

FILM ON FILM
FOUNDATION
presents a
**DOUBLE
FEATURE**
of *Maverick*,
Go-for-broke,
META-
CINEMATIC
**HELL-
RAISING**

7:00

Dennis Hopper's

THE LAST MOVIE



9:15
Anthony
Newley's

**CAN HEIRONYMUS MERKIN
EVER FORGET MERCY HUMPPPE
AND FIND TRUE HAPPINESS?**

\$7

Wednesday,
June 4

Roxie Cinema
3117 16th St.
San Francisco



www.filmonfilm.org

The Film on Film Foundation (www.filmonfilm.org), an organization dedicated to encouraging the exhibition of celluloid motion picture film in the manner it is meant to be screened, presents at the Roxie Cinema, on Wednesday, June 4, the second program in its series “Film Gods Shoot Back”.

At 7pm: ***The Last Movie***

Almost from the outset of his acting career, **Dennis Hopper** earned a reputation as rebellious, egotistical, and drug-addled. By channeling these qualities into his directorial debut, ***Easy Rider***, he created perhaps the most iconic and profitable counter-culture movie ever, and helped launch the phenomenon known as “**New Hollywood**”. Studio heads, eager to cash in on this success, yet out of touch with youth tastes and changing mores, gave Hopper a million-dollar budget and carte blanche to produce a follow-up hit.

Here was Hopper’s opportunity to develop an idea he had hatched on a Mexico location shoot several years prior: when the film crew departs, leaving the sets behind, is this not a form of cultural imperialism? This is the point of departure of ***The Last Movie***.

When an ill-fated **Samuel Fuller**-helmed western pulls out of a small Peruvian village, stuntman Kansas (Hopper) stays behind, shacking up with a local whore and pursuing a crass expatriate version of the American Dream. While Kansas goes native on his own terms, the natives, fascinated by the novelty of cinema, resurrect the aborted film shoot in tribal fashion, enacting rituals of real violence before jerry-built prop cameras.

With multiple meta-narratives encircling this radical inversion of the cinematic apparatus, it’s no wonder that the film implodes, beautifully, spectacularly, under the weight of its own contradictions.

True to its thematic conflation of the processes and products of cinema, ***The Last Movie***’s chaos was mirrored in the conditions of its filming—a confused, sex-, drug-, and paranoia-fueled bacchanal. Hopper kept this up the 18 or so months he spent cloistered at home in Taos editing his opus, under the influence of **Bruce Conner** and **Alejandro Jodorowsky** (***El Topo***).



Thrust upon a public expecting ***Easy Rider***-style hippie quaintness, this confounding masterpiece ensured Hopper would not work again in Hollywood for nearly a decade.

“No other studio-released film of the period is quite so formally audacious.”

-Jonathan Rosenbaum

Grand Prize winner, Venice Film Festival, 1971
1971 Color 35mm 108 min.

At 9:15pm: ***Can Heironymus Merkin Ever Forget Mercy Humppe and Find True Happiness?***

At the end of the 60’s, after the success of his stage musical ***Stop the World—I Want to Get Off*** and a prominent role in ***Doctor Dolittle***, **Anthony Newley** was at the height of his career as an actor, singer, and composer. What better time to try his hand at directing, and what better inspiration than his own fabulous life?



Far from filming a straight autobiography, Newley created a fantastical musical folly, overbrimming with vaudevillian flourishes and gleeful bad taste. On the occasion of his 40th birthday, fictionalized alter-ego Heironymus Merkin revisits the formative events of his life, many involving sexual debauchery, via a film-within-a-film device which is freely abused at all of its nested levels. This **Russ Meyer**-style subject matter is laced with **Jacques Demy**-style surreal whimsy and a tinge of British sensibility, all within a structure cribbed directly from **Fellini**.

Seeking neither to apologize for nor distance himself from the salacious and sordid details of his past, Newley invites us all to share in his solipsistic revelry. His candor about his somewhat

Nabokovian appetite for women is especially notable as the film features his then-wife, **Joan Collins**, and their two young children. **Milton Berle** also appears as the devil in the guise of a drug-pushing svengali.

Audiences and critics were not kind to this deliriously indulgent ego-driven undertaking. Newley’s career hit the skids, as did his marriage. With hindsight, however, we can appreciate its cockeyed charm. Such a film would be inconceivable today.

“A must-see for counterculture-masochists” -Steven Puchalski

1969 Color 16mm 117 min. Rare X-rated version!

Classic trailers before both films!

