

entertainment

A thought-provoking theme

by Jane Rosenberg

The world Peter Watkins creates in his first full-length film, "Privilege", has as its motto "we must conform." It is Watkins' vision for the possible future.

The hero, Steve Shorter, is a pop idol whose every emotion has been taught to him by his agents, promoters, and advisors. He becomes the archetype of what the state wants from each citizen. The premise for Shorter's fame is said to be based on the myth that people actually do not possess creative or imaginative souls, but that they really want to be lead and to conform.

We see Shorter's hero-image used to influence the public on every conceivable aspect, from establishing clothing trends to selling apples, and finally to the promotion of religion. Of course, he is not offered the right to voice his opinions on any of his various activities. He is simply expected to perform like an automaton.

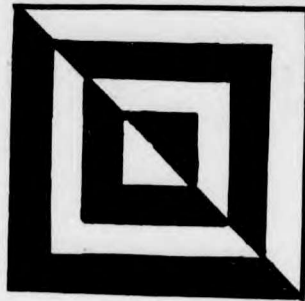
The weakest part of the film is the attempt to show that the hero is really an unsure young man who is desperately trying to find his identity. Paul Jones, the British pop-singer who plays Shorter, is an inexperienced actor, and unfortunately the part seems too difficult for him to believe in completely. He makes a great number of facial contortions without the proper emotions behind them. However, the message he embodies is still explicit.

Watkins employs the same technique as in his film "The War Game". He combines documentary new styles with theatrical cinema. This method seems to intensify the audience's awareness of the possibility of the truths behind the predictions made in the film. The use of colour in this film is exploited very well, to give surrealistic power to many of the images. An exceptional example

of this is the stadium scene where Shorter is the Church's agent to unify it with the State.

Despite the fact that Jones, and Jean Shrimpton as Shorter's girlfriend are not exceptional actors, the film still stands as a rare, imaginative work with a thought-provoking theme.

Director Watkins is a conscientious social thinker who worries deeply about the near future, and does something about it.



paupers album proves polished and powerful

by Richard Levine

Knocking around Yorkville not so long ago were four grubby-looking guys who had a rock band and worked - sometimes - at the Cafe El Patio. You knew why they called themselves the Paupers.

You could talk to them and be aware of how eager they were to make it. They knew what they wanted - to make it in T.O., to move on to New York and blow the peoples' ears out with the Toronto Sound. Then they were gone.

Now, about a year and one lead singer later, the Paupers are shaking the walls of New York's newest psychedelic night club, The Electric Circus. But not with the Toronto Sound. It's the Paupers' sound now, their own thing.

Their first album, "Magic People", on Verve-Folkways, consistently high quality and a distinctive sound that should be very successful.

The excitement of the Paupers' sound stems from the novel use of African drums and powerful marching rhythms, as well as an intense rock beat.

Bassist Denny Gerrard, guitarist Chuck Beal, lead singer Adam Mitchell, and drummer Skip Prokop comprise the group. Three of the four play drums, and Prokop, winner of several awards, has been called the best rock drummer in Canada.

As a consequence of this, perhaps, the Paupers have a very disciplined sound. They produce a fast uncomplicated beat, (You and Me) or a constantly changing one, (Magic People) or one which

controls the effects of complex electronic sounds, (My Love Hides Your View) just as in "Tomorrow Never Knows", on Revolver.

The title song begins with a succession of drum rolls on a set of bongo drums, a high-pitched wail from an electric guitar in the background. Then the lyrics start, then a section of virtuoso drumming accompanied by wailing warbling sounds, African and mysterious in tone. But the central direction is not forgotten. Adam Mitchell continues singing, then - snap - the song is finished.

If nothing else, the Paupers should force a new direction in drumming which in all their songs has the strange effect of maintaining a steady beat while elaborating and garnishing the musical phrases. The drums cease to be merely a mechanism for keeping time, but a means of adding substance to the pauses where the music might otherwise bog down.

Mitchell and Prokop, the lead singers, wrote lyrics which are fun to listen to. Think I Care details the tribulations of a kindergarten boy hung up on romance. He sings:

Tell you a story that will make you laugh,
make you cry,
and make you stare.
Well its the story about my baby
and her favorite line
She says, "Think I care,"
(she don't care)
Well...I met my baby
in the nursery school...

while a hard guitar backs up these almost ridiculous lyrics, the whole group joins in the refrain, shouting: "Think I care, she don't care." There is a tremendous vitality in the group, which is shown in these lines from It's Your Mind:

You've got to treat life with a grain of salt...
If you're hung on hesitation
and you think your life is gone,
Well, it's your mind,
Yes, it's your mind.

The album has other interesting features. The fault of poor groups is that every guitar plays the same tune, only in different octaves. The Paupers often pick out three distinct but interwoven melody lines and their music increases correspondingly in excitement. Several songs are broken in the middle with improvisations on the main theme, similar to Light My Fire by The Doors. Almost every song contains electronically distorted sounds, as in Tudor Impressions which are beautiful and of a kind I have not heard on any other album.

Here they differ from the Beatles, whose Sgt. Pepper sounds are more elaborate but suffer from a corresponding lack of spontaneity. But because the Paupers have not forgotten the dancer, they have created a very exciting sound, complex enough to bear re-listening, but with rhythms that invite physical response.

Notes from underground

by The October Revolutionary

Last Monday I attended a special screening of the underground movie which will form the first in a series of programs at Cinecity.

Once again I faced the main fault of underground movie makers is their desire to show the viewer how clever they are. This desire manifests itself in three ways: they take an unconscionable length of time to establish a setting, they sacrifice fluidity for rapidity (the two not necessarily being diametrically opposed), and they insist on spelling out each symbol for the audience, as if we were the lowest of ephemeromorphs.

These faults aside, (for they mean little in the total spectrum) the programme was, with minor reservations, fascinating.

OH DEM WATERMELONS is just plain grotesque, just plain absurd, and just plain funny. The maker, in short, has achieved his purpose.

PLASTIC HAIRCUT, the main sinner in the sacrifice of fluidity, is amusing, even involving, but much too much a melange of Brecht, Kafka and the Marx Brothers to have an identity of its own.

AN EARLY CLUE TO THE NEW DIRECTION, by Andrew Meyer (and, incidentally, the only one in this series not by Robert Nelson) is, in contrast to its direct predecessor, an excellent study of youth and age, experience and naivete, and is engrossing if never involving.

PENNY BRIGHT AND JIMMY WEATHERSPOON, if anything other than an exercise in the technique of cinematography, I must admit I did not understand.

HOT LEATHERETTE is a study of the extensions and compressions of time and space to create an aura of black comedy from an essentially tragic situation. This enhances the popular theory that comedy is tragedy extended to its penultimate. That these are simply exercises is not to decry the films, for, as in today's various art fields, form has become more essential than content.

SUPERSPREAD is a bizarre conglomeration of stag movies, test patterns, television film clips and more everyday scenes, which, in an odd manner present rather mundane realities in a most masterfully contentious manner.

THE AWFUL BACKLASH has to be seen to be experienced, and any reference to it would probably spoil its effect. Let me say only that, although the least enjoyable of this series (in terms of pure entertainment) it is the most involving.

There are no actors in these movies, for the directors wish to create scenarios rather than scenes, and wish to present reality on a larger, more impersonal scale.

They are not, I believe, for the casual viewer, but for the movie buff they are jolting, perhaps a little shocking, and incredibly mesmerizing.



Scene from 'Oh Dem Watermelons'