

Idealist at heart

Director Ford creator of "male weepies"

By VINCENT P. DORVAL

It's been a couple of weeks since John Ford passed away at the age of 78. News of his death gave John Wayne the rare opportunity to shed some tears. He stated on behalf of some of the best actors in Hollywood that his stardom and theirs were due to John Ford's devotion to them when the roles were scarce or not up to par.

Not many directors think of their crew as a family, though Ingmar Bergman and Sam Peckinpah are two exceptions. Familiarity with the faces must have been the reason for the ease of the hand behind such great films as *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Stagecoach*, *The Quiet Man* and *The Searchers*.

If anything, John Ford was a moralist. In his films there was a code that the cavalymen, the boxers and the revolutionists had to live by. John Ford wanted to remind us of our chivalric traditions, and the fact that most of these codes stemmed from the mythic western showed that Ford was, at heart, an idealist.

The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962) is the perfect example of the Fordian vision of man and his honour. James Stewart, a principled young lawyer from the East, arrives in the rowdy town of Shinbone, ruled by two toughies — Lee Marvin playing the heavy, and John Wayne the fearless knight. Complications begin when Marvin beats up Stewart and Wayne's girlfriend (Vera Miles) plays nurse to the injured lawyer. Miles has a change of affection, and Wayne is left without a companion for his newly-built cabin.

John Wayne embodies loyalty and respect for the future and for justice. His beliefs lead him to save Stewart's life and to destroy the evil town element. And he never does get the girl; recognizing the end of an era, his breed of man must vanish with the inroads made by law and order.

It might be said that Ford thought too highly of his male heroes, and that realism was absent from the Ford films. But the male code and life style was merely an attitude of Ford's. It's about as truthful as Kubrick's coldness, Bergman's inquisitiveness, Peckinpah's anger and other approaches of today's film artists.

John Ford was a creator of "male weepies", and they deserve to be talked about along with anything else ever caught by the camera's eye.



John Wayne presents Vera Miles with a cactus as James Stewart looks on in Ford's *The Man*

Who Shot Liberty Valance.

Miscasting mars Stratford Othello

By LYNN SLOTKIN

Stratford has had its problems. A few years ago Louise Marleau was an unintelligible Juliet. Last year Lila Kedrova was thoroughly charming and delightful in a part that required her to be totally despicable. And this year there's Othello.

The production is full of problems, and in some ways they hide the brilliance of Shakespeare's play of jealousy and revenge. Director David William must take the blame.

His first blunder is the casting of Nahum Buchman as Othello. Buchman has great stage presence, pride, dignity, and a deep, rich voice. But Buchman's native tongue is Hebrew. He has never acted in English before, and it shows.

First of all, his accent is so thick as to make some of the lines incomprehensible to the audience. And second of all, his understanding of English is so weak that at times he doesn't know what he is saying. For instance, he would give a line, "She wakes," or "She comes," in reference to Desdemona, and only after he gives the line does he then turn around and see if she is waking or coming. The result is quite comical, and, therefore, disastrous.

William tries to justify his casting by saying Othello is a stranger to Venice and his speech would be different; different, yes, but unintelligible?

William then miscast Amelia Hall as Emilia, Iago's wife. Hall does a nice job, but she is obviously much older than Douglas Rain, who plays Iago, and this adds a new dimension to Iago which is not in the script, and never developed in the production. Shakespeare is no dummy; if he wanted Emilia to be older than Iago he would have said so.

Iago obviously dislikes his wife, but had William cast a younger woman one could conceivably believe Iago married her for companionship or for a more basic need. But why would he marry a woman much older than himself and of lower station? This is never brought out in this production.

Annena Stubb's costumes, with their richly coloured brocades, are luxurious and spectacular, as usual, but the sight of noblemen wearing such heavy, warm garb, especially when the peasants are dressed in lighter clothing, in the same scenes, is ridiculous. And would Othello wear such an elaborate red velvet 'pancho' with its unwieldy train,

even on special occasions, let alone on the spur of the moment as he did? Hardly.

William does get lucky in some cases of casting. Alan Scarfe is whiney, petulant and spoiled as Roderigo. Martha Henry is fresh and even delicate as Desdemona. Douglas Rain, as Iago, steals the show. His is a cool, calculating Iago. William has him constantly on the move, one might even say 'prowl', and Rain has a marvellous ease to his movements, as if nothing could be more natural to be on that stage in that costume.

But who cares about a few good performances when the rest of the production is such a disaster? How is an audience supposed to have any pity, or compassion for Othello, and the suffering he is going through, if it can't understand the actor portraying him? How is it supposed to take seriously a production that is rife with miscasting and illogical costuming? Thanks to David William, Stratford has blown another one.

Mac sizzles while York fizzles

By ANTHONY GIZZIE

Can a university situated near one of the most exciting metropolitan areas in North America, with a reputation of political activity and with a day-student population of over 10,000, put on a decent orientation programme for its new and returning students? It certainly can.

So why didn't it happen at York? Just compare our shoddy effort with that of one of our sister universities. On a budget of under \$5,000, McMaster University in Hamilton this year hired an orientation co-ordinator for \$500.

With the help of the student union, he produced an outside patio dance, a 1950s greaser dance, a meet-a-stranger dance, a dance marathon, an all night 1930s film festival, numerous beer gardens, a pyjama parade and two concerts, one with the Guess Who, the other with Lighthouse — all under the theme, "Back to the Good Ole Days". Each student was given an Orientation button and a handbook which listed all facilities and services provided by the McMaster Student Union.

Now why couldn't the Council of York Student Federation co-operate with the colleges on campus to produce a similar university-wide

programme? At McMaster everyone has a feeling of being part of it all — they polled over 55 per cent turnout in the last council election. At York, the best we can muster is a feeling of being a victim of the bureaucracy.

Perhaps the CYSF should form an orientation committee with a paid

co-ordinator, two members appointed from the CYSF and a representative from each college, designed to drum up some spirit among the student body.

Perhaps then York orientation might become the yearly event it is at other universities, instead of a necessary evil to be disposed of before classes begin.

Toronto location film premieres at York

The Paper Chase, an American film starring Timothy Bottoms and celebrated producer John Houseman, will preview at York on Tuesday, Sept. 18 at 7:30 p.m. in Curtis LH-L.

The special showing, open to the York community, will precede the film's official Canadian premiere at the Stratford Film Festival on Saturday, Sept. 22.

The story concerns a group of law students at Harvard, and the stress of scholastic competition and the exam system. In his first film role, Houseman, 70, plays a crusty law professor.

Film Shooting occupied several weeks at the Kleinberg studio in Toronto last season, as well as several locations on the University of Toronto campus. Over 250 Toronto college youths were employed in the filming of the simulated Harvard locations.

Director Jim Bridges, who also wrote the screenplay, will visit York in person to talk with film students next Friday afternoon. Bridges has written over 14 features and many TV dramas, and has worked as an actor with Andy Warhol and John Cassavetes.

Packed festival

Losey, Doll's House at Stratford

Jane Fonda's appearance in the new film version of Ibsen's contribution to women's emancipation, *A Doll's House*, will kick off the Ninth International Stratford Film Festival this weekend.

The film, shot entirely in Norway, also stars Edward Fox (*Day of the Jackal*), Trevor Howard, Delphine Seyrig and David Warner. Director Joseph Losey will put in a personal appearance at the showing, and if *Time* magazine's nasty piece on the on-set hassles between Losey and

Fonda are even half true, the director of *The Go-Between* may have a few interesting anecdotes to relate.

The festival, to be held in the Avon Theatre from September 15 to 22, boasts a Douglas Fairbanks Retrospective each weekday at 2 PM, including *The Mark of Zorro* (1920), *The Three Musketeers* (1921), *Robin Hood* (1922), *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924) and *The Gaucho* (1927). Horace Lapp will provide piano accompaniment.

This weekend, besides *A Doll's House* at 8:30 PM Saturday, the festival will present the new star-studded version of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (British, with Peter Sellers, Ralph Richardson and Flora Robson) at 10:30 AM and yet another Fairbanks swash-buckler, *The Black Pirate* (1926) at 2 PM.

On Sunday, Marcel Ophuls' first film since *The Sorrow and The Pity*, entitled *A Sense of Loss*, will have its Canadian premiere at 9:30 PM. The film is an absorbing documentary study of the conflict raging in Northern Ireland.

Also on Sunday is Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood*, with that shaky husband-and-wife team Burton and Taylor, and Peter O'Toole, showing at 7 PM. A West German film about King Ludwig of Bavaria, *Requiem for a Virginal King*, will be shown at 2 PM.

Weekday evening films at 7 and 9:30 include a new Claude Chabrol delight and *Traitement de Choc* (Shock Treatment), which should raise a few hairs. *Traitement* director Alain Jessua will be present.

Canada's main contribution to the week, apart from an interest in next Saturday's *The Paper Chase* (more on that next issue), is the Quebec film *Rejeanne Padovani*, directed by Denys Arcand, Tuesday night at 9:30 PM. It's billed as "an abrasive fast-moving film from Quebec, told on two contrasting levels of action, about the price of success in business and politics."

Full memberships for the festival cost \$20, evening memberships \$12, and retrospective memberships \$6. Individual tickets cost \$2. Orders should be sent to the Stratford Film Festival, Box 520, Stratford, Ontario, N5A 6V2, and information can be obtained locally (i.e. Toronto) by phoning 964-1154.