



# Lights, Camera, Action!

By DAN MERKUR

If the issue of *Love Story* may be justifiably hailed as an emergent sign to indicate romanticism of story, then surely this romanticism is a necessary fantasy to counterbalance the very serious work being done in a highly realistic vein, of which Clint Eastwood's *Play Misty for Me*, is a recent example.

Alan Rosenthal, an ex-York film department professor now working in Israel, has compiled a book on the history and approaches of post-war documentaries, particularly that branch commonly called cinema verite, the cinema of truth. Its history is best explained to say that some of the foremost filmmakers, the Maysles brothers (*Salesman*, *Gimme Shelter*) find the label cinema verite unsettling, and insist on the generic name Direct Cinema.

The essential discovery of the verite cineastes, among them Alan King, Don Pennebaker, Richard Leacock, Terry Filgate, is that the objective camera eye is a fiction, that there is always the comment made by the lens by virtue of its placement and its setting. Thus the documentarists have found, pretty much, that a realistic portrayal of a John Doe is fully much as accurate as a documentary reportage of a John Doe, and probably more convincing as a work of art.

On a similar line of thought, John Cassavettes' *Husbands* is a dramatic study of three husbands at the crisis time of the death of a close friend. The film is languorously developed in

Kodak home movies-style of color and lighting. The composition is adept however, as no doubt Cassavettes' home movies must be.

Similarly, Eastwood's *Play Misty for Me* has the simplest of lighting and exposures, with accurate color and no fancy work done, indeed some work almost on an amateurish level. The storyline is accurate and believable. The film cutting is as polished as may be expected of a major studio contract film (Universal-MCA). The plot is clearcut and simple, proceeding in classic beginning-middle-end time structure, with logical omission of unnecessary detail.

However, *Play Misty for Me* also settles, in my mind, the age-old debate of obscenity or not. I cannot say I find anything obscene, given its historical veracity. What is true cannot by definition be obscene. However, there is the problem of simple bad taste. *Play Misty for Me* raises the problem objectionably.

Accurately and tastefully presented, by way of film aesthetics, the feature tells the story of a highly-neurotic disc-jockey groupie, a woman so lonely and obsessed with the voice of a kind dj she plots an incredibly brilliant plan to bed him and then have him fall in love with her. She is rejected by him, and resorts to murder. It isn't a pretty story. The way Eastwood, with all his hard-boiled veneer of super-coolness, portrays it, it is quite an ugly story. It is very well-presented. Which makes it an even uglier story. It is a film in very bad

taste. It is a depressing thing to see, like *The War Game* or *Freaks*. Art has political force, and I can understand the validity of making *The War Game*, but surely this phobia of Eastwood's regarding movie-star groupies is something the world would be healthier disregarding.

Interestingly, however, in portraying the neurotic character, accurate Freudian understanding has been applied, and the rendition of the character makes the murderer a sympathetic figure of emotional neuroticism and yet quite sane, quite sane. Very dangerous, but quite sane. Interesting? Disheartening. Depressing.

I do not recommend *Play Misty for Me* except to psychologists seeking a better understanding of the neuroses of the highly-paid performer in Western society. Otherwise, it is a movie whose message is one of pain, and who needs pain?

The Ontario Film Theatre at the Ontario Science Centre will be playing Sergei Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* next week, Part One on Tuesday October 5, and Part Two on Thursday October 7. Curiously, the neurosis of power is also dealt with in *Ivan*, but Eisenstein was far enough removed from his subject to have left a masterpiece instead of a bad dream.

## York & OECA cultivate all Ontario educational TV

By BRIAN PEARL

Twenty years and several billion earned dollars after TV first came into our hearts and minds the first altruistic, educational goals of the medium of the massaged masses are at last served.

The potential for mass enlightenment first presented by television in the 1950's and then quietly ignored by the major networks for 20 long and tedious years is finally being realized in the U.S. by the National Educational Television and the Public Broadcasting Laboratory and in Canada by the Ontario Educational Communications Authority.

Not surprisingly, the universities are deeply involved in educational TV. They are interested in special programs on specific topics presented as university credit courses taken at home by independent students.

OECA began broadcasting last year on the UHF channel 19, CICA, and is expanding this year to a full schedule of child, student and adult education and general information programs. Channel 19 only serves the Toronto region, but there are stations planned for Ottawa and Windsor. Video tape equipment and regular shipments of tapes will be used in the unreachable far North of Ontario. The full network will be operational by the end of the decade.

Whether channel 19 can become the pace-setting example of public service and non-commercial competence to our networks that NET has become in the U.S., remains to be seen. But 77 per cent of all programs on channel 19 is

Canadian and with new CRTC regulations on 50 per cent Canadian content coming into effect, channel 19 can show the rest of the country how to do it.

OECA seems determined to create the strongest links possible between the educational network and the universities. Two separate efforts shared by OECA and Ontario universities are in the works. The first is a series of York programs on environmental pollution made by nine students with funds from both the university and the network. The second effort is a new credit course offered by the University of Waterloo: Arts 100, Communications. Arts 100 is the province's first tv course, with weekly lectures broadcast on channel 19 and tests, telephone lines for questions and the eventual credit supplied by Waterloo.

York's relationship with OECA has been close, handled through the York Television branch of the instructional aids department. YTV began planning last year for an Atkinson course, Sociology 173, Urban Sociology to be broadcast on channel 19 much the same as the Waterloo course is this year. But the plan fell by the wayside, a victim of no time for sound planning, a minimum of effort spent on groundwork and the mercurial temperament of the course director, Stanley Burke.

YTV and OECA are working together to finance the production of three programs on pollution by nine students from Ontario schools, including York and Ryerson. The organization was benevolently

flexible, allowing generously for the inexperience of the students. The material was checked at the script level by representatives of York and OECA and then the students received a budget of \$10,000 dollars to complete the projects.

The work went on over the summer and Echo Media, as the group was styled, are finishing the first of the completed programs ASAP (as soon as possible). According to Fred Thornhill, television program coordinator with YTV, "The program changed immensely" under the influence of the students and the finished product should be reviewed by OECA within two weeks. Thornhill said no more projects are in the works between OECA and York. But it may just be that the success of Echo Media could begin a regular co-operative program of university student television production for educational TV in Ontario.

Educational TV in Ontario is undergoing a period of rapid development today. Only the vague outlines of the finished network and its production methods are visible. But even that basic set-up indicates the universities will play a large role in the eventual network at all levels; production, content and the actual function of the network. Credit courses and student productions are simply the most likely joint efforts of the universities and educational tv. But one expects that in a medium noted for its imagination and innovation both the communications authority and the universities can discover many more such joint efforts.



Jan Rubes challenges youngsters to guess what this is on Ch 19.

## Lennon's new album 'Imagine' best of post-Beatles era

By STEPHEN DAVEY

Imagine, John Lennon and the Plastic Ono Band with the Flux Fiddlers (Apple 3379). Unlike Lennon's first solo album (John Lennon, Apple 3372) which was more therapy and soul-baring than music, *Imagine* is a far more mature statement from one of the 60's greatest rock and roll innovators (we can argue about the others later).

Aided by George Harrison on guitars, Klaus Voorman on bass, Nicky Hopkins on piano, and Alan White on drums (Ringo Starr was in Spain making a western when the album was recorded in August), Lennon has produced the best post-Beatle album to date. Unlike Harrison's *All Things Must Pass* (Apple 639) which tended to be over-produced and repetitious and McCartney's two (enough said about them), *Imagine* is Lennon's most diverse and brilliant recording thus far.

The album's 10 tracks range from rockers, to folk, from ballads to country and western. Lyrically Lennon is at his best. In the title song he shows his sincerity in the album's simplest song:

"You may say I'm a dreamer,  
But I'm not the only one.  
I hope someday you'll join us  
And the world will be as one."

The album's stand-out cut (in both senses) is *How Do You Sleep* an undisguised rebuke to Paul McCartney:

"So Sgt. Pepper took you by surprise  
You better see right thru that Mother's eyes...  
Those freaks was right when they said you was dead  
The one mistake you made was in your head...  
The only thing you done was Yesterday  
And since you've gone you're just Another Day...  
A pretty face may last a year or two  
but pretty soon they'll see what you can do  
The sound you make is Muzak to my ears  
You must have learned something in all those years  
How do you sleep at night?"

A word should be said about the album's packaging. Lennon always gives you your money's worth (in the past, calendars, posters, etc.). *Imagine* comes complete with a lyric sheet, track by track instrument information, a 22 x 30 inch poster, a record sleeve (remember them?), and a snapshot of Lennon holding a pig by its ears (hmm...). All of this and a great album (which is selling for under \$3 downtown), what else could you ask for?

The rumors that the Beatles are reforming appear more realistic daily. *Imagine* teams up Harrison and Lennon with bassist Klaus Voorman. Ringo Starr who has appeared on both Harrison and Lennon's earlier albums, has said there is a strong possibility the new band will take shape. He said under no circumstances would they be called the Beatles. Lennon announced on the Dick Cavett Show last week he intended to tour North America in the spring. If we're lucky, we may be getting the Beatles back.