

ENTERTAINMENT

Royal Flash entertaining

Hero proves unlikable, MacDowell a fop

By IRA MICAY

Anyone familiar with George MacDonald Fraser's four novels featuring the adventures of Captain Harry Flashman would know

that with Malcolm MacDowell, Alan Bates, Oliver Reed, and Florinda Bolkan in front of the cameras, and half of the British film industry behind them, all

Richard Lester had to do to make Flash a successful movie was to keep from having a heart attack during production.

Fraser, who also wrote the screenplays for Lester's Three and Four Musketeers, has reported in his books about the life of Captain Flashman, a fictional member of the British army, circa 1850. He's a devout coward, whose repeated fortune it is to earn military honours inevitably belonging either to chance or to other officers, usually dead ones.

Flashman is also a major league womanizer, and the combination of his military exploits for Britain at her colonial best, with "Flashy's" own off-duty brand of sexual imperialism makes for delicious reading.

Royal Flash is sure enough a very entertaining film, but with the talent and resources at hand, I think Lester could have released a superior picture. What was most disappointing was the director's portrayal of Flashman himself, with Malcolm MacDowell in the starring role.

In the original literature, "Flashy" is hardly a saint, but he retains an ironic consciousness about all his good fortune that enables the reader to relate to him and enjoy the magic of his adventures.

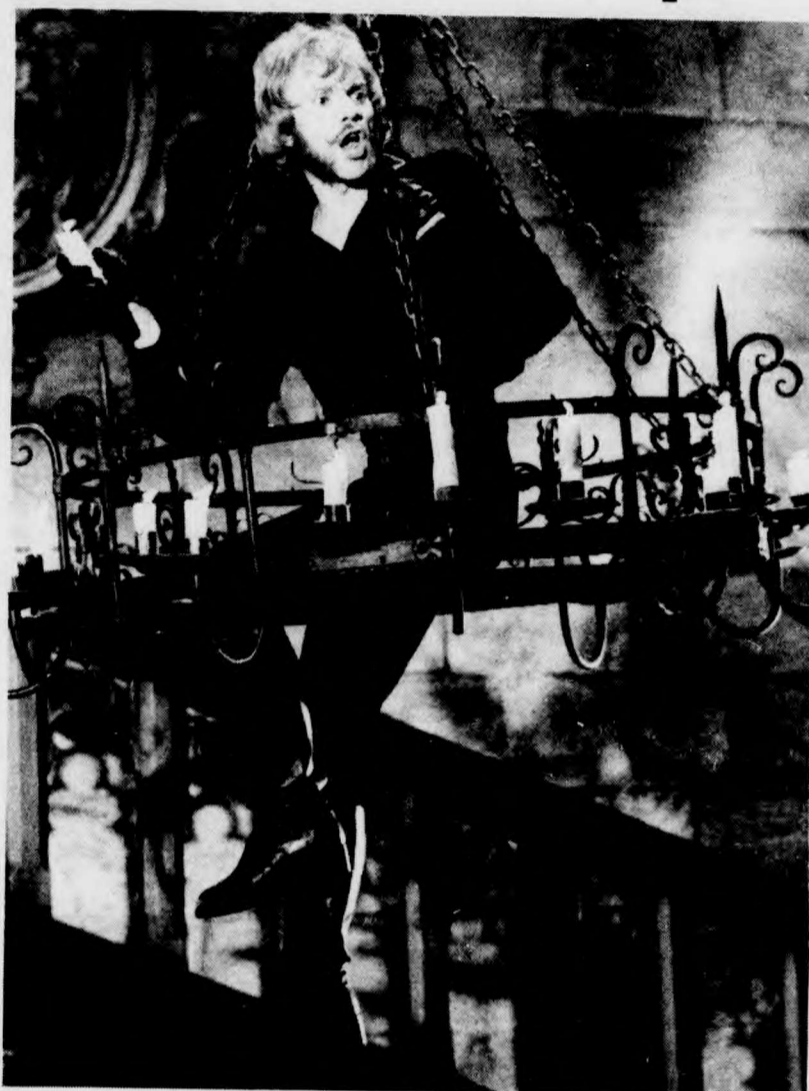
Malcolm MacDowell's Harry is a selfish coward and a snivelling brat who displays no personal depth whatever. He retains all the consciousness of his horse, and to exemplify his haughtiness, Lester has him delivering his lines as if he were Mae West. Because there is nothing at all likeable about him, what is most enjoyable about Fraser's prose is altogether absent from the film.

Oliver Reed is his dependable evil self as Count Otto Von Bismarck, the German politician who kidnaps Flashman to use him as a look-alike replacement for the syphilis-prone groom in a political marriage the court is orchestrating.

Britt Ekland, Rod Stewart's current wife, and just about everyone else's ex, plays the bride that Flashman is to marry. In a sequence that could have been quite charming had it been better directed, the Princess, uninterested in love until Harry initiates her, develops an insatiable hunger for his body thereafter.

Florinda Bolkan who was incredibly sensitive as the lead in Vittorio de Sica's last film, A Brief Vacation displays, along other things, her versatility in the role of Lola Montez, the egocentric Spanish beauty who graduates from "bumping" Flashman to virtually ruling Austria, by charming its king with her talents.

An enjoyable a film as it is, it



Malcolm MacDowell swings in Royal Flash.

seems a shame that Richard Lester had to direct Royal Flash so soon after his work in the Musketeer films. In tone and style the pictures are quite alike, and the three movies call upon a similar approach to visual humour.

But instead of being able to give Flash the vitality of the two other films, it looks like Lester has tem-

porarily exhausted his comic facility for films of his sort. In attempting to stay original and fresh, he has compensated too much for being personally jaded. The humour gets increasingly ironic and esoteric, while the script material is actually so rich that it best functions at a simpler level.

Mistreated by press, clubs, Taylor's rise a long one

By TED MUMFORD

Sweet thunder filled Burton Auditorium last Thursday night as New York pianist Cecil Taylor demonstrated why he is known as the most powerful performer in jazz. With his longtime colleagues Andrew Cyrville (drums) and Jimmy Lyons (alto sax) he gave a soldout house a concert that many will never forget.

Taylor caught the audience off-guard by beginning with a thirty minute free-form performance of his poem Columns. From a backstage mike Taylor, Cyrville and Lyons hooted, chanted and recited, much to the delight of the audience.

Eventually they came forward onto the stage; Taylor danced about and banged the strings of his piano, Cyrville beat out rhythms on his stool, his chest, the floor and walls, and Lyons lurked in the background, coming forward long enough to rip up his music. There was a method to the Unit's madness, though, for these antics were a perfect prelude for the musical onslaught that was to follow.

The Unit played only one piece, a furious tour-de-force which lasted over an hour. Taylor played in a frenzy, striking the keys as if he were a hammer and the keyboard an anvil. Taylor's compositions, a blend of modern "classical" elements, and everything played in the history of jazz, are not easy listening music.

He demands a great deal of the listener, but those who can enter the realm of his music are rewarded with a magical experience. As

Taylor himself has said, "Part of what this music is about is not to be delineated exactly. It's about magic, and capturing spirits."

Taylor is not an easy man to interview, but his aversion towards the press is understandable. Hostile reviews, along with the indifference of record companies and clubowners, have made Taylor's rise to just recognition a long and hard one.

When Taylor left the study of classical piano and emerged on the jazz scene in the late fifties, he was rarely offered jobs, record contracts or media exposure. One critic wrote, "His playing contains the germs that could one day spell the end of jazz."

For ten years Taylor sometimes had to work in factories and airports, and as a dishwasher. He had opportunities to make the big time by conforming, and playing mainstream jazz, but he never sacrificed aesthetics for money.

Fortunately, Taylor can now devote all his time to music. In addition to teaching he has been working on a book of poetry and a book on music. As a performer, he is finally being recognized as one of the spearheads of modern music.

Grail and Monty

This week Winter's film series will be Monty Python and the Holy Grail. The film will play on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, November 7, 8 and 9th at Curtis Lecture Hall-I. Admission is \$1.50 for general.

"Blues root of all music" J. L. Hooker comes to York

By BETTY HUTTON

John Lee Hooker, is one of the oldest and most respected blues guitarist in the jazz music field. At 58, he has built up quite a name for himself and has shown that the blues from the old south lives on despite the vast changes that have occurred in the music industry over the last fifty years.

Born August 12, 1917, in Clarksville, Mississippi, he started making music at a very early age. His grandfather started him off by nailing strips of inner tube to the barn door at different tensions and then plucking out melodies from the crude instrument.

He made the decision at the age of thirteen to become a serious musician and from then on he practiced and played every chance he got.

Being of an independent nature from his upbringing, he ran away from home in his early teens and went to Memphis, then settled in

Detroit. In 1948 he started to work professionally in clubs and soon made his name known around the other guitarists and jazz pianists in Detroit. It was then that his first single Boogie Chillun became a hit and a big break for John Lee.

Since then it hasn't been hard for Hooker to get jobs. As he would put it, "Blues is the root of all music, jazz, ballads, rock'n'roll, everything comes from blues. Just stepped it up and changed it a little bit, but it's all blues when you get right down to where it's at, it all comes from the blues."

John Lee can be seen and heard for all his worth at the Winter's College Dining Hall on November 7. It's being sponsored by CYSF's newly formed Social Co-op as an experimental concert to get all the colleges involved in bringing bigger and better groups to York.

This first concert costs \$3 and it will be licensed. Tickets are available in the CYSF office.

Legend of Fred and Bernie

Panel 1: A sign reads "BUFFOON Collage". Below it, a speech bubble says "dere it is, bernie".

Panel 2: Fred says "it's jus' like you saying, fred. yer lit'rate critique did it sing'lar justice." Bernie replies "dat's cuz i pick my words wit' care, bernie my oyster."

Panel 3: Fred says "dat hallow'd buildin' iz a part'n'on o' culchur, a true monnument ta da mammary o' nordan buffoon, da fizzishun hero o' china." Bernie asks "derby or wedgewood?"

Panel 4: Fred says "a mean man wit' a stat'o'scope, bernie my prawn. i t'ink dis hall o' int'llectual-type learnin' is where we shud make our furst mark an' de york univ. landscape." (p.k. fred)

Panel 5: Fred says "it have cum to my attenthun dat de student counsil is havin' whad dey call an' eelecthun. anudder plot by de administer ration, i betcha. we goin' ta change dat, ol' bern." Bernie replies "get da pork outta yerk, fred."

Panel 6: Fred says "whatcha doin' on da ceilin', fred?" Bernie replies "turtin' yerk whaddam i doin' here?"

Panel 7: Fred says "me an' my slitely undernourished but interminably loyal frend want ta run for da esteemed offiss o' student counsell persident." Bernie replies "okay...but you have to be buffoon students."

Panel 8: Fred says "boorocratic offishulls." Bernie replies "I can't beleeve it. dat's da lass straw." Fred says "less go 'n getta pizza, bernie my poppet." Bernie replies "walls gonna fawl down now, dass fer damshur."

Panel 9: Fred says "dis ain't gonna be da peace o' cheese we t'ot, unca' fred." (to be continued)

York Winds waft

Artists-in-residence at York this year, the York Winds will give their first performance of the season tonight in CLH F at 8 p.m. On the programme is a mid-eighteenth century classical quartet by Michael Haydn, Torontonian David Weinzwiegh's wood-winding quintet (1964), an extremely taxing piece by the late John Barrows, an unusually soft piece by early twentieth-century American composer Irving Fine, and finally a strictly classical piece from Mozart's friend Franz Danzi. It's free.