

from textures that are constantly flexible, blending and changing, ebbing and flowing like ocean tides (to which some reference is made by Stoltzman in his annotation). Delicacy is far more characteristic of his network of sound than is density: at the end, *Arc* dissolves in a coda for strings alone, for which the poetic inscription "shall begin from the end" is wholly appropriate. As Japanese painters view brush, paint, and a surface to work on in another way than Westerners do, but communicate with us nevertheless, so Takemitsu uses the coloristic resources of a Western orchestra in a way of his own, but with concepts of artistry, design, and fulfillment that bridge the intercontinental gap. We commend Takemitsu for his tendencies and look forward to their future development.

The gap-filling functions were artistically accounted for by Serkin, by the excellent artistry of the Philharmonic's solo string and woodwind players, and above all by Boulez. In a true sense, what he had to work with was engineered to produce a luminous whole, with a perfection of detail few others could match.

The program of which *Arc* was a part began with Haydn's Symphony No. 104 in D (known as the "London"), performed with finesse and discretion, and with a little more sobriety than befits its rollicking finale. It was a better prelude to what followed than the annihilating impact of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C minor was to what preceded (in both cases, Takemitsu's *Arc*). One would have to assume that the two familiar pieces, however inappropriate, were programmed to permit maximum rehearsal time for the work of Takemitsu, who was present to hear, to react, and to bow. ●

Fraser Young
Literary Crypt No. 77

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer on page 62.

UBMA BJ JBUCA WBIJRAY

Q KE Z K I K D Y Z Y I M

F O M X E Y A M O I G .

—COI XRQQKHE

The Movies

Fellini Without Feeling

by Judith Crist

IT IS carnival in Venice in 1758 as only Hieronymus Bosch and Federico Fellini could conceive it in its glitter and grotesquerie of fireworks and costumed merrymakers: Casanova summoned to an island rendezvous by "a nun who has seen you in the chapel every Sunday for the past two months"; the nun's surrender on condition that they perform for a hidden voyeur, her lover, the French ambassador; a spectacular gymnastic, semi-balletic coupling that climaxes in catatonic exhaustion; and Casanova, his services rendered, hustled out into the stormy night while ingratiatingly but vainly attempting to assure the unseen observer that he has other "talents" that might "find favor with your king of France."

Thus, in the opening scene of *Fellini's Casanova*, does the filmmaker present a précis of things to come in the \$9 million extravaganza that was three years in the making. In what could well be subtitled "A Satyr's Progress," Fellini and his long-time screenplay collaborator Bernardino Zapponi have "drawn freely" from the autobiographical writings of Giacomo Girolamo Casanova de Seingalt (from his 1788 *Histoire de ma fuite des prisons de Venise* and his *Mémoires*, published in 1798, after his death at seventy-three). And what emerges in that most brilliant camera-eye of the Italian filmmaker is a glowingly detailed caricature of the eighteenth-century society through which history's most notorious amorist traveled, his primary vehicle his sexual reputation. It is a stunning studio creation, a fascination for the eye, a bemusement for the intellect, and a void for the heart.

Even more dazzling in its spectacle than the 1970 *Fellini Satyricon*—and as cold in its attitude—this work seems a total antithesis to the director's last film, the 1974 *Amarcord*, a work so personal, so overflowing with the heart's blood and vital juices of its creator that an exercise in self-divorcement would seem a logical sequence. But self-divorcement is, of course, an impossibility for a creative art-

ist of Fellini's caliber, and it is clear from the start that Casanova is not quite his beau ideal. On the contrary: "Casanova is everything I despise," Fellini has said. "He is a lover with cold sperm, an old man who has never grown up. He is all shop front and a braggart fascist. . . ."

And so he is as he recalls his amorous adventures in Venice, Württemberg, Dresden, Paris, London, Parma, Constantinople, Vienna, and Switzerland. A Hogarth drawing with high-arched nose and elongated chin brought to life by Donald Sutherland, Casanova trades table talk with "aristocrats," beds highborn and lowborn grotesques, tricks doting dowagers, performs his sexual athletics as ardently in public as in private, and makes no contact with humanity beyond the physiological connection. He emerges the petty schemer, the pretentious intellectual justifying himself with futile "projects," the fool scorned by the few humans he encounters. Even an accidental reunion with his aged mother is abortive, the crone complaining of her son's "impractical ideas" and his failure to write or visit, the son explaining that he lacked an address, but failing to ask for one before they part. He is left to his dotage as librarian to the Countess of Waldstein, reduced to being the butt of jokes from the servants with whom he is relegated to dining, complaining about his food, and dreaming of Venice and amours with the life-size mechanical doll with which he had, perhaps, his most satisfying affair.

Casanova, in retrospect, is almost a detail in the lush canvas that Fellini fills with his familiars in eye-boggling settings created by Danilo Donati, artist also of *Satyricon*. More than the characters, one recalls the splendors of the huge candelabra being fanned to darkness by lackeys in a Dresden theater; the castle walls at Württemberg covered with pipe organs and their players; a wild and drunken wine race at the British embassy in Rome; a bevy of seamstresses in bawdy song as they stitch a voluminous gown; a company of actors in the full heat of an orgy at an

inn, fading into the coolth of an elegant stage performance of *Orpheus and Eurydice*; the seething black Venetian waterways that Fellini sees as a “bladder” entrapping his protagonist; the trompe l’oeil decor of a rococo dining room; the impaling of squirming specimens in a Swiss entomologist’s laboratory—a preliminary to an acupuncture healing of Casanova. And of course there is the Fellini hallmark in an encounter in mist-shrouded England with a circus troupe that boasts the strongest woman in the world, a giantess who plays with dolls and dwarfs and proves as elusive as all the “real” women in Casanova’s life.

And then the characters emerge: Clarissa Mary Roll’s angel-like seamstress; Cicely Browne’s Madame D’Urfe, dilet-



Donald Sutherland as Casanova—
“A Hogarth drawing brought to life.”

tante of the occult; Dudley Sutton’s near comatose Duke of Württemberg; Tina Aumont’s Henriette, Casanova’s claimed “real” love; Olympia Carlisi’s Isabella, the entomologist’s daughter, who sees the death wish in Casanova’s loving; and perhaps above all, Adele Angela Lojodice’s Doll Woman, a masterwork of mechanical femininity. Donati’s costuming is as exquisite as his sets, the vision underlined by a particularly rich Nino Rota score.

Removed though he may be from his protagonist, even in an “exercise” Fellini proves himself the genius of the cinematic vision, his fantasy so deeply tex-

ured that it counteracts the director’s alienation. The *auteur’s* affection may not be with his Casanova, but his wit and wisdom are at work to enthrall his audience. The work is long—166 minutes—but never self-indulgent, with the confident hand of a master artist in control. It’s better when his heart is with his hero—but we’ll settle for his intellectual engagement this time around.

Fun with *Dick and Jane* is a funny and promising movie that unfortunately reneges on its promise halfway. Written by David Giler, Jerry Belsen, and Mordecai Richler, this Peter Bart–Max Palevsky production promises to be the first film to deal with downward mobility in America via the plight of the mortgaged middle class en route to becoming the nouveau poor. The idea, dreamed up by Ted Kotcheff, the film’s director, is a dandy, but it is not, alas, the stuff of box-office appeal, and so there’s a switch midway to the trite and true path of Watergate-era morality (i.e., turn crook in a crooked system) and the Cinderella-story ending in the comedy tradition.

We’re off to a sprightly start with George Segal and Jane Fonda as the all-American-reader Dick and Jane, ensconced with son and dog in an upper-middle suburb, with two cars (one the company’s) to fill the two-car garage and a swimming pool under construction in the midst of lovely unpaid-for landscaping. Then George is fired in cutbacks at the aerospace company. First comes the living-as-usual and the keeping-up-appearances; then comes unemployment insurance and desperate job-hunting; then there’s the try for food stamps—and then there’s rock bottom, with relatives maintaining in puritanical fashion that poverty’s good for the soul. Loan sharks are next—and a freak robbery points Dick and Jane in the direction of crime. And it is in that line that our hero and heroine wind up in clover, demonstrating “the ingenuity and imagination that has made American industry what it is today.”

Kotcheff, whose outstanding credits range from *Life at the Top* through *Two Gentlemen Sharing* and *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, has a deft hand with a social probe; Segal is perhaps the most relaxed of “light” performers; and Fonda, as *Period of Adjustment*, *Cat Bal-lou*, and other vehicles have demonstrated, has a graceful sense of comedy. Among them they lend a sprightly humor to the plight of the children of affluence

brought face-to-face with economic necessity. That the scriptwriters failed them midway with an abrupt switch from realistic social comedy to pure caper-plotting is regrettable. On the other hand, if you’re not bothered by the notion that stealing is acceptable so long as you steal from the “right” people, you can enjoy it all.

Thieves, an urban comedy by Herb Gardner, seemed, during its 1974 Broadway run, to be ideal movie material. Now his tale of two young Manhattanites whose twelve-year marriage is disintegrating under the stress of city living and the strain of their own alienation is on film—and looks as if it would work better onstage. The carry-over asset is Marlo Thomas, a completely enchanting young woman, totally credible as the believer in “possibilities,” amazed at how “boring” her upwardly mobile husband has become; the carry-over debit is Gardner’s stage play that does not become a screenplay by virtue of the addition of street scenes. That the credited director, John Berry, an uninspired but professional filmmaker, left the production midway, with Gardner taking over, is obvious: “characters”—and with few exceptions they are just that rather than people—face up to the camera and deliver set speeches, interrupted only by change of scene.

The speeches are gem-spotted; Gardner is a warm and perceptive writer (as witness *A Thousand Clowns* and *The Goodbye People*) and his urban concepts are fey. But his various themes—nostalgia for the old neighborhood, the armed-jungle life of city streets, the movie-star angst that besets middle age, the awkwardness of one-night stands for thinking adults—are well worn, and only occasionally does he strike a fresh note.

The appeal generated by Thomas spills over on Charles Grodin as the husband wanting to move onward and upward and weary of his wife’s cuteness. And there is an absolutely uncontrolled scenery-chewing series of shticks by Irwin Corey as her aged irascible-cabby father, as well as down-played and subtle bits by Ann Wedgeworth, John McMartin, and Hector Elizondo as high-rise neighbors. But a general air of déjà vu, starting with an introductory cantata of apartment-dweller talk taken straight from the orchestrated opening of *Divorce American Style*, hangs heavy over the relatively static work. A pity. Gardner is one of the few fine social humorists at work today—in need only of direction. ©