

Busby's back at Cinematek

Bananas and horns abound in 1943 musical

"Mr. Mason, if you had a beard, you'd remind me of my two favourite people: Santa Claus and Uncle Sam."

Busby Berkeley's *The Gang's All Here* meringued onto the screen in 1943, with plugs for war bonds, cheers for the war effort, and a bubbling cauldron of technicolour fantasy and song.

Now, to inaugurate the Cinematek, a new theatre on Yonge between Eglinton and Lawrence, the managers are showing a rerelease of the film with the Fox Movietone newsreel which accompanied its opening at New York's Roxy Theatre on Dec. 22, 1943.

The story in *The Gang's All Here* is

Untitled

I
Felt your presence in passing
As a wave underfoot.
But
Not knowing your direction
You slipped by,
Leaving
Only the dampness
Of sea salt spray
In my hair.

L.F.

some turnip about a romance between a singer and a soldier, and the writing and acting couldn't be worse if they had a Swift's Premium sticker tacked across them.

But plot and acting are mere threads on which Berkeley hangs his dazzling dance routines and costume numbers.

Carmen Miranda sings *The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat* while a line of chorus girls wave obscenely huge bananas at her. Benny Goodman and his orchestra parade off a bus, playing as they walk and sticking their clarinets and trumpets into assorted backsides.

The screen of the Cinematek is stretched floor to ceiling like the skin of a bongo drum, and the floor slopes downward so that the eight rows of seats are at eye level with the screen. The effect is that of sitting in somebody's private projection room.

Films scheduled at the theatre in December include Max Ophuls' *Lola Montes*, Ernst Lubitsch's *To Be or Not to Be* (with Jack Benny and Carole Lombard), and *Destry Rides Again* (with Marlene Dietrich and James Stewart).

Also planned are the 1949 *Great Gatsby* (with Alan Ladd), *King Kong*, and *Casablanca*.

Admission is \$2.25 with a membership fee of 50 cents.

Members receive notice of film screenings, and may enter free to a film forum to be held at Cinematek monthly.



As American soldiers stalked off to war, Carmen Miranda nestled into a fruitcart to entertain nightclub patrons in *The Gang's All Here*, Busby

Berkeley's 1943 fantasia. The film is running at the Cinematek on Yonge.

You're a wishy-washy play on Bayview, Charlie Brown

By AGNES KRUCHIO

You can't keep a good man down — that seems to be the assumption of the people who bring you *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, now playing at the Playhouse Theatre on Bayview, for the second time around.

If you have seen it the first time, you will be glad to note that Don Potter, the man who played Snoopy in that production is the gentleman who "supervised" the direction for this one. If you are a Peanuts fan, nothing will keep you away.

But you would do just as well to read it at home and save your money, as student tickets are \$5, and this show seems to be little more than a bloodless animation of the comic strip.

This is probably not the fault of the actors. The structure of the show is a string of skits based on the comic strip by Schulz, and little opportunity is given to the actors to develop and explore their characters.

Blaine Parker misses the point when he plays a wishy-washy actor playing a wishy-washy Charlie Brown. Although we know that this is what

C.B. is supposed to be, we are hard put to find some of those loveable characteristics in this nebulous character that the company sings about in the opening.

Cathy Wallace, who has been travelling for the past five years as Lucy, is the backbone of the production. She is a self-assured, Perfectly Crabby Person — according to a poll she takes of her friends in one of the skits.

Patty is played by Mary Ann McDonald of Day by Day fame in *Godspell*, and she has perfected all the little-girl frills it takes to be Patty.

Blanket-laden Linus is given some wholesomeness and sparkle by Richard Kelley, in a number called *My Blanket and Me* — in which it becomes evident from the way he handles his blanket, that he too has read Sigmund Freud...

Schroeder, played by Mel Tuck, noticeably lacks some of that holy pas-

sion that characterizes a future composer. He is weak, and at times, especially as the butt of Lucy's marriage proposals, he seems lost and pale.

Snoopy is played by Martin Short, and he makes up for a lot of the company's shortcomings. With his good sense of timing, his warmth and talent for mimicry, he captures the joy for life, the dreams and doggie-wisdom of Schulz' nutty character.

In his main solo, *Supertime*, the highlight of the whole show, he becomes a one-dog burlesque as he waxes poetically ecstatic about his dinner. Ironically, he is the only truly human character in the whole show.

Clark Gesner's music and lyrics are for the most part innocuous and weak, and the whole structure of the show is marked by the lack of cohesion. And in the end — unbelievably — Lucy, in a most unLucy-like gesture, makes up with Charlie Brown. Peanuts will never be the same again.

Acomba is sorry his film had plot

By WARREN CLEMENTS

Director David Acomba feels his first film, *Slipstream*, was a vehicle to "take out my fantasies", and is sorry only that it was forced to have a plot.

"The whole thing was like a dream," he said in an interview last Friday. "The concept was, what if a guy, out there alone, has all the best music available — what kind of music would he play?"

"What kind of control would he have over himself? How would he deal with the people he saw?"

"Because it had to have a plot, we lost a lot of feeling. That's not what I'm going to do next time."

Slipstream, showing at the Uptown, tells the story of a disc jockey broadcasting from a desolate shack on the Alberta prairie, and his reaction to a woman who intrudes on his solitude.

The film was this year's recipient of the Canadian Film Awards for best picture, direction and sound.

Admitting that he was a dark horse candidate for the awards, Acomba quoted the jury as saying they liked his "fresh approach for Canadian film".

"*Slipstream* was a more obtuse, obscure movie than the rest of the films in the competition," said Acomba.

"In a sense, it's much more a stoned movie. That doesn't mean we were smoking up all the time we were making it, but the images, the way it was made, give it a relaxed perspective."

The term "slipstream", applied to aeronautics, refers to the speed of a jet's exhaust relative to the surrounding air — air "slipping" against air.

"The poetic equivalent is a person who, although he has to make decisions, must surrender to a lot of pressures. Ultimately, Mike Mallard (the disc jockey) must follow his will, even if it means a breakdown."

Since the film is musically-based — and since, in this writer's opinion, the

whole film is simply a build-up to and let-down from a beautiful five-minute storm sequence orchestrated by Derek and the Dominos' Layla — talk naturally turned to the film's music.

Acomba agreed that the Layla sequence was probably the "high" of the film, and said that a similar treatment had been planned for the sequence in which Mallard and Kathy, the woman who visits him, ride nude on horseback across the plains.

"The horse was going to go on a two-mile run," he said. "The screen would have been white, and then you would have seen figures moving and realized that you were looking through clouds."

"We planned to play Van Morrison's *Into the Mystic* over it, and it would have been another high like Layla."

"But when it came time to shoot, the horse wouldn't run, the helicopter mount was improperly positioned, and there was a storm approaching which we couldn't shoot around."

While this is Montreal-born Acomba's first feature, he has done rock shows with Delaney and Bonnie, Van Morrison, the Byrds, and Anne Murray. He plans to make another feature.

"There will be even less of a plot than in *Slipstream*. It will have more characterization, sort of a concept approach."

"Van Morrison and I will share an experience, and generate an idea for the music and script. The moments will be valid for me, and you'll be able to get off on it, like the storm sequence."

Slipstream was filmed in 31 days a year ago last June, financed by the Canadian Film Development Corporation and "people who wanted tax write-offs".

Acomba conceded that it was a difficult film to promote.

"It has no sex, no violence, hardly a plot, no stars, and it's my first film."

No fire in annals

By JUDITH NEFSKY

Written by Marcel Horne, a nomadic, despondent type who mastered the art of breathing fire, *Annals of a Firebreather* chronologically follows the various adventures of the writer's life.

Having been a carny, thief, convict, pusher, and performer, El Diablo (Horne's adopted name) does have an interesting story to tell, but someone else should tell it.

Originally intended as a private diary, the book is written in a semi-literate non-fashion. To attach cliché to soggy cliché, Horne employs his ample vocabulary of four-letter words.

His philosophy of life is less than enlightening. Critical of the rich bitches with full stomachs and fuller wallets, our hotmouthed hero doesn't do any reflecting when he starts pulling in \$450 for two nights' work.

Introducing the book, Horne writes: "I am not a writer. Nothing has been added or left out for your reading pleasure."

This is his most obvious contradiction — why did he bother having a book printed at all?

The hard-cover edition (Peter Martin Assoc.) costs a cool \$8.95.

Sight and Sound

Glendon composer presents concert

A lecture-concert by Edford Providence, composer of the music for *Collage* and a part-time Glendon student, will be presented Tuesday at 8:30 p.m. in Glendon's Old Dining Hall in York Hall. Providence will present excerpts from *Metamorphosis*, opening in the spring at the St. Lawrence Centre, along with Margaret Somerville (dance) and Wane Karlstedt (light). All is free.

Kesey's Great Notion in Winters

Paul Newman doubles as director and actor in the film version of Ken Kesey's *Sometimes a Great Notion*, showing Friday and Sunday nights at 8 p.m. in Curtis LH-I. Winters College presents Henry Fonda, Lee Remick, Michael Sarrazin and Richard Jaeckel in this drama of a lumberjack family who refuse to join in a statewide timber strike. Admission is \$1.25 general, \$1 for Winters students. Next week: *Straw Dogs*, a tale of neighbourly compassion in rural England.

Perth County to play in Bethune

The highly entertaining Perth County Conspiracy appears in Bethune College's dining hall tonight at 8:30 p.m. for an evening of song and patter. Admission is \$1.50, or \$1 for Stong and Bethune students who haven't misplaced their sessional validation cards.

Woody Allen's treatise on sex

Woody Allen decorates the screen with a parade of several uncommon vices in *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex*, Saturday and Sunday nights at 8:30 p.m. in Curtis LH-L. Bethune movies host this parody of carnal indulgence but, because of inflation, move their prices up to \$1.25 general and \$1 for Bethune students. They throw two cartoons into the bargain. All in 35 mm.

Monkees in Head film at the Roxy

Tomorrow night at the Roxy, one of the more unusual movies of the past few years escapes onto the screen. Head, rapidly becoming something of a word-of-mouth classic, stars the Monkees, Annette Funicello, Frank Zappa, Victor Mature and Victor Buono. It is reputed to be highly amusing. For those who hate to gamble on such things, there is a double feature of *Let the Good Times Roll*, and it all starts at 7 p.m.