



Ray Whelan as Arthur Uri.

Boredom reigns Ui play

By Sandra Souchette

Although Brecht's theory of theatre operates on a method of "alienation" which forces the spectator to separate himself from the dramatic spectacle, it has nothing to do with imposing the inertia of boredom.

George Luscombe's production of Arturo Ui, playing at the Toronto Workshop, ultimately fails because large segments are boring and even though we may be momentarily unnerved by such awesome metaphors as Arturo Ui (Hitler), gangleader of the cauliflower "protection" racket, delivering his final ego-maniacal oration, complete with spot-lights and Nuremberg rally sound effects, the feeling of that omnipresent reality fades and we are left suspended between the potential and the actuality of the play.

In spite of the montage of effects in the play: the newspaper headline slide-projections, vaudeville routines, rhymed epigrams, Shakespearean insertions, and the parallel of Chicago gangsterism and the rise of the Nazis, the images that work are the ones with an almost programmed familiarity (something distinctly anti-Brechtian).

Our understanding of Hitler's muscle-men lieutenants and the emasculated Hindenborgh (Von Hindenburg) rests on previous knowledge rather than on any depth of characterization. Don Meyers as the twisted foot Givola (Goebbels) has a sinister aura of evil and Len Doncheff as Roma (Rohm) gives strength and credibility to his role but Barry Wasman as Giri (Goering) and especially Michael Marshal as Hindenborgh are weak caricatures, not only historically but also dramatically. Ray Whelan in the demanding and complex role of Arturo Ui (Hitler) sustains an innovative and creative interest throughout, both verbally and in his mannerisms. And it is his movement that enlivens the better moments of the play.

Joe Hill — a terrific film

By LLOYD CHESLEY

Is politics a wave of ideas? Is it cult heroes and leaders? I think you'll agree that the sensible approach is that politics is people. This is the idea of Bo Widerberg's terrific new film Joe Hill.

Joe Hill is history. Joe Hill is also myth. But in this film, Joe Hill is a man, a normal man, a good man.

Joe was a Swedish immigrant who landed in New York around the turn of the century. He tried to integrate himself to this new culture, finally saw the bullshit, and started speaking and preaching a World United Worker's Revolution. He sang songs. I guess he was the Woody Guthrie of his day, 'cause Woody said "This guitar kills fascists" and that's why Joe was into music too. In 1915, Joe Hill was executed for murder. Even history believes he was framed.

Widerberg follows Joe from his arrival. He meets the system head on. He lives in a shit hole tenement, but he accepts it. He befriends a little urchin who teaches him a lot about slum survival and he also meets the most beautiful girl I have seen in movies since. I dunno. What happens to them teaches him more about the land of the free. This segment beautifully evokes not only the period and location, but Joe's innocence as a youth without making him seem an idiot.

Joe hits the road, or the rails and meets individualism: The hobo. This is a romantic period in the film. These bums aren't drop outs or anything but, as their age shows, they are a thing of the past, men who will have no place in the rapidly encroaching technological society.

Joe says goodbye to the past and meets the future: a group of Socialist radicals who travel around the west coast speaking from soapboxes and being beaten up by police. Joe joins them and becomes known mostly for his songs. The important thing here is two alternatives Widerberg wisely avoided.

He could have set in to a lot of heavy political rhetoric, like a Godard might have done. In fact, the politics of these people are rudimentary and simple. The rhetoric is played right down.

He also might have taken the chance to create a mythic hero in the



Thommy Berggren as the man, JOE HILL, in Bo Widerberg's new film, a ballad about a man who spoke for what he believed and was murdered by a government.

new Joe Hill, politico. In fact it is always apparent that Joe is just another member of the group. Never do we feel he is a leader or even a better man than the others. He is just another man.

That is what it's about: the men. Brave, honest, sincere men fighting to do what they think is right. In this case it is world communism, and the sincerity of the cause is made stronger by the sincerity of these common men rather than by heroes or rhetoric.

The film is filled with lovely scenes, moments and images. If the film is political, it is only right that it

contain one of the loveliest love scenes I have seen in a long time. Joe's travels with the hoboes, his fight in jail as he and the others toss the shit into the office because the sheriff won't empty the pail, his torture by fascists trying to make him sing the national anthem (one yells at him to "Say 'hail'" and the more he yells it the more it sounds like Sieg Heil), and his wait on death row where he befriends his guard are all beautiful.

The film is about a man, a ballad of a guy who spoke up meant for all guys who speak up, and not only for sustenance, but for beauty as well. Good film! At the Uptown.

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