



## Onward and Upward with the Institute

THIS COUNTRY now has a national film foundation known as the American Film Institute, and, although it was not formed officially until June 5 of this year, the seeds of controversy about its aims, functions, and purposes had been sown long before. Actually, the criticism, much of which came from disgruntled members of the splintered non-Hollywood film community, was based on insufficient knowledge of the plans being drawn for the institute. Fire was laid especially on a \$100,000 grant by the National Council on the Arts to the Stanford Research Institute, which stubbornly—and quite properly—refused to make public its findings; but these will appear in due time, and they will of course serve as a guide to the twenty-two-member advisory council of the film institute and to its new director and chief executive officer, George Stevens, Jr.

One fear of film teachers such as Cecile Starr, and also of William Starr, executive secretary of the American Federation of Film Societies, was that the new institute would be “Hollywood-oriented.” Gregory Peck, acting chairman of the board of trustees during the preliminary planning phases that led to the formation of the institute, took note of this fear during a statement he made at an institute press luncheon held in Washington on June 5. He spoke of the “excessive commercialism which . . . has become so unfortunately identified with the American film.” These words might well appear ironic, coming as they do from one so long identified with the commercialism of the American film. After all, the salary paid to Mr. Peck to appear in only one film might well provide the entire budgets for three or four non-Hollywood feature films.

Nevertheless, Peck proved to be an excellent choice as the leader of the exploratory work for the institute. And the announced objectives of the institute have hardly a trace of “Hollywood orientation.” They include, on the other hand, such estimable aims as the assisting of film education in practical ways, the promotion of film appreciation generally, the sponsoring of experimental film projects, and the coordination of film archive and research activities.

However, much watchful interest will be focused on just how the more than \$5,000,000 funding of the institute will be invested during the initial three-year period for which it is earmarked. Of this funding, \$2,600,000 came from the National Council on the Arts (with the

Ford Foundation participating), another \$1,300,000 from the Motion Picture Association of America, and the last \$1,300,000 remains to be raised from private and corporate sources. If suspicion is created by that grant from the MPAA, it should be scotched by firm statements already made from all involved that no strings have been attached to the use of the granted funds.

George Stevens, Jr., it seems to me, is a wise choice to head the institute programs. The son of renowned director George Stevens, a young man with considerable working experience in film, he proved himself in five years of service as the head of the USIA film program. Without any doubt, he was mainly responsible for revitalizing government film-making; for during his tenure he gave opportunities to several gifted filmmakers who created fine examples of documentary cinema. Among those he attracted to the government documentary were James Blue, Bruce Herschensohn, and Charles Guggenheim, and it can be expected that these and other talents he uncovered will be given opportunities in experimental and feature work. No reason not to encourage the best talent, wherever it might be hiding.

For it is from actual film-making, in and outside the studio, that the institute will best be able to develop and define quality. Advanced study centers are to be formed, and these will stress the craft of cinema under working conditions. Mr. Stevens, however, will have to face a virtual barrage of complaint and criticism when it comes to the commissioning of feature works. Documentary is relatively safe, but when it comes to the fictional film and the film that provides entertainment along with a hoped for significance, the fur is going to fly. Who will evaluate the projects proposed to the institute? How free will the script writer and director be to develop their material? These are problems that remain to be worked out, and for assistance Stevens will have that twenty-two-member board of trustees as advisors.

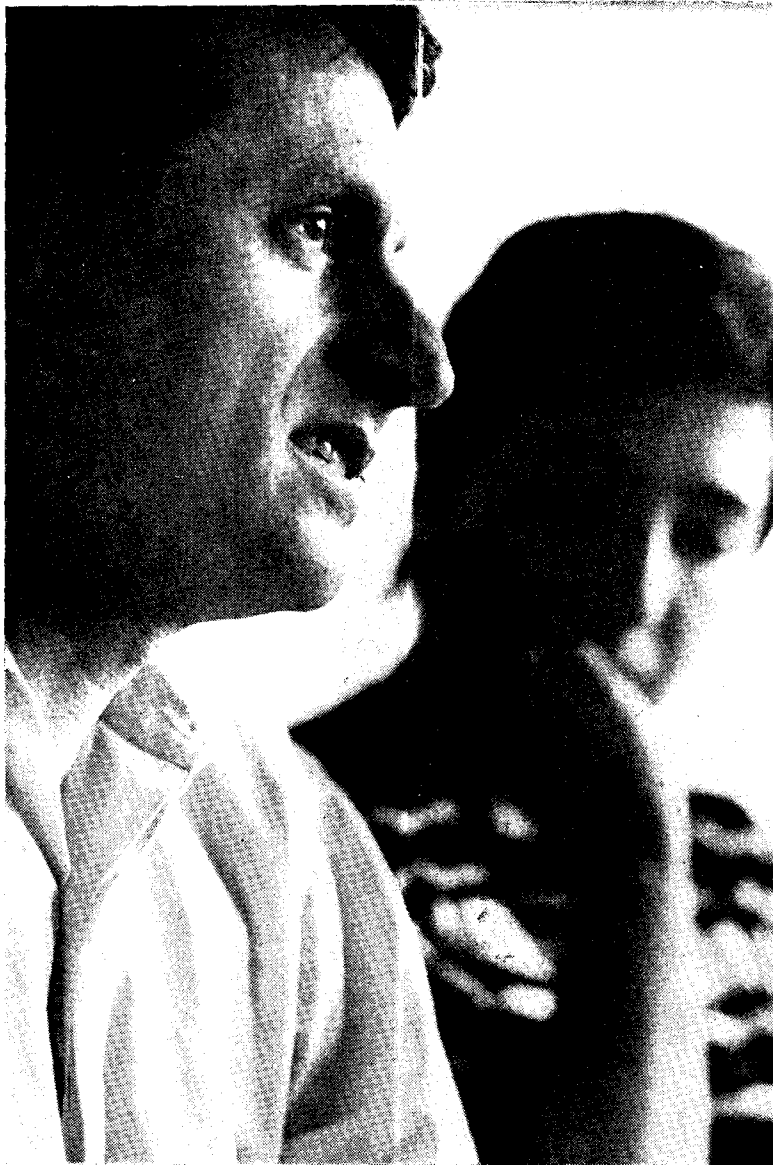
THERE does exist legitimate cause of complaint that not all areas of potential help to the institute have been drawn upon for the formation of the board of trustees. I myself might have some question as to just how Elizabeth Ashley, actress, can serve the cause of new film-making in this country, no matter how talented and intelligent she may be. While Arnold Picker, executive vice president of United Artists, has shown

his public spiritedness on many occasions, he should nevertheless, it seems to me, be balanced by someone in the independent field—Walter Reade, Jr., perhaps, or Don Rugoff. The rebel groups who have created the so-called underground cinema are not represented at all; a sympathetic critic such as Andrew Sarris might have been of value here. Francis Ford Coppola is a young and talented writer-director, but he is a basically Hollywood talent, after all. And there is that large West Coast contingent made up of Peck, George Seaton, Dan Taradash, Sidney Poitier, Fred Zinnemann, and Jack Valenti, who heads the MPAA. They are fine people all, they are undoubtedly sympathetic to the creation of a new cinematic movement in this country, but do they have the wide experience that will enable them to distinguish the persuasive self-servers from the genuinely gifted potential filmmakers? This will remain to be proved, and it is perfectly possible that the board will act in a wise fashion.

ON the other hand, bringing Richard J. Walsh, president of the couple of theatrical employees' unions, into the act as a trustee is an excellent idea, for the union situation must be liberalized if new film-makers are to be given a genuine chance. David Mallery, an educator with long experience in film studies, is a fine choice, as is my SR colleague Arthur Knight, who has long devoted himself to writing, teaching, and criticism in the film field and has shown a broad range of sympathies. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and the Reverend John Culkin, S.J., director of the communications center at Fordham University, should be able to provide ideas, and Bruce Herschensohn and Richard Leacock will represent documentary film-makers. Really, the worst that can be said about the board is that it does have an Establishment coloration, and this can lead to cautiousness where anything but cautiousness should prevail.

The board and Stevens will get down to business at a first meeting in July. Projects will be announced shortly thereafter, at which point the rebel yells will grow louder and more strident. But, for the first time, we are emulating other countries in fostering a film institute. Those in Britain, France, Poland, Italy, and Czechoslovakia have made important contributions to cinema and the spreading of knowledge about it. The same thing will undoubtedly happen here. Above all, what is being acknowledged is that the commercial spirit has far too long dominated the American film and that a counterforce has been long overdue. —HOLLIS ALPERT.





—M. Desjardins.

Xenakis (with Mrs. Xenakis in the background)—  
“a style that expresses the violence of his memories. . . .”

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# IANNIS XENAKIS: FORMULA FOR NEW MUSIC

By JAN MAGUIRE

UP THE ROAD through the street market of the hilly rue des Martyrs toward Montmartre, where hunched-over septuagenarian widows shop on the old-age pension of 60 cents a day, bellicose middle-aged housewives haul string bags loaded with potatoes and leeks, and laughing, fighting youngsters spill across the steep, narrow, cobblestoned street, we picked our finicky way to Xenakis's studio. Iannis Xenakis, whose name makes people start—either in rage or in intrigue—expects a complete overhaul of the format in which music has laced itself up for the past thousand years and which suddenly has become too small.

Xenakis is a Greek, born of a wealthy business family in Rumania, who fought

in the Greek Resistance during the war, while he was attending the Athens Institute of Technology. After having been in and out of jail several times (as he points out, it was the Resistance that lost in Greece) and after having had the left side of his face flattened out in combat, he was banned from his country and now lives in Paris, where he has taken out French citizenship. In France he has studied music with Arthur Honegger and Olivier Messiaen, and he has worked in the architectural bureau of Le Corbusier to earn his living. He continues writing mathematical and architectural essays, while composing music and carrying on musical-mathematical research that already has altered the course of the future of music.

Xenakis was not in his studio when we arrived, so we went two blocks down

the street to his home. We were greeted by Mrs. Xenakis, a modern young woman in slacks, whose short, dark hair, cropped close around her face, and dark-rimmed glasses gave the impression of a person of determination—but whose soft and natural graciousness, somehow, was not surprising for the wife of a musical iconoclast whose methods are kind and systematic. She explained that her husband had been with the technicians of the French Pavilion at the Montreal Expo 67 all day and was late returning. Cat-like, she cuddled up in an armchair and explained in monosyllabic simplicity, “The French Pavilion has a hole in the middle. They asked him to fill it up. With lights, light flashes every hour for eight minutes, with music.” She spoke in detached phrases, absorbed in her thought. “He works night