

films

(I'm not at all satisfied with the following paragraphs, which make *Morgan*, at the Roxy, sound terribly pretentious, though I think part of the film's excellence is the product of the conflicts I'm about to discuss. So maybe an initial exhortation is in order:

Go to see *Morgan*. It is the funniest British comedy I have seen for a very long time. It can be enjoyed simply as a very funny film. No knowledge of socialism, Modern British Cinema or the habits of the gorilla is required. *Morgan* is the best film now in Edmonton. Now, if you wish, read on.)

A plot summary of *Morgan* isn't going to get us anywhere. The point of the picture isn't that Morgan (brilliantly played by David Warner) is being divorced by his wife (ditto by Vanessa Redgrave). Nor is it that he has jungle fantasies, funny and moving though these are.

Nor is the film reducible to a neat "mad artist in a mad society" message.

In fact, I don't think *Morgan* has a "message" as such at all. On one level, it's slapstick. On another, it's a delicate, touching investigation of what has happened to the once-so-potent myth of the Red Revolution.

Morgan's mother (Irene Hand) represents the grand old British working-class revolutionary spirit, gallant and obsolete. *Morgan* is a product of that dead dream, thrust into the cool, stylish, anti-ideological 'sixties. The workers are never going to revolt, so what can a man do but build in his head a private revolution?

Morgan's private revolution is essentially a parody of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's glorification of the state of nature.

It takes the shape of slow-motion Walt Disney True Life Adventures-type shots, of sequences from a Johnny Weismuller Tarzan film, and even, as *Morgan's* fantasies grow darker, of an excerpt from a King Kong feature.

This world is brought into conflict with two other worlds: the equally fantastic socialist mythology (which neither the film nor I mean to sneer at—for all its weaknesses, it was an honorable dream, and such dreams are rare), and the less-honorable mod mythology which has served as the scene of so many recent British films.

Great comic scenes result from both confrontations. From the former: *Morgan* demonstrating the death of Trotsky on an egg being held by an unsuspecting policeman; *Morgan* making gorilla noises at Karl Marx's tomb. From the latter: *Morgan* invading the art gallery owned by his wife's lover, armed to the teeth; *Morgan* disrupting the wedding of lover and wife in a gorilla-suit.

It all adds up to a thoroughly satisfying film, and you shouldn't miss it.

Curiously enough, a very bad film is on at the Odeon involving another mad artists, called (devastating subtlety!) *A Fine Madness*.

It has Sean Connery as Samson Shillitoe, a psychopathic poet who goes around punching people and breaking things and being totally irresponsible, like all poets, right?

And he has this loyal little wife who takes him to this nice psychiatrist who is really impotent, like all psychiatrists, right?

And psychiatrists's wife naturally turns to Shillitoe, and psychiatrist is (understandably) piqued, and allows a mad neurosurgeon to go ahead with a lobotomy on Samson, right?

Far be it from me to disclose how it all comes out. Suffice it it say that the film handles its cliches woodenly and brutally.

Everybody in *Lady L* (at the Capital) is thoroughly sane and quite delightful.

Written and directed by Peter Ustinov, after a novel by Romain Gary, this very satisfying little film follows Sophia Loren from youth in a gorgeous Paris bordello (where, you will be glad to hear, she only does the washing) to glorious old age as a Titled English Lady.

In the intervening years she is involved with Paul Newman, a dashing quixotic criminal who is the love of her life, and with David Niven, a suave English aristocrat who acquiesces to a ménage à trois with great good humor.

I recommend the film unreservedly as a delightful entertainment which manages to transcend completely the limitations of Paul Newman, who plays a Frenchman in his most American manner.

David Murray is teaching an extension course on the Art of the Cinema which I strongly recommend to those with the time (six Tuesday evenings) and the money (\$18 registration fee). Check with the Extension Department in Corbett Hall.

—John Thompson

ESO first features fancy fiddler

If you were accosted on the street by an elderly lady who seized you violently by the dapel and hit you over the head several times with her umbrella, simultaneously shouting in shrill tones, "The Edmonton Symphony is playing this weekend", what would you do?

That's right, you would immediately disengage yourself from her grasp and sprint to the Bay to buy tickets for either the Saturday night or the Sunday afternoon performance.

Because after all, where else would you be able to hear more-than-passable live performances of Elgar, Bruch, Paganini, and Tchaikovsky in the comfort and privacy of your own Jubilee Auditorium?

Yes, gentle readers, the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra presents its first concerts of the 1966-67 year October 15 and 16.

QUITE LISTENABLE

And the program, if not overwhelmingly esoteric or strikingly modern, is very listenable. Take Sir Edward Elgar's *Cockaigne* Overture, for example: Elgar is (depending on how you look at it) the first, the last, or the only great English composer of modern times. (Real Elgar fanatics have been known to murmur seditiously that Elgar was the only great composer ever.) *Cockaigne*, a piece of "descriptive" music on the subject of London, is one of his very good (as opposed to his very very good) works. It is flashy, buoyant, good-humoured, high-spirited, English

and very well scored indeed.

Piotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky (and there are more spellings of his name than there are of Shakespeare's) is a much maligned composer. When faced with the statement, "My, but I do like Tchaikovsky!", any true member of the cognoscenti will either immediately turn purple and launch into a three-hour discourse on the evils of tonality, or turn icily away.

Tchaikovsky was one of that vanishing breed of composers who are not afraid of a melody; and because he had a good deal of talent, he turned out a colossal number of good melodies, as well as quite a few bad ones. And as his melodies are usually arranged in a dramatic context and orchestrated exceedingly well, he earns the right to be called a good (if not revolutionary) composer.

Luckily for you all of the musical material in the Fantasy-Overture *Romeo and Juliet* is at the very least passable, and much of it is first-rate.

The soloist for the performances of Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy* and Paganini's First Violin Concerto will be the universally-lauded fiddler Ruggiero Ricci. Those dedicated few of you who attended the ESO concerts last season will no doubt remember Ricci's flamboyant, not to say melodramatic, performance of the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto and a couple of hair-raisingly difficult Paganini Studies.

Ricci is probably the nearest Paganini now playing. Paganini electrified Europe in the first few decades of the 19th century with his phenomenal technique and unbelievably intense playing style, and was even accounted by some to be one of the possessed.

NOT DIABOLICAL

Ricci does not, perhaps, strike anyone as being particularly diabolical, but he certainly has a phenomenal technique and an intense playing style. He is an Italian, a showman, and an accomplished master of overstatement.

As for the works Ricci will play, about the *Scottish Fantasy* I know nothing (I've never heard it); the Paganini is a perfect vehicle for Ricci's technique, and is a thorough delight.

Brian Priestman will direct both of the performances. Sometimes, when I am particularly depressed, I wonder gloomily whether the people of Edmonton really appreciate Mr. Priestman's existence. "Do they realize", I am often to be found muttering to myself, "what a great conductor he really is?"

But the fact still remains that the percentage of the Edmonton populace who attend Symphony concerts is appallingly small.

And in view of the fact that I can't conceive of a more pleasant way of spend a Saturday night (or at least a Sunday afternoon), it's very surprising.

—Bill Beard

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