

Guest artist

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his studio to ponder technical problems, the landscape must be "inside" of him. The actual process of mark-making is a pensive recollection and is highly spiritual. This type of intimacy is apparent in Hong-yin's work.

The painting *Market Town* (1987), for example, reflects the crowded conditions of Hong-yin's city. His unusual repetition and square composition won the artist an award in Nanjing for this painting. The artist successfully combined both the studied, dynastic traditions of a very ancient country with a bright eye of modern China.

The sketches of Hong-yin are on display in the Faculty Lounge of the Fine Arts Building and his paintings are in the Art Gallery of York University (AGYU) until October 5.

There will be a painting demonstration in room 302 of the Fine Arts Building, Tuesday, October 4 between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. The demonstration will be followed by a slide show/discussion in the Faculty Lounge between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. An interpreter will be available at the AGYU for anyone wishing to talk to the artist immediately after the slides between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. All events are free of charge and open to the public.

Laughs and reflections

By FRANK CLARKE

What appears to be nothing but theatrical outrageousness can pose serious questions concerning male-female and family relationships. These questions eventually confront the audience in the latest presentation of the Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, *Lola Starr Builds Her Dream Home*.

This outrageous musical with a social conscience features men in dresses, newspaper reporters with secret vices and a heroic dog named "Eat Me."

Written and co-directed by Artistic Director Sky Gilbert, the play — set in the 1950s — centres on the plight of Lola Starr (played by Gilbert) and her attempt to build an idyllic life in suburban Connecticut, away from Hollywood scandal and her abusive lover Johnny Bad (played by co-director Edward Roy). However, her past — namely, Johnny Bad — soon catches up to her, and she must choose between starting a new life with her daughter or continuing her destructive relationship with Johnny.

As Lola Starr, Gilbert gives a first-rate comic performance. Gilbert portrays Lola as a homemaker with all the naiveté of a confused child and, alternatively, as a love-starved woman with such grace and sultry sexuality that one forgets that a man is playing the role.

Debra Kirshenbaum gives a strong performance as Lola's daughter Tina, a tough but caring kid who wants to see her mother's relationship with Johnny Bad come to an end. At one point she asks, "Do you really love him, or are you just addicted to him?" Actually, Lola loves him for his big . . . well, let's just say that Johnny is well-endowed.

Amid the hilarity and sexual horseplay, Gilbert provides some insight into why a woman might remain in an abusive relationship, when near the end of the play Lola declares, "I like him before it hurt. It was sort of a game." By this time Lola has realized that her hopes for an ideal family have been in vain, as Tina will never be a prim and proper young girl — she wants to become a prison matron. Her new relationship with reporter Malcolm Inklepoop is, as well, far from normal.

The combination of frolicking, musical farce, and social criticism makes *Lola Starr* high-spirited and thoughtful entertainment.

The show runs until October 16 at the Toronto Cinema.

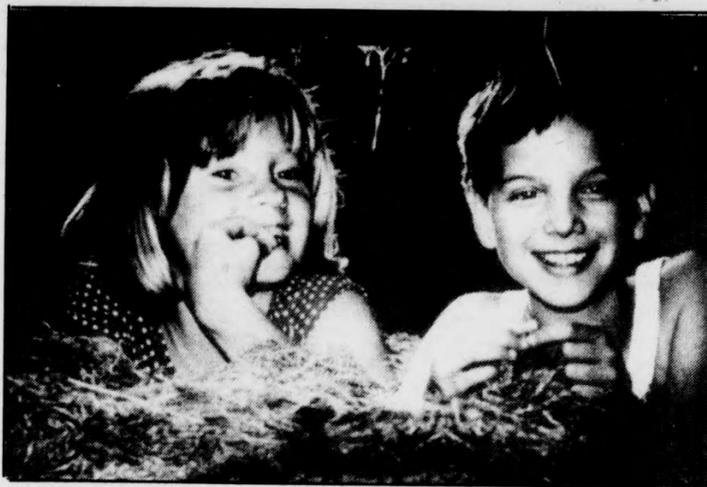
Exploring adult life through child's eye

By SIMON CHUNG

Films in the "Coming of Age" genre are essentially romantic — the innocent protagonist (as a child or teenager) undergoes a journey into an unfamiliar, often hostile world and emerges with the holy grail of experience. The best example is perhaps *Stand By Me*, in which the romantic journey is both actual and figurative, and the quest turns up much more than the dead body the boys set out to find.

French director Jean Loup Hubert's autobiographical account of his childhood, *The Grand Highway*, (*Le Grand Chemin*) falls within this genre. Nine-year-old Louis, the director's alter ego, arrives from Paris to a sleepy, rural town in Brittany to spend a few weeks with his mother's friend, Marcelle, and her carpenter husband, Pelo. The boy does not realize, however, that he is sent there because his father — supposedly working out of town — has abandoned him and his pregnant mother, and the latter has decided to put Louis under the care of her best friend until after she gives birth.

En route to Marcelle's house, he encounters a strange, unshaven man who warns him that his hostess "is real shrew." Louis soon discovers



A HAPPIER MOMENT: Louis and Martine in *Le Grand Chemin*.

that this mysterious man is her husband, Pelo.

Louis finds himself caught in the couple's marriage disaccord. Marcelle avoids Pelo like the plague, while Pelo reacts with constant drinking. Both try to win over Louis — Marcelle prepares special meals for the boy and overwhelms him with motherly care, while Pelo takes him fishing and teaches him many ways such as urinating outdoors.

Their mutual love for the boy, while genuine, is curiously transformed into a competition, an extension of their animosity. Later, Louis is to discover that their ill feelings stem from the death of their son nine years ago. These feelings erupt in a confrontation one night, during which Pelo sexually assaults Marcelle. Naturally, the episode is overheard by the frightened Louis.

Meanwhile, Louis befriends Mar-

tine, the local tomboy who is one year his senior, and together they explore an array of experiences from sex to death. Her casual disdain for rules imposed by adults (she refuses to wear the shoes especially bought for her flat feet) inspires Louis toward greater autonomy. Her free-spirited vivaciousness has a profound influence on the way Louis deals with the world.

The rites of passage in *The Grand Highway* is a journey toward greater independence from the adult world — represented as sterile, ineffective, and dishonest. When Louis uncovers a lie told by his mother concerning his absent father, his reaction is to run off to the hideaway previously shown to him by Martine.

By the end of the film, Louis is no longer a pawn in the game of domination between Marcelle and Pelo, but instead becomes an active agent in their eventual reconciliation. He has reached maturity in that he has attained a measure of autonomy and independence.

The Grand Highway is a warm, subtle, and remarkably well conceived film that depicts the process of maturity with honesty, insight, good humour, and a surprising lack of sentimentality.

Mom,
send ^{less} money!



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