cronauer and clearly let him know exactly where he stands.

Undaunted and unwilling to play the program of boring music assigned to him, Cronauer spins the hottest rock 'n' roll hits of the era. This infraction, combined with a commentary which is incredibly funny, doesn't fit into the Army's strict guidelines of humor and Cronauer lands himself in a heap of trouble.

Yet the men love him and he really is helping to boost morale. Convoys of fresh, somber troops leaving for battle are much happier after being entertained by Cronauer in an impromptu street performance. Touched by how he helped these men, Cronauer even undertakes a dangerous mission to go visit men in the field.

"Good Morning Vietnam" has three acts, the second being simply a series of scenes

depicting the atrocities of the "police action" set to Louis Armstrong's *Beautiful World*. These disturbing vignettes accent the anonymous nature of warfare necessary to fight a silent, invisible enemy. Napalm-razed villages and mass executions remind the viewer that this film is not strictly comedy.

Cronauer's commanders, a stereotypical weak lieutenant and a mean, dictatorial sergeant major, both hate Cronauer for the way his popularity has given him power of a sort. Cronauer could care less about power. His concern is the unjust censorship of his material. Also, his friendships with the Vietnamese teach him that not all Vietnamese want America's help, and that the American involvement is just another political move.

This resolution is an important statement the film makes about the dangers of control. The close-mindedness of Cronauer's commanders represent power in the wrong hands. The rationale of "We're here to help" present in the Vietnam conflict provided a defense mechanism which took years of devastating losses to realize.

Had "Good Morning Vietnam" been intended as just another film about Vietnam, it would have had a serious role model to follow, namely "Platoon." However, it did not address the concerns of wartime as powerfully, and the film's main emphasis is the amazing talent of Robin Williams. He is very funny, especially because his humor is so well suited to an environment in which he can

be perverse. His acting is also excellent, proving his accessibility to dramatic roles, previously seen in "Moscow on the Hudson."

This film has already proven to be a tremendous success, and is one of the best comedies this year.

Review by Matthew Stewart

"The Dead"
Starring Angelica Huston and Donal McCann
Directed by John Huston
Rated PG

John Huston was a rare filmmaker in many respects. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he was not hellbent on creating one hit film after another.

He supplied a bountiful number of box-office successes, but he also lent his talent to movies that were destined to reach a limited audience: "Fat City," "Wise Blood," "Under the Volcano."

Most of these films attracted Huston's fancy because of their literary merit. That was true of his 37th and final feature film, "The Dead," based a short story by the director's idol, James Joyce.

It's easy to see why Huston spent many years trying to find backing for "The Dead." It is almost anti-cinematic, devoted largely to a dinner party of Dubliners in the early part of the century. But Huston as director and son Tony as screenwriter have endowed the film with such insight and richness of character that the discriminating filmgoer can be grateful for the family endeavor. Even Huston's

daughter, Anjelica, plays a major role.

The evening is Jan. 6, 1904, the Day of Epiphany, and a handful of genteel Irish gather for a festive dinner at the home of two maiden ladies and their young niece. The central figures are a married couple with an unshared sadness, Anjelica Huston and Donal McCann. Not all of the guests are sedate. There's Freddy (Donal Donnelly) who seems on the brink of committing another of his drunken scenes.

The Misses Morkan (Cathleen Delaney, Helena Carroll) strive to keep the evening on an even keel, but it isn't easy, given the outbreaks of political wrangling and the undercurrent of sexual tensions. After most of the guests have left, the Irish tenor (Frank Patterson) favors the

hostesses with a rendition of "The Lass of Aughrim," filling the house with pure angelic sound.

"The Dead" is filled with such small treasures. The film's most moving scene comes at the end when Anjelica Huston unburdens herself of the great sadness of her life: the death of a sweetheart at an early age.

The film is a fitting monument to the more profound side of a great American filmmaker. Huston has drawn subtle and telling performances from a cast of Irish and Irish-American actors. And he has kept faith with James Joyce.

The Vestron release is rated PG for no apparent reason except the adult content.

"The Dead"
 By **BOB THOMAS**
 Associated Press Writer

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