

ENTERTAINMENT

Going Down for the Count *La Nouvelle Vague*

by Peter Elliot Weiss

Theatre Glendon - Feb 23 - 27
Directed by Banuta Rubess
by C.E. Loewen

It was, to the eye, your Dracula story - Jonathan Harker (Greg Freir) knew the "secret" of the Count (David Bruce and was off to save his fiancée Mina Murray (Heather Hodgson) and her sister Lucy (Joanne Coniam) and Arthur Holmwood (Stefan Molyneux) (latter two indirectly) from the imminent danger. Arthur is associated with Dr. VanHelsing (Patricia (Jill) Hildebrand), a vampire-chaser and contemporary of Freud. Lucas Seward (James Burrell), a boyhood "friend" of both Jonathan and Arthur, had mysterious 'ties' with desire and was indeed the main complicating force of the story. There was also the suffragette movement, an impending war, lots of (homo)sexuality and images, images, IMAGES.

It was, to the mind foremost, a comment on the perversity of human nature. "False conception of family relations." "Can little boys grow into women,

and little girls into men?" The images and symbols abounded as several stories (on different planes, even) were superimposed on one stage and gradually came together in a chaotic clash of spirit and flesh.

It was, to the average observer, a story which jumped from "regular" English scenes (like the pub, with an impressive song-and-dance by Sonja Wenk and company) to absurd images (such as the "kiss" scene in some room of the castle; and Jonathan's return to England, an excellent portrayal of realization in a paralyzing paranoia). - Burrell's Lucas Seward was an exercise in a man aware of his power. His attempted seduction of Mina and his confrontation with Arthur were especially chilling. - Hildebrand as Dr. VanHelsing was both humorous and moving; elements of comic relief and of intensity and intelligence were projected. - I hesitate to say much about the acting. This was clearly a "production play," with emphasis on imagery and symbolism. The backs of the actors excluded the

audience all too often, as did what appeared to be sometimes poorly heeded lighting cues. However, the actual lighting design (by Steve Devine) and Chris Reed's sound design complemented the incidents on stage and compounded the confusion.

It was, to a reflecting mind, a statement regarding reality as we blindly stumble through it. Lucas was the Count in disguise; Dr. VanHelsing was a woman in disguise. But everyone was in disguise. No one really was who they appeared to be. Jonathan realized this when he returned to England. As Dr. Van Helsing said: "For all its magnificence it is a society in chains. A society in chains breeds monsters out of the air." And as the playwright Peter Eliot Weiss said: "People's self interests prevent them from recognizing the monsters around them and with them until it is too late, because monsters come in many different disguises." Within each of us is a monster. Jonathan has warned us of the danger. Beware.

by Lisa Henderson

"Cinema is somewhere between art and life."

La Nouvelle vague of France's most controversial film director and script writer has swept the shores of Harbourfront. A Jean-Luc Godard retrospective including his earliest works (*Breathless* 1959, *La Chinoise* 1967, *Tout va bien* 1972), to his most recent (*Sauve qui peut* 1980, *Soigne Ta Droite* 1987), will be showing until March 31. Turning out a new film every few months, Godard deliberately ignored the humdrum formulas of classical Hollywood style cinema of the 40's and 50's, and set out to create a new means of expressing cinematic language. With emphasis on a fragmented collage method of narration, improvisation and innovation emerged accordingly. Rapid jump cuts, hyperbolic travelling shots, juxtaposed shots in different spaces and time have produced an overall disunity which treats an open-minded viewer to a world of the unpredictable and places his or her visual and auditory senses under a spell of dizziness.

Inserts from literature, theatre and television are removed from their original context and are placed in a bizarre abstraction. The cinema of Godard follows Brechtian principles which ensure that the viewer remains detached from the illusion of the drama taking place.

To achieve this distancing effect, Godard's characters often turn away from the scene and speak directly to the audience; plot headings are purposely included abruptly, in order to break up the fantasy world on screen; but most importantly the interest of the film focuses on the aesthetic study of the characters' behaviour and life rather than their inner emotions. The works of Jean-Luc Godard unquestionably stretch to the fullest all the possibilities of cinema and it becomes clear that his days as a film critic have opened his eyes as wide as a child's in a toy store. For more information and ticket reservations concerning this retrospective of films and video work of contemporary French cinema's most influential director, please call: Harbourfront 872-2277.