

Cohn presents Fellini fest

by Margaret Little

A night of Fellini, presented at the Cohn last Sunday, leaves one awestruck. Fellini's powerful message strongly colours his early film, **Toby Dammit**. This film, now a Fellini classic depicts the shattering end of an actor's life. The Italian film director combines his ingenious shots with Edgar Allen Poe's poetic wit for a captivating effect.

Poe warns the actor: "Don't wager your head to the Devil," which is literally what the actor does.

The famous Shakespearean actor, Toby Dammit, arrives in Rome for his first and final visit. Fatality colours every one of Fellini's shots. From the brooding nuns to the hearse-like car, Fellini creates an atmosphere of whispered premonition.

A precocious little devil appears time and again, teasing Dammit towards destruction. Dammit makes his final public appearance ironically reciting:

"Out out brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury . . ."
(**Macbeth**)

An ominous cadence falls upon the scene when Dammit forgets the last two words, "signifying nothing" and relapses into oblivion. How odd that Dammit should forget the two words that represent his life. Surely no mere slip on Fellini's part.

After his performance

Dammit—no longer interested in life—jumps in his flaming red Ferrari and chases the devil over a collapsed bridge. A wire blocking through-traffic accidentally slices Dammit's head and rolls it to the Devil. The conclusion only emphasizes Fellini's powerful symbolism and uncanny imagination.

A similar theme of isolation and decadence can be seen in Fellini's recent movie, **Orchestral Rehearsal**, however the message is more subtly entwined with the individual personalities.

A keen perception of a musician's sensitivity and solitary life is expressed through a series of TV interviews. From tubist to oboist, each musician has his own particular philosophy of life and music.



Behind this musical sensitivity lies a strong political theme. The players move from ultimate liberty to final subservience. Powerful union forces lead to a violent revolt and musicians screaming:

"Orchestra is terror
Orchestral leader is death!"

What began as an expression of musical liberties, becomes a full-fledged riot. At the height of the revolt, the

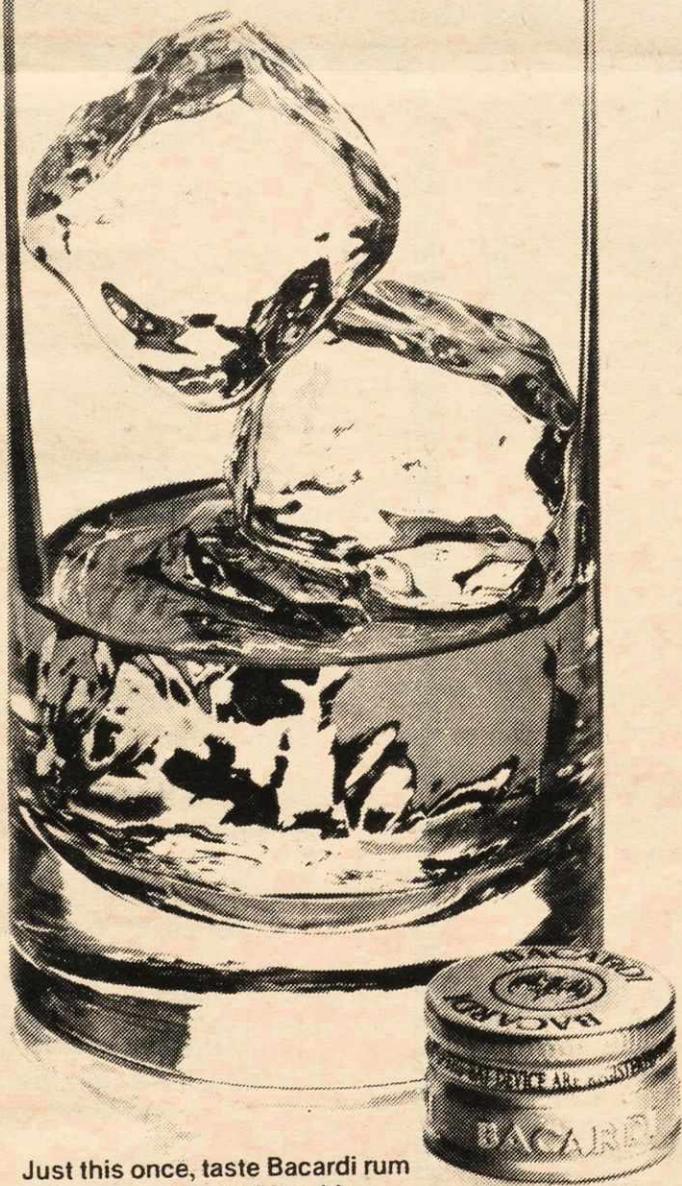
rehearsal hall begins to crumble.

The conductor takes full advantage of the situation, restoring order and dictatorship.

The more recent film shows refinement in Fellini. He has more subtly adapted his actors and plot to his powerful theme.

All in all, both are highly effective and leave one spell-bound.

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