

BOOKSHELF

The Director's Craft

Appropriately subtitled "The Director As Voyeur," Barbara Leaming's *Polansky* is a sharply insightful biography of the Polish director. Leaming traces his preoccupation with violence, sexual frustration and obsessive peeking at intimacies to traumatic experiences in his youth and the turbulence of the times (*Simon & Shuster \$15.50*).

In *Ingmar Bergman: The Cinema As Mistress*, Philip Mosley finds the key to the director's metaphysical outlook in his early upbringing, his eventual estrangement from religion and in his deep concern for man's fate (*Boyars, 99 Main St., Salem, NH 03079; \$16*).

Joseph McBride's *Hawks On Hawks* is an illuminating montage of interviews in which the director discusses in practical terms his work methods, his fellow directors and his performers, offering young filmmakers invaluable advice in down-to-earth language (*U. of California Press \$29.50/11.95*).

An informative and entertaining biography, Ed Naha's *The Films of Roger Corman* quotes at length the director/producer - but mostly showman - while assessing Corman's pragmatic methods in combining tight budgets with respectable cinematic creativity (*Arco \$14.95*).

In *Eisenstein's Ivan the Terrible* by Kristin Thompson, a methodical analysis of the late Soviet director's classical masterpiece focuses on the "formal density" in its narrative/stylistic structures and use of complex sonic and visual elements, common to many of his other films (*Princeton U. Press \$32/12.50*).

The creativity and resourcefulness of Australian directors is revealed in David Stratton's lively study, *The Last New Wave*. The current renaissance of down-under filmmaking and its recognition on the international scene are put in perspective by a knowledgeable analysis of upcoming directors and their films (*Ungar \$19.95*).

Reference and Research

A comprehensive and useful catalog, H.K. Harrison's *The Mystery of Filters - II* is, as well, a remarkably informative historic guide to the use and properties of this essential adjunct to quality photography. All the varieties of available filters are listed and described as to their properties, effects, white light transmission characteristics, and such recent innovations as black dot texture screens, opticolor and the ingenious strip filter (*Harrison & Harrison, 6363 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90038; \$14.95*).

The first volume of the *Ariel Cinematographic Register* series, covering the holdings of the Deutsches Filmmuseum in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, includes some 300 camera manufactured during the last 60 years. Kodak, Debrrie, Pathé, Bell & Howell, Bolex, etc. cameras, mostly 16 and 8mm, are illustrated and described (in German) in this historically invaluable repertory, ably edited by Peter Ariel (Deutsches Filmmuseum, *DM 125, approx. \$50*).

Roger Crittenden's comprehensive guide, *Film Editing*, offers expert advice on the editing process, while relating it to other areas of filmmaking. Tape editing is also knowledgeably discussed in this excellent manual (*Thames & Hudson \$9.95*).

A bibliographical as well as historic survey, *Animation: A Reference Guide* by Thomas W. Hoffer presents a significant, extensive review of the genre, listing and reviewing publications of all types dealing with animation. This is a choice source of general information on that creative medium (*Greenwood Press \$35*).

All nominees and winners of the five uppermost American entertainment honors - Oscars, Emmys, Tonys, Grammys and Pulitzer Prize Plays - are listed from their inception through 1981 in an impressive and serviceable compilation, *Variety: Major US Showbusiness Awards*, painstakingly edited by Mike Kaplan (*Garland \$50*).

The 1982 edition of *Audiovisual Market Place*, a standard multimedia guide, provides a thoroughgoing register of services, supplies and sources, available in the US and Canada. It lists AV software producers, distributors and service firms, AV hardware manufacturers and dealers, plus a directory of companies, key personnel and related data (*Bowker \$39.95*).

An authoritative and exhaustive compilation, the *1980 Annual Index to Motion Picture Credits* covers all films shown in the Los Angeles area during the year. Fully cross-referenced,

this basic record provides all pertinent data on production, release, director, writer, cinematographer, cast and crew (*Greenwood Press \$150, standing order \$115*).

Personalities on Parade

In *Mae West: A Biography*, George Eells and Stanley Musgrove offer a lively, well-researched and highly readable portrait of the timeless superstar, symbol of a sexy acting style she virtually created (*Morrow \$15.50*).

The complex personality of Jane Fonda is perceptively analyzed in two current biographies: *Jane Fonda: The Actress In Her Time* by Fred Lawrence Guiles and *Jane Fonda: Heroine For Our Time* by Thomas Kiernan. While both books present colorful and detailed accounts of her screen career and her political involvements, Guiles emphasizes Fonda's individual confrontations with society, and Kiernan accents society's reaction to her dynamic lifestyle (*Doubleday \$16.95 and Dellilah \$9.95*).

The impact of politics on the film industry is assessed in a timely and significant memoir. Screenwriter Lester Cole, one of the unbowed Hollywood Ten, offers a vivid and fighting recollection of those turbulent times in

Hollywood Red. Not one to forgive and forget, he vigorously asserts the correctness of his views as he details the ideological quarrels, judicial persecutions and personal tragedies that left their mark on so many of his generation (*Ramparts Press, Palo Alto, CA 94308; \$12.95*).

Louise Brooks, the sexy silent era star now a cult figure, presents in her autobiography, *Lulu In Hollywood*, a searing indictment of the movie industry, exposing film executives' brutal tactics and luridly extravagant ways that caused her to desert the Hollywood stages for Europe's more congenial artistic environment (*Knopf \$15*).

A paradoxical nature hidden under a veneer of debonair nonchalance is Lionel Godfrey's assessment, in *Cary Grant: The Light Touch*, of the consistently popular actor during his 31-year film career (*St. Martin's \$10.95*).

George L. George ●

George L. George is an active member of the Directors Guild of America. He was a production manager at the NFB in 1942. During his long career as a film director he won an Academy Award for his dramatic short Toward Independence.

Eugene Maryon Buia 1944-1982

Eugene Maryon Buia was born in the Chinese year of the Monkey (1944) and died three days after his 38th birthday in this year of the Dog (1982). Both events took place in Romania - the Balkan nation currently ruled by the communist dictator Ceaucescu.

Suzanne White, in her "Book of Chinese Chance," describes men born in Monkey years this way: "What words will describe this darling lunatic of a man? The thought of Monkey men conjures an image of Federico Fellini's (Monkey, 1920) maddest movies superimposed on Charlie Parker's (Monkey, 1920) most far-out chord changes, and somehow mysteriously jelled into a persona not unlike that outspoken curiosity seeker we all know as Howard Cosell (Monkey, 1920). It is not fair to say that they are all a little cuckoo, but that's about as close as I can come."

Eugene Buia nurtured dreams of becoming a famous film director; the music closest to his soul was the piercing wail of the primitive panpipes, but to make his living he worked for years as a broadcast journalist, in radio and television.

Eugene was a little cuckoo, to be sure. An East European merry prankster, blessed with Charlie Chaplin's vulnerability and cursed with the ego of Alexander the Great. "I am Macedonian," he used to explain, pronouncing the word with a "ch" sound in his accented English which kept him from getting staff positions in Canadian broadcasting.

When I first laid eyes on Eugene in a Montreal cutting room a dozen years ago, he was a dark-skinned, black bearded immigrant with a sheepskin cap, who had trouble explaining to me in broken English that he wanted a job. He looked more like a goatherd than a filmmaker, so I sent him away. After he returned every day for a week, it turned



out that he picked up enough Italian during a six-month stint in a Milano refugee camp, so I hired him as the assistant director for the Italian version of the film I was working on.

Eugene was somewhat of a black sheep in his homeland. Unable to study film, his first love, due to incredible entry restrictions at the Romanian film school, he became a journalist and got into the Bucharest Film Studios on assignment. He managed to endear himself with the small circle of feature film people, and worked for a time as an assistant on several costumed dramas. He and his family, however, fell out of political favor, and he was declared *persona non grata* around the studios. That's when he hatched his plot to flee. Eugene made his way through Bul-

garia to Greece and across the Bosphorus to Istanbul. He managed to buy a forged passport and travelled to Italy, where he was promptly arrested for possessing false documents. He spent some time in prison, before his status as a refugee was clarified.

The United Nations issued him a *bona fide* refugee passport, and with this he travelled to Montreal. He applied for Canadian landed immigrant status, and five years later he recorded a radio documentary for CBC as he was sworn in as a Canadian citizen in a Toronto court room. Pledging fidelity to Queen Elizabeth and all her heirs, somehow came out "all her hairs" on the radio.

Both of us settled in Toronto, I to start up this cycle of Cinema Canada maga- (cont. on p. 57)



● The skillful Megan Follows and the competent Diane Leblanc

nenberg's own interpretation is followed, *The Broad* — were seen primarily from the point of view of the parents. *Jen's Place* stands virtually alone (except for parts of Robert M. Young's *Rich Kids*) in being primarily from the point of view of the child.

When Jen Tell (Megan Follows) comes home from summer camp to find that her father has moved out, she is naturally upset: not so much because her parents have split, but because they did it behind her back, and arranged custody and visiting rights without allowing her, at the age of 14, to have any input.

At first, she takes the classic approach and runs away, hoping to force her parents back together. But soon Jen reaches a more logical conclusion, and at the suggestion of her friend Suzanne, tries to find a lawyer to represent her interests. This is not as easy as it seems, as there is considerable hostility to child advocacy law, even in the legal profession. She does, however, eventually find someone to take her case, Miles Massey (Martin Doyle), and together they work out a new arrangement. Jen will try it her parents' for a month, and then decide with whom she wants to live.

The great strength of Salzman's and Yates' approach is its straightforwardness. Unlike a lot of books and films about teenage problems, they do not try to load Jen down with every kind of situation imaginable. Jen isn't worried about her looks, or "going all the way" with a boyfriend, or even about school — she just wants to be able to make up her mind about where she's going to live, and she resents not being allowed to do so — hence the double meaning of the title. In a feature format this simplicity would have been a drawback, but, in an hour-long television slot, it gives the central drama the kind of power it needs.

This power is all the more noteworthy, because it helps to cover up weaknesses in the script that in a longer version would be crippling. Jen's parents, though competently played by Diana Leblanc and Michael Kirby, do not have much depth. She is primarily embittered and resentful throughout the first part of the story, and he is revealed as shallow and deceitful. There is no analysis beyond that. Martin Doyle, as the lawyer, is also something of a stereotype of the laid-back crusader; the kind of person who volunteers to be a *pro forma* New Democratic candidate in solid Conservative ridings.

What carries *Jen's Place*, though, is Megan Follows' performance as Jen. In her skillful and sympathetic portrayal, she cleverly underplays the role, and so Jen appears as an ordinary teenager with ordinary desires and fears. And the point she makes, that when a family breaks up, everyone, including the kids, should have their legal say, is an important one. Megan Follows' success in this role bodes well for her future career,

which has the potential to be in the same league as Kristy McNichol and Jodie Foster. It's a further comment on the sad state of Canadian film and television production that she won't do it here.

J. Paul Costabile ●

JEN'S PLACE p./d. Rebecca Yates, Glen Salzman p. man. Janet Cuddy sc. John Lazarus, Michael Glassbourg 1st. asst. d. Karen Lee Hall 2nd. asst. d. Howard Rotschild p. sec. Michelle Sirois loc. man. Barbara Kelly cont. Pauline Harlow p. asst. Beth Boignon art d. Barbara Dunphy asst. art d. Jo-ann Ladenheim wardrobe Maureen Gurney props Greg Pelchat make-up Lee Lanham art dept. p.a. Patrick Moore d.o.p. Rene Ohashi asst. camera John Hobson sd. Tom Hiderly boom Michael Lacroix gaffer Maris Jansons grip Chris Dean asst. grip Benjie Wilkinson 2nd. unit cam. Paul Mitchnick 2nd. unit asst. cam. Kathryn Robertson 2nd. unit boom Carol McBride stills William Deacon cast. Deirdre Bowen mix. Wally Weaver ed. Malrin Wilkinson, James Lahti music Rainer Wiens l.p. Megan Follows, Diana Leblanc, Michael Kirby, Martin Doyle, Sarah Levy, Margaret Dragu, Susan Rubes, Ivan Hall, Brendan McKane, Michael Ball, Brenda Kamino, Gail Kerbel, Diane Douglas, Diana Belshaw, Lee Max Walton p.c.: CineFlics Ltd. in association with CBC and CFDC colour 16mm. running time: 55 min.

Philip Jackson's **Rites of Passage**

In 1979 filmmaker Philip Jackson spent a year in Paris. One of the projects he worked on during that time was *Rites of Passage*, a 12-minute short about his impressions of the canals that weave through the city. Deliberately avoiding tourist clichés, Jackson leads us up the Seine River, passing beneath the bridges which, as he puts it, "span not only the river, but the centuries."

The film is an exploration of perception, using the camera the way an impressionist painter uses his brush: sight becomes a series of glimpses, coloured by subjective mood, determined by how carefully the eye or camera studies the play of light and dark, or the blend of colours, and the effect of movement.

The conjunction (often disjunction) of sound and picture in *Rites of Passage* adds another dimension. The film opens and closes on a note of foreboding as one bridge becomes another to the theme music from *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. This sequence gives way to a nighttime shot of the lights of barges and cruisers as they glide under a bridge, enhanced by a mysterious, almost discordant electronic score. Further shots of the Seine, and Notre Dame which, seen from the water, are coupled with Gregorian chants, reminiscent of a spiritual and medieval past. The editing pace of the film is slow, staggered, and the shots from a wide-angled Bolex lens misty and evocative. The mood wanders

from the somber and portentous to the whimsical, as Gregorian chants give way to "April Song" and "Porcelain Doll," while the camera circles around statues and gargoyles.

Through Jackson's subjective camera, the bridges and canals become a symbol of man's attempt to create something lasting in the face of the ever-changing. There is a mystical feel to the film, a sense that this voyage is on a level of consciousness much deeper than the day-to-day lives of the people we see walking along the water's edge. *Rites of Passage* is similar, both thematically and stylistically, to another film Jackson shot at that time. *The Sorcerer's Eye* is also a mystical exploration of symbols of the past (in this case ruins of two medieval fortresses in northeastern France.) And Jackson's current project, a science fiction called *Music of the Spheres*, involves a medieval concept about the celestial music of an earth-centred universe.

Rites of Passage is not solely preoccupied with the weight of the past. Close-ups of sunlight shimmering on the water and a bird flying overhead serve to remind us of a reality beyond the man-made and man-lived. A final shot of industrial cranes silhouetted against the sunset shows these two forces co-existing, a symbol of days to come.

The film has the brooding nature of an artist's year of introspection. It also has a North American's awe of European oldness. If certain passages lack structure or a sense of continuity, the images themselves are compelling, and certain moments are truly very beautiful.

Daphne Ballon ●

BITES OF PASSAGE p./d. Philip Jackson camera Philip Jackson sd. mix Patrick Spence-Thomas ed. Jackson assisted by Kenneth Gordon neg. cut. Ken Cox p.c. Lightscape Motion Picture Company Ltd. colour 16mm running time: 11 min. 42 sec.

Buia (cont. from p. 34)

zine, and Eugene to study film for four years at York University. We were both active during the formative years of the Toronto Filmmakers Co-op, with Eugene and I collaborating on a documentary film on senior citizens. Making independent films on spec was no way to make a living even then, so Eugene started to free-lance for CBC radio, making gripping documentary items, mostly on ethnic subjects.

Femlibbers used to get enraged at his apparent male chauvinism. What they rarely realized was that Eugene was merely reminding them of the other half of the universe, the male half. Actually he loved women, and among circles of intimate friends he would allow his inner tenderness to show. He had an on-again off-again relationship with a woman from the Caribbean whom he met in Montreal, and after living with her for a number of years, she bore him a son. Eugene dedicated his last major film, *Letter to Vietnam*, to his son Ian (pronounced "Yahn") and to ethnic children everywhere.

The christening of a newborn baby forms the most powerful image in one of Eugene's earlier films which he called *I am a Gypsy*. After being immersed three times in holy water to ward off evil spirits, the gypsy baby is held up for all to see and the image is frozen on the screen as the cry of the newborn pierces our ears. This image of an immigrant child born in the new land of promise was used to help launch Toronto's multicultural television station, when MTV first went on the air.

Eugene worked three days without sleep to assemble the proper series of images for that inaugural broadcast. For many concerned with ethnic realities in Canada, the birth of MTV was a sign of hope. Eugene worked very hard for six months as a staff producer at the new station, finally having all the facilities of a large broadcast centre at his command. Hopefully some of the shows he did are still preserved in the archives. The few I saw showed his development as a visual documentary producer maturing as never before. Unfortunately, the management of MTV were more concerned with mining the gold of commercial revenues and less with producing quality programming. More and more of the shows were imported from abroad for peanuts, and Eugene was dismissed in the wake of an internal

power struggle.

But above all, Eugene was a survivor. He mastered the art of living and producing good material, all on a shoe-string.

When news of his death reached me, I was incredulous at first, thinking it was another one of his pranks. The last time we spoke on the phone he sounded disheartened and advised me to stay where I was out west since not much was happening in Toronto. He applied to the Explorations Program of the Canada Council to finish his autobiography, and asked me to write a letter of support. I understand he received the grant, which is now in trust for his son's support.

The circumstances of his death are curious at best. He went back to Romania for a visit, primarily to see his father who is said to be near death. In order to finance the trip, Eugene undertook to research several stories while there. CITY-TV in Toronto was interested in background on the Romanian biochemist Dr. Mihai Leontopol, a specialist in a rare skin disease, who was on his way to Canada. The billion dollar CANDU nuclear reactor sale to Romania was the second story. The third, I understand, had to do with two Romanian journalists, reportedly ordered killed in Paris by Ceaucescu himself.

Eugene had travelled back to Romania more than once before, the last time in early 1982, during which time he claimed that the secret police vandalized his car. Eugene Buia left behind a letter dated July 26th, 1982, in which he outlines the purpose of his trip and very clearly states that if something happens to him on this trip, his friends here should suspect foul play.

External Affairs in Ottawa have decided to accept the official Romanian version of Eugene Buia's death. They stated that the Canadian consul in Bucharest, "who is an experienced, senior diplomat," was present at Mr. Buia's autopsy, and "as far as he can determine," the Romanian version of the events is accurate.

As the official story goes, Eugene Buia was driving out of Romania's on the highway from Bucharest when, 60 kilometers from the Yugoslav border, his car swerved to avoid a truck and hit a tree.

George Csaba Koller ●