

films

The Comedians, at the Paramount, is produced and directed by Peter Glenville. The screenplay was written by Graham Greene from his novel.

The cynical title analogizes the complicated story which is occasionally masked by aborted screenplay and lax direction; but it has sufficient strength to make the film a qualified success.

The setting is Haiti just after the Duvalier takeover. Three figures—Smith, Jones and Brown—arrive on the transmuted island and are submerged in the violence of the dictatorship, the bloodshed of counter-revolution, and the poverty of the country. Their anonymous masks are torn away to reveal the human beings behind them—Smith, a naive idealist; Jones, the great pretender; and Brown, the cynic—a motley crew for a comedy.

Burton plays Brown, a trifling, jealous anti-hero who is trapped in Haiti because of a hotel left to him by his mother which he is unable to sell, and by a married woman whom he loves (Elizabeth, naturally).

Miss Taylor is tolerable when she remembers her accent. (She is of German descent; her father was executed at Nuremberg for war crimes.) She is married to a Latin American ambassador, ably portrayed by Peter Ustinov.

The Burtons run away with the first part of the movie, and while their love-making has remarkable professional quality, the excessive quantity is detrimental to the movie. (They give one the guilty feeling of imposing on their personal intimacies.) This does however serve to expose Brown's weakness of character. He opposes even her husband's advances toward her, and crudely demands to know the history of her sex life.

Paul Ford (once part of McHale's Navy) gives a strong performance as Smith, the ingenuous American who has a half million dollar allocation to promote vegetarian products in a country of starving beggars.

His innocence is exemplified by his incongruous support of principles in a country where the law is enforced by a group of toughs who would give Robert Stack second thoughts.

Smith's wife, unconscious of the danger, intervenes between Brown and the police. They are about to reduce him to a bloody pulp in his own hotel lobby when she storms down the stairs lashing out in Fringlish and demanding that they produce a search warrant.

Major Jones (Alec Guinness) is a loquacious tergiversator. He hides behind a delicate camouflage of tales of his heroism in Burma which leave Brown unimpressed.

He suffers the usual setbacks of the gun-running profession and is hunted down by the *Tonton* when they discover his attempted extortion.

The movie picks up once it is over the passion and into the drama of the story. The rebels require a military leader, and Jones appears to have the qualifications. They trick him with his boasting into assuming command.

The police attempt to bribe Brown into delivering up the fugitive and offer him \$2,000. "Inflation is everywhere," he comments. "It used to be thirty pieces of silver."

Brown is faced with the choice of playing Judas or repenting. He chooses to be a good shepherd and deliver Jones to safety, despite Jones' annoying advances to his lover—they play gin-rummy together.

At the rendezvous with the rebels Jones confesses to Brown, and reveals the real Jones, who never quite made it to Burma, and who couldn't smell water miles off. They turn out to be much the same people, except that Jones is now trying to make the stories come true.

Brown begins to develop ideals—his fatal flaw.

The movie is long—over two and a half hours—and the production could have been better, but the story is reasonably rewarding if one can survive the low points to get at it.

—Gordon Auck

How I won the war

Novel hasn't film's satiric punch

HOW I WON THE WAR, by Patrick Ryan; Corgi Books, 256 pp. 95c.

Patrick Ryan's Account of the Memoirs of Ernest Goodbody starts as a mirth-filled reflection of Goodbody's rise to the officer corps, and rises to crescendo through North Africa and into Italy to find a morbid grave in Greece. If you find it in yourself to read the book, the first 174 pages will suffice. From there to the end of the book, the humor is sporadic and strained, bearing no similarity whatsoever to the part that precedes it.

I had the opportunity to see the film, and found it to be wielding a rapier of satire, while the book itself is strictly light humor. The film I'll leave in the capable hands of Mr. Auck, and let the better parts of the book speak for themselves.

Goodbody is the victim of circumstance that he cannot, in his simplicity, comprehend. His unflinching faith in his abilities of leadership, comradeship, and superiority in situations lead Goodbody into an unbelievable series of events.

I suppose he sees himself as many people see themselves: unerring, heroic, and unrealistic; in a world of pseudo-fiction. Goodbody really thinks his men respect him. He honestly sees himself as a hero, and no matter what the truth is, or how the facts are aligned, he does not realize what he truly is, a petty character in common occurrences.

Mind you, Goodbody sometimes realizes the severity of his predicaments and this is when the real Goodbody emerges. In the petty situations he magnifies his importance and retreats unknowingly to his secret world, just as children live in a sometimes fantasy world of heroes and villains.

The humor of Goodbody comes from his total naiveté which is often under the assault of his men, the Twelfth Platoon of the Fourth Musketeers.

The comedy of circumstance and situations is best shown by the events Goodbody involves himself in:

He captures the Golden Fleece of Jason at officer training maneuvers.

In his first night in the service he acts as an unbiased denture thrower.

He unknowingly discovers an entire system of service profiteers, and fails to recognize it.

He bungles his way into Tunis while it is still being held by the enemy, and has to hide in a makeshift brothel.

He liberates a hospital in Greece which did not need liberating (this is where the breakdown of the book begins).

He is approached by several madams but fails to succumb.

He is made liaison officer between the Arabs and the British, and to facilitate the detection of dysentery, offers twenty francs for

every cigaret tin that is filled with Arab faeces. This results in a major revolution in the town which he holds when thousands of Arabs come with their little cans.

He wins the Battle of the Booze, which was fought between the British, New Zealanders, and the Americans over possession of a vineyard.

He captures forty prisoners in Italy, only to be impounded himself when he is mistaken for the enemy.

He commands two hundred foot-sailors of the Italian Liberation forces, whose incompetence speaks for itself.

He directs a three and a half hour cricket game on a rocky granite pitch under a blazing Egyptian sun.

And in the last, and bad, section of the book, he buys the last bridge standing over the Rhine with an N.S.F. cheque.

Totally ridiculous? Well, maybe. The structure of the book has some merit as it gives an expository account of some part of the war which comes from a serious source; the memoirs of a general, a historian's viewpoint, and the like. Ryan then attempts to produce an antithesis through his fiction, to create what he would like to consider satire.

The satire is either too superficial to be noticed, or too cerebral to be of any value. This is where the film was better than the book.

Generally, it is light entertainment that never really succeeds in accomplishing what Ryan might have been attempting.

About all the book ends up doing is reassuring us that it was Ernest Goodbody who won the war, not the Yanks like they'd like us to believe. Even in the book Goodbody runs into an American tank commander who states (with his tank barrel down Goodbody's nose), "General Mark Clark's gonna be first into Rome and we gonna see nobody else don't jump into the act. O.K.?"

If you really want to see who won the war, go see the film; forget about the book.

—John Makowichuk

Mixed Chorus sings, swings with Bach, Brahms, Britten

The University of Alberta Mixed Chorus continues its 24th Annual Concerts tonight and Saturday in the new Students' Union Theatre.

The 120 voice Chorus will be directed by Mr. James Whittle in an enjoyable selection of serious and light choral music from the sixteenth century to the present.

A special feature of this year's concerts is the Chamber Choir, a small group of selected Chorus members who will perform several pieces throughout the program. The Chorus and the Chamber Choir will combine to sing Orlando Gibbons' anthem, "Hosanna to the Son of David", as the highlight of a group of selections from Renaissance church music.

In addition, the program includes two "Songs of Mourning" by J. C. Bach, and the motet "O Heiland reiss die Himmel auf", by Brahms. Several outstanding modern compositions will be performed, including "Norwegian Girls" by Zoltan Kodaly, "Belle et ressemblante" by Francis Poulenc, and "I Lov'd a Lass" by Benjamin Britten. The program will conclude with a group of popular folk songs of England, Germany and America, as well as Bela Bartok's arrangement of "Four Slovak Folk Songs".

During the past few years, the University of Alberta Mixed Chorus has earned a reputation as one of the more active student organizations on campus, and the present Chorus is eagerly maintaining that tradition. Following the concerts in Edmonton the Chorus will give concerts in Edson and Drayton Valley, on February

9 and 10. In May the Chorus will climax the University year with a 10 day tour of Alberta cities and towns.

Tickets for the Concerts can be obtained for \$1.50 from members of the Mixed Chorus, at booths in SUB, Arts, Education and Tory Buildings, or at the Allied Arts Box Office in the Bay.

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