

Nostalgia, sex highlight York 1960 film festival

By REBECCA CANN

The year 1960 marked the beginning of a loss of innocence. It was the year of the Pill, the twist, the U2 incident and the Cuban embargo. It marked the release of a new kind of film, including *L'Avventura*, *A Bout de Souffle* (*Breathless*) and *Psycho*. It was also the year York University began.

York's Department of Film/Video has moved to capture the flavor of 1960 for today's York community in a screening of films released during that year. The "1960 Watershed Year in International Film Production Festival" will run on a series of Wednesday afternoons in the Nat Taylor Cinema and is free to all comers. Doug Davidson, a film/video faculty member currently on sabbatical, took time out to organize the festival and describes the films selected as "the most outstanding and significant films released in the world during 1960."

In the history of film, 1960 was a year of transition. The old Hollywood studio system was being swept away, as was the traditional style of filmmaking. The tight narrative and neatly rounded endings of the old Hollywood films were rapidly making way for the episodic structures, ambiguous endings and disjunctive elements of the modernist style of film. Foreign films were beginning to fill theatres in North America, and with the relaxing of Hollywood's production code sex became a major topic for exploration on celluloid.

The York film festival provides an overview of these changes with a wide range of films. Each viewing

will be introduced by a film/video faculty member who will explain the film's position in the festival as well as in history. The films chosen promise to reflect the social, moral and artistic transformation which occurred in 1960, the first major steps towards where film and society are today. Each film is a classic in its own right and since some of them are rarely available for public viewing, the festival should not be missed. Whether you seek an afternoon of nostalgia, entertainment, or a break from classes, the "1960 Watershed Year in International Film Production Festival" will provide the space.

September 18: 1:30—Munro, directed by Gene Deitch. Oscar-winning cartoon of the adventures of a total misfit in the US army. *The Apartment*, directed by Billy Wilder, won best picture, best director, best screenplay at the Oscars. A compendium of '50s lore and '60s sexuality, starring Jack Lemmon and Shirley MacLaine. Introduced by Doug Davidson.

4:00—Hiroshima, Mon Amour, directed by Alain Resnais. An experimental approach to time and memory. Controversial in its exploration of an inter-racial relationship. Quebec censor cut 14 minutes and lost his job. Introduced by Evan Cameron.

October 2: 1:30—Universe, directed by Roman Kroiter and Colin Low. A documentary journey through space. Canadian film of the year, it set a new standard for special effects and was a precursor of Stanley Kubrick's 2001: *A Space Odyssey* in its animated effects. *Primary*, directed by Richard Leacock and Donn Pennebaker. An exploration of John F. Kennedy's campaign. Introduced by John Katz.



4:00—I'm Alright Jack, directed by John Boulting. A British satire on labor relations, starring Peter Sellers, Ian Carmichael and Margaret Rutherford. Introduced by Gerald Pratley.

October 9: 1:30—A Bout de Souffle (Breathless), directed by Jean-Luc Godard. One of the most radically modern new-wave films of the period. Richard Gere fans will be familiar with the recent remake which does not hold its own in comparison to the original. Stars Jean-Paul Belmondo and Jean Seberg. Introduced by Seth Feldman.

4:00—Exodus, directed by Otto Preminger. Based on the best-seller by Leon Uris concerning the building of the state of Israel. Hollywood's answer to TV, this runaway blockbuster epic stars Paul Newman, Eva Marie Saint and Ralph Richardson. Introduced by Robin Wood.

October 16: 1:30—Psycho, directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Hitchcock's promo was to advertise that no one would be allowed into the theatre after the performance began. The suspense killed audiences. Introduced by Ken Dancyger.

4:00—L'Avventura, directed by Michelangelo Antonioni. "Not so much told as accumulated." Booned at Cannes, it won the special critic's award. The film explores the desolation of the characters' spiritual world. Many consider it the greatest film since 1960. Introduced by Bruce Elder.

All films are being screened at the Nat Taylor Cinema, N102 Ross. Admission is free. If you lose this schedule, our Calendar of Events will keep you informed weekly.



BUT WHERE'S SONNY? Gala guests Norma Aleandro and Cher make their appearance at the Festival of Festivals.

By ADRIAN IWACHIW
Prague

Vera Chytilova and Jiri Menzel, the directors of the hour-long documentary *Prague*, were two of the leading figures of the Czech New Wave in the 1960s. After the Soviet invasion of 1968, both stayed behind while many of their compatriots fled into exile. For several years, Vera Chytilova was not allowed to make films; Jiri Menzel, for his part, had at one point retracted and denounced his own role in the New Wave, which influenced an entire generation of Czechs.

Prague makes extensive use of experimental visual techniques, such as stop-action and time-lapse photography, prismatic distortion, as well as plenty of fast editing. It is a visual trip through the history of the Czechoslovakian capital: its architecture, its famous personages, its artistic styles. Unfortunately, it all comes across more like an inferior *Koyaanisqatsi* that isn't sure of what it wants to say, and with no sense of rhythmic or musical continuity. Images of fashion models posing

against old buildings and on stone stairways are thrown in at random.

To top it all off, an unceasingly pompous and annoying male English narrator repeats poetic banalities such as "There is a time for life, and there is a time for death," or "The most important thing is to be conscious of continuity." The latter he repeats partially or completely with insistent vehemence some six or seven times in rapid succession. What relationship, one might wonder, do these profound words bear to the well-dressed blondes gazing into the camera? Perhaps, one hopes, it is somehow a pale shadow of that wonderful Czech New Wave quality of mingling the comical with the deadly serious; lyrical whimsy with dark satire. Maybe if you read between the frames you could feel the oppression of Czechoslovakia, historically burdened by its stone monuments, more recently by its police state anxiety. "And again, an era ends, and another one begins. Because life on earth never comes to a stop." One wishes *Prague* came to an earlier stop.

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