savage Messiah—

saving grace

It is usually after viewing a film like "Savage Messiah" that a great deal of the excesses of Hollywood and public relations men boils to the surface. For it is they who have single-handedly suffused the meaning of such formerly powerful adjectives as "powerful" or "moving". That leaves very few words with which to describe the film and not come off sounding like a press release. In a way, Gaudier has created one of those films that are out to be seen, because the only plot one can legitimately offer is this: it's about a French artist who was killed at age 23 during World War I. A good film is one which portrays a piece of life realistically, while making you think. That is what "Savage Messiah" does. The life being portrayed is that of Henri Gaudier, a French artist who lived in London with a woman twice his age and Sophie Branka. The film conveys their relationship, making points that, while also taking on war, politics, and artistic decadence which, if you believe the film, came to life in London before it went to Berlin, Carbon Grey. The believability of the film is greatly enhanced by small but effective gestures of props, as well as nicely done color photography, and location sound record which is usually absent from the studio sound so prevalent today. In this film, people wear old clothes, look old and worn, artists use colored pencils, hobo young men use army and, as beggars look like beggars.

The film deals with the staff from which Art is made, emotions and comedy, and the cost of being true to one's art. It is usually after viewing a film like "Savage Messiah" that the audience is left with the moral of the story to take away. The moral of the story is that it is not necessary for you to be dead or for the right words to be spoken in order to live. In the film, the best musician is the one who is never seen, that is to say the violinist; the best actor is the one who never speaks, that is to say the ballet dancer. The best words are not spoken in the film, they are shown. This is a film for the person who does not want a film. It is a film for the person who wants to see the truth and the beauty of life. It is a film for the person who wants to laugh and cry. It is a film for the person who wants to think and be inspired. It is a film for the person who wants to know what life is all about. It is a film for the person who wants to live.

The film ends with the words, "What has happened to all the brave men of yesterday?" "They are dead," Gaudier replies.

The film's mixture of drama and humor, life and whimsy, is near perfect. It is not a great film, limited perhaps by its subject, but it is a very good film, and well worth watching. One story, told by Gaudier after he has painted himself into a corner with an art dealer is worth preserving in these pages:

A man saw a little bird, sitting in the road, unable to fly or walk. The man felt sorry for the bird. Nearby was a hot, steaming, fresh cow puddle. The man felt sorry for the bird. The man scooped out a small area in the center of the puddle and dropped the bird into it. The warmth made the bird relax and fall asleep. A little while later, a fox came along, took the bird out, and bit his head off. The moral of the story is that it is not necessary to be a genius to put you in the shit, or your friends who take you off. The moral of the story is that it is necessary to be a genius to put you in the shit, or your friends who take you off. But while you are in it, keep your mouth shut. The Chet Coopster.

THE TECH TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1972 PAGE 5

Hot Tuna - lukewarm

It's too bad about the Airplane — Marty Balin gone, and Grace with her voice burned out, and half the time they're not playing together anyway. The fact that the Airplane's excellence was a result of Grace being there was clearly shown by the contrast given by Hot Tuna at the Music Hall on October 17.

The way the Airplane split up, with Jorma Kaukonen and Jack Casady going into Hot Tuna and Fasile Kantner and Grace Slipkoff on their own dual ego trip, left the two best musicians in one faction and the two best songwriters in the other.

Hot Tuna did a good, professional job with material that varied from extremely high quality to mediocre. There is no challenging the talent of Kaukonen on guitar or the fact that Casady is the best bassist in rock music. Sanny Papa John provided competent if not spectacular accompaniment on drums.

The only flaw in the group technically is the violin-playing of Papa John Cressh. Peter Balsawo, who seems to be content to play basically the same riff almost every time he takes a lead, with the possible exception of "John's Other." He also substitutes an ability to hit screeching high notes for real excellence on the instrument. Hot Tuna gives a reasonable good show aesthetically. Papa John cavorts about the stage with a verve which makes him appear younger than he is, while Jorma, tall and thin with shoulder-length hair, stumps around the stage in time to the rhythm of the music, looking for all the world like a toy soldier of the revolution. Casady remainsimplausible while wearing his incredible bag riffs.

Those expecting to see a great deal of originality were disappointed; the group played only one new song, a number featuring Papa John, which was typical of him, that is to say mediocre. Other than that, the only halfway new material was two electric arrangements of songs from their superb acoustic album, "Uncle Sam Golden Songbook" and "New Song (For the Morning)." Mainly, the band played songs from their last two albums, opening with "Red Red Wine," and including other familiar tunes as "Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning," "Keep On Truckin,'" and "Feel So Good" from the Dark album. Many of the songs did come across better in concert than they did on the albums, particularly "Water Song" from Burgers

Hot Tuna with Jorma Kaukonen and friend; below, Jack Casady (left) and Sanny Papa John.

Photos by Dave Tenenbaum