

Fonda lives, *On Golden Pond* doesn't

by Ken Burke

Vehicle. The word vehicle, besides standing for a means of transportation, also has another dictionary definition, "A means by which something is expressed or displayed". That, my friends, is how the word is used when a play or movie is talked about as a vehicle for the talents of this or that actor. Why all this chatter about the particular word? Because I've just seen the film **On Golden Pond**, and it's a vehicle, in the worst sense of the word.

The film exists only to provide its actors with opportunities to pump out bravura performances, much the same as many a Neil

Simon script provides Marsha Mason with plenty of opportunities to cry. Of course some of the statements the film makes about growing old and relationships between generations are true, but then again, Rod McKuen offers up truths as well - the key is that a truth need not be banal.

The comparison of the script to a Neil Simon product is fairly accurate. Like A Simon "vehicle", it begins with a set situation - a conflict which everyone in the audience knows will be absolved by the film's end (satisfactorily, of course). Therein lies its attractiveness to actors.

The situation and characters

are so plain and...easy, that they can do all the emoting they desire on top of the story, without having to struggle to capture difficult nuances that get in the way. Even before the film begins, the viewer essentially knows everything that's about to happen - all the situations are preprogrammed for audience recognition and approval. You can probably guess that I'm not rooting for Ernest Thompson to win the Golden Globe for best screen-play. Or the film for best motion picture, either.

Now that I've got a good rant out of my system (well, almost out), comes the time to talk of the

actors for whom the vehicle is designed. Of the cast, Henry Fonda is far and away the best; hell, upon him the entire weight of the film lies. And with his gallant performance, he almost lifts the film out of the sentimental muck it insists in wallowing in.

I've rarely seen a better performance in a mediocre film. Autobiographical similarities aside, Fonda really seems to be giving it his all. If he retired tomorrow (though I doubt that Fonda will ever willingly retire from acting), **On Golden Pond** would serve as a good capstone for his career.

However, Katherine Hepburn

should keep on acting. It's not that there's anything horribly wrong with her acting, but rather a lack of anything special or **great** - such as Hepburn is still capable of. And Jane Fonda succeeds in making a rushed and formulaic character rushed and formulaic. Nothing more need be said. Have you noticed that I haven't mentioned Director Mark Rydell yet? That's right...

So essentially **On Golden Pond** is a film to stay away from, unless you're a Henry Fonda fan, in which case just keep your eyes focused on him and forget the rest of the movie - you'd do that eventually anyway.

Brides have good reason to blush

by Michael Brennan

Given the mammoth amount of publicity given to the Rolling Stones' recent mega-tour and the overwhelming popularity of their new album, the coming of a Stones' copy band in the form of the Blushing Brides seems like an easy, cheap act. A band that has been truly influenced by the power of the early Stones shouldn't want merely to emulate them, but to create something as original and honest as its inspiration. Such a band really cares about what the Stones once were.

Still, the local publicity for the Brides came on like a mediocre entertainment act, yet another Elvis imitation, except this time it

was the Rolling Stones being imitated.

The lead singer looked surprisingly like Mick Jagger, the guitarist a cross between Ron Wood and Keith Richards, and supposedly they sounded 'exactly' like the Stones.

I guess I went to see them out of curiosity and from having nothing else to do. Unfortunately, their act lived up perfectly to the dumb advertisement and 'an act' was just what they were.

The band completely duplicated the sound of those Stones' originals they covered. But their playing had no original energy at all. It wasn't as if the Blushing Brides were performing, but as if

they only wished to mirror the Stones performing. Whatever personal, inner passion they might have had for the pure energy of rock and roll was well concealed.

However, the band played second to the vocalist, who looked, sounded, dressed and acted as much like Jagger as anyone could. He had all the moves and idiosyncrasies down pat, prancing about the stage, dancing close to the musicians, lips pouting at all the right times. The total effect was meaningless.

Whatever determination or sincerity Jagger had expressed in the original versions, this singer

rendered completely superfluous. But I must concede that he epitomized well the attitude Jagger has taken in the last few years - a silly, arrogant stance that has robbed everything the Stones have recently done of any gut urgency or compassion. When the Brides did "Far Away Eyes", the mocking sarcasm of the song was evident. To think that the Stones would bother to shit on country music in such a silly fashion when there is some great country and western around today just seemed stupid.

Of course, Jagger is far greater than any imitator. There is, or was, a blatant sexuality about

him, and intelligence in his mannerisms. But the Brides' singer completely lacked both.

The whole show boiled down to a stage act designed for those who worship the Stones, not for anyone who cared to hear some honest rock and roll. It actually made me dislike the Stones even more.

When I think of the title "Greatest rock band on earth" that they have been given, I cringe. There are many greater rock'n'roll figures, past and present, so it wouldn't be much of a loss if you missed this dead imitation. I think I'd rather see an Elvis imitator - at least Elvis was a truly great rock and roll spirit, if not the greatest

Music for the 80's Orchestrals, The Gisele Marie Reviews Manoeuvres, Jam, Baxter

by Gisele Marie Baxter

If it seems incredible that an album called **Architecture and Morality** by a band called **Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark** could be really captivating and not at all pretentious, then it's because OMITD is an incredible band. Paul Humphreys and Andy McCluskey are producing a distinct pop music for the 1980s and this third album can't help but win you over eventually.

Maybe it's not as instant or catchy as last year's excellent **Organization**, but it's beautiful. The boys are assisted by three back-up musicians, and the instrumental line-up is outstanding. This is electronic, but not computer music; it's essentially, wonderfully, human, drawing from rock, pop and even folk traditions, and ranging from exquisite experimentation to bright, accessible numbers such as "Souvenir" and the ragged, intense "Georgia."

The best material on **Architecture** can be quite ambitious. "Sealand" lets its synthesizers ebb and flow around each other, linked by percussion, as it moves towards its urgent, poignant finale. The title track works similarly, but concentrates more on effects, and suggests what this album is all about: obsession and wonder, building structures and searching for meaning.

However, **Architecture's** centerpiece consists of the two Joan of Arc songs. The first is a charming number about the conflict between human and spiritual love, from the point of view of someone who recognizes, even if he can't share, or understand, Joan's vision. The second song,

subtitled "Maid of Orleans," has a dark, even threatening beginning, gaining passion and light as it travels through martial drums to a lilting melody. This takes up the first song's theme, as the singer wonders what Joan could give "to such as me, who longs to see how an angel ought to be."

Humphreys and McCluskey create **music** with electronics; they can take other instruments such as guitars and drums and reed horns, using them beautifully in this context. They're going to be very important in the 1980s if they keep on at this rate.

The Jam affect me in different ways, but they're as vital in their own fashion. **Absolute Beginners** is a five-song EP released to tide us over until the sixth Jam album is issued in March. It's too short and a bit uneven, but like everything this trio from Woking, England, does, it's worth a listen.

Side one has two new songs and one from 1979; while none is classic Jam, they're effective. The title track is a jazzy '60s-style rocker with a great, brassy horn section, and "Tales From the River Bank," a moody song of modern dreams and disillusionments, features intriguing interplay between guitarist Paul Weller, bassist Bruce Foxton and drummer Rick Buckler. The older tune, "When You're Young" is mod-style and brightly arranged - and it shows that there are strong points of connection between earlier and recent Jam music.

Side two is classic; it consists of a U.K. single from last spring, and its B-side. From its urgent

introduction onwards, the percussion-driven "Funeral Pyre" is an angry indictment of a violent society, sung with conviction by Weller and company, who do offer hope even when surrounded by anarchy: "watch the flames grow higher/ but if you get to burn/ you can't help but glow." "Liza Radley" is so different: it's a bittersweet, gentle ballad about a man in love with a lonely, rejected, yet perceptive girl, and features some evocative acoustic guitar work.

The Jam can't seem to stop glowing. It's so good to hear from them again, and come March, it should be even better.

ARCHITECTURE & MORALITY
by
Orchestral
Manoeuvres
In The Dark

