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Cardinal Photos
By JAMES KORGER

BST: King of Siam

Clive Barnes would blush. Rodgers and Hammerstein would certainly kvetch. And someplace, somewhere, Yul Brynner is unquestionably wondering "why," simply "why." But Broom Street Theatre, not content with subjecting theatre partisans to six hours plus of stale television soap drama, has concocted the "King of Siam." Not alone, of course. Clive, Richard, Oscar and Yul have certainly helped. Joel Gersmann has had a hand in it. And the cast—Mark Anderson, Denny Burt, Judy Dolmatch, Phoebe Harris, Chris Morris, Fred Murray, June Oppenheimer and Weasel Schuler—has also aided the cause. So, if you are one of the curious, if you are one of the brave, you might be interested in seeing this sure-to-be-twisted adaptation of the famous musical comedy *The King and I* that opened last weekend at the St. Francis House. Rumors persist that the show will go on for two more Saturdays and Sundays. And gossip-mongers have been saying that some of the cast members can be seen in some of the very poses pictured in this charming photographic essay. Getting to know you? As you like it.



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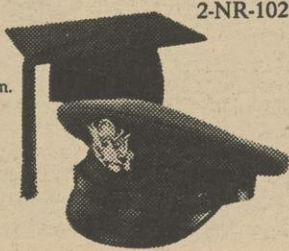
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Numismatics Review

By MORRIS EDELSON
Cardinal Numismatics Editor

In his ceaseless quest for the finer arts, Morris Edelson, editor of *Quixote Magazine* and *Cardinal Numismatics Editor*, has stumbled upon many a delicate masterpiece, but lately Morris has been disappointed.

It's the 50th anniversary of the Wisconsin Players, says the brochure, but the Wisconsin Players have been long dead. About when John Weaver wore knee pants a group of drama enthusiasts, students all, began to put on plays in Bascom Hall. There was money in it, and so the students gradually got pushed to the side. In recent years the myth that the Wisconsin Players is a student organization was used to keep other student drama groups from forming. They had to operate either under church sponsorship, as did *Mime and Man*, which did *The Hostage*, Mike Wilmington's first hit at Wisconsin, or through another organization. This last is the reason why *Quixote* literary magazine sponsored so many theater ventures: *The Brand X Players*, *The Nude Playwrights*, *The Nightmare Group*, and recently, Gerald Peary's *New Yoerick Players*.

This year the fiction of the Wisconsin Players becomes a little more threadbare. Judy Ashford, business manager of the University Theater for the last five years, said that the old image of WP as an extracurricular activity will be dropped and instead the activities in Vilas Hall will be under the University Theater label. Master of Fine Arts productions, bigger productions (those directed by professors) using the Theater Departments practicum students to build sets and carry scenery will be required for those enrolled in Theater classes. There will be less plays presented in the Union Theater, where the rent is heavy, and more small productions, especially in the second semester.

STATE BANKROLLS PLAYERS

THE PLAYERS (or whatever it is) raise money for the State of Wisconsin. They receive a bankroll, but are expected to pay it back and make a little extra for the Legislature. Breaking even isn't good enough, and thus a heavy stress on box office, which has made them the target of attacks on the campus dating at least back to 1934, when *New Student* magazine said they were trivial and irrelevant. Legally, the group is an "auxiliary enterprise" in the class of the Kafka Memorial Union and the University Book Store, two institutions which have also had their public relations problems. Sums involved are rather large for theater groups—Auxiliary Enterprises, with offices in the former National Guard command post in the cellar of Bascom Hall won't talk—but one estimate of the annual budget is 60,000 smackerolas.

Genial Joel Gersmann, an ex-Theater Department TA, says that the typical experimental production of the Auxiliary Enterprises fundraisers (WP) is \$10,000. That is for *My Fair Lady*. Lou Rackoff, not to this reporter, said he only got \$200 for his *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Of course, Rackoff is only an MFA candidate.

NEVER MISS A BET

Money considerations perhaps explain why the Auxiliary Enterprises Drama Group mounts its weakest season in recent history this semester, a dehydrated musical comedy (without the music and probably with little comedy) *The Matchmaker*, the rant of Richard III, Rackoff's play (another Shakespeare—the Bard's bones are often troubled by the WP, usually his more best loved stuff), and a play for children. Children's theater pays, so we expect much more of this sort of entertainment in the future.

Since Fannie Taylor, former director of Union Theater and guiding star of genial William Dawson, 75, outgoing Theater director, and genial Bill Goff, 74, new Theater director, has become a power in the National Endowment for the Humanities, UW's Auxiliary Enterprises Drama Group received a grant to produce two original plays this spring. The playwrights will come to our fair city and be in residence during the times of production. Ed Amor, who played the toothpaste-drooling ghost in *Hamlet* recently will be in on this project. Amor is in his tenth year of being a promising young man, and no doubt has been a good influence on the Auxiliary Players. He, being only an old young man, however, has nothing like the influence of Professors Emeritus Curvin and Mitchell who help set the tone of the repertory century after century. Let us blame these doughty old rascals for the four plays of fall.

THE ENERGETIC Judy Ashford says that this year there will be dress rehearsal cocktail parties, too, where you can go and hob-nob with all the famous directors and then watch the sets fall down, for a good price. Never miss a bet.

In contrast to this confessed money-grubbing, the Broom Street Theater Repertory Company using tax-free, rent-free church space just over the garden from the Sterling Hall bomb site, give their all for art. Their dedication to the avant-garde and freedom of expression will be made crystal clear by the choice of the revolutionary *The King and I* for their first production this fall. Genial Joel Gersmann, 14, says that the play will not be presented straight—this is no surprise for BS Theatre—and it will be less than four hours long—this is unusual. The production, before you start whistling the hits, will be an adaptation, with the cast doing some songs and reciting others as classical poetry in the manner of A.C. Scott.

THEATER HERE IS NASCENT

On the telephone Mr. Gersmann said that the sub-text of the production would be what it is to be an American in the context of a prevalent Rogers and Hammerstein (schlock) mentality. "There's no reason to do Moliere in America," Gersmann said (believed to be a reference to a WP future production). If you want to do something classical, then it must be American, for that's all we have. The only classical lit we have is Rogers and Hammerstein." Mr. Gersmann continues:

"The Wisconsin Players doing a junky American play assume it is art. Actually it is junk. There has never been a serious play written by an American; there is no serious theater in America. Theater here is nascent. You can't do theater unless you realize this situation. The only group that does is the Bread and Puppet Theater.

(continued on page 8)

The Daily Cardinal

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Book Review

Olympic Games' Lesson: 'All That Glitters Is Not Gold'

William O. Johnson, Jr.
ALL THAT GLITTERS
IS NOT GOLD
THE OLYMPIC GAME,
G.P. Putnam's Sons, \$7.95
Erich Kamper,
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
THE OLYMPIC GAMES
McGraw-Hill, \$25.00

By JOHN GOLDLUST

In the year of the Munich Olympic Games, it is inevitable that this quadriennial orgy of sport will inspire a number of books dealing with these, the XXth Olympiad of the modern era, and with the Olympics in general. After all, an obscure obsession of a rather romantically eccentric French baron has exploded in the space of seventy-five years into a gigantic sporting extravaganza involving thousands of participants from almost every country in the world and watched by hundreds of millions of television spectators in a worldwide hook-up.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympics had the quaint idea that a regular festival of sport of the type held by the ancient Greeks was an ideal means of promoting international friendship and understanding, as well as allowing the best sportsmen in the world to achieve their greatest heights through spirited competition. It does not require a great deal of insight to discover that by 1972 what was originally conceived as a noble contest of skill and endurance in quest of international harmony has become an enormously expensive business enterprise that frequently acts as the vehicle for personal and national aggrandizement.

The Baron's idea of participation for its own sake has been perverted to win at any cost for oneself or for one's country's sake. Each country deifies its winners and ignores its losers. Journalists and television commentators lionize the narrow-minded concern of the champion who has dedicated himself from childhood to win, win, win. Parents are praised for "creating" Olympic champions by inspiring and supporting this approach and shielding the prospective champions from "outside distractions" such as living, learning, or relating to people. Instead of "the main spirit of the Olympics is to participate" the prevailing motto is more likely to be that of U.S. pole vaulter Bob Seagren, who pointed out in an interview in Munich, after coming in second to an East German, that the silver medal was the same as nothing at all.

JOHNSON CRITICALLY evaluates the games, carefully pointing to the numerous examples of self-seeking corruption, bad-sportsmanship, and nationalistic bally-hoo that tend to predominate. He notes that despite the "official" line which holds that the athletes are participating as individuals, there are always "unofficial" points-tables published ranking each country's performances and interpreted by each nation's journalists in a way that will best promote national glorification of that country's results. Since the U.S.S.R. entered the Olympics after World War II, its competition with the U.S. to win the Olympics by amassing the largest number of medals and placings has been closely observed, commented on and evaluated by the press and sporting bodies in both countries.

Johnson also justifiably mocks the idea that the Olympics are for amateur par-



ticipants only. Except in a few of the more obscure sports, in order to win the gold medal an individual must dedicate himself obsessively to training for many years, spending many hours of every day in a rigid, premeditated programme devoted solely to eventually producing a winning performance at the games. These people are professional in the sense that the sport plays the major role in their lives and their job or "study" is merely incidental, allowing them to qualify as true-blue "amateurs." Also, because of the national pride and honour involved, most governments are eager to promote and subsidize athletes through scholarships, training programmes and trips abroad.

Many of the Olympic champions are aware that their feats and the subsequent idolization and publicity can be skillfully translated into financial or even political gains. The latter two-thirds of Johnson's book consists of a series of short portraits of outstanding Olympic champions of the modern era, tracing their lives subsequent to their Olympic victories. Many are faced with psychological problems as a result of achieving their greatest moments so early in life, and thus their subsequent existence appears to them to be all downhill. Others use their victories cynically to make business contacts, obtain preferred jobs, meet important people, or to receive support for public office.

One of the best chapters of the book is devoted to the career of the great American sprinter Jesse Owens, who discovered that despite his being the toast of the world after the 1936 Berlin Olympics, he was unable to eat his three gold medals. He found, however, that people were prepared to pay him for speaking to sporting clubs, youth organizations, fraternal orders, and the like, casting him in the role of a "professional good example." Thus he has made a career of mouthing, to all who pay to listen, the idealistic phrases of the Olympic movement, praising the ideals of sportsmanship, brotherhood, dedication, and hard work, while his own experience and observations on the direction of competitive sport in the U.S. would inevitably lead him to conclude that sport is

being used to socialize young people with such traits as obsessive ruthlessness, aggression, chauvinism, and success as the only measure of one's worth.

ANOTHER CHAPTER examines the membership of the International Olympic Committee, which is probably correctly characterized as the "Bluest-Blooded Club" in the world. Almost all the members are independently wealthy, socially prominent (frequently of royal blood), citizens whose perceptions of life are inevitably effected by their own distinctively luxurious backgrounds so that their understanding of the motivations of the average athlete from a working-class background or the political use of sport in both internal and international affairs of some governments are generally totally naive and unrealistic. There has also been a history of the I.O.C. tacitly using the principle of sport being above politics to support abhorrent political regimes. The case of the two American Jewish sprinters being left off the U.S. relay team in Berlin is a case in point.

Johnson's biting critique is a refreshing alternative to the usually trite, mealy-mouthed glorifications of everything sporting that are perpetuated by the sycophantic sporting journalists of the media. Certainly the Olympic Games are still a dazzling spectacle with fine performances by excellent athletes who are frequently also excellent sportsmen in the best sense of the word. However, a great amount of demythologizing of sport and sporting heroes is necessary, particularly as there are strong forces such as sports commentators, politicians, and many others able to profit personally from the "sports industry" who seek to use the mythology of sport to encourage individual and national aggrandizement, and also to somehow use sporting success as an analogy for success in life. This latter use has a tendency to perpetuate other more dangerous and often socially regressive myths.

On the contrary, the book by Kamper does not concern itself with either a glorification or criticism of the Olympic ideal. It is a book of facts of the purest kind, written with the type of academic objectivity of which a dedicated physicist

would be proud. Kamper presents a faithful record of every Olympic event held at the modern Olympic Games between 1896 and 1968, listing the first six place-getters, the time or distance, country, and in addition, the number of competitors in the event, number of countries and the date on which the competition was held. In team events every team members' name is listed.

This gargantuan feat of dedicated scholarship took Mr. Kamper nearly forty years and so emerges as almost a life's work. The extent of his labours is demonstrated in the bibliography which lists hundreds of official reports and publications from twenty-six countries. The text is studded with 678 (count them!) footnotes which comment on any kind of irregularity, to the length of informing the reader when some contestant's name has been spelt wrongly in the official programme. The entire book is printed side-by-side in three languages—German, French and English. This can be a little confusing to the English reader as the alphabetical order is taken from the German as are many of the abbreviations. In addition to lists of the results, event by event (including sports and events no longer in the Olympics), there are at the back tabulations of such variables as which nations participated in each event at each Games, a list of the greatest medal winners—individually and by country—and many other incredible statistics painstakingly compiled by Kamper.

WHY ANYONE WOULD want to write such a book may be a legitimate question but appears rather impudent in the face of the enormity of the task, the duration of the research and the dogged determination of the author to leave no stone turned. One must remain humble before the deed and point out that it is undeniably the most complete work written on the outcome of events at the modern Olympics. For anyone to whom having such facts at their fingertips is vital, this book is the definitive work. However, one must feel sorry for Mr. Kamper because by the end of the Munich Olympics his work will already be out of date. Oh well, back to the library.

John Goldlust, a doctoral candidate in sociology, has memorized the Guinness Book of Records.

Poetry

THE DOGS MIGHT BITE

Foreigners will be coming back to Madison to fill the void.
Our legislature has been throwing them out for the last several years, now they're coming back.
The Wisconsin natives are weak but they have the numbers.
But man for man the foreigners will win.
We are heading for a time of inaction, since the New Yorkers and Texans will play to win.
Why must there be either native doldrums or foreign neurosis?
We need some real foreigners, like from New Guinea.
People from Wisconsin don't know anything, people from New York know everything—this amounts to the same thing—inaction.
What can there be between these two extremes?

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EIGHT NOTES ON
THE UNDERGROUND

Some cogitations provoked by the current Saturday night series of underground films at the Madison Art Center.

By RUSSELL CAMPBELL
of the Fine Arts Staff

1. AVANT-GARDE AND TRADITIONAL. Precisely because it is the function of an avant-garde to break new ground, to shatter taboos, its works (ideally, at least) are quickly dated. They have a built-in obsolescence: they will soon be surpassed by the creations of more traditional artists building on the newly laid foundations. Avant-garde classics thus risk becoming, in short time, of historical interest only.

This it seems to me is what has happened to such celebrated movies as Stan Brakhage's *Desistfilm* and Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures*, both shown in the Art Center's series. Brakhage's early work, made when he was twenty in Denver, Colorado, is famed as a revelation of the Beatnik milieu, and is certainly very different from the heavily wrought Freudian psychodramas then (1954) constituting most of the American avant-garde. But seen today, the film is simply a brief, crude record of an ordinary-looking small teenage party. *Flaming Creatures* definitely retains a visual excitement from the aesthetic compositions of its languidly posturing transvestites, but shorn now of its shock value (male genitals have become old hat, thanks largely to the court cases fought around this very film) it doesn't seem to justify the extravagant praise it elicited from many critics, Susan Sontag among them.

A weakness of the underground is that it keeps thinking of itself as avant-garde. Independent film-makers are consequently chronically wary of working with subjects or styles previously broached, for fear of seeming insufficiently "revolutionary." But why shouldn't there be an underground tradition? The first crawling steps of an infant don't constitute walking, let alone dancing. Let-forms be utilized to the point of exhaustion, let topics be returned to again and again! This idea is implicit in the actual practice of some underground stylistic features as multiple superimpositions and painting directly on film.

2. Form and formalism. "The

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—Vincent Canby, *New York Times*



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The Wisconsin Film Society

new film-makers are very much aware of their position as aesthetic revolutionaries" — Gregory Battcock, *The New American Cinema*. The cult of novelty for its own sake has become intensified in the recent "structuralist" phase of the underground cinema. The precursor of the structuralist school was Robert Breer, who in 1954 made a ten-second loop film in which every frame was different. As if

work say of Antonioni and Godard) from the stubbornness of content refusing to fit into traditional forms. Content is irrelevant. The only image in George Landow's *Film in Which There Appear Sprocket Holes, Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, Etc.* is a static medium close-up of a Kodak test model. These film-makers are not pioneering new forms for themselves and other artists to explore in later works.

first we have to improve ourselves; that only through the beauty of our own selves can we beautify the others."

Since the mid-Sixties, the Foundations have smiled their approval of this philosophy with substantial grants (naively, when I first saw the Ford Foundation credit at the end of *Emshwiller's Relativity*, I thought it was a neo-Dada joke). Anger, Brakhage, VanDerBeek and Harry Smith are

with film . . ." (Jon Jost).

(On this subject, a note: Brakhage's *Window Water Baby Moving* and *Thigh Line Lyre Triangular*, which were shown in the Art Center series, though not exactly sexist, are childbirth films that make of the experience something purely visual and exterior — the typical underground trait of valuing optical sensation over emotion.)

5. Orpheus and Narcissus. A more liberated, or at least defiant, vision of sex has come from the line of homosexual underground artists, descendants of Oscar Wilde and directly indebted to Jean Cocteau. Film after film has outrageously celebrated the pleasure principle, from the flagrant (Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks*) to the refined (Gregory Markopoulos's *Himself as Himself*). The mythical heroes of these works are Orpheus and Narcissus, rebel gods who, according to Marcuse, "have not become the culture-heroes of the Western world: theirs is the image of joy and fulfillment; the voice which does not command but sings; the gesture which offers and receives; the deed which is peace and ends the labor of conquest . . ." "Orphic-Narcissistic images," he continues, "... are committed to the underworld and to death," and no words could serve as a better introduction to Anger's notorious *Scorpio Rising*, the fetishistic, fatalistic cult world of the leather jacketed motorcycle gang, swastika-bedecked, ritualistically gay and recklessly foredoomed. (The Art Center will repeat this film later in the series.)

6. Arrogance and humility. "Every time I step into a commercial movie theatre I lower my standards, I lower my demands, I lower my intelligence, I muddle my sensitivities, I descend down to the level of the people! Down with the people! Up the Angels!" — Jonas Mekas, 1970.

"Most Independent film-makers lack the humility to be great artists. Their own personalities loom larger than their art or their audience. Many are still overreacting against Hollywood." — Andrew Sarris, 1966.

The arrogance characteristic of many lesser underground film-makers finds expression in the portentousness of their films. It was indeed the vice of Mekas's *Guns of the Trees* (according to the critics — I haven't seen the film myself).

"The beauty of our creation, of our art, is proportional to the beauty of ourselves, of our souls." If Mekas's pronouncement is correct, the ambitious film-maker need but submit himself to yoga and meditation. Why strive with his art? A beautiful soul will give birth to beautiful movies by mystical parthenogenesis. Mekas's words date from the high summer of hippiedom, but their import lives on in the mindless dogma of today's underground promoter: all Independent films are good, all commercial films are bad.

7. The language of underground film. Is underground film a "new language"? Not really. It's simply that film is a hybrid art that mixes visual elements from painting and photography with dramatic elements from the theatre and the novel; the underground cinema, unlike the commercial, heavily emphasises the visual over the dramatic.

"Suppose the Vision of the saint and the artist to be an increased ability to see — vision" — Brakhage. In underground films, narrative is non-existent or diluted from taut plot to casual incident. Meaning is contained within a collectivity of image clusters in which development through time is of little significance: there may be repeating film loops, superimpositions, multiple images projected side by side, mixtures of representational and abstract imagery.

A given collection of images gains significance through its coherence, its likeness-in-disparity. The Scylla and Charybdis of the underground

(continued on page 11)

Cogitations:

Eight Notes

On The

Underground

From top: George Landow's *Film in Which There Appear Sprocket Holes, Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, Etc.*; Andy Warhol's *Sleep*; and Mario Montez as Dolores Flores in Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures*.



in reply, Andy Warhol made static-camera, single-shot movies, notably *Empire* and *Sleep*, in which every frame is virtually identical, and which have a combined running time of fourteen hours. Then Michael Snow made *Wavelength*, consisting entirely of a single zoom shot. Peter Kubelka's *Arnulf Rainer* and Tony Conrad's *The Flicker* were made entirely from black and transparent leader edited together.

This experimentation does not spring, as it often does in the arts (in above-ground cinema, in the

In fact, it is quite the opposite — once the gimmick has been tried once, it becomes gratuitous to use it again. After *Wavelength*, Snow made a film consisting entirely of a panning shot.

These formalist movies are designed to produce aesthetic shock, like much Pop Art. Yet it doesn't take a lot of imagination to conceive of equivalent experiments in minimal cinema. Thus I would suggest: (a) a film consisting solely of a vertical traveling shot (downwards) (b) a film in which the camera was attached to a large overhead fan and pointed at the ceiling (c) a film to be projected forwards or backwards according to whether it is received rewound or not. Should I shoot these movies?

Actually it's unfair to place Warhol squarely in this category, since both *Empire* and *Sleep* do have (just) significant content, and the long-take technique was used to very powerful effect in later films both by himself (*Harlot*) and others (e.g. Shirley Clarke's *Portrait of Jason*). But I think it's suggestive that to me the most solid and satisfying achievements of the Warhol factory to date, Paul Morrissey's *Flesh*, *Trash*, etc., have forsaken this avant-garde style for a much more conventional form involving plotting, characterization, and cutting.

3. Aesthetic radicalism and political radicalism. The frequently-made facile equation of radicalism in politics and the arts works here through a deceptively easy syllogism: the underground rejects Hollywood, Hollywood is the System, ergo the underground rejects the System.

Look at the facts. Hollywood is only part of the System. In political terms, the underground is an innocuous diversion of revolutionary energy into petit-bourgeois navel-gazing. Listen to guru Jonas Mekas, 1966: he praises "all those avant-garde artists who are trying to bring some beauty into a world full of sadness and horror . . . We used to march with posters protesting this and protesting that. Today, we realize that to improve the world,

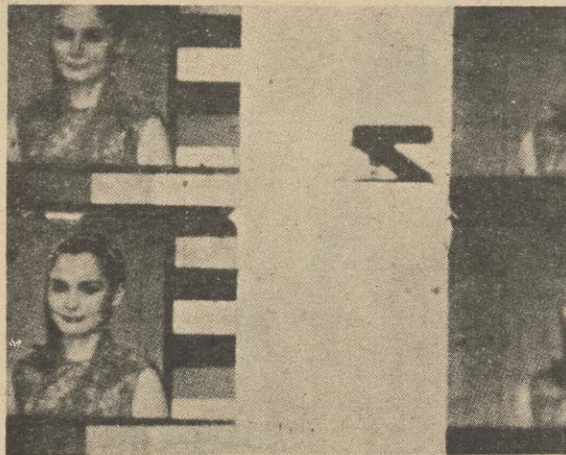
just a few of the mythically subversive underground artists thus favored. Emshwiller has made films for the USIA and John Whitney devises computerized graphics for IBM. And now, too, the Federal Government directly subsidizes the underground. The National Endowment for the Arts recently gave \$9800 to the Film-makers Co-op in New York to publish their catalogue, and this very Art Center series, like many others, is funded with federal money.

Obviously, underground films pose no threat to the corporate establishment. The vast majority of them in fact steer well clear of political topics. The few that do essay them are likely to be very broad (VanDerBeek's sundry satires and anti-H-bomb films), narrowly personal (Brakhage's anti-war *Song 23*), or conventionally liberal (Conner's *Report on the President Kennedy assassination*).

Radical film-making groups have grown up outside of the underground, with Newsreel, American Documentary Films, and now the various women's film organizations. If there is such a thing as revolutionary art, the underground film, for all its hype, is no specimen of it.

4. Sexism. Speaking of women and the underground, I'd like to quote from a letter printed in the new issue of *Women & Film* (No. 2):

"... I find myself, as one of these 'independent' film-makers, to be in the schizoid position of wanting to see such film-making encouraged, and yet at the same time I am appalled by the all too frequent puerility and sexism displayed in this area of film-making . . . Operating on the no doubt fatuous assumption that . . . this 'avant-garde' mode of film-making should be not merely exercises in aesthetic fun and games, but truly avant-garde in the social/political/cultural sense, I find myself perpetually let down — both by the film-makers and by the relative lack of any critical assessments from the various magazines concerned



Jazz Artist James Cheatham: 'Life Is My School'

By BRUCE PARSENS
of the Fine Arts Staff

"I received my degree in the street," says James Cheatham, "and I've always been involved in street education. Getting together with kids and groups in churches and anywhere. After all, the greatest school of all is life and life's experiences."

Today Mr. Cheatham is involved in a different, more formal school of education. The noted composer, arranger and teacher is currently a visiting artist in the

School of Music where he teaches a course on Black Music. Mr. Cheatham harks from an unusual background—he has written the music for hundreds of commercials which have appeared on network television. He has composed the music for the Revlon commercial with Gina Lollobrigida, many for Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola, the Buick commercials for General Motors, and also commercials for General Tires and Goodyear, and many more. Mr. Cheatham noted that he was very fortunate to be associated with an advertising agency that let him write the music which he really wanted to write.

MR. CHEATHAM comes to the University of Wisconsin from Bennington College where he held a similar post. He said that he tasted the water and it tasted all



Cardinal photo by Bill Rogers

right so he decided to move. He was recommended by jazz artist Bill Dixon who taught here last year.

"In the thirties," he says, "many Black musicians walked around much of the time with \$500 in their pockets but no place they could spend it. This was followed by the era of the Buddy Rich, Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa bands which were comprised largely of Black musicians. If a hotel, or restaurant where they would serve them they took the whole band and went someplace else. This was a time of great communications between these musicians that began to flow over into other walks of life little by little, and now again here at the University we must keep these lines of communications open between peoples we can find truth in life."

He continued: "I don't think of myself as a teacher really but more as a messenger passing on what was passed on to me. It's all part of what is essentially a self-teaching process in which I learn from my students and they learn from me. The interaction is very important."

He said about his teaching here: "I feel I have a beautiful relationship with my students in the trading of knowledge both in terms of the ensembles and the lectures in the Black Music History course, which I'd like to see become a full year course. There is so much important material in this field that should be covered and which is relevant to music today."

HIS MAIN AXE is trombone. "It was the key that opened up the grand door of music for me," he relates. "I still play it for general and therapeutic reasons."

As a free-lance musician, Mr. Cheatham has toured with Duke Ellington, Clark Terry, Paul Mauriat, the Mel Lewis-Thad Jones band, the Gerald Wilson Orchestra, Benny Carter and Maynard Ferguson (who will be appearing in Madison on October 8). Mr. Cheatham has written

Hamilton and Cheatham.

Mr. Cheatham attended the New York Conservatory of Modern Music in Brooklyn and Westlake College of Music in Los Angeles. He received a one year grant to the Operatic Laboratory, also in Los Angeles.

ONE OF THE THINGS he enjoys most (next to sleeping, he says) is "studying the natures of things and peoples." He would also like to continue the communications with his ensembles and history classes, and continue working with Dance instructor Quincey Edwards, the Artist-in-Residence of the Afro-American Studies Program, because dance and music are so interwoven and so much a part of the same entity.

In closing, Mr. Cheatham added a word about life: "I die trying to enjoy every moment of my life. Anyone that doesn't is just short-changing themselves."

I'm sure Mr. Cheatham lives up to those words and I'm also certain that a lot of good will come out of his being here in Madison.

Xenophthalmia

By DIX BRUCE
of the Fine Arts Staff

John O'Connor, television critic for the New York Times, has described the coming commercial television season as 'surprisingly bearable.' If 'surprisingly' were changed to 'hardly,' perhaps I could agree.

Television is, of course, getting to be a little bit more, as they say, 'relevant.' Owen Marshall tackled lesbianism recently and Marcus Welby featured a VD victim or two, and an unwed mother. Beyond that, except for first-run films, little serious music, drama or satire is slated for network presentation, as usual. Situation comedy, and the game show will rule the rabbit ear roost again this season.

But, what can one say? It's apparently what the people want and, through the much-vaunted rating system, the people have spoken. And they do have a choice as to what they wish to watch: On ABC there's a game show, on CBS there's a soap opera, and NBC has a situation comedy.

Serious television critics have long observed this trend toward homogeneity and other similar trends (such as the segment-commercial-segment-commercial convention) native to U.S. television and have attempted to analyze why what is, is.

Of course, the question is of a multi-faceted sociological nature, best left to the experts, but there are certain factors which lend themselves to discussion by the non-expert.

First of all, it must be observed that the commercial nature of television more completely dominates programming than any other single factor. If a show doesn't have the ratings—no matter how good it is—not enough people are watching it, the networks theorize. Too bad if
(continued on page 8)

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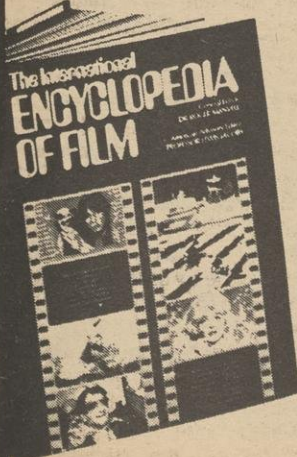
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NO ORDINARY BASEMENT

*'None Of This Artsy
Stuff For Clark Wilkinson'*

By JOHN MCCOLLOW
of the Fine Arts Staff

"There is so much talk now about the art of film that we may be in danger of forgetting that most of the movies we enjoy are not works of art."—Pauline Kael, *Going Steady*.

They're out there, millions of them. They don't read Andrew Sarris, or Robin Wood, or Mike Wilmington (God forbid). Most of them have never heard of *Ma Nuit Chez Maud*, *Wind from the East*, or *Alexander Nevsky*. But they're out there all right, and they're movie fans. They go to the movies after a hard day's work to escape from it all. They want to be delighted, awed, fascinated, made to laugh or cry. In short, they want entertainment and none of this artsy stuff, if you please.

Clark Wilkinson is one. He is a pleasant, grey-haired man who has an insurance agency in Baraboo, Wisconsin. He makes his home there with his wife.

"I'm not much of a movie critic," he admits. "I think movies are nice relaxation. I like a happy ending, and lots of fun in between."

BUT CLARK WILKINSON isn't just an average movie-goer. What sets him apart is the fact that he has King Kong in his basement, also Frankenstein's daughter, also an 1890 Edison projector head, also forty years worth of *Box Office Magazine* and quite a bit more too.

No ordinary basement, this basement of Clark Wilkinson's.

The stairs leading to the basement are lined with portraits of Academy Award Winners of year's past. "Good grief," I hear myself say. "Susan Hayward won an Oscar!"

Clark Wilkinson is waiting to welcome me at the bottom of the stairs. Behind him I can see jumbo-size likenesses of stars such as Jimmy Stewart, Tom Tryon, Burt Lancaster, Gary Cooper, and Doris Day. Clark ushers me into one of the basement rooms.

The far wall of the room is lined with books on or by Hollywood producers, directors, and stars. Across from this Wallace Beery, Norma Shearer, Joan Crawford, and the Marx Brothers smile

down at me. Underneath these Metro stars are pictures of all the screen Tarzans from Elmo Lincoln on. On a table in the middle of the room is a poster of Mae West—it is an advertisement for Old Gold cigarettes. "When you come up," it says innocently, "You'll find Old Gold."

"I'VE GOT OVER 3800 stills," Clark informs me, pointing to the rows of filing cabinets in which the stills are arranged chronologically. "Of course, I used to have more, but I give some away each year to the State Historical Society. Eventually the whole collection will be theirs."

In the corner of the room next to the cabinets stands a Roman warriors costume from *Ben Hur* (the Charlton Heston version not the Ramon Novarro version). There is also a women's version of the costume but it covers the front of the body only. "They couldn't retreat," chuckles Clark.

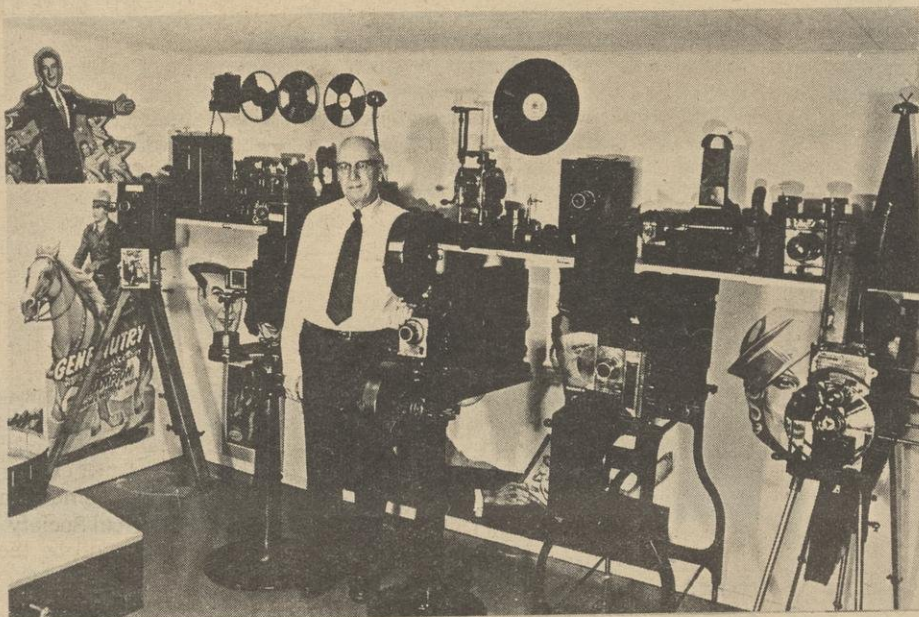
Clark pushes aside a door on which Ava Garner is reclining seductively and reveals stacks of magazines. "I have forty years of *Photoplay*, forty years of *Box Office*, forty years of *Motion Picture Herald*," he explains. "I have earlier issues but I took them apart for the ads." He has papered the walls, floors, and ceilings of the basement with movie ads.

Later, I get a chance to page through some of these magazines and sample some of their intriguing titles—"The Star-maker whose Dreams Turned to Dust" (D. W. Griffith), "The Girl They Tried to Forget" (Bette Davis), "Hollywood's New Miracle Man" (Frank Capra), and "Best Picture of 1935" (Naughty Marietta).

WE MOVE ON to a large picture of the Babylonian set from *Intolerance*. Clark shows me some photographs of the construction of the set. In one, you can see Sunset Boulevard in the foreground; it is a dirt road.

One of the more interesting bits of memorabilia in the basement is the head of the dummy who hung on the cross in *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (no irreverence intended). "For the closeups in the crucifixion they used Max Von Sydow, for the long shots they used a dummy," Clark explains. "The head is eighteen and one half pounds of solid rubber."





Other interesting props in the room include a breakaway bottle, a rubber brick, a chimney-sweep broom from *Mary Poppins*, and assorted toys from the *Our Gang* (Little Rascals) comedies.

The highlight of the room is definitely the wall of autographed stills. "I have over two-hundred autographs," Clark tells me, "and most of them have used my pen." Among the stars represented in his autograph collection are Mary Pickford, Randolph Scott, Peter Fonda, John Wayne, Goldie Hawn, Sophia Loren, Richard Barthelmess, Annette Funicello, Harold Lloyd, Gloria Swanson, Ray Milland, Marlene Dietrich, and Elroy Hirsch (remember him?). Clark Wilkinson points to the autographed picture of Greta Garbo. "I'm rather proud of that one, right after that she stopped giving autographs altogether." There are also some producers and directors represented in his collection. Among them: Roman Polanski, Ross Hunter, Walt Disney, Adolph Zukor, Hal Wallis, and Peter Bogdanovich.

WE WALK INTO a room of posters from films of 1916 through the thirties; posters of great stars such as Fatty Arbuckle, Tom Mix, Claudette Colbert, W. C. Fields, Douglas Fairbanks, Rudolph Valentino, and lesser stars like Billy West, Texas Guinan, Bessie Love and Al Jennings (America's reformed outlaw); posters of directors such as Von Stroheim, Griffith, and Ingram.

"Wallace Reid, didn't he die of a drug overdose?" I ask.

"Yes...yes, he did."

The monster room is enough to melt the hearts of all those who make *Night of the Living Dead* the most popular movie on campus. Bela Lugosi's voice welcomes you. Among the inhabitants of the room are Frankenstein's daughter (in her coffin), a dinosaur monster from *The Land Unknown*, and the Deadly Mantis. In addition, Clark Wilkinson has a marvelous collection of heads: Lon Chaney's latexed head from *Phantom of the Opera*, Bette Davis's half eaten away face from some

forgettable movie, Peter Lorre's head which Vincent Price cuts off in *Tales of Terror*, the head of the Creature from the Black Lagoon, the head of a mutate from the planet Exeter (five mouths and no nose), and others.

THE MOST HALLOWED inhabitant of the room is King Kong, who Clark obtained from Ernest Schoedsack, director of the film. The King stands less than a foot and a half tall and is looking a little the worse for wear nowadays, but even in his old age you can still see traces of the young conqueror of the Empire State Building.

For the poster enthusiast, monster movie posters make some very entertaining reading. Some examples: *Nombies of Mora Lau* (written by George Plimpton) "supernatural undersea thrills"; *Attack of the 50 Ft. Woman*; *The Monster of Piedras Blancas*, "the friend that walks lover's beach"; *The Blob* with Steve McQueen; and the all time favorite, *Monster on the Campus*, "Coed Beauty captive of man-monster."

From the monster-room, we walk over to a room filled with motion picture equipment: 1913 and 1916 projector head, a kerosene lamp projector, a silent movie camera and a 1895 mutoscope.

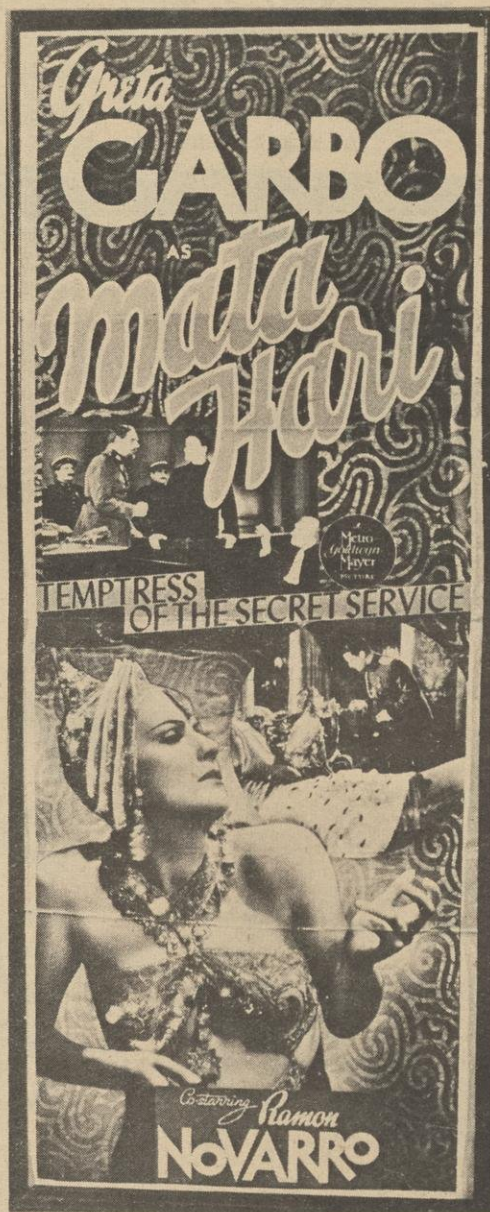
"This must be worth a lot of money," I exclaim.

"Oh, I guess it is. Fortunately, I was able to get a hold of it a while back relatively inexpensively."

The Last Room we visited is a fitting finale to a journey through the magic and glamour of Hollywood's past. In this room, Clark Wilkinson has collected costumes which have been worn by some of the more glamorous leading ladies of the screen—Bette Davis, Marilyn Monroe, Hedy Lamarr, Elizabeth Taylor, Lana Turner, Grace Kelly and Judy Garland are all represented in this costume collection.

"Well, Mr. Wilkinson," I say as we walk back toward the stairs, "what's your favorite movie?"

He smiles. "I guess I'd say have to say I enjoyed *Gone With The Wind* quite a lot."



Clockwise, from bottom left: the original King Kong, Clark Wilkinson surrounded by his collection of monster heads, (above left) Wilkinson and his collection of old photographic movie equipment, a Greta Garbo poster and (left) a Rudolph Valentino poster. Above, three of the many pictures and posters in Wilkinson's collection, including (center) a rare autographed picture of Garbo.



Cardinal Photos
By JAMES KORGER

The first Monday of every month is "Fine Arts" day for the Daily Cardinal. For those of you who like to write, this is a good opportunity for you to expound upon those subjects which require a bit more space than usual. Submit essays in Dance/Art/Theater/Book Reviews/Film/Numismatics or simply whatever fits your definition of "Fine Arts" to The Daily Cardinal, c/o Fine Arts Editor 821 University Avenue or call 262-5854. Material in all fields is welcome.

Xenophthalmia

(continued from page 5)

My World and Welcome To It was an excellent Emmy-winning show. No ratings, no go show.

The networks can ultimately pass the buck to the sponsors, and rightly so, for it is the sponsors who really decide whether or not a show is to appear.

This process naturally pares down the format variety, weeding out the sick hens and presenting a rather even, consistent bill of fare in nightl

prime time slots.

This rating syndrome "determines" just what the American audience is presumably most comfortable viewing, and then exploits the findings to the hilt until tastes change, and program changes are made necessary. This is what has occurred thus far in television history. The general audience is primarily interested in TV as an entertainment "escapist" medium, according to the network rulemakers.

One might argue that escapism is an art in itself, that the ability to take the American worker away from the hum-drum atrocity of his or her existence is a mercy mission.

Again, the argument that the audience has a choice. One can watch Monty Hall presenting a Santa Monica couple with a house, three cars, and ten thousand dollars weekly for life, one can view average late-thirties, early-forties Doris Day take virginity out of the minds of children and Billy Graham, and put it back on the television set where it belongs; or finally, one can find the Brady Bunch once again in a delightfully common dilemma of American family life that will be solved without raised voices, or naughty words. With art like this, who needs reality?

Unfortunately, reality is sneaking in, anyway. Catholics are marrying Jews (in New York City), two black junk men are saying that there isn't anything uglier than a ninety-year old white woman (in Watts), and divorce is becoming as stylish (all over) as flare jeans on the Dating Game. These trends are heading TV in the right direction, yet one wonders if the new reality is nothing but the new fantasy. Do people attitudes and making them seem silly? Or is he the hero of the people holding those same racist attitudes because he is brave enough to say on television what people have wanted to hear all along. Take bigotry out of the minds of racists and put it on TV with all those other bits of vanishing Americana?

What may eventually force the improvement of commercial television is today the bright spot in television viewing—public broadcasting. Despite budget cuts and a less-than-favorable economic situation in general, public television is growing and improving by leaps and bounds.

Once considered a "weak sister", non-commercial stations are gradually grabbing larger and larger audiences from CBS, NBS and ABC. With seven day programming schedules, the public stations are rapidly becoming dangerous competition for commercial stations.

"Public television is not in competition with commercial television, but an alternative service to commercial TV," stresses Al Gaudinski of WHA-TV again and again. Such an alternative.

The content and the format in which public television is presented is completely and admirably—depending upon what you want from TV—different than commercial stock. No situation comedies, or game shows. Live drama, minority artist programs, public service shows, and musical presentations instead. Drama, satire, and music are not forgotten, but celebrated artistically without commercial interruption.

Public television may be somewhat of a knight in shining armor to alternative-seekers. Though, public broadcasting isn't exactly sterling—news, for example is not treated extensively on most public stations, WHA-TV included—the cultural and educational quality of public broadcasting completely overshadows commercial stations. The networks should take notice.

Numismatics Review

(continued from page 2)

"THIS ROGERS and Hammerstein production will be the first time in three and a half years that I have dealt with literature. It is literature of a low quality, but literature. O'Neill is not literature, he is an imitation of European models, a gimcrack Aeschylus. Our production is not an act of cynicism (believed to be a reference to the charge made by some that Mr. Gersmann does not care for theater), is not an attempt to shock the audience, but it is an attempt to make a statement about America.

"Indirectly the play tells a lot about America, about the attitudes of national chauvinism we have.

The Broom Street plays being rather long sometimes, I asked Mr. Gersmann if he was paid by the hour. He said, "No, we are asking the audience to look at details, not at a play's message or general impression. Most productions around here treat audiences as though they are stupid, we treat the audience as though they are mature, by expecting them to look into a play performance, to appreciate Fred Murray's clowning. The Bread and Puppet Theater doesn't push audiences around either—there wasn't a single word in Fire.

A LONG WINTER

"The Wisconsin Players are polluting the neighborhood. It's only too easy to attack them, but they are symptomatic of the structure of our government and society. We are more capable of being creative than their productions allow for; we could make theater out of ourselves. It's not so much that their plays are dopey and badly done, but that they are obsessed with Art. Their actors and directors become a part of the machinery. Audiences who go there humiliate themselves.

"STUDENTS ALWAYS ask us how dare we do this or that. They want consistency, comfort. They won't stick when they come to work with us; usually they want grades, rewards. And the return is not always tangible.

"Our program? Bob Seder is putting together an original play called Compound, and Chris Morris will be directing Rod Clark (formerly of the Fess Hotel's play The Attic Angel.

The question that arises: if the avant-garde is doing what the derriere garde is doing, is there any hope in Madison of seeing new theatre? (We leave out of consideration here the usual drivel of the Madison Civic Repertory whose contribution to campus life has been to take over the Presbyterian Church and prevent its use by any other performing group). Well, there will be MFA productions up in the attic of Bascom Hall. Perhaps the Spring will see some interesting things done in the black box in Vilas Hall. And Rod Clark's play might be worth viewing. The San Francisco Mime Troupe will visit in February. But theatrically, it looks like a longish winter. Oh well, there's always the Fill-em Serieses, and the popcorn games of the Kafka Union (North and South).

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Magic 'Arthur Teichman' Still Trips The Light Fantastic

By PAT SLATTERY
of the Fine Arts Staff

Some 55 years ago a gentleman named Arthur Teichman decided the general American public couldn't dance. Thus, he and his wife Kathryn decided to do something about it and make a few bucks in the process.

The couple changed their name to Murray and began opening dance studios. They prospered. Eventually Arthur and Kathryn secured their own television show and their name became synonymous with good dancing throughout the United States.

Today Arthur Murray seldom dances but the glitter of his name still does a light fantastic of a business. There are over 250 Arthur Murray dance studios spread throughout the United States, and one of these is located in downtown Madison on the Square.

AS I CLIMBED the 14 steps that lead to the local studio recently my writer's instinct told me that a good story was in the making. After all, dancing lessons must be on the verge of extinction, thought I, a member of the generation first moved by the twist and eventually graduated to the philosophy that dance is dictated by whatever spirit moves the body.

The rigid movement of such quaint steps as the fox trot and the rumba have become anachronisms, cultural artifacts buried when whites started to openly emulate the steps that originated in the steamy dancehalls in Harlem.

I entered the door and stepped into the studio, which was separated into a lobby and a hardwood floor area for dancing. On the dance floor was an 80-year old woman and a boyish looking young man of Latinesque features who were dancing to the soft strains of a gentle waltz.

Left-right, step close; left-right, step close. The white-haired matron was learning the rudiments of the boxcar waltz.

I met the three kingpins of the local studio—James and John Banta and Miss Tally.

THE BANTA BROTHERS have collectively been giving dancing lessons for 48 years. They both are good-looking men in a mature way, with graying temples, very straight teeth, and double-knit slacks. John used to run the Rockford franchise while James operated the Arthur Murray studio in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

The last of the triumvirate is Miss Tally. A former school teacher, the petite brunette quit teaching children to become a fulltime instructor for Arthur Murray three years ago. "I've never regretted the decision," said Miss Tally. "This job has always given me a great deal of satisfaction."

Why do people take dancing lessons?

"Confidence is the key work," explained John. "Dancing has always been a vehicle for self-expression. When people get

married and join country clubs they don't want to do much discoteque dancing. That's when they start coming to us."

The people who come to the Murray studios are normally in their 40's, 50's, and 60's. Last year approximately 500 people came for lessons in Madison, which is more than the numbers of clients for the same year in Ft. Lauderdale. Business has increased ten per cent every year for the last ten years.

WITH AN EYE on the white haired octogenarian who was dancing with the handsome Latin instructor, I asked if dancing lessons were aimed at attracting the lonely and the aged.

"Oh no," emphatically replied brother James. "We have all types of people, some lonely oldsters but many doctors, nurses, waitresses, and lots of everyday people who want self-confidence. People want to be good in something, and when they take to the dance floor they want to be good enough so that other people will notice that they're outstanding dancers."

THE BANTAS pointed out that Arthur Murray studios don't always charge for lessons. There are quite a few trophies lining the Madison studio lobby, and they were awarded for volunteering to give free lessons for the handicapped.

The Madison staff has also given free instructions at Mendota State hospital. Last year, a lady with two artificial limbs took gratis lessons. The staff has even given free lessons at the Delevan School for the Deaf (they learn by catching the vibrations off the floor—believe it or not).

The white-haired lady had meanwhile finished her lesson, and she was sitting on the couch talking to the handsome Latin, whose name I later found out to be Mario Calderone.

There are no blackfootprints on the dance floor that show the path to success in learning the rumba. It was a very plain room, with large mirrors on all sides to help the clients learn.

James Banta put on a record and Miss Tally took my hand to show me a few of the basics.

We shuffled around a bit—Miss Tally's grace was helpful—and John Banta warning Mario not to

be too talkative because I was from the Daily Cardinal.

The Bantas tackled a touchy subject: "the generation gap."

"There's no such thing in our family," snorted John. "My kid is going to be a doctor and James' son is in his third year of law school. But you look at the streets around here today and it scares me to think that these kids will be the leaders of our country in the future."

"Now you can't condemn all these students," interjected James, trying to take the edge off his brother's sharp words. "A lot of these kids out here are highly responsible."

"But getting back to dancing, my oldest kid is graduating from law school this year. You know what he's going to do? Well, he's not going to practice law but instead he's going to teach dancing lessons for Arthur Murray. He feels that teaching people how to dance is more rewarding than a law career."

"AND DO YOU know what our families do when we get together for vacations," added John. "We go out supper club dancing. Have dinner and then dance the whole night, changing partners and just having a hell of a time."

I thanked the Bantas, Miss Tally, and Mario, and readied my departure.

"Do me a favor," said James as he paternally patted on the arm. "Four years from now send me a postcard and tell me if you're doing any supper club dancing instead of the discoteque scene. I'm willing to bet anything that you will be."

James Banta had a point: How many times have I been amused by watching older people trying to catch their youth long gone by doing the dances of the young and foolish? Every Arthur Murray studio will do a steady business as long as there were lonely people with money, country club members, and just plain folk who want to be good at something.

"I'll send you that postcard," I promised as I waved good-bye.

And down those stairs I bounded two steps at a time, trying to figure out a way to stay 21 years old for the rest of my life.



"Confidence is the key word," according to John Banta. "Dancing has always been a vehicle for self-expression."



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Book Review

Sound And Fury Of Great Movie Serials

By CHRIS MORRIS
of the Fine Arts Staff

The Great Movie Serials: Their Sound and Fury by Jim Harmon and Donald F. Glut. 304 pp., illustrated. Doubleday, \$7.95.

Highbrow art critics may bemoan the death of art forms such as opera and fresco painting, but the American moviegoer has his own dodo—the motion picture serial.

If you're old enough, you may remember having seen them week by week at the Bijou, or if you caught the television revival of the serials in the late Fifties and early Sixties, you may remember some of those old-fashioned treats: the strong, vacuous hero, the curvaceous, prone-to-fainting-spells heroin, the oily, cackling villain, the explosions, the hokey superscience, the grandiose fights and, inevitably, the clarion call at the end of the chapter—continued next week.

JIM HARMON an old-time radio fan whose book, *The Great Radio Heroes* is a charming look at airwave heroics, and Donald F. Glut, who writes comic books

at Dell, have collaborated on *The Great Movie Serials* which deserves to stand beside Alan Barbour's *Days of Thrills and Adventure* as a definitive work on these nostalgic cliffhangers from the past. Organized and clumsily written, the book makes fine reading for blood and a collection of old ticket stubs in their bottom drawer.

For kids in the Twenties, Thirties, and Forties, the serial was that little "extra" stuck in between the Saturday matinee features. Often the heroes were radio or funny page supermen whose static-fuzzy, pulp-pressed adventures were translated into poetic motion by stuntmen like Dale Van Sick and Dave Sharpe and special-effects men like Waldo Lydecker. Glut and Harmon capture the sweaty, rowdy Saturday afternoon atmosphere with such precision that your hands get sticky from the bubble gum under the seat.

All the favorites are here—Buster Crabbe's stolid but striking Flash Gordon, battling the screen's all-time arch-villain Charles Middleton's adenoidal Ming the Magnificent; Tom Tyler's Captain Marvel, shazamming him-

self from a fifteen-year old punk into the World's Mightiest Mortal; Kirk Alyn's Superman, able to withstand any peril in the universe except a little chunk of greenpapier-mache; Ralph Byrd's Dick Tracy, minus the hawk nose and wrist-radio, but still the movies' most able shamus; Dick Purcell's Captain America, minus his shield but with a laughable bay window; Linda Stirling's voluptuous Black Whip, the only movie heroin that dads as well as kiddies loved to cheer; and Lewis Wilson's Batman, the most inept of serial heroes, who lost his cape in the middle of fights. Even Gene Autry is along for the ride.

AS WELL as retelling the deliciously ludicrous serial stories, Glut and Harmon fill their readers in on the behind-the-scenes stories of chapterplay making: the cost-cutting use of stock footage, the special effects catastrophes, and the tricks of flamboyant stunt work.

The book's finest feature is the relish with which its authors recount the vulgarity and blatant absurdity of that never-never land in which a hero could be outwitted and nearly annihilated fourteen chapters in a row before

it finally dawns on him that the villain is really the heroine's 84-year old invalid great-uncle.

The Great Movie Serials is a nostalgia buff's delight and a superb introduction for the novice to the dime-store glamour of Hollywood's back alleys of imagination.

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Book Review

'Hoax': What Really Happened?

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED,
By Clifford Irving
with Richard Suskind
Grove Press, New York. \$1.95.

By CAROLINE RALSTON

A month ago, almost exactly, Clifford Irving, who was found guilty of conspiracy and grand larceny in June, surrendered himself to the New York state authorities to begin his two and half year term in jail—an end he himself never seemed to have envisaged possible when he decided to create the fake biography of the billionaire recluse Howard Hughes.

What Really Happened is the inside story of how the fraud was conceived and executed, what Irving was really doing and with whom when he claimed that he was meeting Hughes, and how the whole fabrication finally crumbled. It makes good reading with plenty of suspense.

Twice before the final discovery, it appears that Irving faced the possibility of imminent detection, but handwriting experts scrutinized the "Hughes" letters and guaranteed them 100 per cent authentic. Even the lie detector could not catch him. The female interest is also good with Baroness Nina van Pallandt (of Nina and Frederik fame), followed by an attractive scuba instructor, Anne Baxter; not to

mention a wife who is conned into doing the undercover work in the Swiss banks, and who finally proves the weak link in the chain.

BUT THIS IS NOT a detective novel and Irving, as the protagonist trying to justify his crime, leaves much to be desired. Although quite irrelevant to the history of the fraud, he finds it necessary to dwell on his sexual triumphs in an effort to prove that, at 40, he is not a sexual has-been. He indulges in face-saving rationalizations about lying to his friends, and cannot resist the temptation to reveal himself as an attractive, witty, intelligent guy through remarks supposedly made by others.

In fact, as an apologist Irving has few equals. He sees himself as the modern anti-hero, the debunker of establishment. The money he anticipated from the fraud is never openly discussed. It is called a great challenge, which he compares with climbing Everest, a hoax, a light-hearted scheme to prick the pomposity of the publishing world, but it is never called a fraud—a deliberate attempt to acquire three-quarters of a million dollars and abscond with it. At one time during his research he smuggled a book out of the Library of Congress. A close shave with the library security guard left him a twittering wreck, vowing that that was the begin-

ning and end of his criminal career. In fact, he would have one believe that he was a pure American guy with only a little mischief at heart. Hell!

AT THE END of the book one is left with just one question. Irving has already proved himself to be an adept tall story teller. Has he done it again? The facts—the how and when of the fraud—are probably correct (he faces another five years prison if he perjures himself in print), but when it comes to his motives, his feelings and explanations it is, of course, impossible to know whether this over-rationalized, self justification is What Really Happened.

Underground Notes

(continued from page 4)

film are excess similarity (repetitiousness) and excess diversity (randomness). An example of the latter in the Art Center's series is Bruce Baillie's *Mass for the Dakota Sioux*, which tries to weld together very disparate footage: factories, theatre streets at night, Bufferin ads and Eisenhower on TV, a motorcyclist, waves crashing on a rocky shore, portraits of Indians, etc. etc.; there is overexposed film and negative film. The attempt doesn't work: the film is sprawling and incoherent. Baillie's later *Castro Street*, a very tight and compelling study of the railroad and industry along a single street, triumphantly avoids this peril.

8. Sycophants and critics. "You need this book if you think you can even talk about the underground film using words" — Michael J. Paggie, director of the Art Center's film program, on Jonas Mekas's *Film Journal* (The Velvet Light Trap No. 6).

"... if those involved don't get

confronted with, and so confront themselves, some critical thought on the nature of their films, including the area of how they handle sexual models, and get it now while relatively young — then I think we'll see a repeat run on those dreary sexual stereotypes of yesterday/today. The criticism has to come now." — Jon Jost (Women & Film).

If the language doesn't exist by which we can articulate our responses to underground films, it's about time we invented it. Otherwise we're imprisoned in our own subjective reactions, unable to communicate our pleasure or bewilderment or hurt. And we can't begin to analyze, compare or evaluate — we can hardly begin to think about the films.

I believe the words are mostly there (unlike those for psychedelic experience). And they should be used, as Jost suggests, to question the nature of underground art, and to determine if we want these films to serve as models for a future independent cinema, or not.

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