

Peckinpah's Wild Bunch bloody, violent but great

By DAN MERKUR

Philo Vance, the famed fictional American sleuth, was of the opinion that just as an expert can tell a Reubens from a Titian, so too may an expert recognize authorship of a crime. The traits of the author's personality is equally evident in film. However, while a painting may have a single author, films are the composite effort of many craftsmen. The auteur theory, that the director is the author, is generally true, and like most general truths, is often surprisingly accurate.

Sam Peckinpah is a U.S. director, born and raised on the dying frontier, and so his roots are rustic, violent, basic and vital. He loves the west, and so his films, including *The Wild Bunch*, now playing at the Imperial and Yorkdale, treat the land and the characters with a reverence that raise the blood-bathed cow stories to a level of lyric beauty. Peckinpah is the man responsible for the original episodes of *Gun-smoke*, *The Rifleman*, and the ill-fated show, *The Westerner*.

When I first heard that he was working on a project called *The Wild Bunch*, I figured that he was filming a story about Butch Cassidy, Kid Curry, the Sundance Kid, and Black Jack Ketchum, the real Wild Bunch. Anyone who followed the censorship battles knows it's not; it's about how William Holden and Ernest Borgnine and Co. steal guns from the U.S. Army in 1913 to sell them to Generalissimo Mapache of the Federales in the Mexican Civil War.

Add Robert Ryan leading a group of convicts to capture the Bunch for the railroad; toss in a Mexican member of the Bunch with personal motivation; spice with Edmond O'Brien and Strother Martin just for good measure, and you've got the kind of movie to be expected from Peckinpah. Bloody, violent, dramatic, moving, powerful, fantastic, brutal, unreal — great.

The Wild Bunch has been called an anti-violent statement by the producers in order to get it past the censors. In fact, I think Peckinpah decided that he could make a bloodier western than the Italians, so he did. The blood spilled could fill 100 blood banks. The corpses could fill a pair of Boot Hills.

It is a tough, violent, ugly sort of picture, with some very, very fine camerawork, showing clearly the beauty Peckinpah sees in the land: top notch art direction: expert special effects: and a good score. The direction is masterful. The actors, like Borgnine and O'Brien were coached properly to give

performances well up to their best. If you walk into the theatre expecting an anti-violent movie, you'll be confused by the theme. If you walk in expecting first rate entertainment, you'll be pleasantly surprised with this excellent western blood bath.

Close analysis of *The Wild Bunch* is unrealistic. We're products of a violent, nasty age, raised on television, and schooled in films. To deny the fascination of violent bloodspilling, as long as it is on the screen, is ridiculous. Staged bloodletting on film is a favourite pass-time these days, and *The Wild Bunch* is excellent fare. It is well packaged and mounted, and that is all that is important.

One last word: Strother Martin has a big juicy part. Remember him? He was the warden ("What we got h'yere . . .") in *Cool Hand Luke*, and the horse dealer in *True Grit*. He gives his finest performance, the definitive example of the scum of the earth, complete with Southern accent, three-week beard, and an aura about him you can almost smell.

Lighthouse is actually a small pop orchestra

By PAT KUTNEY

Lighthouse has been playing a lot of gigs in the city the past few months since returning from a triumphant appearance at the Atlantic City Pop Festival. I managed to hear them play in front

of an enthusiastic audience at the Electric Circus.

The concept that Lighthouse has is unheard of in pop music. Here is a group, no small pop orchestra, struggling to present a new idea to the public.

But by its very enormity and newness, the Lighthouse format was bound to fall flat on its face at its first inception. Yet, from the outset, Lighthouse audiences enjoyed their performances.

I have found that individual music adherents have adamantly remained oblivious to Lighthouse's various shortcomings and have steadfastly remained enthused with its work. One of the possible explanations is the veritable intoxicating nature of strings (of which there are four present: violin, viola and two cellos, all electrified.)

The strings, together with a four piece brass section, lead and bass guitarists, organist/vibist, drummer and percussionist, including four singers, comprise the awesome spectacle of Lighthouse. With a band of this magnitude and despite the fact that the individual musicians are, almost without exception, beyond reproach, there are bound to be sound problems.

Indeed, they have an exclusive sound man, Bruce Bell, whose task is to set up the speakers to best advantage and to regulate the volume, treble and bass of 18 instruments and voices.

But to the discerning musicologist, this is not sufficient.

I would really like to hear Lighthouse in an auditorium of near-perfect acoustics like Massey Hall. I'm not putting the Rock Pile or the Electric Circus down, but their sound systems are not really conducive to the music of Lighthouse's makeup and size.

It is this very makeup and size that makes the possibilities of Lighthouse almost limitless and the accomplishment of something original almost inevitable.

Organist/vibist Paul Hoffert, who handles the arranging, has obviously been working hard with his fellow musicians. With every performance, Lighthouse has shown improvement in some area. Unfortunately, about half the material is still presented as a brick wall of sound, with each instrument as discernible as individual bricks.

Miss Cellany

By David McCaughna

The Faculty of Fine Arts Performing Arts Series, which commences soon, is rapidly selling out the mime and poetry series. The music series, on the other hand, isn't doing quite so well and that is a pity since, although the participants are not famous like Ginsberg and Marcel Marceau, they are all of very high calibre.

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It isn't too late . . . the CBC is producing a folk-rock spectacular with Ian and Sylvia, Motherlode, Big Mama Thornton, Whisky Howl, Bruce Cockburn, and The Pentangle. Tickets to the recording of the show are free. It will be held on Wed., Nov. 5, from 7:30 to 12 midnight. For tickets write to Ian and Sylvia Tickets, CBC Box 500, Terminal A, Toronto 1.

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Forum House Publishing has started what promises to be a fine critical series on the major modern Canadian writers and poets. Entitled *Canadian Writers and Their Works*, the first three little numbers in the series deal with Gabrielle Roy, Irving Layton, and Hugh MacLennan. The study of Layton is by York professor Eli Mandel.

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Egg, the new Canadian magazine whose editor Alex Crammer was interviewed in these pages recently, may be on sale in the York book store when you read this. The magazine was supposed to be distributed in Toronto by Metro News, but they refused, objecting to a funny and harmless photo of the cast of *Oh! Calcutta!* clutching one another's genitals. The odd thing is that the same Metro News distributes *Playboy*, *Midnight Flash*, and a good amount of the hard-core pornography that comes in plastic covers.

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The Humanities Department is showing a vast array of films for their courses this year. Many of the films are open to students from outside the courses. Next Monday is the film version of *Oedipus Rex*, to be shown in Burton from 4-5:30. Films coming up in future include *L'Avventura*, *Cool Hand Luke*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Birth of a Nation*, *Weekend*, *Gone With the Wind*, etc. A complete schedule of the films can be picked up in the humanities office in Winters.

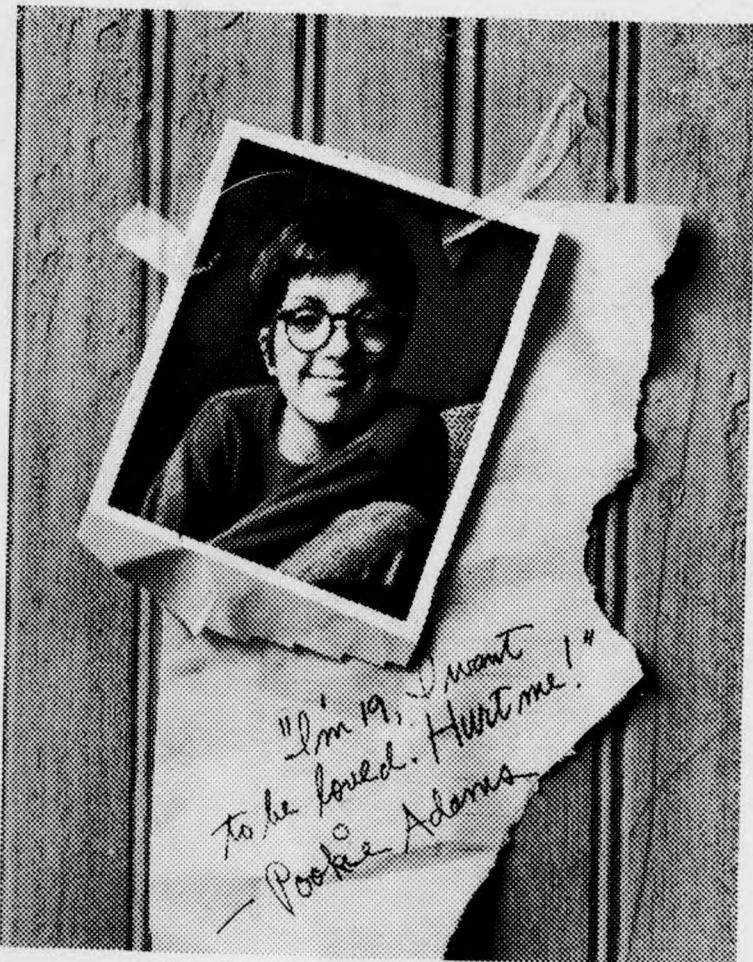
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There is a strong rumour in the air around York that a group of imaginative students plan to gain access to the rooms in the Ministry of Love some night soon. The devious students are plotting to switch on lights in the various floors so that the windows of the building will announce to the world "FUCK OFF."

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Some people will certainly go to extremes to get rid of hippies. Here, from a report in the *Daily Telegraph*, is what one English town did to eradicate the menace: "Hippies have been driven out of Weymouth, Dorset, by the obnoxious smell of dried blood. The council sprayed it round the statue of King George III under which the hippies congregated on the esplanade. To protect the residents, council workers sprayed perfume on the approach to the area. The dried blood which smells like rotten meat was sprayed twice and the hippies did not come back."

LIZA MINNELLI as a wacky undergraduate in a one-woman romping romance that ranks with 'GOODBYE COLUMBUS' and 'THE GRADUATE'.



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Kershaw album hits like a sledgehammer

By MARTIN LABA

The swamp mud still on his ankles, and coon-ass as they come, Doug Kershaw, the wild Cajun fiddler, born and raised on the Bayou Teche in the central swampland of Louisiana, is out with a brand new album, *Doug Kershaw, The Cajun Way*.

The album itself is in fact a biography of Kershaw and his family. Six of the 12 songs on the album make direct reference to the members of his family and the life they lead, hunting and fishing on their piroques in the Bayou country of Louisiana.

Despite the slight commercialism in the very sophisticated production of the album (it was recorded in the famous Woodland Sound Studios in Nashville, Tennessee), the raw and wild proclivity of Kershaw's country Cajun fiddling and singing hits you on the head like a three-ton sledgehammer.

The flexibility of his harsh, powerful voice is equalled only by the flexibility of his ape-like wrists, which enable him to bow almost completely around the strings of his fiddle. And his ability to sing and fiddle is equalled only by his ability to scream. Honestly, he puts in long, elastic screams which seem to melt into his music.

Eleven of the 12 songs on the album are written by Kershaw himself, who is backed up by an extremely competent studio band. The harmonica player stretches and melts his instrument along with Kershaw's singing and fiddling. The result is the most unique

harmony you've ever heard: the harmonica, Kershaw's voice and Kershaw's fiddle in an overpowering three-part Cajun harmony.

Probably the most interesting aspect of the album is the strong Scottish influence in the Louisiana Cajun music. Very often Kershaw's bowing techniques result in a sound that can very easily be mistaken for the bagpipes of the Scottish Highlanders. Kershaw's fiddle parts very seldom consist of sharp, single notes, but more often have the same unified, drone-like effect that the Scottish bagpipe has.

Kershaw is gaining fame and prominence at a very fast rate. He is, of course, extremely popular in Louisiana and Tennessee where he has been a fixture of country music for many years. His biographical song, *Louisiana Man*, was the title song of a very crude album that he recorded years back in Nashville, with his brother Rusty.

But Kershaw has toured many cities in both Canada and the United States, has appeared on the *Johnny Cash Show*, is currently on tour with Cash, and is due to hit Toronto in the beginning of November. He had a concert at Varsity Stadium this summer, crashed the *Mariposa Folk Festival* and appeared at the *Toronto Rock Revival*.

Nevertheless, I hope he remains in sweet obscurity. I mean, he's so unspoiled. It would be a tragedy to lose him in the morass of commercialism.

STAFF meeting TODAY
5:00 be there in the central square