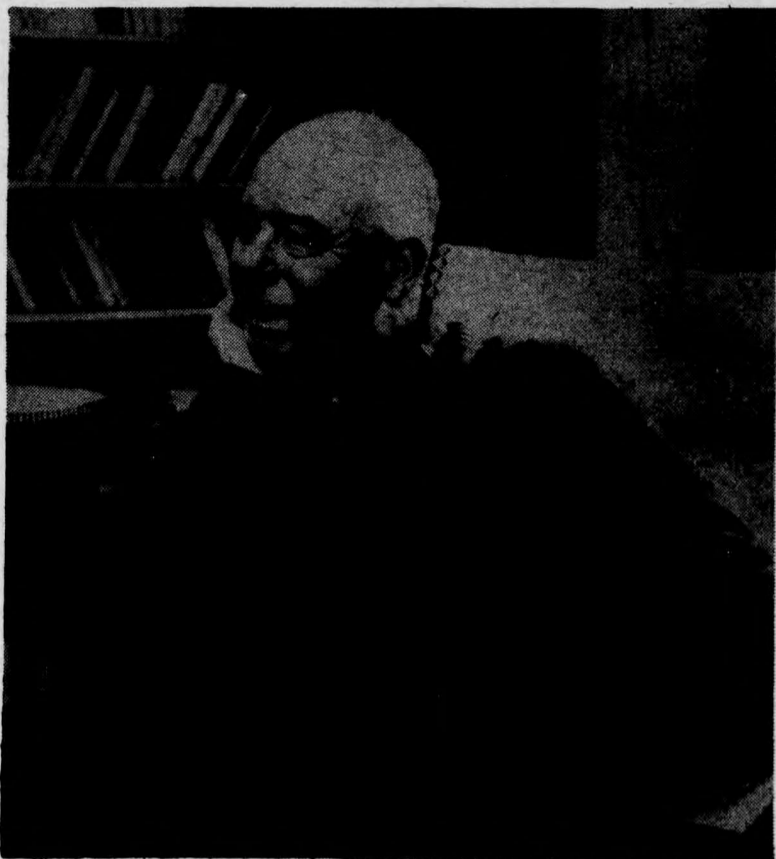


Heady stuff from Jean Renoir



Colin Smith

Begun in September, the Art Gallery of Ontario's homage to the late Jean Renoir is a worthwhile retrospective of a dozen of the director's sound films, spanning the years 1931 to 1969.

Jean's father, the Impressionist painter Auguste Renoir, has been described as having painted with spots of light. The same could be applied to his son; a Renoir film is cinemagraphically lush, sensuous and rhythmic. He employs a low-key stylization in his direction of actors and in building his mise-en-scene in order to bring reality to a heightened state. The moments when this fails result in arch contrivance, but when Renoir succeeds (which is often) he brings forth a vitality and poignancy that few directors have achieved. There is a deep regard for humanitarianism in his films — Renoir was an energetic, robust man with a huge love for life. He refuses to label people as heroes or villains, a tendency that sometimes debases the dramatic thrust of his plots, but offers no stereotyping, bringing rich complexities to his characters, and creating films that demand second viewings. In the best Renoir (*The Rules Of The Game* and *La Grand Illusion*) there is a universality that prevents films

almost 40 years old from becoming dated.

No biographical data can do justice to the way Renoir involved himself in life. Born in Paris in 1894, he had early interests in philosophy, math, ceramics. He served in the first World War, and then directed his first film in 1924. Renoir worked in France until the Nazi occupation when his two best films were condemned, recut, withdrawn until reassemblage and redistribution decades later. He fled to Hollywood for the 1940's and didn't return to France until 1955, (in between he made films in Italy and India). Renoir's last films in France were for television, later broadcast abroad theatrically. He was involved in directing and writing for the stage, and was a capable actor, sometimes appearing in his own films. His influence on Hollywood film noir and the French New Wave is apparent in every historical cinema text.

Jean Renoir died in February 1979 at the age of 85.

On Sept. 30 at 1 and 7:30 PM, *A Day In The Country*, with *Diary of A Chambermaid* at 2 and 8:30. Oct. 7, *The River* at 2 and 7:30 PM, *The Golden Coach* at 4 and 9:30. Lastly, on Oct. 14, *French CanCan* at 2 and 7:30 PM, *Le Petit Theatre de Jean Renoir* at 4 and 9:30. \$2 per single film, \$3 for both.

"Head On" crashes York

Elliott Lefko

A travelling road show masquerading as a full-length Canadian feature film, *Head On* rolled onto the beautiful York campus last Monday. A few lucky adventurers caught glimpses of succulent youngsters in silk shorts riding bicycles; sultry Sally Kellerman stalking against the background of a York forest; and that new Canadian starlet, Steve Lack, writer and lead actor in last year's underground success, *The Rubber Gun Show*.

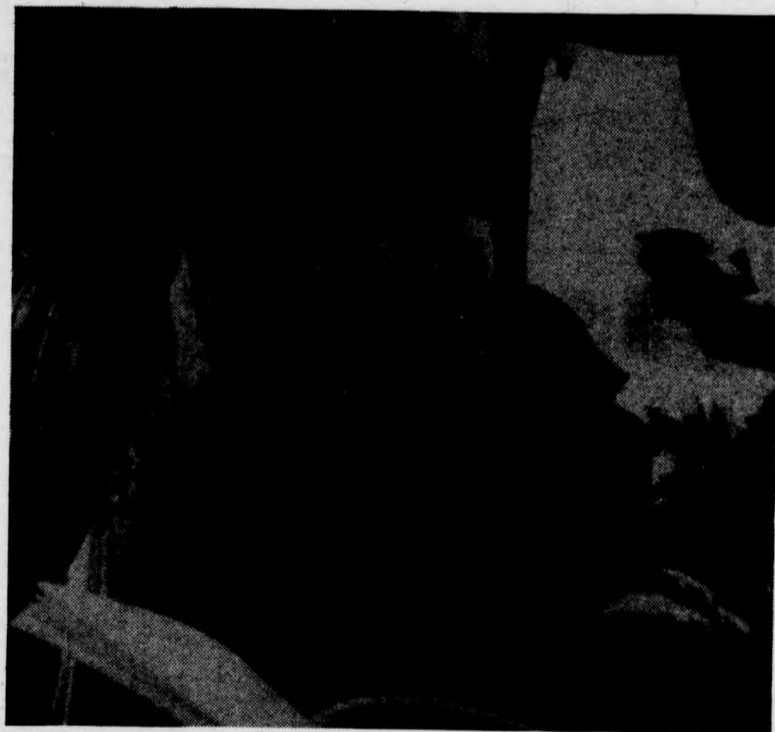
The film is budgeted at over one million. Assistant director David Storey calls *Head On* "A head movie. Not a lot of drugs but maybe cultish." The plot arises from the head-on car crash of two university psychology professors.

Director of photography Tony Richmond comes to the film with credits like Schlesinger, Roeg, and Godard. He plans to use some nice effects in this twisty, chilling love story. Throughout the shooting, director Michael Grant showed little emotion, possibly saving it for more crucial

days.

Set to wrap-up by late October the producers are hoping to see a summer release date. Bathurst

Manor's Ben Mink (of Jack Sheckman, Murray McLaughlin and FM fame) will possibly score the film.



Starlet Steve Lack

Head Off York

Theatre

50 Words: Bits of Lenny Bruce is a nice show, but not a great show. Simon Malbogot and Michael Glassboure recreate and act out many of Lenny Bruce's best shticks. Lacking the context of Lenny's supporting monologues the shticks sometimes lose their impact. The preaching sounds like preaching, not the humor of Live Lenny.

The staging seemed static and repetitive. First night jitters showed themselves in missed light cues and flubbed lines. Nonetheless, the acting is credible. Through his very accurate ear for ethnic accents, many of Simon's characters came to life.

This show would be a nice introduction to Lenny Bruce, to further flesh out what you may've only read in books. But to survive as a midnight show, it should be electrifying, and that it isn't.

NDWT Side Door Theater, Midnight, September 26 - 29, 736 Bathurst.

Ronald Ramage

Reading

John Irving has the looks that a Hollywood director would place beside John Wayne in a celluloid misconception of the Wild West. His New England has an exaggerated academic tint to it. Nonetheless it would make a good weapon in debate with William Buckley Jr. John Irving is an author by occupation and at the age of 34 he holds the promise of another F. Scott Fitzgerald.

His reading at Harbourfront last week drew over 1,200 people. Most of them had probably never heard of Irving more than five months ago. His latest novel, *The World According To Garp* has given him the status of a cult hero. Heroes that are both lustful and innocent seem to be the secret to his success.

He read from a work in progress, a novel called *Hotel New Hampshire*, due for release in 1981.

Ron Justein



Eraserhead manages to live up to its considerable advance reputation. It is chilling, frightening, repulsive and uproariously funny. A fascinating delineation of that area just beyond the fringe of good taste that Divine and Leatherface only dare to dabble in. It is the most accurate visualization of that sensation found only in nightmares. A film that should definitely be experienced. However a forewarning: the hilarious moments do not even come close to counterbalancing the (literally) nauseating ones.

Andrew C. Rowsome

Eraserhead is boring, plotless, dimly lit, totally lacking in time/space continuity. It is not exciting, it is nauseating. Run, don't walk away from anyone who tries to take you. They are not your friends. Ignore this warning at your own peril. Some scenes will haunt you well past the after-show coffee. With luck, it could ruin your life and rob you of your sanity.

Ronald Ramage

Head don't give

Mike Smith

The Punk is gone from *Teenage Head*. What used to be a punk band appeared last Thursday in the Tap'n'Keg for an evening of energetic, but hardly proficient, rock and roll.

Last year the band seemed to have something to say and, although their album *Teenage Head* didn't rocket them to stardom, the group has collected a sizeable band of loyal followers in the Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal area. But instead of realizing their potential, the band has become the token pseudo-punk ensemble for their pseudo-punk audience.

Since seeing them a year ago I noticed no overall change in the material they performed. While lead singer Frankie Venom did fall off the stage in a drunken stupor, and Steve the guitarist brought some equipment crashing to the ground in his own inebriated fashion, and the music was better played and technically more satisfying than last year, *Teenage Head* are clearly a group of musical vagrants still searching for a home.

With even a trace of rockabilly in their sound, one wonders where they will wander next. Perhaps disco would be right for them — by the looks of the dance floor last week they were easily

able to get, and keep, the audience on their feet. But then so can the Bee Gees. Maybe next year this band will have found its true voice; either that or it will join the next bandwagon.



Evan Adelman