

## Filmmaker Fruet at York

# Americans think Wedding In White is dirty



Bill Fruet, one of Canada's leading writer/directors came to York last week to talk to film students.

By DAN JOHNSON  
Time magazine says "Wedding in White is worth its weight in chantilly lace." This Canadian feature film ranks with the work of Kubrick, Russ Meyer, Melvin Van Peebles and Sam Peckinpah by virtue of its X rating in the States.

"The rape scene is too believable," the film's writer-director Bill Fruet was told.

Usual fans of the X rated pictures are going to be terribly disappointed with Wedding as it is not the usual hard fare that is forced to wear the censors' black X. The rape scene has been cut in length by "three humps" in order to get a softer rating in the States. "Now this is going to be the quickest rape you've ever seen" said Fruet at York last Wednesday.

The humour in this anecdote does not alter the serious intentions of the film's maker. It just shows some of the idiocy that can go on when the picture is in the hands of the distributors and or censors.

A juror at the Canadian film awards, held earlier this year, said that he had never been more impressed by the complete detail of an atmosphere and set of characterisations within a single coherent story context, this is by any cinematic standard, international or otherwise.

Fruet told film students he feels writers can draw from their own experiences to get their subject material. Wedding in White is based on an actual occurrence in Fruet's home town of Lethbridge, Alberta.

To develop oneself as a director, Fruet feels one must be a good editor, as it is necessary to evaluate the rushes and decide on the merits of various shots. Fruet spent five years as an editor. He is also an exponent of the school of thought that says a solid base of theatrical knowledge is necessary. This leads to good timing and the competent

handling of actors, which is essential.

Fruet refers to himself as a filmmaker. He doesn't like to categorize himself under the specific heading of writer or director, although he has received acclaim in both roles. He wrote the scripts for Goin' Down The Road, Rip Off, Out and Wedding in White, the Best Canadian Film of 1972.

The years that Fruet spent acting help his writing and directing. When writing it helps him in developing characters as he "thinks like an actor" and from this base he then develops a plot. As opposed to starting with the plot and adding characterisations to it later. His acting experience helps him in directing when "he's blocking up scenes" and when he's coaxing performances from actors as "I know what some of his problems are even before we start."

Fruet prefers to start from scratch and compose his characters

and then develop the plot. He wrote the screenplay for the film Out from someone else's outline and he had to develop the story within this framework. He did this to "develop himself as a writer" but he felt like "a hack" and that "it wasn't a very satisfying experience."

He would like to direct a film based on someone else's script to "test myself as a filmmaker."

Fruet said he would like to do a film made on and appealing to several different levels at the same time, and cited Deliverance as a film of this type.

But he still has to prove himself on an action film in the role of director, although he has already shown his prowess as a screenwriter. He would like to do a project like that next. Getting financial backing for a project in an area where one is unproven is difficult; however with the expected success of his current film this shouldn't be an insurmountable task.

## Jazz albums float in a no-man's land

By JOHN OUGHTON

Blue Note Records have released two new jazz albums which fall somewhere in the no-man's land between traditional, big-band jazz and avant-garde, rock-flavoured approaches.

Dig This! Bobbi Humphrey's second record, offers Humphrey's tasteful flute performances with a large jazz and string ensemble behind her. The arrangements are generally good, especially in the percussion area, but sound remarkably close to Chuck Mangione at times.

Humphrey's flute style is very pure, aiming at a melodic sweetness which is closer to Herbie Mann than Charles Lloyd in quality. For some of the songs, the mixing engineers have placed the flute too far behind the other instruments; it's rather unfortunate to have to strain to hear the flute in an album which supposedly features it. Dig This! is a pleasing but unexciting album, one which shows that Humphrey has talent but needs to develop her musical individuality.

The other album is simply titled Gene Harris. Harris is a West Coast pianist who, like Humphrey, is an interpreter rather than a creator. Despite the album cover's cosmic design, Harris has little new to offer in the way of musical ideas. He's a very proficient keyboard technician, like Oscar Peterson, but has the tendency to emphasize virtuoso runs and embellishments to the expense of the musical feeling of songs. The backup riffs on this album are standard jazz patterns, and at times approximate cocktail jazz.

The liner notes state that Harris much prefers playing to writing. Unfortunately all the technique in

the world won't make great music if the performer doesn't have something new or different to transmit. The album does have some enjoyable cuts, notably Django and Listen Here. Maybe he'll change — it is apparently his first album as a solo artist, without the Three Sounds with whom he usually performs.

## Toronto workshop makes Inspector General a farce

By LYNN SLOTKIN

The Toronto Workshop misses the mark with its present production, The Inspector General by Nicholai Gogol.

When first produced in 1836, this satire had bite. It made fun of a system in which people were sheep, following the whims of some authoritarian figure, sometimes unseen.

The play is about a mayor and his yes men who are terrified because a rumour is circulating that an inspector is coming to their town. They mistake a poor tourist, a government clerk, for the inspector and begin wining, dining and covering his expenses so he'll send a good report back to headquarters. The clerk naturally takes full advantage of the situation and makes fools of the mayor and company.

Instead of clarifying the vision of the play with application to modern times, director George Luscombe blurs it. His characters seem to be out of fairy tale stories and the movies. Bobchinsky (Jeffrey Braunstein) and Dobchinsky (Ken McEvoy) are Tweedle Dum and

Tweedle Dee types, complete with lisps, hyperactivity, and constant confusion.

Zoe Alexander as the Mayor's wife flutters around stage and constantly primps and waves her arms, a la Zsa Zsa Gabor.

Grant Roll as the clerk is a tall, wobbly Stan Laurel/Charlie Chaplin.

Indeed Nancy Brown's set is out of The Wizard of Oz complete with yellow sticked road. The costumes are clownish.

But what is the point? Is the point to show that the problem exists today? Is the ordinary person of 1973 supposed to identify with them? One hardly thinks so.

Or is the production supposed to be a period piece? The point is lost somewhere between Tweedle Dum-Dee and Zsa Zsa.

## James Cunningham, the style is theatrical but is it dance or art?

By ADRIAN HILL

The short, dark days at York have led to a dearth of merriment that shrouds the soul and clouds the vision. In pops James Cunningham to show us that nothing is what it seems.

Cunningham, a theatrical rebel from the start, provided more satire than one would have thought possible last week in Burton. His company, relying more on theatre than dance, poked fun at every contemporary art form from the silent film, to the imagined psychedelic trip.

There can be no denying, the performance was uproariously funny. The audience was in fits of laughter from start to finish. Nevertheless, it was far less than satisfying. The everpresent theme of sexual fantasy, and conscience liberated interaction was shallow and uncomplicated. There was little to perceive as the pieces were simply overdone attempts at wringing laughter from an audience ready to laugh at anything.

The first piece, Everybody In Bed, was a duet with Laurent Persichetti and Cunningham. They played several pairs of characters; they were two tottering old octogenarians, and seconds later vamps from New York's Eighth St. The dancers played characters in a purely theatrical manner. Little was made of their ability to demonstrate mood or emotion by dance. Cunningham's hips travelled miles while his feet meekly followed behind.

The music changed often as every piece that came forth was as obvious as it could be. The austere opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth accompanied the entrance of Cunningham with a four-foot phallus. Chantilly Lace provided the heavy beat for a bump and grind routine that was to be repeated by every member of the troupe before the night was through.

The Clue In The Hidden Staircase, the second offering for the night, was a review that featured the whole company in a series of solos and group melodramas. It featured a barnyard scene where all the animals changed characters home drama, a satire on the The Dying Swan (from Swan Lake), a trio of gun-slinging, G-stringed, motorcycle vamps, and a quartet of rather "fruity" rabbits. Carefully inserted here and there was Mae West — just to tie the pieces together.

As a satirist, Cunningham seems to believe he is free to ignore the demands of the art of dance. In his own words, he sees the dancer not as the remarkable instrument, but as the mirror of the liberated psyche. True to form, there was nothing remarkable about his technique other than the rather glaring lack of it. The company concedes that it has no real technique — just a theme that they carry to the stage. This theme is the notion of the way people would behave if their dreams were acted out.

Cunningham has the undeniable ability to make people laugh, and this talent can not be underrated. All the same, his performance grew more tiresome as the evening progressed. His style offered something new to the stage perhaps; it offered nothing new to dance.

# AN EVENING OF DANCE

FRIDAY, FEB. 2 8:30 P.M.  
SATURDAY FEB. 3 8:30 P.M.

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