California at Los Angeles film school (where Don Shebib also studied) that he had no need for a degree and it was time to get to work.

Back in Canada he made Eat Anything, a film he loved making but found the reception to be "a real disappointment." "It's a good film," he says, "a really beautiful honest film about human beings." Made in 1970 it presents about 25 people he really liked, doing natural things like playing the guitar or talking about their marriage, interspersed with Toronto shots and concluded with comments they make about their feelings about God. The CBC turned the film down.

This film is with his others at the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre waiting for viewers. Ewing couldn't care less about how much money he makes on it, but he would like people to see it.

Ewing continued to accumulate experience. He worked on David Sector's The Offering, Don Shebib's Goin' Down the Road, starred in David Cronenberg's Stereo and Crimes of the Future, acted and sang his own music in Clarke Mackey's The Only Thing You Know, worked on a film in India as a soundman, and returned to photograph his sister, Judy Steed's, film It's Going to Be All Right, and make a 20 minute short for the CBC Bo Diddley's Back in Town, (of which they ran seven minutes one Weekend).

And still he couldn't get a feature film underway or convince the CFDC to part with some of the $120,000 he needed to produce his love-story script.

So he decided to make a skinflick.

He found a friend who agreed to foot $4000 for film stock, and a real estate entrepreneur who finally invested some $20,000. And with director Ed Hunt, another filmmaker whose heart wasn't really in the filmflesh business, Diary of a Sinner was shot right on schedule in 13 days last summer at Kew Beach and a rented Toronto house with a total budget of $65,000 of which only $23,000 cash was actually spent.

The deferrals and debts will be cleaned up if the film makes money. Danton distributor's Dan Weinzeig thinks they may make enough right in Canada to break even, and has already confirmed bookings for Hamilton, Oshawa, London, Winnipeg, a drive-in chain and Montreal in the fall.

So now that producer lain Ewing and director Ed Hunt have a success with Diary of a Sinner will they do much more than establish good credit ratings for future films with it?

Not likely. Intrinsically the film is weak, and as Ewing modestly admits, "... has a lot of flaws due to inexperience and the conditions under which it was made." Oddly enough, though the story line is a far different thing, the virtues and weaknesses in Diary of a Sinner are similar to those in Ewing's early Picaro. Again there are sequences that seem strangely out of place, and swift style shifts in which disturbingly honest revealing scenes are interspersed with unreal and fantastical episodes too suddenly. It continues to suggest a potential for something better.

In the Diary at one point two girls talk frankly about their feelings about death and suicide, while the pimp and ex-priest wait in the park outside impatient with evil intentions. The girls, photographed and lit with spectacular beauty by Jock Brandis, seem to be an insert from some other, fascinating film.

The audience of carefully distanced single males watching the film when I attended, seemed engrossed and satisfied. But what they saw was innocence itself compared to the fare the serious film buff finds in every second film.

For instance in a shower sequence two couples slather soap on each other as enthusiastically as ten year olds, giving the scene a wholesome playfulness that is a far cry from the sensuous lathering scene in Tesghihara's Woman in the Dunes. Ewing mentioned that the censors cut about five minutes. They cut the end of the shower scene for example though he couldn't see why, since the end was the same as the beginning. "Maybe," he suggested, "they just felt, 'That's enough of that!'"

Anyhow, any skinflick in which a jaded nearly 30 pimp (played by Ewing) in confessing to his lusty ex-priest pal begins with, "I love Union Station", can't be all bad. And the shots of the station, the city, the lake, and the Kew Beach district as well as the girls and the beautiful pink-glowing body of professional Calla Bianca doing a gorgeous strip, keep the visuals always interesting.

To top it all, Bo Diddley, a friend of Ewing's, made music, and the music is fine.

-Natalie Edwards

Diary of a Sinner

Sophisticated audiences have many defences against the moral appeal of a work of art. Popular audiences, on the other hand, are suspicious of artistic pretentiousness. So the artist with an urgent moral vision of the world is forced to choose between artistry, which will alienate the vulgar, and morality, which will be wasted on the cultured. Faced with this dilemma, writer-director-producer lain Ewing and his faithful director Ed Hunt have chosen to preserve the integrity of their moral vision and to risk neglect by the arthouse crowd. Like a Salvation Army band, they play a simple tune for simple ears. Following Pleasure Palace, a drama of redemptive love in the sordid underworld of nude modelling, their second film, entitled Diary of a Sinner, opened recently at the Coronet Theatre on Yonge Street.

The simple story, told in a series of abruptly disconnected episodes, concerns a suicide pact forced upon a lonely and sex-starved ex-priest (Tom) by his debauched but world-weary fellow roomer (Dave). Perceiving in Tom the death wish that lurks in all humanity, Dave (played by lain Ewing himself) proposes a week of unbridled sexual licence, to be followed by the suicide of whichever one of them the toss of a coin shall decide. Tom consents and asks to wallow in sex until he is sick of it. And wallow they do, in every beastly vice that Toronto can offer, from the body-rub parlours of Yonge St. to Discipline and Bondage in a basement in North Rosedale. But before the week is up Tom has grown weary of the fruitless quest for self-abandonment in pleasure. Out of his nausea and chagrin he is entranced by the image of Simone, a pure and lovely woman in the thrall of an evil heroin pusher and abattoir operator. To win her love he offers to kill this monster, in which undertaking Dave readily assists, since his own true love (Joan) was debauched by the very same man. None the less, Dave still demands fulfillment of the pact. Proving his manhood to the newly-won Simone, Tom accepts the challenge. Dave loses the toss and promptly plunges into the polluted waters of Lake Ontario.

Regarded as a low-mimetic fiction, Diary of a Sinner might appear somewhat implausible in conception and more than a little crude in execution. But such a view would fail to recognize the archetypal skeleton concealed in the
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paradise, we can almost hear him say,
this is Hell, nor am l out of
a chaotically incoherent character - jo-
vial, sinister, chivalrous, harsh, giggly,
romantic, cynical, tit-crazy - it is be-
cause he embodies the very essence of
Chaos itself. Disintegrated by nihilism
and satiety, he is incarnate Evil, offering
nothing but oblivion and death.

Defying the superficial conventions
that represent Evil as hideous and in-
human, lain Ewing shows us the pathos
of a soul whose fall into the void has
been from a height of clear idealism.
There is pathos in his story of Joan, the
girl enslaved by the heroin pusher, and
pathos in his thwarted desire to be a
rock singer, the brightest of them all.
Like Lucifer, he was once a bright angel,
and in his fallen state, seeking to put
the cold touch of nihilism and death upon
other souls, there is manifest self-hatred.

As he says, in a line that captures the
lean economy of the film's dialogue: "I
never loved Joan; it was only a game."
His vindictive hatred of woman, and of
all idealism, is the face of idealism gone
sour. As he offers to Tom the dismal
satisfactions of his own infernal exis-
tence, which Tom at first perceives as
paradise, we can almost hear him say,
with Marlowe's Mephistophilis, "Why
this is Hell, nor am I out of it!"

It is a mark of Ewing's daring intui-
tion that his characterization of Evil
goes so far as to encompass the grotes-
quely comic. Traditionally of course, sin
is indeed absurd, a travesty of true
humanity made in God's image. While
Tom's erotic encounters lead upward to
Love with the pure Simone, lain's gross
couplings touch bottom when he is as-
saulted in a basement by lady-wrestlers
in Viking costumes. Squawking feebly
for help, he is held down and lashed on
his chubby pink buttocks - an image of
infantile impotence. Evil is overcome by
being rendered ludicrous.

Playing opposite this suburban Satan,
Tom Celli gradually invests the pro-
tonist with spiritual dignity and moral
grandeure. As an ex-priest he embodies
the thwarted desire for a transcendent
faith, at once vulnerable to lain's delu-
sive promise of erotic bliss, and hungry
for a higher satisfaction. Out of the dark
night of the soul in which the Tempter
has found him, there comes the re-
awakening of the spirit. He communicates
to lain his insight that "Material-
ism is the religion of modern man",
and begins to yearn for less barren
gratifications. He talks derisively of
Catholicism, agrees to hear lain's "con-
fession", and even engages in a rather
perfunctory Black Mass at lain's sugges-
tion. Yet we can see that, even as he
parodies his priestly function, he is re-
covering his conviction of its meaning.
At the same time, lain, while he initiates
these mockeries of faith, implicitly
acknowledges its power. The gamble for
Tom's soul has become the harrowing of
what remains of his own. The heart of
the film is the sequence following the
Black Mass: in a surreal fantasy (in
tinted monochrome) lain nails down the
lid of a coffin over Tom - an image
expressive of the essentially annihilating
nature of his patronage.

But the vestiges of lain's humanity
continue to compete with his Despair
(the sin for which there is no for-
giveness). In spite of himself, and in
memory of his love for Joan, he helps
Tom to vanquish the beast who has
imprisoned Simone. Only after learning
of Joan's death does his hatred for life
cause him to demand fulfillment of the
pact that will result in Tom's, or his
own destruction. He has performed a
saving act in assisting Tom to the real-
ization of a redeeming love. But for him
there is no salvation. The filthy waters,
to which he has earlier compared his
soul, close over him.

The vision of modern life, or more
particularly of Toronto life, displayed in
Diary of a Sinner is melancholy indeed.
The spirit that animates the screenplay
is a bleakly tragic one. For although the
plot depicts the redemption of a soul by
Love for spiritual desolation, the char-
acter with whom the author has chosen
to identify cannot find redemption for
himself. Indeed, it is just his diseased
vision of a loveless, depraved, vicious
world which Tom needs to be rescued
from. In other words, Diary of a Sinner
is a fantasy in which lain Ewing de-
strs himself in order to save the inno-

cence which his own nihilism endangers.
A sacrificial act of the imagination, it is
a Faust story written by one of the
damned who retains enough love for his
former brethren, for his unfallen self, to
commit suicide rather than to spread
damnation further. lain Ewing is a char-
acter out of Graham Greene, a saint
who volunteers for Hell.

Robert Fothergill
Love at First Sight
She takes one look and BAM — it's love
at first sight. But what is wrong with
Dick and why does he call himself Roy,
and in what way is he disabled?

By the time you know, the belated
title has told you that Love at First
Sight is a film by Rex Bromfield starr-
ing Valeri Bromfield and Dan Akroyd,
and you can settle back for a cheerful
half-hour with one of the most human,
ordinary, funny and engaging Canadian
couples ever: Roy and Shirley.
She's like the essence of Judy Hollis-
day. One of those crazy dames who
walk past the gates of hell, chewing
bubble gum and reading aloud from a
tourist guide. Dime but delightful.

And he's tall, dark, and in Shirley's
opinion, obviously handsome, but with
a difference: he has a disability. It's the
kind of thing that in the hands of
playwright David French creates a dia-
strate, but blooming under Bromfield's
touch, only accentuates the vulnerable,
incomplete qualities of man. Everyone
has some flaw. But if you're in love, like
Shirley, you hardly even notice.

Love is blind. And so is Roy.

Did you automatically flinch? Not to
worry. Bromfield isn't out to create
false heroes, sloppy sentimentality or
to moralize. Roy's blindness doesn't
make him tragic or incapable. Shirley
doesn't seem a hero, not that much faser.
Shirley anyway. And as Bromfield sets
up the story so that you don't have to
feel pity or concern, you are able to
nervously enjoy the very human pre-
dicaments this couple get into on their
visit to Niagara Falls.

For instance: While Shirley waits
impatiently in the car, Roy enters a thin
woods to relieve himself out of sight of
the road.

"Can you see me?" he calls.

With the exasperation that indicates
this has been going on some time, she
answers, "Yes."

After awhile he calls again. "Can you
see me now?"

"Yes! Go further!" she calls.

Finally, his voice again: "Now can
you see me?"

"No! Roy! Where are you?" she
panics, realizing neither of them know.

This scene finally melted even a
sophisticated Cannes audience this year.
As Bromfield exclaimed with happy
relief: "It really broke them up."

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