

Lenny: A question of authenticity

Lenny, at the Londonderry A, is a film about making a film about Lenny Bruce. It is organized around a sequence of interviews, by someone involved with the prospective film, of the people close to Lenny: his wife, Honey, superbly played by Valerie Perrine; Stanley Beck, his agent, played by Artie Silver; and Sally Marr, his mother, played by Jan Miner. Punctuating the 'interviews' are a number of flashbacks, making up the real story-line in the film; presented in chronological sequence they extend from the early 1950's to 1966. And here Dustin Hoffman appears, playing Lenny Bruce.

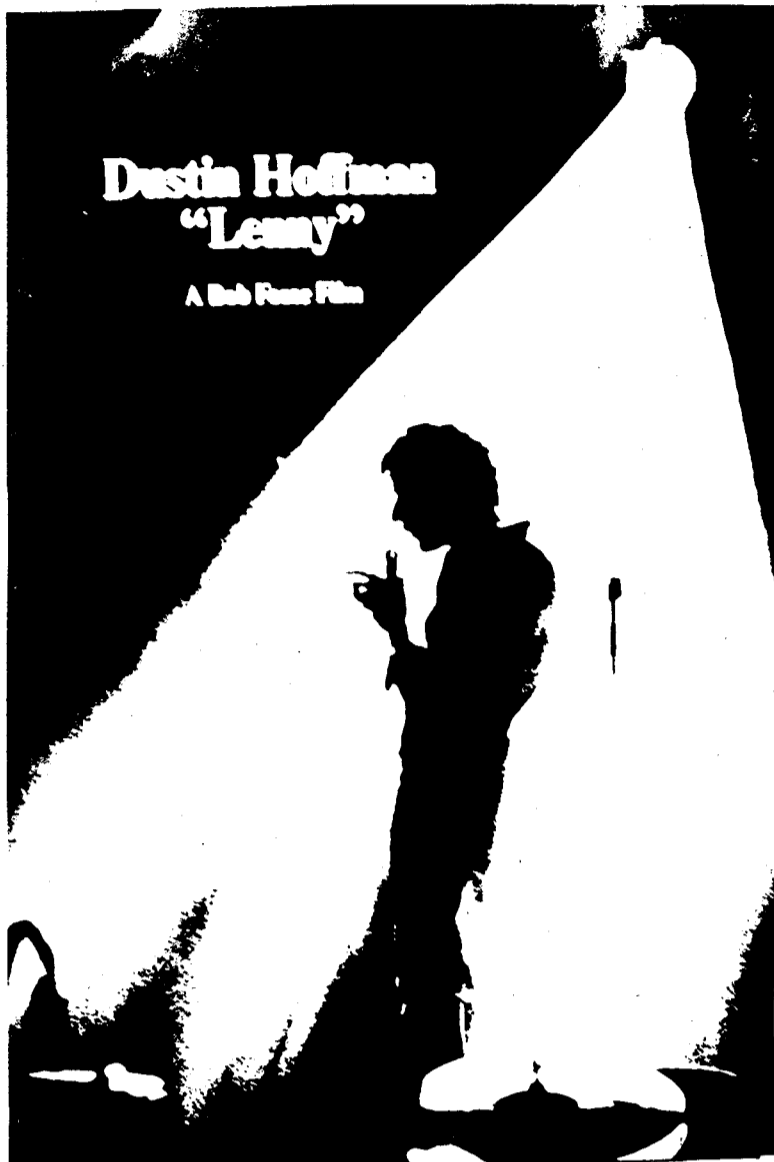
The flashback technique demands a wide range of acting ability from Hoffman and Perrine who have by far the most dominant roles in the film; and both of them respond brilliantly, winning Academy Award nominations for their effort.

The flashback also, in presenting the broad course of events in Bruce's life, tends to jump too quickly from scene to scene, progressively leaving the motivations for the changes in the characters only sketched, or touched.

The film reveals Bruce's early attempts at being a comic; his meeting with Honey, their early use of narcotics, the subsequent break-up of their marriage and, finally, his development into a nationally known satirist of United States society; and becoming openly sympathetic to him, the film presents Bruce's death, at 42 from an overdose of narcotics, as the result of harassment by the justice authorities of Los Angeles, Chicago and New York.

Richard Schickel in *Time* (November 25, 1974) calls the characterization of Bruce the result of the occasion in which "moviemakers prefer myth-making to truth-telling," and decries *Lenny* for a lack of insight into an actual public and private individual.

In a sense I agree: I came away from the film wondering if



Dustin Hoffman as Lenny.

Lenny Bruce had been anything like the way he was portrayed. In another sense, though, I see the film (a film about making a film) as acknowledging from the beginning that its portrayal of Bruce is limited, as any portrayal must be limited. Let the paying audience, then, beware.

On this question it is interesting to note that Honey Bruce, Sally Marr and Kitty Bruce (born in 1955) appear in the credits to the film as Advisors to the Production, although the exact degree of authenticity brought about by this can not be known. Also on this question, Schickel marks

Hoffman's ability to mimic Bruce's stage manner as "uncanny."

The most brilliant aspect of the film, I thought, was director Bob Fosse's talent for showing the links, or gaps, between Bruce and his audience through the cinematography. The photography used for newspaper advertisement is a good example of this. Fosse displayed this same ability when he directed *Cabaret*.

Lenny is in black-and-white. It took six Academy Award nominations and is unquestionably one of the finest films playing in Edmonton.

Thatcher and Gene Hackman, 1820: Preacher-missionary and his new wife journey to Hawaii where he attempts to change the ways of the freedom-loving Hawaiians. When his wife dies he begins to mellow, and year later he decides to stay among the natives. Based on a novel by James A. Michener. Channel 13.

CTV Academy Performance - The Owl and the Pussycat - Barbra Streisand stars as a prostitute who falls in love with a struggling inhibited writer in this warm and wacky comedy feature. Barbra Streisand and George Segal star. Postponed from an earlier date. Channel 3.

Stardust Theatre - Live for Life - 1969 Drama with Candice Bergen and Yves Montand. TV reporter leaves his wife of many years for a young beautiful girl who travels with him around the world on his assignments. Soon however, she tires of him and he is left trying to pick up the pieces of his shambled life. Channel 5.

SUN., MAR. 9

Performance - The Trial of Sunyavsky and Daniel. Adapted and directed by Ted Kotcheff from Max Hayward's book on Trial, based in turn on actual transcripts of the 1966 trial of the USSR of writer Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, both accused of writing anti-soviet works and having them published abroad under pseudonyms. Produced by Eric Till. Channel 5.

TV

Highlights

WED. MAR. 5

Muscamera: Part I - Slovanic Dances - Dvorak's most popular work, from the fast and fiery Furiant to a stately 'saga of Slav nations' sequence, is performed by native folk dancers; Part II - Ravel: A Centennial Concert - Telecast 100 years after the birth of the famous French composer Maurice Ravel, this showcase to his creative genius features host-conductor Boris Brott, opera star Maureen Forrester, pianist Anton Kuerti and the Toronto Symphony as principal contributors-cum-tributors; Part III - Lieder Recital - Christa Ludwig, with pianist Leonard Bernstein, sings such leiter by Brahms as Gypsy Life. Channel 5.

THURS., MAR. 6

Maclear - The Oldest, Boldest Profession - Correspondent Michael Maclear travels to Germany, Holland, Britain and the United States to investigate attitudes and arguments surrounding the question of legalizing prostitution. American author, Allan Mankoff and Munich's Deputy Police Chief, Reinhard Rupprecht are featured. Channel 3.

SAT. MAR. 8

Special Presentation - "Hawaii" - (dra '66) - 171 min. (UATV) - Starring: Julie Andrews, Max Von Sydow, Richard Harris, Torin

arts

Orient Express - solid

There is always a problem with writing a review for a murder mystery. How much do you tell the reader without giving the story away? The problem has not been resolved especially in the case of *Murder On the Orient Express*, now showing at the Garneau.

This murder mystery, written by the master of this craft, Agatha Christie, is very good and well worth seeing. *Orient Express* starts out with some background information which the audience needs in order to understand the movies' end. It's always hard to make the transition between the main body of a show and the background information, which is necessary for audience understanding. In this case it is done excellently.

Murder On the Orient Express is a story of how a detective solves a murder on a train. Sixteen passengers are travelling from the Middle East to Paris. Among the passengers is an internationally renowned detective who takes over the solving of the case. In interviewing each of the passengers the super sleuth must find the killer before the train gets to its next stop. From seemingly diverse reactions the detective comes up with some amazing hypotheses. Fortunately or unfortunately the detective comes up with more than one solution which leaves the audience with less than a cut and dried explanation.

Albert Finney, as the detective, plays an excellent part. He is cool, collected and highly intelligent, all the right ingredients for the super-sleuth he portrays. Other parts are played not as well, as they appear to be a bit plastic. Lauren Bacall, a long time star in movies, and Ingrid Bergman play excellent roles.

A word must be said about the screenplay. Usually movies are somewhat less than dazzling when reproduced from a novel

or other piece of literature. *Murder On the Orient Express* is an exception. It is done very well. Its writers have taken time to get all the details that the author has included in order to portray the mystery as accurately as possible.

I personally liked the movie. It was fast moving and kept me guessing until the end. Unlike other shows it was purely entertainment, it made no other claims. Other movies start with all kinds of claims but fall far short. Entertainment for the audience is a reasonable objective, one which I think we will be seeing more of in the next while. *Murder On the Orient Express* is good - a very good evening's entertainment.

Jay Fitzgerald

Puccini's 'Manon Lescaut'

Manon Lescaut, the opera which made Puccini world famous, will be the last presentation of the current season by the Edmonton Opera Association and will feature an all-Canadian cast. The opera, which preceded Puccini's masterpiece *La Boheme*, by just a few years, will be staged March 13, 15 and 17th at the Jubilee Auditorium.

The title role will be sung by the young Canadian soprano Maria Pellegrini, making her first appearance with the Edmonton Opera Association. Edmontonian Ermanno Mauro will return to the city to sing the role of Des Grieux for the first time. The role of Lescaut, Manon's brother, has been assigned to Calgarian Allan Monk who was seen here last fall in *Carmen*. Young Toronto bass, Ron Bermingham, has been cast in the fourth lead role, that of Geronte. Six young Edmonton singers, Larry Benson, Wolfgang Oeste, Jacqueline Preuss, Peter Benecke, Deiter Rahn and Henry Irwin will sing secondary roles.

Pierre Hetu will conduct the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and the production will be directed by the Company's Artistic Director, Irving Guttman. The large chorus is directed by Alexandra Munn. New costumes have been especially designed for this production by Suzanne Mess with sets rented from the Seattle Opera Company.

Tickets are now on sale at the Edmonton Opera Association office at Suite 503: 10102 - 101st Street, until February 21st. Effective February 24th, all tickets will be sold by Woodward's four department stores.

Newfoundland story

A raw slice of Newfoundland life will surface in Edmonton when Theatre 3 presents *The Head, Guts and Sound Bone Dance* March 12-23 at The Centennial Library Theatre.

Written by Michael Cook, the play will be receiving its first staging in Western Canada. Last Fall an hour-long TV version was shown on CBC.

The Head, Guts and Sound Bone Dance tells the story of three elderly Newfoundland fishermen trapped by time and a way of life they had followed since boyhood.

Sponsored by the du Maurier Council for the Performing Arts, the play features Alex Moir, British Repertory Theatre veteran now living in Edmonton; Des Smiley, an Abbey Theatre trained actor from Vancouver; Richard Sutherland, also from Vancouver, and Jennifer Riach, once a resident of Newfoundland who now lives here.

The play will be directed by Richard Roberts, with sets, costumes and lighting designed by Doug Welch.

"This is one of the finest plays to be written in Canada in the last few years," Anne Green, Manager of Theatre 3 explain-

ed. "We feel that Canadian theatregoers more and more want to see something about their own country, so we will be giving them the best."

For tickets information: call Theatre 3 - 426-6870.

Dance by Orchesis

The Orchesis Modern Dance Club, is experimenting in a new dimension this year, by presenting a studio dance production which will be performed in the Dance Center - Room E-19 of the Physical Education Complex.

On March 6th, at 4:30 p.m. the first performance will be given, involving a cast from Junior and Senior Orchesis, plus members from the Children's Creative Dance Theatre. Tickets for this day can be purchased at the door for \$.50.

The final two performances will be on March 7th and 8th, commencing at 8 p.m. Tickets will be sold at the door with the following admissions: Children under 12 \$.50, Students \$ 1.00, and Adults \$ 1.50.

The Arts Department regrets that the review of last weekend's Symphony concert has been delayed. The article will now appear in Thursday's issue.