



December 16, 1980

## Falling In Love Again

By: Ron Pennington

---

Thomas Wolfe's prophetic adage "you can't go home again" is nicely updated in "Falling In Love Again," a warm, nostalgic movie about a middle-aged man's journey back to his childhood neighborhood. The International Picture Show Co. is releasing this enticing little romantic comedy, which was produced and directed by 21-year-old Steven Paul who also collaborated on the script and who plays a major secondary character. It's very much a family effort, with his father, Han Paul (whose memories inspired the story), as executive producer; his brother, Stuart Paul, playing the central character in flashback sequences, and with several other relatives working in front of and behind the cameras.

Elliott Gould, in one of his most relaxed and effective performances in some time, stars as Harry Lewis, a middle-aged dreamer who is partnered in a Los Angeles clothing store with his wife, Susannah York, who illuminated the screen whenever she is on (and who is also credited for the screenplay with Steven Paul and Ted Allan), plays his wife, who is obviously the one who really runs the business. They have drifted apart through the years, and the film looks back on their teenage courtship.

The story concerns their trip back to New York, during which Gould remembers how they met and the good times they had growing up in the Bronx during World War II, which makes up the bulk of the running time. When he gets there, however, he is disillusioned to discover the old neighborhood is now a slum, and during a reunion with his high school chums, he comes to realize what has happened to his life. This beautifully realized scene is especially memorable and it effectively ties the story together in a positive, uplifting

Paul does a wonderful job in contrasting past and present and his direction is extremely natural, which results in the easy and enticing performances. The flashback sequences have a soft, romanticized essence of memory, and they nicely convey the innocence of youthful dreams. The movie is exceedingly charming, but it is never affected.

In addition to Gould and York, Stuart Paul and Michelle Pfeiffer are excellent as their younger counterparts. Kaye Ballard is delightful as Harry's mother and the other performances are equally effective. Steven Paul is quite good in his rakish portrayal of black sheep of the neighborhood and Cathy Tolbert is impressive as a young woman who introduces Harry to sex.

Michael Mileham, Dick Bush and Wolf Suschitzky are responsible for the atmospheric photography, which enhances the romanticized memories, and it has all been put together with smooth and unobstructive passing by editors Bud Smith, Doug Jackson and Jacqueline Cambas. Michel LeGrand's music, which includes several songs (with lyrics to the various pieces by Dennis Lambert, Sammy Cahn and Carol Connors) performed by Eydie Gorme, Victoria Rocha, Ann Williams and Chi Chi and Johnny Mathis, is pleasant and does much in establishing mood and underscoring emotional content.