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Film review

'Jo-Jo at the Gate of Lions'

By Henry Sheehan

"Jo-Jo at the Gate of the Lions," an independent feature that played at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, is receiving a Los Angeles playdate at UCLA tonight. Although it may appear excessively theoretical at first glance, the black-and-white film, which plots the course of a troubled young woman guided by mysterious voices, ends up being quite naturalistic in its emotional specificity.

Lorie Marino plays Jo-Jo, an at-

JO-JO AT THE GATE OF THE LIONS

Writer-producer-director.....Britta Sjogren
Cinematographer.....Greg Watkins
Music.....Jonathan Sampson
Editor.....Britta Sjogren

Black and white

Cast:

Jo-Jo.....Lorie Marino
Jon.....Chris Shearer
Luke.....David Schultz

Running time — 103 minutes

No MPAA rating

tractive young woman who has gingerly slid into a relationship with Jon (Chris Shearer), an astronomer. However, this kind of love is not enough for Jo-Jo; she submits herself to various penitential pains that one of her mysterious voices suggest will help Jo-Jo prevent nuclear war.

Worse, finding herself out of work, she is drawn into the orbit of a sleazy phone sex operator, Luke

(David Schultz), when she takes a job from him.

Some of the action suggests that both of Jo-Jo's relationships are equally damaging to her sense of self, and that the escape into putative madness — although never called that — is a logical, if dangerous, alternative. Individual scenes, built around cast improvisations, approach this idea with frequently irresistible emotional force. □