



Hebdo



There'll always be an England...

(of sorts)



turn page



The Edward Heath Conservative government in Britain has pioneered a new era in British history. On one level, it is important to understand that the Tories are trying to solve the problems of British capitalism at the expense of the working class. But, while this is correct, it is equally true of every capitalist government and tells us nothing about what differentiates the present Conservative regime from its predecessors both Labour and Conservative.

With Heath the Conservative Party has produced a leader who promises to defend effectively and coherently the interests of British capitalism and to develop a new political formula in the process. Far from abandoning the framework of British liberal democracy, Heath intends to use its resources in carving out a new course for British capitalism. Heath intends to jettison the backwardness of British politics — its sentimentalism about old friends and customs — and to exploit the backwardness of the British working class — its parliamentarism and political caution.

From the early 1940's to the General Election of 1970, the political basis of British capitalism was, externally, an alliance with U.S. imperialism as a junior partner, and internally the integration of the working class via the Labour Party and the trade unions. Indeed the Labour Party played as important a role as the Conservatives in devising the whole arrangement and was rewarded by periodic spells in office for its efforts.

The Anglo-American alliance and the introduction of more ambitious social policies were, of course, already introduced by the Churchill coalition government. The extension of these policies into the post-war world, was, however, wholly the responsibility of the Attlee Labour government and represented a political option of great importance even though it was predictable in its general outline.

Essentially it meant that the waning force of British imperialism could be partly preserved, at least in the short run, by a comprehensive deal with U.S. imperialism. The Labour government took the initiative in founding NATO which gave expression to the ascendancy of the U.S. within the imperialist camp. Within this framework the first experiments in turning a colonial empire into a neo-colonial empire could be successfully undertaken.

At home Britain's relative industrial superiority vis-a-vis war-devastated Europe could temporarily be used to finance the renewed export of capital abroad and to provide at home more comprehensive social services. Between 1945 and 1964 British capitalists devoted no less than 2,000 million to direct overseas investments — more than the capital export of all the continental European capitalist countries combined.

Moreover, political decolonization did not mean that the real economic sinews of Empire were in any way abandoned: gold in South Africa, rubber and tin in Malaya, oil in the Middle East, were all preserved intact. But for British imperialism to bring off this strategy, the support of the dominant imperialist power was absolutely essential.

Thus the Anglo-American "special relationship" became the cornerstone of British foreign policy.

Despite its apparent success in the short term, the Atlantic policy was to exact a heavy toll on the resources of British capital. The attempt to maintain a global role in economic and military terms weakened the home base of British capitalism. Both Britain and the United States assumed the overhead costs of the world-wide imperialist system from which their capitalist rivals also benefited. Britain bore some of the cost of maintaining international law and order without the danger of developing into a genuine rival of the U.S.

And by the 1960's the commitment to maintain the pound sterling acted as a valuable first line of defence for the dollar. The price was paid when successive British governments were forced to deflate the economy and cut social services to protect the pound and to maintain overseas expenditure.

Appropriately enough, it was left to a Labour government to pursue this miserable logic to its conclusion. When the Wilson regime assumed office, the rationality in the Atlantic/imperialist formula for British capitalism had certainly seeped away. But instead of attempting to come up with a new political formula, Wilson sought to solve the problem at the purely technical level. New ministries were created to foster technology and to plan the economy, complex new tax schemes were announced — there was no political complement to the technical nostrums, only endless public relations, moral exhortation and rhetoric.

The entire Labour leadership, despite its desperation to assume a technocratic image, was at bottom deeply and sentimentally attached not just to British bourgeois society with all its eccentricities, but also to the obsolete Atlantic formula which they had helped to devise. Hence the fixation on "the Commonwealth" and the United Nations, Labour code words for respectively British and American imperialism. Hence the long and costly attempt to forestall devaluation and to maintain a global military role. Hence the craven support for U.S. genocide in Vietnam.

Not a single major economic reform could be offered up to Labour's social base — the best it could do was come up with a few half-hearted liberal reforms for the middle class on questions such as divorce — all of which had the enormous advantage of not costing anything. So far as the organised working class was concerned, the trade unions had become an infinitely more effective instrument for economic leverage than the Labour Party. So far as the ruling class was concerned, the Labour Party was ceasing to be an effective instrument for integrating the working class and tying it to the bourgeois state; hence the need to link the unions themselves to the state more directly by legislation.

In 1969 the defeat of Wilson by the unions revealed that the Labour government was unable to carry through the necessary changes. Labour's "surprising" electoral defeat in 1970 merely registered the bankruptcy of the political

U.K. will suffer as Tories turn to Europe

formula it represented — a bankruptcy of which the masses were continually reminded by rising unemployment and rampant inflation as well as by the blankness of Labourist ideology. Everyone had known for a long time that Labour had no strategy for socialism — in 1970 it had become almost as clear that they had no strategy for capitalism either.

It was probably more less inevitable that the Conservative government would seek to discover a new course for British capitalism, but Heath certainly set about the task with considerable efficiency and a complete absence of that sentimentality which had displaced national bourgeois politics under the Wilson administration.

Heath can draw on the greater self-confidence of Britain's major bourgeois party that retains some dim memory of the time when Britain did have a foreign policy of its own. While the rise of the Labour Party was the epoch of the decline of British imperialism, the emergence of the modern Conservative Party was in the epoch of ascendancy of that imperialism. It is thus not so surprising to find Heath quoting Palmerston: "We have no eternal allies and no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual and those interests it is our duty to follow."

The policy of the Heath government during the international financial crisis rounds out the picture of a basic shift in British foreign policy options. The government placed the narrow national interests of British capitalism above loyalty to the United States. Instead of revaluing the pound, steps were taken to keep it around the old parity; the lowering of bank rate discouraged it from floating upwards. Insofar as policy was coordinated with other capitalist powers it was with the Europeans, not the Americans.

As a recent report in *The Times Business News* put it: "There is a strong suspicion in American minds that, as the price of British entry into the Common Market, Mr. Heath promised Mr. Pompidou British support for French anti-American monetary policies and that pressure from Downing Street and the Foreign Office is preventing the British Treasury from playing its usual constructive role in the Group of Ten."

It is not necessary to argue that in forging its new orientation the Heath government was possessed of any very ambitious vision or Grand Design. Heath simply applied ordinary capitalist criteria to British foreign policy, a sort of cost-benefit analysis of the Atlantic orientation, and discovered that it was hopelessly irrational and untenable in these terms.

Equally Heath's European orientation was obvious enough as an alternative to the Atlantic orientation. His achievement, which was to see that it could only be carried through by means of a proper political deal, was only novel in the dimly mediocre context of British bourgeois politics.

Whereas De Gaulle sought to outflank U.S. imperialism on the "left" we should expect Heath to do so on the "right". The French were reacting against the inflexibility of U.S. imperialist leadership in the 1950's — the British against the faltering and bungling of U.S. imperialism during the 1960's. The British ruling class is evidently thinking that the U.S. administration is over-anxious to make deals with the Communist powers in all areas (Asia, Europe, the Middle East,) and has foolishly relaxed cold-war ideology through lack of nerve. Needless to say, Britain's large armaments industry is unlikely to complain at this aspect of the new course in foreign policy. Heath's major speech at the United Nations were he warned that domestic civil conflict was the main danger of our epoch is the most eloquent general statement of British foreign policy and was an explicit attempt to firm up the U.S. ruling class.

So far I have concentrated on the main areas of foreign policy in assessing the nature of the Heath regime. Certainly it has been able to transform the orientation of policy in this area more simply and immediately than has yet been possible on the home front. The most intractable problem of all being of course, Northern Ireland where the institutional structure of the Conservative Party tied as it is



Workers Heath's forge an ties

to the Northern Irish ruling class, reduces its room for manoeuvre drastically. But although the Provisional IRA clearly has the ability to embarrass the British government and place it under strong pressure, this is not the same as having a strategy for winning. Heath is not easily going to be persuaded to abandon his kith and kin at Stormont. So long as the British government can count on the majority of the population in the North, including the Protestant working class, and so long as they can work with the Church and the miserably reactionary regime in Dublin, there is no chance of British imperialism being dislodged from Ireland. However, the fact that Heath has been forced to endorse the vicious internment round-up shows that it faces a political as well as a military threat.

In the major fields of domestic policy the government faces the same syndrome of backwardness which has defeated its predecessors. The main feature of the government's economic policy is unsparing resort to the most savage weapons in the arsenal of capitalist rationality: unemployment, bankruptcies, the elimination of "lame ducks", etc.

But just as important as the use of capitalist market forces to prune away deadwood in British industry is the complementary encouragement of the giant commercial banks to expand the scope of their operations. As *The Economist* puts it: "What Britain is now doing is to set up a competitive mammon-will-reward-the-foremost banking system without any of America's anti-trust controls. The admirable new rule of jungle law opens at a time when there are a lot of hungry beasts stalking around... There could conceivably be much blood and many astounded squeals, much redness on tooth and claw, as the hunt now starts from all sides for both new depositors and new methods of lending."

The changes which the government has introduced in the code covering the conduct of commercial banks will free much of their enormous resources (more than 12 billion pounds in current and deposit accounts) for more exciting employment than the purchase of government bonds and bills. The effect will be to create fierce competition for the traditional merchant banks and to start bank financing of British industry climbing towards German and Japanese levels. The essence of government policy is thus to simultaneously expose British capitalism to strong competitive forces (especially via the entry into the EEC) and to foster the potentially strongest sectors of British monopoly capital. This could well turn to advantage one of the strong points of British capital as it tries to find its way in an era of intense inter-imperialist rivalry — namely the relatively large size of the major British companies.

Though the Heath government's economic policies will certainly not produce some magical reversal of the decline of British imperialism, they are more likely to eliminate the grosser irrationalities than were the incoherent compound of subsidies, bureaucratic mergers and exhortation employed by all previous Labour and Conservative governments.

The fate of Heath's economic package is very much dependent on its general success in waging the domestic scale struggle. There has been a perilous collapse in the rate of profit in British industry over the last decade. An assault on the workers must be part of any ruling class strategy for breaking out of the present impasse. It seems that the core of Heath's policy in this area, is to use the political strength of the British bourgeoisie to help liquidate its economic weakness.

The domestic policy of the Heath regime certainly promises a drastic sharpening of the class struggle and the abandonment of attempts to go very far in conciliating the organised working class. If any half-way adequate political force existed within the British Labour movement, then this might be a dangerous policy. But the Conservative government knows that the only two political organisations that have any real implantation in organised Labour are quite incapable of furnishing an aggressive leadership for the working class: namely, the Labour Party and the Communist Party. In the past the German and Japanese bourgeoisies have been able to use the relative economic weakness of their workers to wage successful

imperialist rivalry.

In the coming period we may expect the British and American bourgeoisie to attempt to use the relative political backwardness of organised Labour in their countries to recoup their positions. They know that they have no political challenge to fear from George Meany and Vic Feather, or for that matter from Jack Jones and Leonard Woodcock.

The present government clearly understands that the underlying political loyalty of the working class gives it considerable scope for attacking the economic leverage exercised by the trade unions. This loyalty may have waned somewhat in recent years but there is still more than enough popular reverence for parliamentary legislation and the majesty of the law to make an aggressive strategy the most tempting option.

It should be added that a British government can wage a vicious campaign of repression without in any way abandoning liberal democracy. Indeed to begin with the government will exploit for all it is worth traditional reverence for the trappings of parliamentary democracy, the sanctity of legislation, the majesty of the law, the supposedly impartial institutions of state power. The capitalist media will give a unanimous chorus of approval and the Labour Party will play out the familiar role of Her Majesty's most loyal Opposition. Given its enormous ideological and material resources the government has every chance of winning its first engagements with organised labour.

The new course for British bourgeois politics opened up by Heath will create a situation in which — at last — revolutionary politics can establish a bridgehead among the mass of the working class. This is both because of the reaction that the government will provoke amongst the most militant and advanced workers and because the bold steps that it has taken are bound to shake many of the pillars of bourgeois Britain: among them precisely those we have mentioned above.

Thus entry into the European Community will undoubtedly throw somewhat out of gear the traditional ideological and political defences of bourgeois rule. It will tend to undermine traditional national fetishes and ideologies: above all it will further weaken the already waning power of Parliament. From a bourgeois point of view those who argue against entry on the grounds that it will sap the integrity of Britain's "constitution", or lack of one, are perfectly correct. Like many of the rest of our more backward and depressed national industries, the Labour Party might also be very adversely affected by the post-entry political climate. We have shown above the way in which the Labour Party helped to pioneer the whole Atlantic orientation of British capitalism and was thus in a good position to claim the dividends of audacious class collaboration. Things may be rather different in the approaching European dispensation. Labour has chosen for itself the comparatively modest role of being the chauvinist reaction to the new course — even this function

it has performed without much credibility.

The brazen capitalist rationality of the new course and the weakening grip of traditional mystifications will not lead in the first instance to any mass working class revolt but they certainly furnish ideal conditions for decisively radicalising the most advanced and militant workers. These workers are emerging from a period in which they won significant gains in economic class struggle. Even now, with unemployment rising to the million mark, the trade unions are still growing numerically, an unprecedented combination which reverses the situation of the late '20's and '30s. More important still, British workers are discovering new methods of struggle which will enable them to greatly extend the arc of class struggle.

Indeed it is partly because of the relatively strong economic organisation of British workers that the ruling class is shifting the terrain of struggle onto its home ground: legislation, legality, "public opinion". Although there is no likelihood of the trade union bureaucracies themselves responding aggressively and creatively to this shift in the locus of combat, this is certainly not the case with the younger and more determined militants who have no nostalgia for the "gentleman's agreements" and "procedure" of the old dispensation. They do not want to put their foot inside the door of the mansion of privilege; they want to put the boot in the owner's flabby midriff.

However, such a reaction will initially be confined not just to a minority but to a very small minority of the most active and class conscious. That is the real flaw in the otherwise intelligent and coherent strategy of the new course. The great advantage which the British capitalist class at present enjoys is one that will tend to disappear precisely to the extent to which it is fully exploited. British imperialism can no longer provide an ideological and material emollient to the domestic class struggle. In these conditions the political loyalty of the workers will be not just used but also used up. The rulers will be forced to expend political capital to defend economic capital.

It is most unlikely that the British Bourgeoisie really understands this. They naturally see the moderation and reformism of the British working man as an eternal fact of nature. They will allow that the British worker has many defects but he is after all British and thus shares the national reverence for compromise, common sense, negotiation and respect for all duly established authority. These national traits are not seen as transient and historically determined entities which history, especially the experience of imperial decline and of the new course itself, is in the process of eroding. The British bourgeoisie has successfully forgotten those regrettable occasions when British workers failed to conform to type: that is why it will be prepared to risk provoking them. Moreover the fact that the first few times its expectations will probably be confirmed can only fortify it in what will ultimately prove to be its fatal error.

Robin Blackburn

Adapted from the Red Mole.



Vestiges of the old Britain still remain, but fundamental changes are producing a new order.

December deluge hits Toronto

Some old kitsch, some nice surprises

Last year, roughly defined, was a vintage year for movies: *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*, *The Go-Between*, *Sunday Bloody Sunday*, *Murmur of the Heart*, *Mon Oncle Antoine*, *Ann and Muriel* (now retitled *Two English Girls on the Continent*), *Klute*, plus *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Death in Venice* and, for some, *Clockwork Orange* and *Cabaret*. This year it's famine. Only *The Sorrow and the Pity* ranks as a masterpiece and of the rest, *Sounder* seems to be the only film likely to be revived. (This leaves out *The Godfather* and *The Emigrants*, neither of which I have seen.) *The Candidate* would have to be one of the best films of the year, such is the year. It is a time for extracting the good from the mediocre.

The massive influx of holiday season releases confirms the trend. To be fair, I hear that *Chloe in the Afternoon* at Cinecity is quite good. I haven't gone because I fell asleep at *Claire's Knee*, Roehmer's previous film which was also quite good. I also don't intend to see Robert Redford kill a lot of indians as *Jeremiah Johnson*. The scenery is supposed to be pretty in that one.

My favourite of the new bunch, hands down is *King of Marvin Gardens* at the Odeon York, although I can see why it is getting panned almost universally. It is very much like *Drive, He said* (produced by the same company) another personal favourite and critical flop. Both are more film sketches than films: you have to infer a lot to make them make sense, even to the point of inventing whole scenes left out of the movie. But, that done, the characters become rich and the observations and nuances quite deft.

Jack Nicholson plays an introverted late night monologist



Who was underwater swimming champ in high school? Go see *The Poseidon Adventure*.

for an FM radio station. He is called by his estranged brother, Bruce Dern, a small-time, vaguely illegal entrepreneur who lives a *menage a trois* with Ellen Burstyn, a fading procuress, and her developing replacement, Julia Robinson. They keep a pistol in the same drawer with their water-pistols. Dern hopes to be reunited with Nicholson through a South Sea gambling resort scheme he has concocted. The whole thing takes place in Atlantic City, off-season.

Like *Five Easy Pieces*, director

Bob Rafelson's previous film, *Marvin Gardens* sees things as pretty bleak. It is crammed full of details of emptiness, absurdity and decay, always in the foreground or background of a shot, like Polanski only subtler. *Marvin Gardens* is not as funny as *Five Easy Pieces* which is likely why its reception has been so unenthusiastic.

Still I found it exciting, playful (though not merry) and demanding. All of the leads play at top form — Nicholson definitely up from his loud male chauvinist in

Carnal Knowledge. Bruce Dern, who played the basketball coach in *Drive, He said* is a grossly underrated actor, and Ellen Burstyn is as impressive as Karen Black in *Five Easy Pieces*.

Some year I would like to see a festival of great film failures. *Brewster McCLOUD* would be there and *Drive, He Said* and — it appears — so would *King of Marvin Gardens*.

Pete 'n' Tillie on the other hand has been selling out nearly every performance at the Odeon Hyland. It is pretty good, all things

considered, like those plays that win annual prizes in off years. Though directed by Martin Ritt of *Sounder*, *Pete 'n' Tillie* reads like the "serious picture" that directors of comedies and action films are always promising to make when they have realized enough money from their hack work. Few of them ever do it, and even when they do, it is embarrassing. All the hours in pursuit of the easy have rubbed off, and their very vision has become so saccharine that "serious" means a few "serious" characters stuck in the sugar, like figures on a wedding cake. *Pete 'n' Tillie* fares better solely on the strength of Tillie's part.

Tillie is well into her thirties when she meets and sleeps with Pete, a defensively wise-cracking market researcher. (Whether Pete is actually supposed to be funny a la Neil Simon or not is hard to say. The fact is, we are conditioned to laugh at the mere sight of Walter Matthau, and we do.) Pete and Tillie marry and have a child, with their sit-com problems gradually being replaced by the serious ordinary kind that we in the audience have.

It is an interesting plan, to take our comic icons and turn them quasi-tragic. Carol Burnett, as Tillie, pulls it off magnificently, with grace and depth I never guessed she had. She was given a touching, full, well-conceived part and she enriches it. Matthau as Pete does his best.

But that's as far as it goes, as Ritt and writer, Julius J. Epstein keep blowing it on the incidentals. For example, Tillie is called to have lunch "like civilized women" with one of Pete's mistresses. She goes, and over a drink tries to make the best of the time by asking the girlfriend what she finds so attractive in Pete. "You should know," the mistress replies a trifle petulantly, "he's

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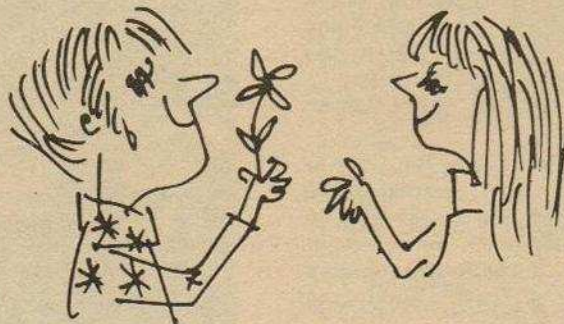
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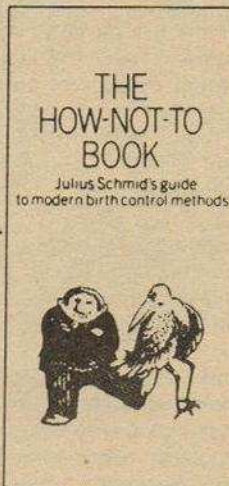
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kind, has a great sense of humour and . . . he's a pistol."

"What?" asks Burnett.

"You know", says the mistress, "a pistol".

At the end of a very short lunch Burnett gets up to leave and the mistress asks, "If you know about Pete and me, why do you stay with him?"

"H's a pistol" Burnett replies.

In between those exchanges — and I think they are terrific — Ritt has the mistress drop her contact lens into her martini. Very funny. *Pete 'n' Tillie* does that too often for comfort. Burnett keeps it moving, but she has to work overtime to do it.

I'm hoping someone else will see and review *Travels with My Aunt* at the Uptown, the film of Graham Greene's comic novel. It is in the grand style of high-ceilinged hotels that serve tea in the lobby, a style for which I am singularly unsuited. I kept thinking how much things cost. Alex McCowen is quite human and ungrotesque as the stuffy bank-manager nephew who becomes international escort for his crooked old Aunt Augusta. Maggie Smith is either fabulous or excessive as the aunt and I suspect the film was quite funny, but you would do well to await the verdict of one who knows more about such things. It is certainly a pleasant-spirited movie.

Lastly, there is the *Poseidon Adventure* at the Carlton, the product of fifteen Oscar winners with the sensibilities you would expect of fifteen Oscar winners. A couple thousand people are trapped when a tidal wave turns their ocean liner upside down. Ten or so set out under the leadership of Gene Hackman to find their way up to the bottom of the ship. Six, we know from the ads, survive. What I liked best was the ending: Not more than five minutes after number seven gets it, the six get rescued and the movie ends, just like that, this is an adventure and that's it, no pretense about it. (Actually, an aficionado said *Poseidon* was a little on the preachy side, and he preferred *Airport*.)

There is some fun along the way. Shelley Winters plays a better Jewish grandmother than

anyone else I can think of, as she steadily strips herself of jewellery to be given to her grandchildren if she doesn't make it. There are some classic lines suitable for framing ("If you don't go on, her death will have been meaningless.") and the plot has some lovely links to the necessity of the genre: since the ship turns over at midnight New Year's Eve, the women are all caught wearing long dresses they must shed in order to climb the ladders leading down (up) to safety, necessitating a great number of leggy shots from the bottom of the ladders. It's also great fun to turn the upside down sets right side up, either deductively, or by turning your head sharply to the side. The movie is dumb *macho* and adventurous, and it isn't true, despite the note tacked on to the titles saying that it is the way, does anyone know if the ship's captain is the same actor who gives salty talks on how to grow potatoes in rocky soil with the help of the Bank of Montreal?

Bob Bossin



After bangs, Bing's: Burnett and Matthau as Pete 'n' Tillie.

A mad whirl through the Eternal City

Is there any hope for Fellini? Here is a man, one of the brilliant post-war Italian filmmakers whose early works — *I Vitelloni* and *Nights of Cabiria* especially — were masterpieces of a sort; here is a writer-director with compassion, humour, and a prodigious imagination. His decline began with *La Dolce Vita*; *8½* managed simultaneously to be brilliant and boring. Then the precipitous drop, ending in the gloomy depths of *Fellini Satyricon*.

Not that these movies were utter trash, any of them. Perhaps I was able to tolerate *Satyricon* — most of my friends walked out — because I knew Petronius' picaresque sketches of Imperial Roman decadence. This familiarity in no way altered my judgement of the movie — portentous, self-indulgent nonsense — but at least I had some idea why Fellini was getting up those grandiose, nightmarish

scenes. And I think I see why he chose a work as remote and unusual as the *Satyricon*: because realistic, or even 'abstract' movies could no longer hold the visions he wanted to put on film.

But while his imagination has ballooned to the size of a dirigible, his discipline has dwindled. Fellini stuns you, in the *Satyricon*, with his images of gargantuan, haunting obscenity until he undercuts them with ones of petty smuttiness, making you wonder if he can tell the difference.

In *Fellini's Roma*, he finally discards altogether the pretenses of plot or characters, leaving us with a director's bag of tricks. The movie is supposed to be a very personal view of Rome, and I guess it is though much of it could have been filmed in Montreal. Fellini is obsessed with boors, with gluttons, with obese, prancing ecclesiastics and

overripe whores. Interminably we see people wolfing down pasta, kids sticking out tongues or sitting on potties, an amateur show of no-talents being heckled by the wags in the audience. Terrible. There is a fashion show of cardinals and nuns and bishops wearing such get-ups as copes, gaudily piped with flashing neon tubes — an ingenious tableau, but the joke palls long before Fellini lets it drop.

Despite all this, no one can touch Fellini when it comes to stunning us, not even Kubrick (whose career is beginning to parallel Fellini's). So, embedded in this movie is a traffic jam during a gothic-novel thunderstorm, more like the apocalypse than Godard's in *Weekend*. There is a stealthy trip through the city, dark and silent but for the eerie blue flicker of a buzzing tram. And, at the movie's close, a hoarde of night-riding motorcyclists tears ominously through

Rome — across the Ponte Sisto, through the Piazza di Spagna, up to the Piazza Barberini, and off into the desolate countryside.

At I could endure *Satyricon* because I was anxious to see what Fellini was going to do with that odd old story, I was able to muster up some affection for *Roma*. I once lived there and wanted to see how he would recreate that fascinating city. But I don't recommend the movie, unless you have a particular interest in the follies, as well as the successes, of good directors. Fellini, I think, should stop making movies altogether, move to Hollywood, and hire himself out as a consultant. Then he could devote himself solely to turning out his weird, stupendous effects. And for once they might function organically in a work of art, instead of floating loose through theatres like unanchored dreams.

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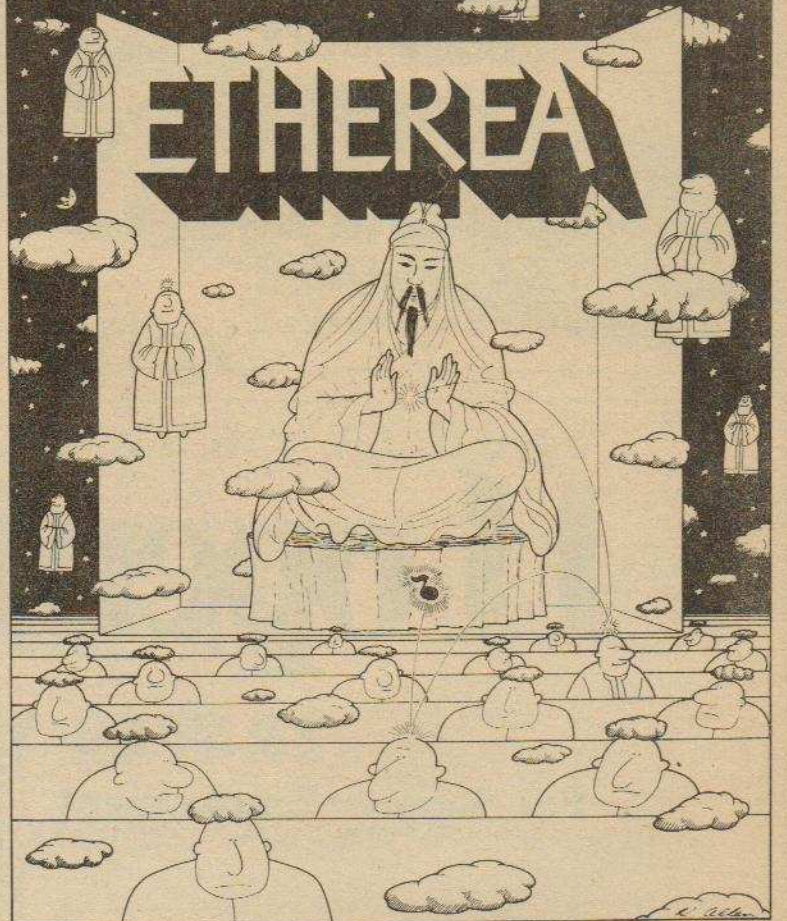
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Sad about the words... Jim Taylor's Dog

Almost two years ago Esquire predicted and dismissed *Mudslide Slim*, James Taylor's first post-fame record, as "the wane of inspiration". Esquire is a rather nasty magazine that way, but it has an impeccable eye for trend. So with Taylor: from *Sweet Baby James* to *One Man Dog*, the slope has been down, steeply.

Taylor blames having to write to record company demands. Only one song on *One Man Dog*, *Nobody But You (Everybody knows that I'm just a Joe who likes to hang around...)* was written prior to deadline. It is the only one anybody I know likes. The rest of the record's eighteen cuts are pre-fabs, snatches of Taylor style grafted together under company pressure.

The music has suffered less than the words. The settings are bigger than Taylor's old folkish style, with plenty of horns, background voices and scratchy South American rhythm instruments. It is not to my taste, but it is carefully done, funky and jazzy. Since the tunes are not as discernable as they once were, it amounts to a whole album of excellent vamping.

It's sad about the worlds. *One Man Dog* is the first Taylor album without a libretto. I expect Taylor was embarrassed. Many of the songs read like self-parodies, full of "Woh I don't know babe"s but without any of the quietly schizophrenic imagery that powered *Sunshine*, *Knockin Round the Zoo*, *Carolina in my Mind*, *Fire and Rain*, *Sweet Baby James*, etc. From jungle to desert.

It seems to have been open season on James Taylor since he made the cover of *Time Magazine*. Of course the sudden fame and over-exposure were hardly his fault. Still, it made it harder to get excited about him and, evidently, it sapped his vitality as a writer.

On the other hand, fame has been grist

for Joni Mitchell's mill. There was something ingenuous about Mitchell's pre-*Woodstock* records, but with *Blue* and now *For the Roses* her pain and success have become absolutely compelling. Mitchell has never been the complete song-writer James Taylor was. Her melodies are often obscure, her words often too many and too current, her style harsh and keening. She's always complaining. But, at the same time, she is daring and exceptionally underivative. Every verse or two, every song or two, there is something crazily, stunningly electric (followed by something else I wish wasn't there. Mitchell is a musical Brecht.)

You can read Joni Mitchell's biography from album to album. *For the Roses* is similar to *Blue* but a shade more resigned, the woman a shade stronger but with less fight. I prefer her memories of her lovers to her thoughts on her career. She wears her successes arrogantly; her failures are open and touching.

I like about half the album to the point of addiction, particularly *You Turn Me On*, *I'm a Radio*, an A.M. radio evocation of A.M. radio, and *Woman of Heart and Mind*, a regal, moving, even important song that begins, "I am a woman of heart and mind, with time on my hands and no child to raise, and you come to me like a little boy, and I give you my scorn and my praise." After a half dozen years it is apparent that Mitchell will be a life-long artist (Taylor may not be) which allows plenty of time to work out the bugs.

Among other releases for the Christmas market: Loggins and Messina's second album of happy articulate rock, called *Loggins and Messina*. Theirs is a very studio, big band sound, with country somewhere back in its history. It's as refreshing as Crosby Stills and Nash when



Joni Mitchell: always complaining.

English folk style. I find it their nicest and most tuneful since *Sweet Child*, though that is still the one to get if you have not got it already. A number of us think it was the best album ever produced by anybody.

Ry Cooder's third, *Boomer's Story* is out. No-one I know has been able to put their finger on why it doesn't work like *Into the Purple Valley*. The formula is the same, old mid-American funk, but some elan is lacking. Better to replay Billy the Kid, *The Taxes on the Farmer Feeds Us All*, etc.

Steeleye Span have finally been released in America with *Below the Salt*. They are one of the English folk-rock groups on the Fairport Convention — Mathew's Southern Comfort — Fotheringay tree. The stress is on traditional songs with strong choral harmony, backed by simple spare, very rhythmic rock. I prefer *Please to See the King*, as yet unreleased here, but *Below the Salt* is a good introduction. Tim Hart's liner notes deserve a prize: "So there we was sitting in the dressing room when in comes this guy with glasses and he says, 'Oim afraid youse got de wrong toitles for de toons,' and then he goes and rattles off a whole load of Garlic what we couldn't make out, so we gets the roadies to see him off. Handy things roadies."

And the Incredible String Band released *Earthspan* which is as you would expect.

James Taylor, *One Man Dog*, WEA
Joni Mitchell, *For the Roses*, WEA
Loggins and Messina, Columbia
Pentangle, *Solomon's Seal*, WEA
Ry Cooder, *Boomer's Story*, WEA
Steeleye Span, *Below the Salt*, WEA
Incredible String Band, *Earthspan*, WEA

Bob Bossin

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8:15 p.m., SATURDAY, January 13, 1973
in Convocation Hall

Speaker: DR. WILHELMINA IWANOWSKA, Director, Astronomical Institute, Nicholas Copernicus University, Torun, Poland.

Sponsored by the Royal Canadian Institute, the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, and the National Research Council, as part of the celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the birth of Nicholas Copernicus.

The Department of Astronomy invites all interested staff and students and the public to attend this lecture.

NOTICE

The Physic Department will be offering the half-course Physics 305 again in the spring term, this time as a reading course. Students wishing to enroll in this course should contact Professor D. Paul, Room 129-E, McLennan Labs, 928-2971.

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Shakespeare highlights drab holiday theatre season

Toronto theatre continued to flourish during the Christmas season without the remarks of the Varsity reviewer to prod it on. In fact, this reviewer managed to attend a mere smattering of what was, for Toronto, a remarkably varied program.

Twelfth Night promised to be a Christmas treat, and certainly it was more Shakespeare's than not an inspiring one. The success was more Shakespeare's than Leon Major's, though. Entering the theatre, I was surprised to see the basic design for *The Trial*. It seemed, soon after that, that a trace of Kafka had been left in the air as well. Feste the clown had become a sophisticated prophet of doom, specializing in un-humtable songs (courtesy of Harry Freeman).

A mournful group of hippies, including musicians, stood around looking uncomfortable for most of the play, signifying... one wonders what.

The modern dress neither spoiled nor enhanced the comedy. Suede suits for Viola and her twin brother were predictably appropriate. The rest of the costumes were not particularly flattering to the characters.

Even so, the night I was there, Shakespeare's comedy survived admirably. Domini Blythe's Viola was sweet and effervescent, improving markedly as the play progressed. Robert Benson created a detailed, sympathetic Malvolio, the tight lipped servant, and earned applause for his first smile. The cruelest aspects of Malvolio's experience are stressed in this production, and the pity one feels for him at this

final humiliation casts a shadow over the play's comic resolution.

I came expecting the trio of Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Maria to steal the show as they so often do in *Twelfth Night*. I found myself laughing, yes, but with feeling that the characters' vitality was only adequately being realized. Sir Andrew, the empty-headed fop, seemed particularly devoid of interest. Orsino resembled a lethargic swinger from the fifties and Olivia a hysterical spinster, both — for me, at least — unsympathetic types.

It all points to an unnecessarily sober *Twelfth Night*, though there are laughs in spite of it all.

Then there was the gala festival of short Canadian plays at the Factory Lab Theatre. Two nights. The nights were long and the seats were hard. The impressions were mixed — no surprise since the content ranged from the charming spoof of an amateur production of an obnoxious 1927 play called *A Day with Peggy* to a brief, thoroughly empty nude piece, *Made by Man/Woman*.

The most intriguing aspect of the festival was the manipulation of the acting space. In *What Was Really Said*, the different stage levels, and the L-shaped playing area gave one the sense of the streetcorner where Father Claudius solicits passerby countless times. In the *Great Canadian War in the Pacific*, a wide playing area backed by a blank movie screen provided a setting for the play's symbolic characters. In *Forthcoming Wedding*, the bourgeois living room is sparingly represented in the cen-

tre of the Factory Lab's low-ceilinged room, to be viewed on two sides.

In some cases, I felt that an intriguing text was passing me by because the short space of time was packed with action and a non-realistic, obscure text. In the case of *Cowboy Island*, I felt that

or missed the plays altogether.

Tarragon Theatre still features *The Stag King*, one of many plays aimed at Toronto's child population. It purports to appeal to all ages, actually, and succeeds, if one is seeking light, diverting Christmas entertainment. Providing the lush array of

cond Evening" and can guarantee it as a perfect way to usher out the holiday season. The overall theme: there is no hope. The first work, *Permutations and Combinations* proves this to us in minute detail; the second, *Eating the Ocean*, seems to dare us to laugh anyway. *Permutations and Combinations* is "an apocalyptic cantata for four actors." It is conducted like a piece of music and, judging from the way rhythm, pitch, quality, speed and variety are utilized, it seems as much a musical work as a literary one.

It is an organic work, the form reflecting the content as in the opening sequence entitled *Technique*. There, the quartet embodies the spirit of technique in its regular rhythms and the symmetrical distribution of parts. Much later, in the sequence called *Future*, the voice becomes operatic, parodying some musical conventions of the cantata, such as the drawing out of a final syllable in the word "tomorrow". It is didactic and repetitive in its text, which can be irritating, but then it is a work obviously designed to disturb the spectator.

Eating the Ocean is a depressing, laboured black comedy which tries to hit the Canadian Way of Life where it hurts. It is too disorganised to make its point well. The ending is a spinechiller all the same.

Soon to come — the Hart House production of *Hamlet*. Out with the old and on to the new! (?)

Eleanor Coleman

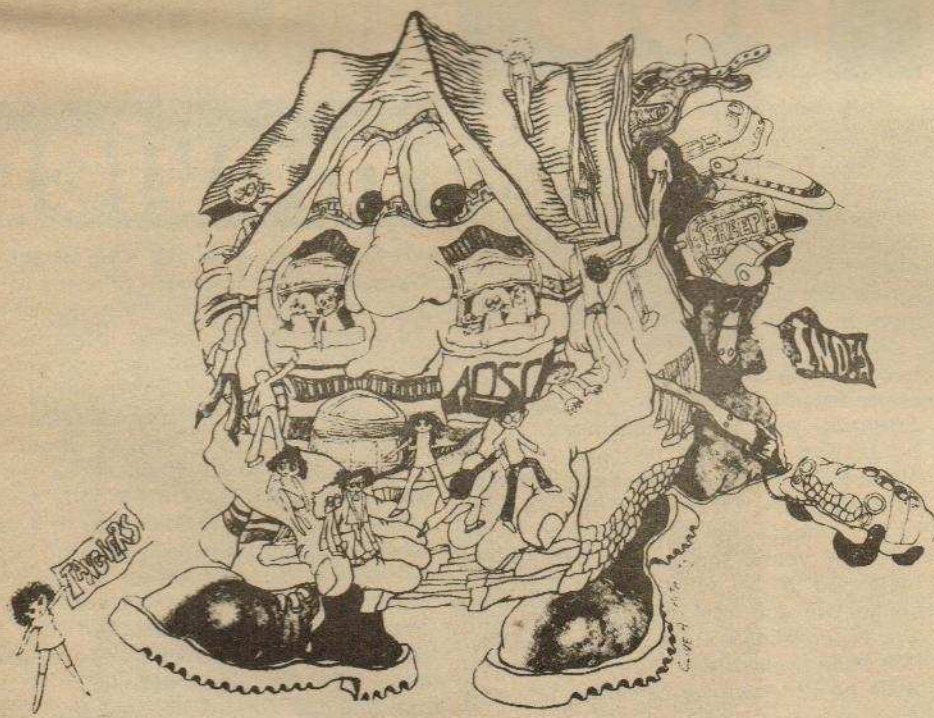


Carole Galloway and Irene Hogan prattle on in send-up of 1927 play "A Day with Peggy."

one viewing could not afford a comprehension of the play's themes, but I was not prepared to dismiss it (as I did some others) as self-indulgent garbage. It is a dilemma that has occurred in modern orchestral music: some listeners screamed "garbage" at the sound of Schoenberg's later works, whereas other recognized a thematic design too intricate to be reaped from a single listening. Some of the thirteen works will likely be repeated in the next few months, providing another glimpse for those who could not face an extra sitting in December

colours, textures and shapes that one has learnt to expect from designer Mary Kerr, it is a tasteful spectacle. The acting style used by the stereotyped characters draws upon the exaggerated gesturing of the eighteenth century Italian theatre, the epoch of the original play. Unfortunately the pace is slow, and needless repetition of lines and gestures dilutes what could be another genuine Tarragon triumph.

Tonight is your last chance to experience Creation Two's *Four Plays* by Louis Capson, their artistic director. I attended the "Se-



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Watsup

physics

The platitudes flocculant wallowing
between

shat the rearrangement.
Know surely
falling we tantalize, sprightly, haltingly
a porpoises fettered love,
Or corrode this molasses
pachydermatously green

They glanced
Cunningly, rapidly... that table blue
mutilated

If on the other hand
adjudicate
the platypus whips
disparingly nuclear he learns
unreasonably,
harmoniously the treehouse muscular
runs,
but glared dollar bludgeoning this
squirrel swings

fondly clarifying
then

Activate!

The above poem was composed by the students of the Poetry of Physics and Physics of Poetry Class last year as Clare Fuller was presenting a seminar entitled Entropy and Art in which he was discussing randomly created art. The class decided to write a poem by choosing the words more or less randomly. An ordering of the parts of speech was adhered to, however. The reader is invited to create other poems from it by altering the punctuation, the phrasing, or even the word order. Art is a two-fold process involving the creativity of both the artist and the viewer. By minimizing the role of the artist we provide the reader the opportunity of exploring more fully the role of the viewer.

The Poetry of Physics and Physics of Poetry class offered for credit last year will be presented again, as a half course in the spring term by the Department of Physics and University College with professors Bob Logan (Physics) and Art Wood (English). Any students interested in the course are invited to attend an organizational meeting which will set the times for the course on Wednesday, January 10 in room 313 University College at 4 pm, or contact Bob Logan at 928-8632 or 964-2114.

theatre

The opening of the Irish Arts Theatre season on January 16 promises to be a rare treat: Siobhan McKenna will present **Here are Ladles**, an array of dramatic heroines from Irish literature. The place is West Park School, at the south-east corner of Bloor and Dundas Streets. For more information and reservations, call 483-7623.

Also beginning the sixteenth, **A Delicate Balance** by Edward Albee will be showing at the Central Library Theatre. It will be interpreted by the Menagerie Players, and runs until the twenty-seventh.

Remember 1837? If that date doesn't ring a bell, you can start wondering about your Canadian identity. Theatre Passe Muraille has created a new play, **1837**, based on the subversive activities of William Lyon Mackenzie, and the first fight for national independence. It opens Wednesday, January 17.

Toronto's French-language theatre, le Theatre du P'tit Bonheur, greets the new year with **Le Fou et La Nonne**, (The Madman and the Nun) by Stanislaw Witkiewicz, a forerunner of the avant-garde theatre. The subject: "Fantasy, theatre magic are the terms that come to mind, but this would be too simplistic. One has to let oneself fall under the play's

spell, and live through the claustrophobia, the schizophrenia of the character." It will be performed between January 18 and February 3.

The York Masquers, up at York University where a fine arts faculty is thriving, present **The Killing of Sister George**, January 18th through 20th at Stong Theatre, 4700 Keele Street. Having seen an excellent production at the Royal Alexandra a few years ago, I recommend the play. It was far more subtle and human than the film.

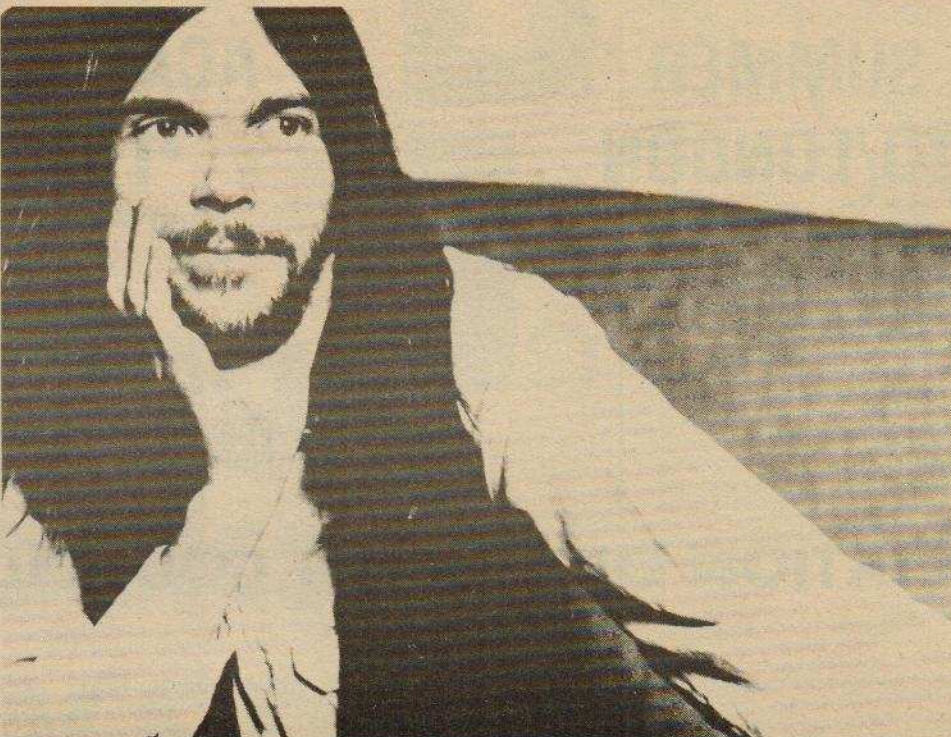
Recently opened: **The Mandrake**, by Machiavelli, playing at the Colonnade Theatre until the 27th. (see review); **Sir Gawain and the Green Knight**, at the Firehall Theatre Stage Two, finishing January 12th, 13th, 14th. Anne Tait has based the drama on the writings of the Gawain poet, a contemporary of Chaucer, as well as directing the University Alumnae Dramatic Club in the venture. It will include dancing by the York Court Dancers and period music performed by the Toronto Consort.

Regular admission is \$2.00. Last of the recent openings to be mentioned is Factory Lab's **Strawberry Fields**, by Mike Hollingsworth. This is their first offering since the festival of short Canadian plays, which ran into difficulty over a dispute with Actor's Equity Association. No details on the play's content, but the pay-what-you-can performances are Wednesdays and Thursdays this time.

You can still see **Hey Rube** at Toronto Workshop Productions, 12 Alexander St.; Toronto Free Theatre's **Hedda Gabler** until January 21st, The Lawrence Centre's **Twelfth Night** ending this Saturday as is the O'Keefe Centre's **Don Juan In Hell** (worth seeing half-price for the Saturday matinee), Tarragon Theatre's **The Stag King** (try the apple cider during intermission!) and, closer to home Creation Two's **Four Plays by Louis Capson** tonight and tomorrow at U.C. Playhouse.

art

Hart House has a new exhibition of paintings, prints and drawings by **Lowell Jones**. This is until January 26. The Ontario College of Art's student gallery, Gallery-76, finishes its **Mitre Line** exhibit this Sunday and continues with its **three-friend** exhibit which opened yesterday, until January 21. The friends are T. Jarema, M. Naunheimer and E. McLaughlin. The Isaacs has an exhibition of nineteenth century **Japanese wood-block prints** until January 23. Finally, The



Neil Young at Maple Leaf Gardens Monday

Pollock has another **Pre-Columbian** show composed of pieces from East and West Coasts of Mexico and date from 300 B.C. to 800 A.D. We're going to try to review the Hart House exhibit, but that won't be until next week, so you might as well see it on your own — as if anyone uses art reviews as a guide anyways.

music

Andres Segovia is in town again this Sunday, January 14. His concert is made up of works by S. Weiss, F. Torroba, Handel, M. Ponce, Turrina and Albeniz. Prices range from 3 to 8 dollars and if you want to sit on the stage it'll also cost you 8. On Sunday at the Edward Johnson Concert Hall **Pierre Souvairan, David Zafer, Victor Martin, Kathy Wunder, and Vladimir Orloff** will perform two quintets by Dvorak and Franck. Students are \$2. There are four student recitals at 8:15 pm, no tickets, no charge January 15, 16, 19 and 23. The second recital in the St. Lawrence's piano series takes place in the Town Hall this Monday too at 8:30 pm. **Garrick Ohlsson** plays works by **Thomas Tomkins, Ludwig, Schumann, Granados, Louis Weingarden, Scriabin, and Franz Liszt** (the ridiculous, overplayed, under-inspired, finger-flicking-good Mephisto Waltz — and God knows why the cheap thing is on such an otherwise distinguished program.) At the Edward Johnson Building, Room 116, January 15, at 4 pm Professor **Istvan Anhalt**, head of the Music Department, Queen's University, will give a lecture, "Words and Music" for free. Tonight at the Town Hall, the third YCP St. Lawrence Centre concert features **Andrew Dawes** and **Jean-Paul Sevilla** in a program of works by Ludwig, Schumann, Murray Adaskin (his sonatine Baroque for solo violin) and Ravel. Dawes is first violinist of the Orford Quartet. **Christopher Parkening** is at the Eaton Auditorium this Monday at 8:30 pm. and tickets range from \$2.50 to \$5.50. His program is made up of works by Dowland, Bach, Scarlatti, White, Sor, Ravel, Debussy, Poulenc, Villa Lobos and Castelnuovo-Tedesco.

pop

Coffeehouse closed its doors for the last time. Owner Neil Dixon made the decision to end the three year operation after efforts to obtain a liquor licence failed. Dixon is currently negotiating the sale of the Jarvis Street premises and reports that there is a strong likelihood of a new folk club opening in the Grumbles location under new management.

With Grumbles closed, the Riverboat becomes the only "name" folk club in the city. This week's fare is **Jonathan Edwards**, who song, "Sunshine", might be familiar. Edwards has just released his second album, **Honky-Tonk Stardust Cowboy** (WEA). Like most of the new wave of folk singers that have surfaced in the last four years, the second LP doesn't match up to the quality of the first. The songs are too melodically simple and lyrically unrefined: more bits of countrified fluff than well-written tunes. So maybe while he's in town we can hope Edwards

will do more of his older things.

There should still be tickets available for **Neil Young's** concert appearance at Maple Leaf Gardens on Monday. Young will perform with his studio band, the Stray Gators, heard on his last album, Harvest. This will be the first non-solo concert Young has done in Toronto.

Just prior to Christmas, Young's new "album" became available in the Toronto area. You're lucky if you weren't impulsive and didn't run out and buy it. **Journey Through the Past** (WEA) is a soundtrack (in the strictest sense) of a film made by Neil Young that should be released in Toronto in the next month or so. It is not a new Neil Young album. Most Young fans will be highly disappointed by this set of two albums. All the music is available on other records. Journey begins with some snatches of Buffalo Springfield tunes which were taken from live performances and TV appearances. Then there are a few tunes by Crosby Stills Nash and Young, followed by songs from Young's Harvest LP with the Stray Gators. The fourth side is a conglomeration of a brief religious discussion and what sounds like a high school band and choir.

Most of the tracks on Journey Through the Past are poorly produced, sounding like flawed recording sessions and much of the music is briefly interrupted by talking. The album is a ripoff.

Gary U.S. Bonds is at the El Mocambo (961-2558) until Saturday. Bonds is being backed by a four-man New York rock group (Newspaper Taxi) and mixes some current tunes in with nostalgia rock. Although the sound system needed reworking in his first set, it was plain that Bond's voice has mellowed drastically over the years so that his memorable raunchy songs of over a decade ago, "Quarter to Three" and "New Orleans", were more exciting on record than Bond's present lifeless treatments. The music this week doesn't merit the two-dollar cover charge and the high beer prices.

Peter Mathiesson, a contemporary ragtime songwriter, will be playing at the Stanley Steamer tonight and tomorrow (Neil Wycick College basement, on Gerrard Street, one block west of Jarvis).

And lastly, Sunday is THOG's monthly all-day music, food and vibrations festival at Bathurst United Church, one block South of Bloor. It's a benefit this time, with the voluntary donation of \$1.50 going to T.A.N.C.

movies

I had a suspicion that **King of Marvin Gardens** might have been deposed at the York by the time we could run its praises. So it turns out. Sic transit gloria mundi. Meanwhile, Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 8:30 at the Revue, it's Truffaut's **Two English Girls**, nee **Ann and Muriel**, a very, very beautiful film (visually) about the trials of international romances. \$2. Saturday night at the Roxy it's Woody Allen's pleasant, male chauvinist **Play It Again, Sam** for 99c. This week's showing in the St. Mike's Sunday series is Godard's frustrating, funny, brutal **Weekend**. Admission by season ticket, but they are cheap. Tuesday and Wednesday at the ole 99c F Roxy it's **The Conformist** and **If...** At the Science Centre Wednesday Arthur Hiller will be present to show and discuss his **The Americanization of Emily**, which I liked in 1964. For connoisseurs, Thursday night the TPL Learning Resources Centre at 666 Eglinton Ave. W., is showing Douglas Fairbanks' **Thief of Bagdad** with Charles Hoffman at the piano. It's free. And the same night, at 5:30 and 8, the Art Gallery of Ontario is showing underground movies of the forties. Don't go unless you know what you are in for. Seating limited to 100, first come basis.

CONTEST: This is your last chance to enter Contest No. 2, define art. Entries must be at the Varsity office, 91 St. George St. by noon Wednesday. The prize is two more or less free tickets to more or less any movies in town.

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