

Discovering the Movies by Cecile Starr

(van Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1972, \$9.75)

I realized I was becoming a film freak when, sometime last year, I found myself running home from a double bill at the film society to watch the late movie on TV. The symptoms are shared by an increasing number of people. As the commercial films get more boring and trite we turn our attention to the early years of the medium. At first the nostalgia thing might prevent one from getting a really clear focus on the old films of John Ford or Robert Flaherty, but after a few months of ritualistic attendance there is a sense of discrimination. Preferences develop. The style of a specific director is noticed.

Until recently any discussion of a film tended to centre around a description of the story. There were the hard core addicts who spoke in a language all their own, arranging their own private showings of 'movies' (such

people disdain to words 'Cinema' or even 'film'; 'show' is out of the question). The beginner is left out. Talking about films is a whole new scene. (ooh!) I needed something like a Cole's notes about movies. That's what 'Discovering the Movies' is: a primer on the film medium and the whole artistic subculture that surfaces wherever a Garbo Film is shown.

Cecile Starr recognizes the fact that not all the people attending the great number of film festivals are initiated into the inner sanctum of the cult. Charlie Chaplin plays at the Garneau. He's been re-accepted by Amerika and even Time magazine wrote about him. But what about the other films of his time? It is pretty hard to find movie magazines going back that far and even then that's not what you want. 'Discovering the Movies' is a basic history of the film

medium from the first concepts of moving pictures down to "an exploration of some of the techniques that combine fantasy and reality in the experimental film."

The book is fully illustrated with black and white and colorplate excerpts from the films discussed. Starr approaches the topic as a film critic and a sort of contemporary art historian. She does not just gush out 'oohs' and 'ahs' at every old time film technique. She explains how things are working. She judges and evaluates trends. The film media is a mass media and this evaluation thus involves a sociological discussion. It is in this area that I find 'Discovering the Movies' is particularly accurate and informative.

One complete chapter is devoted to the magic of the movies. It is a thematically central chapter in the book. Cecile Starr emphasized the

technical and stylistic aspects of film that manage to involve us and delight us. She refers to those subtle elements of pacing and editing that produce specific effects in a film. She has recognized and utilized aspects of the McLuhan myth: Medium is the Message. Film is generally a passive response medium but there is a certain amount of participation in the creation of the illusion from the montage of shots.

This book provides the uninitiated with a basic vocabulary and grammar for the discussion of films, as well as the technical knowledge necessary to an understanding of the medium. Now instead of secretly watching the late movies on TV and publically scorning them, you can be a film critic! Seriously though, the book is a definite aid to a comprehension of why films work.

Terri Moore

rhymes and reason (carole king)

After releasing an album like "Tapestry", it is inevitable that following albums will be compared to it. "Tapestry" was noted for its simple casual sound and the universality of the lyrics. With this album, Ms. King has gotten back to the unified sense of style that was characteristic of "Tapestry" but was lacking on her third album "Music".

In "Rhymes and Reasons" the piano and voice dominate each track with the bass, drums, strings and chorus coming into focus from time to time, to emphasize certain melodic lines. Like "Tapestry", the back up is quite complicated but somehow achieves the illusion of simplicity. There are many subtle instrumental touches that emerge with repeated listening, such as the fine steel guitar work by Red Rhodes on 'Goodbye Don't Mean I'm Gone' and the flute jogs in 'Feeling Sad Tonight'. This makes the whole album more durable. It is one of those rare albums that reveals something new each time you hear it.

Each of the songs is immediately identifiable as a Carole King song. They are all characterized by the neat, logical, haunting chord progressions that King songs possess. The piano work on this album is excellent. She has the talent for spreading out her chords to achieve the deepest, richest tonal quality possible. She also uses a great deal of syncopation in her chording to highlight the melody of the songs. Her voice, although it still contains a nasal quality, seems to have mellowed and though scratchy in some places, there is enough emotion and feeling within the lyric to carry the emotions to the listener. She is instinctively a good singer in that her phrasing and timing just fit into the music very comfortably. Her voice maintains the quality of attempting to reach out and reassure the listener and this makes the lyrics come through with strength and honesty.

On "Tapestry" the lyrics contained personal messages of loyalty and friendship to others. On this album that warm personal feeling remains, but she seems to have drawn more from within herself and is writing to herself rather than to others.

One of the methods she uses to create a unified feeling is the constant use of images within separate songs that relate to one another. She speaks of the coldness of the nighttime and contrasts it to the warmth of the sun. There is also the feeling of being alone and that time is passing by too fast. She seems to be haunted by people and places in her past and she looks back on them with fondness and longing. The major image used is that of fire. She speaks of the warmth and comfort of her fireplace and the peace it brings to her. She appears to be trying to resolve within herself her being and to justify some reason for it all.

When you think of the album no one particular song stands out and you tend to think of album as an entire entity rather than just a collection of songs. With an album of this nature it is difficult to spotlight specific songs because when you hear a line of one song it triggers off something inside your head that makes you think of another song on the album. Also it is a matter of personal opinion as to which ones you happen to like.

'The First Day in August' has a nice melody that is simple and direct to the point. She is always at her best when she is making direct statements. It is a love song written by Carole and her husband, Charles Larkey. It begins with a piano introduction that is triple-tracked. There is the chording and double counter melody which are characteristic of her style of piano playing. The voice is double tracked on certain lines and words to give emphasis to her statement. There is a string break in the middle eight bars with the strings playing the melody together with the piano. The piano and strings trade off themes and there is the constant weaving in and out of the melodic line between the two. This is a fully realized arrangement. It has a simple beauty all its own.

'Gotta Get Through Another Day' is one of the faster cuts on the album. The music consists largely of piano, bass and drums. The piano style is reminiscent of the style used on 'I Feel The Earth Move'. She tries to



photo by Kahlua

answer unresolved questions within herself and even though she can't find the complete answers she will continue to be.

"Some say that time brings a better understanding/ Of the rhyme and reason to it all/ Still the flame keeps burning through the lonely night/ Its just not all right/ And I wonder if I'll make it till you call."

This song sounds like a movie theme. It reminds you of "Pocket Money" in its structure. The strings are way in the background and they are not really noticeable. A strong feature on this cut is the percussion section. The bongos and congos are constantly going on and they fit in well with the song. The voice has a catch in it and it has a wistful quality. She has found something and won't rest until she finds it again and the voice shows determination to do so.

This will probably be the single to be released: "Sweet dreams of yestertime; are running through my mind/ Of a place I left behind." "Oh, I want to be there in the wintertime/ With a fireplace burning to warm me/ And you to hold me when its stormy" "Been to Canaan and I won't rest until I go back again."

S.C.C. Holder

sparky's coming

Sparky Rucker, master of traditional blues and musical prodigy of Rev. Gary Davis, will be appearing in SUB theatre to give an intimate concert in traditional blues. The concert will be 8:30 p.m., Tuesday, November 21.

Sparky will also be playing the SUB Room At The Top coffeehouse the evening of December first and second.

Sparky has an album out, but the record company has no distributor, and so records are only available from Sparky himself. They really are beautiful as blues.

in the land of grey and pink

With their second LP release in Canada, "In The Land Of Grey And Pink", Caravan was mostly concerned with songs and melodies, steering clear of too many instrumental breaks and lengthy blows. If solos were needed they were kept short and provided by keyboards man David Sinclair. The album was none too interesting, with Caravan sounding like an uninspired Moody Blues.

With the recent release of "Waterloo Lily", though, Sinclair is absent and Caravan have subsequently altered their sound. To augment the band, a new keyboards man has been brought in, Steve Miller. The band has now moved in a new direction from short, aimless tunes to long and mostly interesting passages. With everyone having ample opportunity to solo the overall musicianship is much improved also.

Suffice it to say that if you have an interest in free-form jazz and/or John McLaughlin's "Devotion" you should have more than ample room in your head for "Waterloo Lily".

Lawrence Wilkie

b.b. king's coming

From the beginning, B.B.'s way of expressing the blues has always been pure but remarkably complex. There are no artificial devices such as reverberation, tremolo or other effects; he doesn't dance around or move much nor does he perform from a multitude of showy positions. Still, B.B.'s fluid approach to the blues might turn out to be the most important development since electrification.

B.B. King has also developed a potent vocal style, most distinctive, again, in the ways he tends to punctuate phrases: his clear falsetto wail and snout-singing.

I intend no putdown of any other bluesman when I say that, for me, B.B. King at his best, developing before your eyes, is a miraculous experience. For those of you interested in the experience, B.B. King appears in our city Nov. 26 at the Kinsmen Fieldhouse. Tickets are available at the Ticketorium in the Boardwalk.

Lawrence Wilkie