

Lindsay Anderson's latest

O Lucky Man throws darts with a smile . . .

By WARREN CLEMENTS

O Lucky Man is a ridiculously enjoyable film, a two and a half hour Pilgrim's Progress in which hero Malcolm McDowell rises and falls, only to be saved by a bedazzling and hopelessly irrelevant ending.

Everyone connected with the film obviously had a great time making it. McDowell was first discovered in Lindsay Anderson's *If . . .*, co-star Rachel Roberts performed in Anderson's *This Sporting Life*, and at times it all seems like an Anderson deluxe home movie. The glorious re-union at the finale, in which director Lindsay himself appears to spread a little Zen to the masses, seems less a part of the film than a missing snapshot from the British film industry's family album.

The saving grace is that the script is witty, the music is light and pointed (see music review below), and the fun is infectious.

McDowell's character starts his travels innocently enough as a wide-eyed coffee salesman who uses a winning smile and boundless ambition to climb ahead. As ultimate head of coffee distribution in northern England and Scotland, he gets to bed his landlady, receives gifts from a fellow boarder, and enjoys royal treatment in a luxurious hotel.

Just as this heady good fortune becomes excruciatingly incredible, the bubble bursts. The army captures and tortures the hapless salesman ("Who are you working for?"), and an experimental hospital attempts to make him a permanent patient. (If you liked the

"horse in the bed" scene in *The Godfather*, you'll love the hospital episode's gruesome climax.)

If any message emerges from the epic, it is that any fool can beat the system, but the system has built-in mechanisms to beat the fool. Lightly cynical, but not sticky about it.

McDowell's presence, and scenes of him falling through a window and undergoing an eye examination, inevitably recall Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*. But where *Orange* stripped its characters of all warmth and emotion, *O Lucky Man* gives them enough warmth to hang themselves.

O Lucky Man is a funny entertaining movie, with imagination piled high and wide in gleefully self-conscious mounds. With a tighter script, it might have been a perfect film — but then, with directors like Anderson at a premium, who expects perfection? Now showing at the Uptown Two.

The Ruling Class

The perfect movie is hard to come by, but *The Ruling Class*, with Peter O'Toole and Alistair Sim, comes very close. It's a mixture of black comedy (O'Toole stars as Christ incarnate) and burlesque, and O'Toole deserved the Academy Award for best actor (he was nominated) far more than Marlon Brando last year. Now showing with *Carnal Knowledge* (by Mike Nichols, script by Jules Feiffer) at the Kensington, on College west of Bathurst, for the unbelievable price of \$1.25.



Malcolm McDowell ponders the vagaries of wealth in a short-lived job in *O Lucky Man*.

... and hits top score

By STAN HENRY

Alan Price's score for *O Lucky Man* is the most innovative and exciting movie soundtrack to be released since Simon and Garfunkel put their marks on *The Graduate*.

The title song — which, for the uninformed, bears absolutely no resemblance to *Lucky Man* by Emerson, Lake and Palmer — sets the tone for the rest of the album by blending curiously pessimistic lyrics with music which is sometimes nothing less than ironically joyous.

The title track brackets the album and the movie as a simple beginning version to introduce the story and later as a churning rock masterpiece to sum up and reflect on what has preceded.

Price, a former member of the Animals, shows such a freshness of outlook, an ability to vary musical styles and a remarkably pleasant voice, that one wonders why he took so long to surface.

O Lucky Man's major drawback is also one of its strengths. Price and his music never intrude on Lindsay Anderson's film; the composer keeps his material to a well-polished minimum to enhance the plot-line. As a result, the record album contains only about 25 minutes of music, which is precious little to get for \$5, what with the title track being included twice.

But *O Lucky Man* is definitely worth the price.

Snow White meets Fellini

Orientation film nights, once the last refuge for tired cartoons and horror epics, have branched out in their appeal.

Bethune College is offering two nights of non-stop movies, starting tonight at 10 PM with *City Lights* (silent version), "M" (with Peter Lorre as everyone's favourite child molester), *It's A Gift* (with W.C. Fields), and *The Third Man* (with Joseph Cotton and Orson Welles in Vienna, and Anton Karas on zither).

Sunday night, Bethune promises "Them" (all about ants), "Snow White" (in which a prisoner dies of thirst one foot from a glass of water, while the Seven Dwarfs sweat their caps off in a diamond mine), "The Black Cat" (with Karloff), and "I Walked With a Zombie". This show starts at 8 PM and closes at 2:30 AM.

Calumet College offers free food and beer today at 2 PM with a series of short films, the majority by Canadian animator Norman McLaren: "Cosmic Zoom", "Ballet Adagio", "Gallery", "Cria", "Countdown Canada" (in which our neighbours to the south pick up their option), "Omega", "Street

Musique", "Two", "Pas de Deux" (the beautiful super-imposed ballet), "Legend", "Mosaic", "Blinkety-Blank" (creatures drawn directly on the film by Mr. McLaren, who is good at that sort of thing), and "Angel".

The Calumet people are holding the festival in the Atkinson Studio, and promise to end it all with Jane Fonda in *Barbarella*.

Following a 6 pm beer and barbecue feast in the Atkinson living room tomorrow, Calumet will host films in the Atkinson Studio including *Calumet*, *Pipe of Peace*, *Let It Be* (Beatles), and *If* (with Malcolm McDowell).

Stong's contribution is a night of "fright night flicks" beginning at 10:30 pm tonight in the Junior Common Room with "War of the Worlds", "Let's Scare Jessica to Death", "Targets" (Peter Bogdanovitch's first film, with Boris Karloff in his last role), and "The Skull".

Winters College is offering an as-yet unspecified program of all-night movies on Saturday night in the Junior Common Room.

Most of these affairs are crowded and cramped, and those interested in attending would be advised to take a pillow or a pair of binoculars. Or a crowbar.

Elsewhere this week, the Film Library, Room 114A, is showing a 70-minute documentary entitled *Paris 1900*, in two parts today and tomorrow at noon. The film follows Paris' history from the turn of the century to the beginning of the First World War, using newsreels, theatre programs, early silent movies and George Melies' trick films. Viewers will be treated to scenes of Bernhardt, Tolstoy, Renoir, Rodin, Chevalier and Gide, and are invited to bring their lunch.

Courtesy of the film department, Federico Fellini's *La Strada* (literally, the Road) will be shown at 10 am in Ross S137 on Tuesday, Sept. 11.

Of the film, which won an Academy Award as the Best Foreign Film of 1956, critic Pauline Kael writes: "The theme — that everyone has a purpose in the universe — is acted out by three symbolic characters: soul (innocence, spirit, dreams), Gioletta Masina; body (physical, brute strength, man as animal), Anthony Quinn; and mind (the artist-fool), Richard Basehart. Though the background of the film is neo-realist poverty, it is transformed by the romanticism of the conception . . ."

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BIOLOGY 305

(Plant Development)

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