

ENTERTAINMENT

Is "YOL" a revolutionary's work?

New Turkish film reinforces traditional values

Pierre Careau

YOL, a controversial nationalist film, fought its way out of repressive Turkey, ruled by a fascist military government since September 1980, to eventually win the highest honour of the world's most prestigious film festival (La Palme d'Or au Festival du Film de Cannes, 1982).

Likewise, its creator chose refuge in France in October 1981, rather than returning to prison after his leave had expired. Indeed, Yilmaz Guney has spent half of his 25-year career imprisoned for political reasons, ranging from subversive poetry to an official's murder (which has yet to be proven). Nevertheless,

Yilmaz acted in over 100 films, also writing and directing twelve of them. Another one was even completed while he was in prison, and his last three and most important films, *SURU* (the herd), *DUSMAN* (the enemy), and *YOL* (the way) were made by procuration, during his incarceration. Yilmaz deserves the paternity of these films since he was in constant communication with a friend who directed *ad interim*.

YOL opens on a flight of seagulls over a penitentiary island, setting the hopeful tone of a one-week leave for a few lucky prisoners. Despite the picturesque cinematography, their journey through Turkey is not a mere travelogue, but represents a

desperate search for identity. The route seems direct, but is laden with ambushes at every stop. The three main characters embody the strong Turkish popular traditions and customs. However, the country, full of militia, threatens their everyday life and secular patrimony.

A moment of great emotion builds when one of the convicts, finally reaching his destination, frankly admits his cowardice to his in-laws' family, his wife and young children. The two children, lost in despair and sorrow, reach out as their beloved father is taken away. Their little faces distort behind the barrier of the window pane which separates them from the courtyard. There

stands this stranger who is also, and above all, their legitimate father, the most important figure in Turkish culture. The poignancy becomes almost unbearable. Indeed, throughout the film, the emphasis is on the children emulating their father. Invariably, women are relegated to domestic servitude and subordinate to male despotism.

This other inmate lets his wife die of cold to purge his honour and the honour of his family. She has committed the unpardonable sin of adultery. The *rigor mortis* in the minimalist image of this man resolutely walking toward a grey horizon, dynamically cut by an oblique cliff of white snow, visu-

alizes the determination, the rigidity and yet the strength inherent in his action. His slight hesitation, although it comes too late, gives some hope that humanism may pierce the thick shell of retrogressive Turkish tradition.

The only liberated character is a Kurd, with no wife or family. However, he does not wish to marry. His individual freedom is expressed through slow-motion flashbacks of him happily riding a brisk horse with his brother. This young man appears to have enough strength to carry an ideal.

Yilmaz Guney has filmed the criteria of his revolutionary ideal: there is no room for cowards or careless individuals. He opens his door to men of noble heart, ready to purify their race but within the barriers of tradition. However, Turkish tradition has already repressed half the population, the female class.

Would the government be traditionalist then, simply considering the word "population" to be of the feminine gender?

If the ending shows the way, *YOL* projects an uncertain future. An aesthetically beautiful shot of a railway piercing the horizon to an unknown destination suddenly blurs. Perhaps the exile is not the answer after all. Despite his social condemnations, totalling almost 100 years of imprisonment, Yilmaz Guney might wish to return home provided he could make movies his way.

Murray McLauchlin: Have songs - will travel

Paula Todd

Murray McLauchlan sauntered backstage at Burton Hall Thursday night and grinned. He was relaxed and ready for the show which was sponsored by the CYSF. Quickly, he checked the song line-up with his soundman and slipped down to the dressing rooms to make his entrance through the stage door.

That he was confident showed in the ease of his performance. Burton wasn't full, but those 264 people who came to see him managed to generate the noise of a crowd twice its size. From the moment Murray opened his mouth, he was cheered and applauded. Packing the performance with old tunes like "Hard Rock Town" and "Honkey Red",



Photo: Barry

An easy show

this polished performer drew a standing ovation.

In slightly faded blue jeans, running shoes and t-shirt, Murray looked every bit a man in his "early

30's". His jokes were generally childish and (if we can give the man this much credit) condescending.

His performance is pat and polished with no hint of artistic stretch. He offered up his talents with a certain arrogance, letting his fingers trip along the piano keys, allowing us a few bars of several musical genres; but he never gave us enough to dig into. He fooled around, spending too much time in tired dialogue and unfunny chit-chat.

But the audience had come to hear the familiar and as long as he played it, they loved him.

Murray blows the harmonica with ease and deliberation; the whining

notes filled the acoustically superb hall and mellowed the audience. "Hey, this place sounds great," he said at one point.

From his new album, *Windows*, he played "Jealousy", a song which sounds good on the album, but hollow live. And he did "I Hate Your Gun", a fairly lame lament of John Lennon's death. In performance, however, he managed to liven it up and removed the reggae edge which renders it artificial on the l.p.

After the concert, he was as relaxed as before. He obviously found it an easy job and as I watched him pull away in his jeep, I couldn't help but wonder what television show he was going home to watch.



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