

Ross Hunter continues crusade

Nice wholesome family entertainment

By DANNY ZANBILOWICZ

Producer Ross Hunter, "The film industry's number one progenitor of family entertainment" continues his zealous crusade against the pervasive nastiness of the modern screen with his latest effort, *Lost Horizon*, at the Odeon Carlton.

Hunter's talents are now a finely honed instrument that unerringly produces grossly successful audience pleasers such as: *Pillow Talk*, *Tammy and the Bachelor*, and *Airport*. Although the above movies somehow generated a great deal of green stuff (*Airport* is the fourth-biggest grosser in film history), they are equally known for their complete lack of material for gray matter. In *Lost Horizon*, Hunter has made a noble attempt to fill in this void by devoting at least a minute and a half of his two and a half hour film exclusively to intellectual stimulation.

Lost Horizon is a musical version of James Hilton's 1932 novel of the same name. The story reveals the exploits of a group of Americans and British whose evacuation by plane from a South Asian revolution turns into a high-jacking and a crash into the Himalayan Mountains. They are immediately discovered by a leather-laden parade of Mongolians, led by a slanty-eyed John Gielgud as Chang, and are taken the tortuous way to a verdant, Edenlike oasis called the Valley of the Blue Moon, better known as Shangri-la. The explanation for the existence of an area with a Disney-World climate in the middle of the frozen Himalayas is that the valley is "protected by the very high mountains on all sides."

The movie boasts a stellar cast. Charles Boyer comes out of retirement as the hoary High Lama of Shangri-la. Peter Finch plays the role of Richard Conway, leader of the stranded globe-trotters, and a world-reknowned British plenipotentiary, on his way home from an unproductive peace-keeping mission. (Holy Henry Kissinging!)

He is joined by Sally Kellerman, in the role of neurotic, suicidal, pill-popping newspaperwoman, Sally Hughes. George Kennedy plays Sam Cornelius, the simple touristic American engineer. George Conway, impulsive, dashing brother of Richard Conway, is dashing portrayed by Micheal York. And there's Bobby Van as ego-starved Harry Lovett, the "corny nightclub comic", who comes complete with taps on his shoes, and prehistoric jokes in his repertoire.

(E.G. "I had a night-mare last night that I was choking on a giant marshmallow, and when I woke up, my pillow was gone!")

As this heterogeneous collage of personalities discover the wonders of Shangri-la, it becomes clear that this is where each individual's distinct needs can be satisfied. Sally Hughes needs to discover the meaning of life, within herself, and Shangri-la can help her find it. Sam Cornelius needs anonymity to escape his sordid past. Harry Lovett needs a permanent loving audience. Richard Conway needs a crisis to solve. And George Conway, who doesn't believe in Shangri-la, and is the only one who wants to leave, gets his in the end. Shangri-la is everything for all people, if they only believe.

Of course the most rampant need of all is romance. It's not long before everyone in sight has paired off with a physically compatible mate. True love arrives in a flash in Shangri-la.

Richard Conway meets the intriguing school-teacher Catherine, in the form of Liv Ullman. Brother George hooks onto a luscious dancer named Maria, masterfully performed by heart-throbbler Olivia Hussey. And Sally Hughes meets Sam Cornelius.

A screen so cluttered with couples naturally calls for some singing and dancing. Pan staged the musical numbers in a creative and visually exciting style. Burt Bacharach and Hal David collaborated on the eleven original songs that are heard

in the film. Bacharach's music is apparently heading in more abstract, free-form directions, and the result is not very good. Bacharach is known for the catchy hummability of his melodies, but these new tunes, for the most part, escape the listener as soon as they are heard. Dionne

Warwick will be hard-pressed to dig up a million-seller from this score.

Hal David's writing merely adds an extra chapter to the already fat volume called: *The World's Stupidest Lyrics*, to which he has been a steady contributor for many years.

This film is awfully healthy and good-natured. Seeing it often enough will give you hope, restore your faith in mankind, and cure your acne. We recommend a single dose for all those who have, from an early age, been weaned on the bitter juice of cynicism.



"All together now kids, Shan-gri-la." Bobby Van (as Harry Lovett) complete with taps on his

white bucks, leads the kids in a rousing chorus in the new Ross Hunter opus, *Lost Horizon*.

Presentation of student films run gamut of sophistication

On Thursday, the Program in Film presented its first Festival of Student Films.

The first film, *Cosmic Arrangement*, was designed and directed by Ivo Cristante with the aid of an OFY grant. The film, in colour, explored the problems of space and time and was impressive in its use of animation.

The Afternoon of a Thought, written and directed by Daria Stermac, was a good idea that didn't quite make it. The subject matter, a complicated study of human relationships, was too far beyond the filmmaker's technical proficiency. The abrupt cuts became irritating and the style and soundtrack seemed to me to be 30 years out of date. The film badly needed a good dose of simplicity. Stermac, however, is good at framing her scenes and the less-cluttered, slower parts of the film showed promise.

The Prisoner was a good little suspense story written and directed by Jim Purdy. It told of a wounded soldier ordered to escort a prisoner to the base camp. The dialogue provided laughter in spots but the themes of trust and betrayal were well handled, as was the development of tension.

The fourth short film was a documentary, *The Process*, about a group of religious zealots. The film, made by a group of third-year students, concentrated on a typical day in the life of one of these caped crusaders. Good use of music and off-screen commentary helped to make *The Process* a good, short documentary.

The last two films on the program were longer, more technically sophisticated works. The first, *Jason Borwick*, by Dennis Zahoruk, received an award for scenario at the 1972 Famous Players Student Film Competition. The film presented two sides of a man's personality — one arrogant, conceited, aggressive; the other timid, weak and frightened. Zahoruk played both parts so well it was difficult to believe it was the same person. The two Jasons converse over a game of billiards and the point of the film was summed up in the words of the strong, egotistical Jason: "The rules clearly state that there can only be one winner — but, Jason, why is it always you?" Zahoruk is not afraid to take his time over a shot or a spoken line, nor is he afraid of silence. Jason Borwick was greatly enhanced by Ivan Martin's magnificent lighting and Stephen Franklin's camerawork.

The final film of the presentation, a full-length feature by Derek Best called *The Autobiography*, was described as an exploration of the reality of a filmmaker's

existence. It dealt with illusion and reality, with role-playing and with the problems of the artist whose only reality is his work. There were some good moments in the dialogue, especially between David, the filmmaker, and the Voice: "I want to make the most of my immortality while it lasts." Unfortunately the film became repetitive and confused and had no real ending to speak of. The CBC was sufficiently impressed to contract to show the film at a future date.

There was a good crowd on hand for both shows and the Program in Film hopes to make the Festival an annual event. Plans are being made to show this year's films in the fall.

Indians mediocre

By LYNN SLOTKIN

The news coverage of the recent incidents at Wounded Knee has more suspense, tension and feeling than the current production at Toronto Workshop, *Indians* by Arthur Kopit.

By taking the incidents surrounding the betrayal of Sitting Bull and his people by a one-time friend, Buffalo Bill Cody, Kopit shows the universal problem of how the Indians, or indeed any minority, are short-changed by a powerful majority. The powerful body always seems to have good intentions when it tries to improve the lot of the minority. The majority always thinks the minority needs improving.

Kopit's play is full of such horror stories as the government buying the Indian's land but keeping the payment for them in Washington, in trust; or forcing them to live on reservations, killing their buffalo in hopes that they'll get hungry enough to learn how to farm.

The majority always seems to have good intentions, in their own eyes, concerning the welfare of the minority. Too bad these good intentions seem to include humiliating and degrading the small group into submission.

It's sad but a sort of mediocrity is creeping into the acting of the company of the Workshop. Only Grant Roll as Sitting Bull rises above this level. His performance has a certain defiance and dignity. David McIlwraith as Buffalo Bill Cody wasn't forceful, or towards the end, pathetic enough to command an audience to believe him.

Indians was a fair production, but only fair. For the real passion and life better turn to the six o'clock news.



Good Eats

Make it yourself

By HARRY STINSON

According to the benign powers that be, we must all take that heart-rending and traumatic step, and wrench our palates free from the comforting blandness of all those goodies from our friends at the great Kraft omniprocessmill. How then, to circumvent the yawning vacuum in our bill of fare?

First, of course, peanut butter . . . easy stuff: just throw a lot of peanuts into a blender with some oil (soy or peanut oil, a tasteless type). Caution, put the oil in before the peanuts, please. The consistency and smoothness depend on the proportions and length of time you use.

Next, we turn to salad dressings. Most of them use an oil and vinegar base, the proportions varying according to your taste and the type of dressing. But 3:1 seems to be a relatively common oil: vinegar balance. You can use any oil or vinegar. A dash of lemon juice, some Tabasco, soy sauce, Worcestershire, (any, and/ or all) can be added, plus seasonings from among salt (onion salt), pepper (cayenne?), basil, mint, savory, oregano, paprika, dry mustard, curry, and garlic (rah, rah!). To these foundation concoctions, you can blend in stuff like tomato soup concentrate (or ketchup) for instance, or onion soup. And I do hope that you have a blender by now: if so, you now have the terrific versatility to beat in practically anything and everything, (onions, mushrooms, apples) especially all sorts of scraps and shreds of cheese (combined with soy sauce, nutmeg, cinnamon, paprika, curry, thyme, lemon juice and the base makes a delicious cheese dressing).

This brings us to the other standard; mayonnaise (salad dressing). Combine 3 tbsp. lemon juice, ½ tsp. salt, tsp. prepared mustard, an egg, ¼ cup oil and seasonings of your choice (some curry is good). Mix smooth, and whilst still running the old machine, pour slowly in ¾ cup salad oil, continuing about 2 minutes. Make a simple Thousand Island by adding relish, or just flavour and colour to taste. You can make another simpler cheese dressing by just blending the cheese shreds into this, or grating it straight in and stirring it up.

Another household infamy is that obnoxious little package if individually wrapped cheese slices. Good cheese is of course expensive, and becoming more so, but if you avoid the snobby creamy French-types, many excellent Scandinavian and other cheeses (yes, even some Ontario cheeses,) are available readily in Toronto. Two places in particular — Pasquale Bros., a fascinating Italian old-fashioned food emporium, and Kensington Market, where you can get practically anything in cheeses at relatively cut rate prices. While we're on the trail of alternative food sources, an unlikely but lucrative spot is (surprise) Honest Ed's! While he never features a completely balanced spectrum of food, a little concerted rummaging usually turns up some real bargains. Usher's (on Queen) offers more choice but beware the pitfall of switched labels on brand-name products.