

Documentary 'defective'

Film exposes China's cultural revolution

By TOM MOORE
Arts Editor

From Mao to Mozart, which won the Academy Award for best documentary this year, chronicles virtuoso violinist Isaac Stern's three-week trip to China in 1979. Though Stern's visit was largely goodwill, he did take the time to perform on several occasions and also to visit a number of musical conservatories.

In China he found a nation appreciative of Western classical music, but whose musicians, especially the younger ones, were sadly lacking in classical training, largely due to the 15-year Cultural Revolution.

cinema

From Mao to Mozart, a rambling travelogue sort of documentary, takes as its main point the dangers of the Culture Revolution. In 1966 Mao Tse-tung cut off all Western sources of art in order to make Chinese culture flourish. In this period, which endured for 15 years, it was illegal to teach anything about Western culture. Those who did were punished.

He Ludeng, the director of the Shanghai Musical Conservatory, describes the period in the film: "I was treated as a criminal ... 10 of our (the conservatory's) teachers died by suicide because they couldn't stand the torture and humiliation. We were all treated as criminals because we taught Western music."

Director Murray Lerner tries to add impact, by showing a number of scenes where young Chinese play classical pieces but don't quite bring them off because they lack the feeling — they think to play loud and fast is enough. Attempts to further vent this point are scattered throughout From Mao to Mozart with Stern complaining over and over again about how music must come from the heart and soul and not from the instruments alone.

"Every time you pick up an instrument you make a statement. Unless you feel that music can say more than words ... that you aren't alive unless you play music ... don't be a musician."

But such heartfelt talk and scenes from seemingly infinite musicians damaged by the artistic censorship fail to

really drive home the horrors of such a totalitarian move as the Culture Revolution.

Stern, who looks like a Walt Disney chipmunk, has such a wry and witty persona that he holds together this rather chaotic film. Not only is Mao To Mozart confused about the points it wants to make politically, it provides scene after scene of the Chinese countryside and people without giving the audience many clues to what's going on.

The film is extraordinarily well-shot for a documentary, but since you don't know what you're looking at half the time, it seems quite a waste. These days the trend in documentaries is to eschew narration and title cards in favor of a more realistic presentation. Sometimes this works but more often it's quite unsettling. Though From Mao To Mozart has some narration it could have used much more.

Luckily, the winning personality of Stern and the moving performance of classical music by him and David Golub, the pianist who accompanied Stern on this trip, make up for From Mao To Mozart's many defects.

Special effects add flair to Messina's latest

By ED LEITCH
DTH Staff Writer

A sample of the lyrics of "Whispering Waters," a song off Jim Messina's new LP Messina, goes:

Well, I've been out walkin' on the banks of the sea
Where the whispering waters run down
I spied a maiden enchanting to me
She sang such a sweet melody.

records

If you think the words sound frivolous, how would you react if I told you that he

also used recorded sound effects of waterfalls and children laughing? How about if I told you that in addition to the acoustic guitars and four-part harmony, he added recorders, violins, snare drum, mandola and various other sundry sound effects to resemble the tinkling sound of water? And he did it all in increments, layer after layer of lush sound piled on to support about ten lines like those above.

Would you say it was a waste of time or a misdirected effort? Would you say Jim Messina was infatuated with fluff? Would you fear that you were about to be pulled to death with cotton balls?

Actually, Jim Messina has pulled it off and emerged from it all, with his listeners,

unscathed and probably better off for the experience. Nine out of 10 other performers would have totaled the song or at least done a "Rockford Files" turn about halfway through and tried to escape the trap they had laid for themselves.

Jim Messina deserves a great deal of credit because no other performer has ever used waterfall sound effects, much less children laughing, and not had it go over like Donny and Marie filling in for the Rolling Stones.

As a performer or a producer, Messina has never been one to cut corners or pander to anyone. That is precisely why "Whispering Waters" and the whole album for that matter works so well. The arrangements are flawless, the performances are inspired, and the attention given to detail is staggering.

If you hear a pin drop when Messina is on your turntable, it is because Jim Messina

wanted you to. Every guitar lick is in place and if you are interested in such things, Jim has included on the lyrics sheet a list of types of guitars used (a Fender 1956 Stratocaster on "Child of May Dreams," for instance) and where he bought them in many cases.

Side two of Messina is some of the most versatile party music ever created, guaranteed to please a diverse crowd. Don't get the idea that this is elevator music though. A romantic little duet by Jimmy Messina and Pauline Wilson entitled "Stay the Night" might entice someone to do just that.

All things considered (and they were in the production of this album), Messina is a thoughtful, well-crafted display of talent and a welcome addition to one's record collection. So throw it on between your Mother's Finest albums and The Ember's Greatest Hits — you won't be disappointed.

Film presented today in Carroll

The Toronto Exchange presents Don Siegel's classic horror film Invasion of The Body Snatchers, actually an allegory about McCarthyism, at 7, 9, 11 p.m. today in Carroll Hall. This 1956 film stars Kevin McCarthy who was also featured in the remake. Admission is \$1.

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Job interview sign-up

The following employers and graduate school representatives will be on campus to discuss job opportunities and academic programs on the dates indicated. Students can sign up for appointments with these representatives eight days ahead of the visit in the University Placement Service, 211 Hanes Hall. A resume is necessary at the time a student signs up for an interview. This is put in the folder accompanying the sign-up sheet.

DATE	ORGANIZATION	DATE	ORGANIZATION
		Oct. 13	Black & Decker Bank of the South College of William & Mary Law School Rose's Stores, Inc. W.S. Peebles & Co. E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Co. Hallmark Cards, Inc. Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co.
Oct. 12	Black & Decker A.M. Pullen & Co. Technology for Energy Corp. UOP, Inc., Corporate Research Center Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Co. J.C. Penney Co., Inc., Internal Audit Dept. Oxford Industries Creative Dining Division of General Mills Restaurant Group Bank of the South	Oct. 14	Black & Decker Frito-Lay, Inc. Fidelity Union Bancorporation University of Richmond Law School National Security Agency Coopers & Lybrand

Premiere of 'Romeo and Juliet,' end product of combined efforts

By MARC ROUTH
DTH Staff Writer

When the houselights dim in the Paul Green Theatre this evening at 8 p.m., and Romeo and Juliet begins, faithful audience members from past years' productions by the Department of Dramatic Art will notice that a dedicated crew has come together to give life to Shakespeare's famous tragedy of the two "star-crossed lovers."

Nicholas Searcy and Laura Sumner as the infamous pair and director Tommy Rezzuto have once again joined together in presenting this awaited addition to the fall theatre season.

Last fall saw Searcy and Sumner in the much lighter trappings of Moliere's The Would-be Gentleman, also directed by Rezzuto. Although they portrayed a comparable set of infatuated youths in that comedy, the plot never reached beyond the conflict of love to the greater conflicts of the warring Montagues and Capulets in Romeo and Juliet.

And yet even further back, the three- some worked together on Summer and Smoke, Tennessee Williams' classic. It has been a long journey from the America of Williams' play to Moliere's Paris, France,

to the Verona and Mantua of this play. But for those who see all three of the productions, the contrasting styles and viewpoints against a common ground can be seen.

Director Rezzuto also wears the hat of scenic designer for this production, a dualness that allows for unusual cohesiveness between the interpretation of the production and the visual elements. His set design suggests the various locations of the play through the use of a unit set which allows the audience to rely on the imagination to transport it from one location to another, much like in Shakespeare's time.

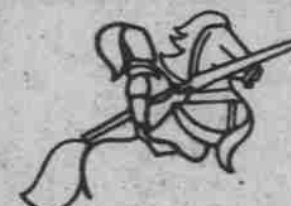
A varied theatre piece, Romeo and Juliet is the result of creative efforts from a few areas. Rick Brown, costumer for Playmakers Repertory Company and Dramatic Art productions, designed the costumes. Tom Johns, M.F.A. candidate in Dramatic Art, designed the lighting. Laurie Dowling serves as the sound technician, Jon Roth staged the fight scenes, and Kate Hunter provided the choreography.

Performances are at 8 p.m. today through Saturday in the Paul Green Theatre. Tickets are available at the Carolina Union and Graham Memorial box offices.

The Bottom Line takes a lighter look at the news. Look for it every Tuesday and Thursday on the editorial page of The Daily Tar Heel.

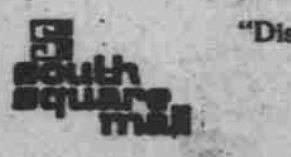
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