

# Wormwood highlights

by Sheena Masson

Wormwood's "alternative" cinema, located on Barrington Street, provides intriguing and varied films, and January is no exception. The highlight of this month's screenings is **BONAPARTE AND THE REVOLUTION** (Abel Gance, director), one of the first epic films to be screened, Friday, January 20, at 7:30. Reconstructed from versions shot in 1925, '26, '36, and '71, this film is truly epic at four and a half hours in length. The original version, called **NAPOLEON**, used for the first time techniques such as multiple images and wide-angle lenses. **NAPOLEON** was sold to MGM who reduced it to one and one half hours, and needless to say, it lost much of its impact. Also MGM cut all the experimental footage using colour and hand held cameras.

**BONAPARTE** is Gance's attempt to reconstruct the film replacing the destroyed footage with new material. Although there was no sound in the earlier versions, the actors moved their mouths to a script and it was later dubbed. This film makes use of techniques that were innovative in Europe for that time. Gance's use of closeups was criticized because the audience couldn't see what the actor was doing. Russian montage, popular then in such pictures as Eisenstein's **POTEMKIN** also turns up in this picture. This involves a sequence of, for example, four shots being repeated and gradually speeded up. Nowadays this technique is not done except in experimental films.

This Friday (January 14) two shorter films are being shown, **ACCIDENT** and **THE SERVANT**, screenplay by Harold Pinter. Saturday should prove more relaxing with a number of 'experimental' nature films being screened. Walter and Ellis Delorey, presently working out of Cape Breton, are two filmmakers whose 'portraits of the land' combine natural and electronic sounds. The following Saturday, January 21, viewers can learn how to build a bomb shelter from Mister Home-Repair and generally indulge in 1950's nostalgia. **NEON PALACE**, a low-budget Canadian film, 1970, was one of the first to lampoon the '50's. Gordon Parsons, who runs Wormwood's, describes it as a series of quick cuts that finally "dissolves into complete inanity."

Finally, for the last weekend in January, two sets of rare jazz selections from Joe Showler's collection are planned. Performers include Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday of whom only 20 minutes footage exists.

These shorts are gathered from a number of sources. Some of these musicians made guest appearances in films long since sunk into obscurity but Showler has extracted the footage of the jazz performance. Short films of such artists were also made at one time to be shown in visual juke-boxes. Showler has also collected some of these films from previews that were shown before movies as more or less advertisements for the musician's latest hit. These two evenings should be an unrepeatable experience for jazz buffs.

February's schedule is largely unplanned, although **WOMAN OF THE DUNES**, a popular Japanese movie, is planned and also a 12-hour 30's and 40's gangster movie extravaganza (**LITTLE CAESAR**, **WHITE HEAT**, **THEY LIVE BY NIGHT**, **I WAS A PRISONER ON A CHAIN GANG**, et al.). Gordon intends to start showing experimental films on Wednesday nights in the small informal theatre at the Atlantic Film Co-op. More information about these films can be obtained at 423-8833. Also regular reviews will be appearing later in this newspaper.

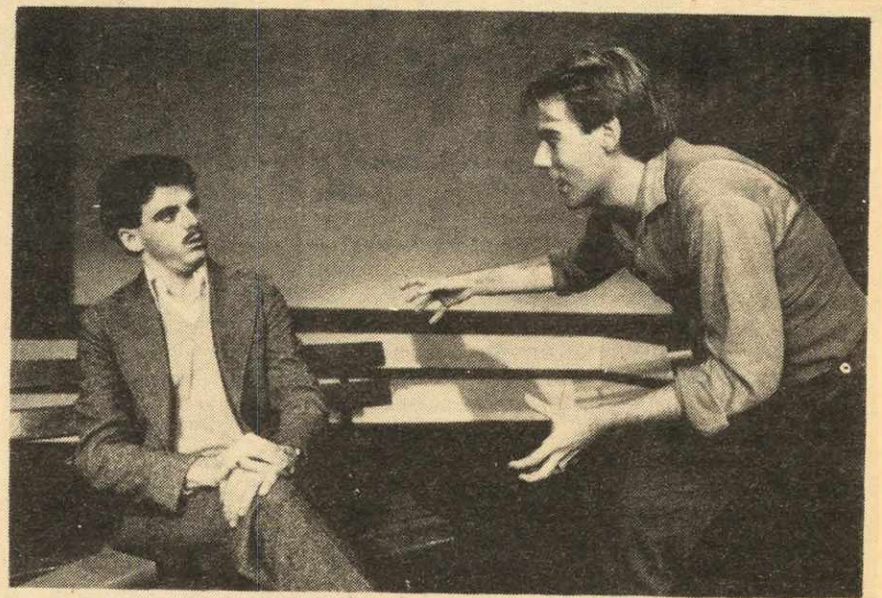
## Talent needed

The Dalhousie Drama Society is alive, well, and actively searching for new talent. Both actors and production staff are needed for the society's March production. Auditions are scheduled for Friday, Jan. 13th, from 3 to 5 p.m. in Room 318, SUB. All interested persons are welcome. Prior experience is not a requirement; talent and enthusiasm, however, are essential.

The Dalhousie Drama Society came into being last term with its December production of two one-act plays, **The Bald Soprano** and **The Zoo Story**. Debra Hornsby of the **Chronicle Herald** generously praised the acting in **The Bald Soprano**, describing the total effect as "an admirable production." Of **The Zoo Story** she said simply: "This is amateur theatre at its finest."

These results were achieved through the hard work, dedication, and considerable ability of the first members of the DDS. But Dan Cormier, the new President of the DDS, is not content to rest on last month's laurels. He is determined that the DDS should attract new people and explore new approaches to theatre.

Actors and all those interested in technical aspects of theatre will be most welcome at the audition on Friday afternoon between 3 and 5. Please come out and support our society.



Peter, [John Lewis] portrays a middle class New Yorker in Central Park who is assailed by Jerry, [Keith Bellefontaine], a desperate drifter, in **The Zoo Story**.

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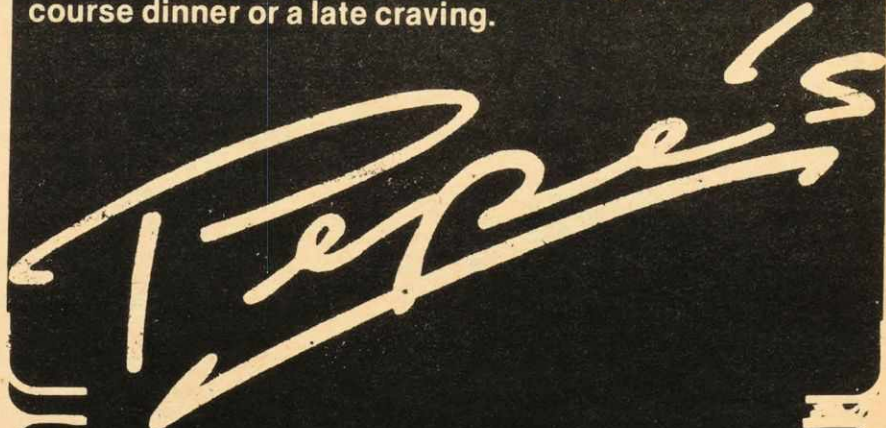
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