

Film "L'Avventura" Tragedies Of Love

By Marion Raycheba
"L'Avventura," the last Film Society presentation, is a make-your-heart-ache exploration of the tragedies of love.

Anna, restless and unsatisfied that marriage to Sandro will solve her problems, disappears during a holiday with friends. Her companions search frantically but there is no trace. The group leaves the island for a more habitable resort; Sandro and Claudia, Anna's closest friend, continue their search. They pursue clues, drive from town to town, but all efforts are fruitless.

PRIVATE GUILT

Something has happened. On the bare, harsh rock island where Anna disappears, Sandro and Claudia become aware of each other for the first time. Claudia is frightened; she runs; he pursues; she begs him to leave. As their love grows, each struggles with a private guilt. Each feels he has betrayed Anna. And so their search becomes a dreadful, frightening search to find themselves.

The story itself is simple but the director, Michelangelo Antonioni, treats it with an agonizing beauty. The viewer is drawn, repulsed, torn. The black and white film accentuates the naked landscape, making it so spectacular that it seems to become a causal factor in the struggle. Sandro and Claudia, as they wander in an abyss of despair and guilt, become an integral part of the background.

INTENSELY MOVING

We were warned in the Film Society brochure that "L'Avventura" was a very long, very slow film requiring a great deal of patience on the part of the viewer.

Symphony Tribute To Shakespeare

The Edmonton Symphony concert this weekend will feature a tribute to Shakespeare.

Mendelssohn's incidental music to "A Mid-Summer Night's Dream" will be presented by the orchestra with eight local actors as special guests to read selected parts of the play. A 140-voice choir from the Assumption Academy will sing the fairy music.

Led by Jack McCreath as narrator, the actors will include Walter Kaasa, Doreen Ibsen, Jean McIntyre, Wes Stefan, Richard Gishler and Frank Norris.

But something so filled with an impossible tension could never be long or slow or boring. Individual taste will, of course, pass judgment, but, for myself, "L'Avventura" was intensely beautiful and profoundly moving.

Polished, Precision Production But... The Acting Was Dreadful

By Jim Pasnak

Children, any playwright or producer will tell you, are always dangerous creatures to have on stage. It is difficult to rehearse children, they are unpredictable, and they upstage the serious parts of the production.

"Sound of Music" as interpreted by the Light Opera of Edmonton successfully overcame these difficulties. The children (the von Trapp kids, seven of 'em) did everything on cue, didn't bungle any lines, sang sweetly and even acted fairly well.

POLISHED SHOW

I found this to be a characteristic of the show as a whole: it was a polished, precision production that went of, not like clockwork, but with a smoothness that is happily becoming more common in local efforts.

In fact, "Sound of Music" was a knock-out. The costumes (by Mallabar) were lavish without being gaudy; the sets (Laszlo Funtek) were quietly spectacular; even the make-up (Jerry Baril) was unobtrusive.

There was a small problem with the sets. They were painted canvas drops, executed by an outfit in Rome. They were very artistic but when a cast member walked too close, we saw the granite dome of the convent or a wall of the von Trapp mansion quiver. I hope to see more of this type of set but it is probably feasible only on a large stage like that of the Jubilee Auditorium.

PLOT TO HANG SONGS ON

Of course, the acting was dreadful. But the plot—a postulant becomes governess to a widower's children, marries him, and they all bolt Nazi Austria to liberty—is a fairly feeble thing anyway, designed basically to hand the songs on.

And pretty wonderful songs they are, too. From the title song to "Climb Every Mountain," the show-stoppers were always lively, unusually well-executed and often very beautiful.

Sandra McLean (Maria) has a fine singing voice and she made a most convincing postulant. David

Sledgehammer Play Unsettling, Top Studio Theatre Production

"Why this is Hell, nor am I out of it."

"Long Day's Journey Into Night" is a play that no one would want to see twice.

But everyone should see it once; for one thing, the Studio Theatre production, under the direction of Mr. Frank Bueckert, is superb, perhaps one of the best things Studio Theatre has done.

For another thing, the play is, well, unsettling. It makes you think.

FOUR HAUNTED PEOPLE

"Long Day's" looks at four horrible people, the "haunted Tyrone," sinking deeper into their own private inferno. The action covers one day; there is no resolution, the situation is slightly worse but basically unchanged at the final curtain.

As James Tyrone, the head of the household, John Rivet gives a competent, often a powerful performance. In the early stages we did hear echoes of J.B., but Mr. Rivet gets better as the play progresses, projecting well the weak, dissolute actor, the man dragged down by circumstances he has created himself.

SPECIAL ACCOLADE

A special accolade goes to Lee Royce in the role of Mary Tyrone, a woman enslaved by morphine. She lies to her family, lies to herself, and realizes that nobody, including herself, believes what she says.

She fidgets about, praises her husband and tears him down in the next sentence, and finally, in slow and unwilling anguish, goes upstairs for another shot.

Mrs. Royce's portrayal of a woman who talks and talks and

talks about her life in order not to think about it, was for us the high point of the evening.

The part of the eldest son, Jamie, was played by Ken Smith (or as he prefers to call himself, Kenneth Agrell-Smith, which is much more theatrical). We are of two minds about Mr. Smith. Largely, his was a reasonable performance.

Jamie is not quite a copy of his father. He is a lush, but at least he realizes it. And, unlike his father, he has a dash of compassion and no delusions of grandeur.

Mr. Smith projected this rather well, but he refused to straighten up while doing it; he seemed to play the part from a sort of half-crouch.

Douglas Riske as Edmund, the youngest of the Tyrone, gave a sound, very moving performance.

MAID IN BROQUE

Susan McFarlane was the maid, Cathleen, played in a broad Irish brogue. This part does not offer much opportunity for profound emoting; it serves mainly for snatches of much-needed comedy.

It is enough to say that Miss McFarlane did very well with what she was given.

The setting and whole design of the play—perpetrated by Norman Yates and new-comer Robert Dietle—was magnificent.

Studio Theatre has, of necessity, acquired the knack of constructing sets to make the acting area appear much larger than it is.

The lights were well-handled, the costumes were fairly authentic, we feel.

We were especially pleased with the sound effects, the ghostly music at the end of each scene, and a punctuating foghorn in the last two acts.

SEDDGE-HAMMER

A number of people we talked to found this play "tedious." We cannot disagree more.

One young lady described it as a sledge-hammer, and this comes closest to our own point of view.

There were times when one felt like covering one's ears and shouting "Oh God! Shut up, shut up!" as the Tyrone moved sluggishly in their miasmas of madness.

In an era of dramatic works that stress communication, "Long Day's Journey Into Night" is a play of over-communication. Each one of the Tyrone knows how the others feel, but, having heard it so often, they don't listen anymore.

They know what they are, but they don't give a damn.

It's not the sort of play one might expect from Charlie Chaplin's father-in-law.



SEVEN PLUS ONE—Maria, the new governess in "Sound of Music," entertains her charges (everytime you count, you come up with a different number) while a scary thunderstorm roars outside.

Galbraith (Captain von Trapp) was called upon to act mostly in the first part of the play; he did better than most at it later on when he unfurled his singing voice. His solo "Edelweiss" was a high point of the evening.

SOLID PERFORMANCES

In supporting roles, Madge McCready (the Abbess), Helen Wyka (van Trapp's erstwhile girl friend), and Ray Baron (a local character) gave solid performances. We were especially pleased with Bob Rae. In the role of Max, von Trapp's business manager, he added a much needed comic element, as well as being the best actor on stage. We should have had more of him.

There were some points both confusing and annoying. For instance, if the play was taking place in Austria, why were the Captain and Max the only two with Austrian accents? Another thing, we had difficulty reconciling 1938 fashions to the obviously haute couture 1964 on stage. And the play seemed to stop every now and again to allow long columns of nuns to tramp back and forth. I have nothing against nuns, but these processions did seem rather irrelevant. Then there was Eileen Turner, who engineered the whole thing and directed the orchestra. An energetic conductor, the audience found her distracting as she was

placed in full view of the auditorium.

But these are minor grievances. For the most part, "Sound of Music" gave us an evening that was, if not profoundly aesthetic, at least highly entertaining, at times approaching something like art.



YOU ARE SIXTEEN GOING ON SEVENTEEN—Rolf Gruber (Ray Baron) and Liesl von Trapp (Patricia Wray) caper through a light little dance full of the ecstasy of a sixteen-going-on-seventeen and seventeen-going-on-eighteen romance.