

Actors On/Off Screen

Charlton Heston, one of Hollywood's eminently articulate and civic-minded stars, puts down in **The Actor's Life** his candid impressions and thoughts about himself and his career. Covering in concise entries the 1956-76 period, it is one of the most illuminating diaries kept by a performer whose interests and concerns often transcend his professional activities (Dutton \$12.95).

Director Vilgot Sjoman "I'm Curious Yellow/Blue" reprints in **L 136: Diary with Ingmar Bergman** the taped record of his apprenticeship with Bergman during the filming of "Winter Light." It is a highly informative insight into the director's personality and methods, and a uniquely perceptive document on the creative film process (Karoma, 3133 Bolgos Circle, Ann Arbor, MI 48105; \$9.95/4.50).

Christina Crawford, Joan Crawford's adopted daughter, gets even with her adoptive parent in a blistering memoir, **Mommie Dearest**. She describes in bitter detail the humiliating punishments that followed extravagant gifts and the insane rages of a woman who never managed to reconcile her needs as a star with her duties as a mother (Morrow \$9.95).

John Hughes, in **Bernadette Lafont**, transcribes a taped interview he recently had in New York with the spirited French actress, in which she talks intelligently and frankly of her films, her fellow-actors, and the directors who guided her career (N.Y. Zoetrope, 31 E. 12 St., NYC 10003; \$3).

The story of a really nice guy whose success didn't go to his head (at least so far), **Travolta** by Michael Reeves is mainly a photobiography, but with enough text to satisfy the legitimate curiosity of his innumerable fans (Jove \$1.95).

In **Private Elvis**, Diego Cortez has assembled an appealing album of Presley's life as a G.I. doing his army service in Germany. Elvis generally maintains his composure, but the *fräuleins* sure go gaga over their idol (Two Continents \$6).

Academy Award winning George L. George is a film director who does film book reviews in Canada, France and the U.S.

Themes and Variations

The fight to abolish film censorship for adults, as it occurred in England in the early 70's, is told by Enid Wistrich, chairperson of the Greater London Film Viewing (censorship) Board (1974-75). Her memoir, "**I Don't Mind the Sex, It's the Violence**": **Film Censorship Explored**, is a fascinating, detailed account of a courageous and reasonable campaign faced with the usual prejudice and ignorance masquerading as high-minded or traditionalist principles (Boyars \$9.95).

A definitive study, edited by Herbert Marshall, **Eisenstein's The Battleship Potemkin** offers a comprehensive view of what is probably the most celebrated film ever made. The book assembles a broad international collection of writings that consider the film as an artistic achievement and a political event, together with Eisenstein's own account of its conception and filming (Avon \$7.95).

An impressive import from the USSR, **Designers of Soviet Films** reproduces 248 elaborate sketches in black and white and color of movie sets created by Soviet artists. The designs are aesthetically quite striking and their rendering most imaginative, as pointed out in T. Silantieva's English language introduction to this large format book edited by M.A. Bogdanov (Imported Publications, 320 W. Ohio St., Chicago, IL 60610; \$27).

In **Camerado: Hollywood and the American Man**, Donald Spoto examines perceptively the changing masculine image projected in US films by such actors as Gable, Peck, Brando, Cagney, Grant and others and assesses its impact on our cultural attitudes and social patterns (NAL/Plume \$4.95).

Brandon French explores the cinematic roots of women's liberation in his stimulating study, **On the Verge of Revolt: Women in American Films of the Fifties**. He finds that in such films as "Sunset Boulevard," "The Country Girl," "Some Like It Hot" and others, the seeds of emancipation sprouted from the breaking of traditional family and societal ties (Ungar \$9.95/3.95).

Bernard B. Dick's **Anatomy of Film** is a well conceived work that analyses with competence and erudition the structural components of the medium — camera and sound techniques, editing

process, visual effects and narrative devices, as well as the theory and practice of film criticism (St. Martin's \$10/5.95).

The history of American gangster films is persuasively traced by Eugene Rosow in **Born to Lose**. This riveting and meticulous study brings out the parallel rise of capitalist/urban society and organized crime, as closely reflected in the equivocal appeal of the genre's outstanding examples (Oxford U. Press \$19.95).

An engaging and solidly documented book by Alex Barris, **Hollywood According to Hollywood** examines the film industry's narcissistic tendencies, a recurrent self-fascination running the gamut from the trivial to the tragic, and the sentimental to the sordid (Barnes \$17.50).

A perennial cult for monumental pageantry, spectacular battles, superhuman heroism is the subject of **The Hollywood Epic**, Foster Hirsch's knowledgeable survey of a style ranging from D.W. Griffith's "Intolerance" to De Mille's "King of Kings" and Kubrick's "Barry Lyndon" (Barnes \$15).

The World of Video

How the American Broadcasting Company successfully handled the television aspects of the 1976 Montreal Olympics is engagingly told by Bert Randolph Sugar in "**The Thrill of Victory**." It is an exciting episode in this revealing story of ABC-TV, the network whose coverage of sports has no equal in scale or know-how (Hawthorn \$12).

The history of French television, from the 1950 inception of regular telecasts up to 1959, is narrated by Henri Spade in **L'album de famille de la télévision française**, an attractive, intimate and well illustrated volume (Laffont, Paris, F49).

An anecdotal survey of the American video advertising industry, Jonathan Price's **The Best Thing on TV: Commercials** is a slick, readable and entertaining book whose premise is that commercials are often more fun to watch than the programs they interrupt. Producing TV spots presents challenges that Price explores with considerable knowledge, crediting ad agencies and filmmakers with creativity and salesmanship (Penguin \$7.95, Viking \$14.95).