

Peter Hardy on Film

'Siddhartha' slow and stupid

Back in my high school days there were certain writers who were just so "in," so with-it and cool that I refused to be seen near any of their books. When my friends would praise them I would scoff loudly and project a scornful "I don't read trash like that" pose.

In secret I would eventually look into these writers' works, not so much out of fairness as from the hope that if I had read the books I could criticize them even more scathingly. Of course, even on summer vacations I couldn't avoid those awful moments when someone would see a book like "Fellowship of the Ring" in my hand and rush up to me, give a gasp of pleasure and say with a faraway look in his/her eyes "is it your first time?"

With Tolkien I found out that my suspicions had been wrong. With others, like Kurt Vonnegut, I decided that I had been right. As for poor old Herman Hesse, he never had a chance.

I had been unimpressed by Hesse's "Steppenwolf" but the harshest blow was dealt by the National Lampoon's take-off on "Siddhartha."

But if the National Lampoon did a good job on "Siddhartha," they have been equalled by the makers of the new film version. As a friend of mine said, watching the film is like listening to a professor spend the first half hour of class trying to call the role.

"Siddhartha" begins with two young men in India, one of them the title character, who leave their homes to "be free." After studying with a teacher in the forest for a while the friend decides that this is what he wants to do, while Siddhartha goes his own way, saying of the teacher "Look at him—sixty years old and he hasn't reached Nirvana!"

Coming to a city, Siddhartha becomes enamored of a concubine named Kamala. He gets to be a wealthy merchant and lives with her for a while but his life gets so mired down in decadence, lust and sloth that he tries to drown himself. Not managing to pull that one off he joins up with an old boatman, who tells him that the ultimate truth may be learned from the river.

As far as I can tell the basic message behind all this is your basic pantheistic pitch: God is everywhere, everyone is God, everything changes but everything returns. This kind of Eastern religiosity is very popular among American youth—but how much it has to do with actual Eastern religions I can't say.

It's easy to see why it's so popular; it's sufficiently vague to be comforting while making no demands on the believer. To say that God is everyone is the same as

saying God is no one. Hence, responsibility is owed only to oneself, and if that's the case why talk about God in the first place?

I can see that from a surface viewpoint Hesse's philosophy might seem appealing; after a closer look I find it rather appalling. Still I don't see how even an admirer of Hesse could like the film of "Siddhartha". Director Conrad Rooks has some kind of reputation as an underground film maker but it's hard to see why from this film. His direction is not only sluggish; he doesn't seem to have much natural talent for cinema in the first place. There are a couple of nice erotic sequences with Siddhartha and the concubine—thanks largely to Simi Garewall's attractive portrayal of Kamala—but this is supposed to be a kind of spiritual film. Rooks' way of conveying spirituality is showing us lots of artily composed shots of rivers and sunsets, just like any trashy, materialist Hollywood director, except a trashy materialist Hollywood director would probably do it better.

Sashi Kapoor seems uncomfortable as Siddhartha, but that might be the Oxfordting English he speaks in most of the time. The rest of the performances are routine.

"Siddhartha" is probably the worst film I've seen this year, if you rate a film by its intents and accomplishments. It's slow; stupid and I would recommend it only to people who enjoy being bored to the point where they want to throw rocks at the screen.

Music Notes

Flute recital set

The UNC Music Department will present the second concert in its Tuesday Evening Series tonight at 8 p.m. in Hill Hall. The program is a recital of 20th Century Flute Music and will feature Susan Oehler, flute, Barbara Rowan, piano, and Kathy Logan, cello.

The concert includes Mario Davidovsky's Synchronisms No. 1 for Flute and Electronic Sounds, the Sonata for Flute and Piano by Walter Piston, Alan Hovhaness' Sonata for Solo Flute, the Aaron Copland Duo for Flute and Piano; and Heitor Villa-Lobos' Assobio a Jata (The Jet Whistle) for Flute and Cello.

Davidovsky notes of his Synchronisms No. 1: "It belongs to a series of short pieces wherein conventional instruments are used in conjunction with electronic sounds."

This Sunday, Michael Zenge will perform on the piano as part of the UNC Music Department's new series, The Sunday Evening Series.

The North Carolina Symphony Chamber Players will present a Chamber Music Concert in the Music Room, East Duke Building, Duke University at 8:15, Friday.

Taster's Choice

Cinema

"The Harrad Experiment." Carolina Theatre. Film about group marriage experiment which has pretensions to being very modern and liberated, but it is really just a stupid old fashioned love story. 1:36, 3:24, 5:12, 7 & 8:48. Ends today.

"I Escaped From Devil's Island." Varsity Theatre. Drive-in stuff. 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30 & 9:30. Ends today.

"Lady Ice." Plaza I. Terrible caper film. 3, 5, 7 & 9. Through Thursday.

"Siddhartha." Plaza II. Terrible movie based on the writings of that notorious teenybopper favorite — Hesse. 3, 5, 7 & 9. Through Thursday.

"Days and Nights in the Forest." Alternative Cinema. Satyajit Ray's comedy-drama of four businessmen on vacation. An extraordinary film combining the poetic naturalism of Ray's early period with the psychological probing of his later period. Friday at 7, Saturday at 2, 4:30, 7 & 9:30. Murphey 111.

Theatre

"Showboat." Village Dinner Theatre in Raleigh. Buffet at 8:45 p.m., 8:30 curtain. Tickets are \$9 Sunday through Thursday, \$10 Friday and \$11 Saturday. Nightly except Monday. For reservations call 787-7771.

Stewart Theatre. Tickets are now available at the box office at the NCSU student center for the theatre's Broadway, classical, jazz and dance series.

Tickets, \$1.50, are now on sale at the Carolina Union Information Desk for the Agnes de Mille Heritage Dance Theatre, the first performance in the Friends of the College series scheduled for Oct. 3, 4 & 5 at 8 p.m. in Reynolds Coliseum, N.C. State University. Laboratory Theatre auditions for "Acts With Women" will be held tonight at 7 p.m. and Tuesday at 4 and 7 p.m. in room 205 Graham Memorial. Original script by Trebor Lloyd.

Season tickets for the Playmakers 1973-74 season are now on sale at 102 Graham Memorial and Ledbetter-Pickard's downtown. Tickets for "The Threepenny Opera" are also available for season ticket holders. General sales for "Threepenny" will begin Thursday. For information call 933-1121.

Concerts

John McLaughlin and the Mahavishnu Orchestra. Carmichael Auditorium. Wednesday, Oct. 10 at 8 p.m. Tickets, \$2.50, are now available at the Carolina Union Information Desk.

Season Tickets, \$6, for the Chapel Hill Concert Series are now available at the Carolina Union Information Desk. The series includes Baroque Ensemble of USSR, Leonard Rose and Gary Graffman, Edward Villella and George Shirley. All concerts at 8 p.m. in Memorial Hall. \$2 single admission tickets on sale two weeks prior to concert date.

20th Century Flute Music featuring Susan Oehler, flute, and Barbara Rowan, piano, assisted by Kathy Logan, cello. Tuesday Evening Series. 8 p.m., Hill Hall.

Speakers

Senator Sam Ervin, Jr., the "country lawyer" from Morganton, N.C., will appear in Carmichael Auditorium on Wednesday at 8 p.m. Admission is free and is on a first-come, first-served basis. Students with ID's will be admitted first.

CBS newscaster, Dan Rather, will speak at Duke University, Tuesday at 8:15 p.m. in Page Auditorium.

Chalmers M. Roberts, columnist for the Washington Post, will speak tonight at 8 p.m. in Hamilton Hall Auditorium. The speech is sponsored by the School of Journalism in cooperation with the Curriculum in Peace, War and Defense.

Nightlife

Town Hall. Hydra, rock from Atlanta, and Mike Williams, folk. Music begins at 9 p.m. Through Friday.

Endangered Species. Rod Abernethy. Music begins at 8. Cat's Cradle. Mike Cross & A.C. Bushnell. Music starts at 9 p.m.

Taster's Choice, or the Entertainment Calendar, is included in every issue of the Daily Tar Heel. Its purpose is to provide a thorough guide to entertainment and culture in the Triangle Area. Those wishing to include items in the calendar should call Kevin McCarthy at 933-1011, between 3 and 5 p.m.

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VS	
PHOENIX SUNS ATLANTA HAWKS	
Cameron Indoor Stadium Duke University Tuesday, Sept. 25 8:00	Reynolds Coliseum N.C. State University Thursday, Sept. 27 8:00
Tickets \$6, \$5, \$4, \$2.	Student tickets available for \$1 off in the \$5 and \$4 section.
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