

ARTISTS

Forty years of soul

A funking good time with Jones' gang

by Trevor Campbell

Listen Up: The Lives of Quincy Jones

directed by Ellen Deissbrod
produced by Courtney Sale Ross

Listen Up, the biographical film about Quincy Jones which premiered at the Elgin Theatre on September 13, approximates the kinetic energy of jazz by bombarding the audience with a variety of images, dialogue and music. Relying on insights from friends, family and peers, Courtney Sale Ross (producer) and Ellen Deissbrod (director) reveal the history and complexity of this obsessive musical legend.

Deissbrod uses multi-edited sequences which jump from the recording studio to Jones' old neighbourhood, and every place in between. A soundtrack of sampled Jones' recordings, past and present, punctuates these images.

Jones' recent album, *Back on the Block*, which features an abundance of talented performers, young and old, legends and future legends, rappers and singers, serves as the main musical ingredient of this film. As the title suggests, this effort deals with this man's return to his musical and personal roots.

The artists employed on this



Hey, those guys look familiar, especially the one in the Batman shirt.



Les yeux sans visage

album, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Bobby McFerrin, etc., speak candidly about Jones' forty years in the music business. They offer a combination of both words and actions, the actions being their performances, which illustrates how and why he has become such a gifted producer.

One of the many charms about this film is its honesty. Most of the sequences are unrehearsed interviews, old footage from previous endeavours, or entertaining coverage of the recording sessions. One instance of this

honesty comes when Jones' daughter from his first marriage tells of her father's obsession with his music, an obsession which causes him to give secondary importance to his domestic life.

Cinematically, *Listen Up* incorporates calculatingly crude close crops and varying angles, creating a frenetic urgency. Images and sounds jostle each other, anxious to reveal another side of Jones and forcing the audience to pay attention or miss enlightening information.

Initially, the pace of these edits

seems overwhelming; imagine watching 20 consecutive minutes of beer commercials. However, the emotive quality that exists throughout quickly comes to the fore.

Listen Up will appeal primarily to music fans because it offers a look at the past 40 years of jazz, blues, soul, funk, and rap as defined by the people who lived it. But, those who place importance on cinematic technique should see *Listen Up* for barrage of startling images which will grab them until the final credit is rolled.



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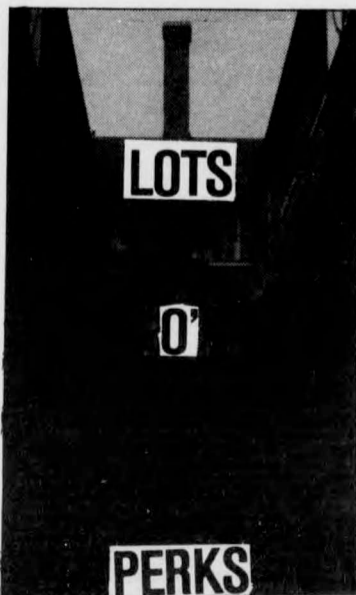
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