

MOVIES

Four-Letter World: 100% Canadian porno

By MARTIN KNELMAN

Porno pictures are to movies what newspaper city rooms are, according to the Davey Commission, to journalism—the graveyard of broken dreams. Cinepix, the MGM of Canadian skin flicks, lays on all the trappings to make the Toronto premiere of *Love in a Four-Letter World* (at the Nortown) something of an event, but beyond the swinging water-bed bash and the celebrity treatment accorded those involved in the production, there's a faintly disguised air of embarrassment about the proceedings.

People smile over drinks and comment politely about the photography or the humor, but really there's no saving grace about *Love in a Four-Letter World*. Even technically, it's dreadfully amateurish, and as for humor the word is in this case a euphemism for the hideous smirking that infests a movie when those involved aren't sure whether they can get away with playing the material straight or whether it would be better to try passing it off as camp.

I don't like to jump on pornography, because it's an easy target for those smug, self-righteous crusaders who think the only thing wrong with movies is that they need to be cleaned up. That way lies *Love Story* and *Song of Norway*. Besides, it isn't the pornography that's offensive about *Love in a Four-Letter World*. What's obscene is the contempt for audiences and for the possibility of doing honest work. The movie is a bog of self-disgust.

What is one to say about John Sone, who directed the movie and collaborated on the script, or about his actors? Can any amount of commercial success compensate for how they must feel when they go through the motions of sitting through this film with an audience of people they may know?

When people get involved in movies, it isn't because they want to spend their lives working on stuff like this—a



Michael Kane in *Love in a Four-Letter World*: even technically amateurish.

piece of generation-gap idiocy about a middle-aged filmmaker who loses wife and daughter to the degenerate colony of hippies next door.

I can't bear to review a movie this bad; just sitting through it is a painful experience. As a reviewer, I can't help wondering whether watching work like this and passing judgment on it is respectable work for an adult human being. There are important bad movies that demand attention, like *Husbands* and *The Music Lovers*, but *Love in a Four-Letter World* isn't one of them; it isn't worth wasting outrage on something so childish and trivial.

Yet this movie can't be ignored. It

was a big hit in Montreal, it was partly financed by the Canadian Film Development Corp., and there was a minor *cause celebre* when the producers withdrew it from last fall's Canadian Film Awards competition on the grounds that the judges were too snobbish to consider it on the basis of its true artistic merits.

Even by the still shaky standards of Canadian feature film production, it's gall and cynicism to talk about the artistic merits of *Love in a Four-Letter World*. As long as these exploitation movies make back money which is then available to more ambitious filmmakers, I can't work up much indig-

nation about the CFDC's investments in skin flicks. At the same time, it's hardly a matter for national pride. What, exactly, does *Love in a Four-Letter World* have to do with our reasons for wanting a Canadian feature film industry?

CC AND COMPANY

"You've seen too many motorcycle movies," Ann-Margret tells the evil cycle creeps who are about to gang-rape her in the back seat of her car, just before that wholesome easy rider Joe Namath comes along to rescue her. And once you've seen *CC and Company*, at the Imperial and several other Famous Players theatres, you have seen too many motorcycle movies.

There's a certain cunning involved in the idea of casting a swaggering pro football star opposite a smirking sex symbol for truck drivers who was already making comebacks before she was old enough to vote, especially since both have been kept in the celebrity spotlight by gossip about their sexual prowess. But the curiosity appeal expires during the first five minutes, and even if you go to see the movie in a spirit of slumming, it soon becomes an infantile fuddle-duddling drag.

Worst line: "It's hard to believe that by this time tomorrow I'll be back in that Seventh Avenue rat race." It's even harder to believe in Ann-Margret as belonging to the fashion world *ever*.

RENE CLAIR

Another coup for the Ontario Film Theatre: less than a month after the great Buster Keaton series comes a retrospective of 10 films by the legendary French filmmaker Rene Clair, whose work is now almost as rarely seen as Keaton's. A series of five Tuesday night double-bills starts at 7:30 tomorrow at the Science Centre.

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