

# ENTERTAINMENT



## Back to the Toilet

Lieutenant Matt Ryder lies in bed; a sensuous, blonde, female officer rests against his arm. In the heat of passion, he confesses, "I didn't quit (the Navy) because I wanted to stop killing people. I quit because I wanted to kill them." Out come the machine guns, and we're off to an evening of all-American violence in true Rambo style.

*The Patriot* previewed at the Fiesta Four theater to an audience including the director and various cast and crew members, as well as the paying public. After chatting with these people for a few hours in the lobby and later at the Long Bar, I concluded that the creators of this film are unquestionably more interesting than the final product.

Director Frank Harris and his

wife Diane, assistant producer and actress in the picture, reside in the Santa Barbara area. Harris studied film at Brooks Institute. In the early seventies he initiated his career on the



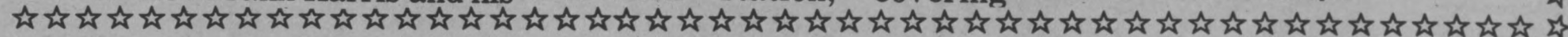
Diane Harris, Stack Pierce, and Frank Harris.

camera crew for a local television station, covering

stories such as the Isla Vista riots and the Bank of America bonfire. He sees *The Patriot* as a stepping stone in his career, and hopes it will lead to more ambitious undertakings. His goal is to someday direct his own material, in hope of eventually producing a Hitchcock-style whodunit thriller. When asked to comment on *The Patriot*, Harris joked that it was made for the beer drinkers in Bakersfield.

Mr. and Ms. Harris acknowledged that the film is aimed at the foreign market, although it is being released nationally as well. With a modest budget and a tight 90-day production schedule, creating *The Patriot* was no laughing matter (although watching it was a different story). A good-sized portion of the picture was

(See TOILET, p.7)



- ▲ Welcoming Remarks
  - ▲ "Welcome"
  - ▲ Staff Box
- Photography
  - Racing by Alexander
  - New Zealand by Kodak
- Record Rundown
  - Hall not Oates
  - Choir not Wild

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There Is No one

Fable of Context

Richard, Look At This

A Phranc Look At The Smiths

Welcoming Remarks, Staff

Sound Advice From The Miller's Outpost Guys

The Cover Story Dies, The Furs Roll Over And Play Dead

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# Racing by Alexander, New Zealand by Kodak

Since the invention of the automobile, car racing has always held a fascination for certain people. Expensive machines, high speeds and the crowds; all have influenced the attraction to this sport. Maybe it was the "thrill of victory and the agony of defeat" that lured others. Maybe it was the girls waiting in the pits. Or maybe it was the opportunity to live life in the "fast lane" — never knowing if a race would be your last. Motor racing undoubtedly has an adventurous quality to it, which has been captured in Jesse Alexander's photographs, exhibited currently at the Santa

Barbara Museum of Art through Oct. 19.

On a completely different wavelength, another photography exhibit which recently opened is "Focus on New Zealand" at the Western States Museum of Photography, showing through Nov. 2. This exhibit, in contrast to the dynamic nature of the racing images, presents serene, pastoral views of the New Zealand countryside.

Jesse Alexander was attracted to the "fast lane" lifestyle and began attending races in the 50s. This portfolio shows black-and-white and cibachrome prints from the 50s and 60s throughout Europe. The "Ferrari Fire #1-4" (1960) sequence demonstrates the panic and fear of the pit crew, the driver and the crowd. Alexander focuses on the winners, the losers, the jubilant crowd and wild-eyed drivers. Another outstanding image in his show is the cibachrome print "Peter Collins, Targa Florio" (1958). The picture displays the anticipation of the crowd, the nervousness of the officials, and the impishness of the driver, all in the off-primary colors reminiscent of early color photography.

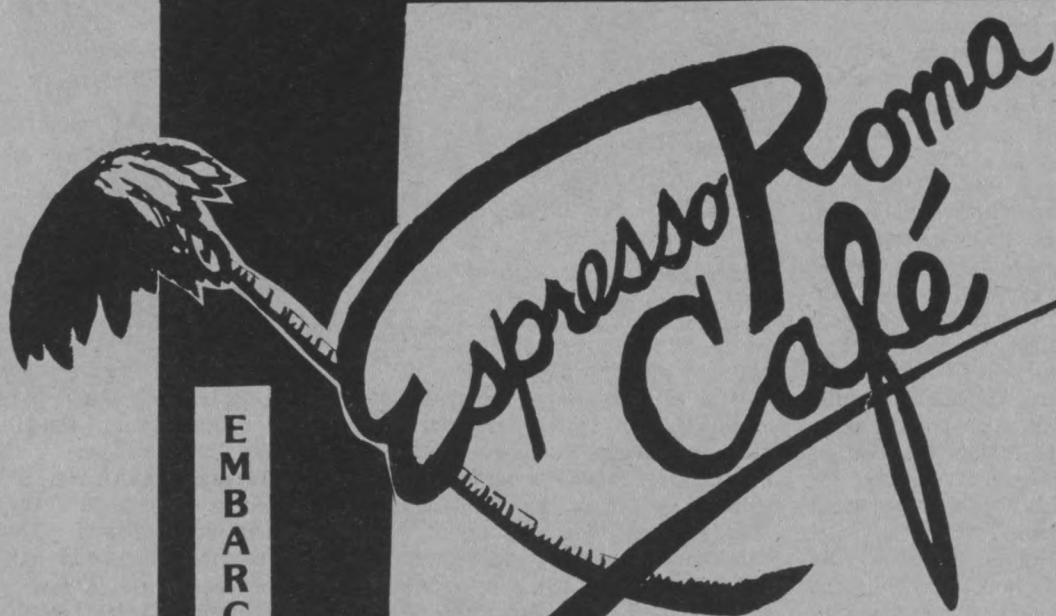
"Focus on New Zealand" is a collective exhibition of international photographers who looked closely at this oft overlooked country. As it is the first major showing to concentrate on New Zealand, the photographs ended up



looking like a travelogue for *Travel and Leisure* magazine. All the images are pleasant, quaint and cliched.

These pictures are technically excellent, but the creative level leaves the viewer wanting more. All are very beautiful, yet this fact does not save the show from appearing to be a Kodak commercial. This group of images was summed up by contributing photographer Ernest Haas when he said, "We (the photographers) came to New Zealand to find our innocence." That's for sure. No risks were taken in this show.

(See PHOTO, p.6)



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# To Be Phranc, The Smiths

Prejudice. Bias. Predisposition, partiality, predilection. Which is to say that I knew before I went that I was going to like what I got. On Aug. 22, 1986, The Smiths performed at the Arlington. Phranc (with a Ph and a hard c) opened for them. I went because I expected to like it. I liked it a lot.

Phranc is one of the best opening performers I've ever seen. She gets the audience warmed up in her own unique way. She bills herself as "your average, all-American, Jewish lesbian folksinger," which just about covers it. She comes onstage alone, she and her guitar. She is slender, androgynous, dressed in a flat-top, jeans and a plaid madras shirt. She looks, as far as rock-n-roll stars go, fairly unremarkable. Then she begins to play, and she begins to seem a little more remarkable. Her voice is strong; her songs have something to say, whether about Reagan's policies in South Africa or about her newest girlfriend. Her songs are fairly simple; neither words nor music is complicated. She captured the audience with lines like, "Reagan won't give up and he won't give in/He's got his head stuck up what's left of his colon." By the end of her all-too-short set the audience was enthusiastic, clapping and singing along with Phranc. She's quite winning — by the time one hears a few of her tunes, one is compelled to like her, her songs, her humor.

Intermission. The audience mills about, dressed in neutrals (mostly our favorite color — black). Staring and stared at. We wait.

The Smiths, with their usual sense of drama, make us wait more. The lights dim, then the bright lights glare at us from the stage, music plays, but still no sign of the Smiths. Finally they came on stage, resplendent. The crowd surges forward, eager for a glimpse of their favorite Smith. More eager, they stand on the seats, and finally the arms of the chairs — which is always a challenge intoxicated.

The Smiths waxed fair brilliant. Morrissey did his usual romping and writhing, much to the hap-



Morrissey, the heart, and Marr, the backbone.

piness of his fans. He has a way of twisting his cardigan over his head and otherwise bare chest that's quite endearing. He moaned and howled and crooned to our hearts' content. A bit o' the theatrical about him, has Morrissey, and it is with that he keeps the audience on the arms of their seats. He is the heart of the Smiths, and when we screamed, we screamed his name.

Johnny Marr, not to be forgotten by any afficianado, is accordingly the backbone of the band. Without his arrangements and mastery of the guitar, their sound would be lacking. He is very unassuming visually, unlike the more egotistical Morrissey, and yet a good bit of the credit for the Smiths' success goes to Marr. The

rest of the boys — there were five this time instead of four — are even more unassuming visually (i.e. they stood there expressionless and played).

The Smiths' sound live is very akin to their sound on vinyl. Which is not to say that they sound pre-mixed, only that their ability exists and flourishes in the real world, not just in the studio. Especially good were the rousing "What She Said," "Still Ill," and "Bigmouth Strikes Again."

All in all, it was a very satisfying concert. Both acts played extremely well; the audience was good — everyone went home happy. I got what I wanted, and what I wanted was the Smiths.

— Sheri Ledebur

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# Welcoming Remarks

Well, here it is — our Back to Gruel issue. How was your summer? We don't remember much of ours. We do remember a couple of things, like working our asses off to put out the Pulitzer Prize-winning summer Arts and Entertainment issues, which you probably missed. You had to glow in Europe! You had to go home and visit the folks! You had to be a freshman and not know any better!

We were STUCK HERE and forced to come up with a foolproof plan to live through life with Tyrant Bill (T.B.) and fill up to a half a page with comprehensive, enlightening stories — each week! We decided to become tourists in our own little paradise by the sea (S.B.) and report our findings back to you — our absent public. So we went in search of the good life (Robin Leach would have been proud). We dined in some classic joints like Woolworth's Luncheonette, and drank in some charming holes-in-the-walls like Mel's. We basically lumped together anything that could remotely be referred to as "Arts" or "Entertainment" and wrote about it in a little column that we like to call *Off the Cuff*.

As the summer progressed, our piddly paychecks ran thin(ner) and we had to change the name from *Off the Cuff* to *In the Red*. But we couldn't let this great idea die; we had to come up with another way. Then we thought, "Hey, why should we have all the fun? Why should we spend all the money?" Now that you're back from gallivanting about, it's time for you to get to work

— for us!

That's it — we finally hit upon something — an A & E editorial section, if you will. Yes, straight to you from our worn desk — your chance to tell the world (well at least our politically active corner of the world) what you think about life (A & E life, that is). If you have anything on your mind remotely related to arts or entertainment, write about it. If you disagree with a review in our section — God forbid — write and tell us about it. Anything.

We don't require any writing style, but we do expect writing with style, so have fun with this. Type if you can, print if you must (crayons OK — periwinkle blue Crayolas excluded). Deadlines are important only if you want to be considered for a specific issue, if you have anything topical or timely. We come out every THURSDAY, so MONDAY is your day to come in and find the *Off the Cuff* box, somewhere on our desk — good luck.

Here is the "conclusion" paragraph. This is the hardest part to write. Just reread what we wrote, know it, live it, love it. If there are any questions just stop by our office (desk) or give us a call (961-3993). Gee, I guess this is it. Welcome to the ranks of the few, the proud, the A & E writers. Bye.

*Brett A. Mermer* *JJ*

Brett and Jeannie (Jeannie and Brett)



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## Sound Advice To Incoming Students



JEANNIE SPRECHER/Nexus

When found relaxing in the Santa Barbara Long Bar after a long day at a promotional convention, the Millers Outpost guys (yes, they really do wear that stuff) had one bit of advice for the incoming UCSB freshmen: "DON'T EAT ANYTHING BIGGER THAN YOUR HEAD!"



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## PHOTO

(Continued from p.3)

One photographer can capture the excitement and energy of a sport that is rarely seen from an aesthetic view. Another

photographer can view a beautiful country with huge aesthetic potential yet ignore this potential with cliché-ridden images. Two current exhibitions examining two entirely different worlds with just as disparate results.

— Sarah Hackett

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# TOILET

(Continued from cover)

filmed locally. Viewers are treated to a close-up view of those offshore oil platforms which adorn out coastal paradise, in addition to shots of Santa Barbara beaches and the Yacht Club. According to Ms. Harris, many local actors were cast in smaller parts. If nothing else, the film provides some interesting views of Santa Barbara.

There isn't much to say about the plot of *The Patriot*. I guess if you're a Bakersfield beer drinker, a substantial story line isn't the foremost concern of your mind. Basically, a gang kills some people and steals nuclear weapons from the Navy. A deep-sea diver named Maggie (played by Diane Harris) smells trouble when she finds a nuclear warning label that fell off a bomb in the process of smuggling it to an offshore oil rig. She snoops around too much for her own good. The bad guys do not like this, so they kill her. Her friend, ex-Navy Lieutenant Matt Ryder (played by Greg Henry), sets out to avenge her death (and save his country as well). He rejoins the Navy, leaving his freewheeling Harley-Davidson biker lifestyle to save the day (and his country too). He soon finds that if he is to save his country he will have to do it His Own Way. So he quits the Navy, grabs his machine gun and his wetsuit, and kills many people in the name of justice and revenge. I won't divulge any more of this highly complex plot; God forbid I ruin the ending for you.

After the preview, I spoke with Stack Piece, who plays the cold-hearted criminal Atkins. Piece aptly summarized the essence of this film: The movie is about a man who is in the toilet, gets out of the toilet, but then goes back in the toilet because he's more comfortable there.

Piece didn't seem to think *The Patriot* exhibits excessive violence, stating that violence is an undeniable fact of life. "We don't live in a fantasy

world," he asserted, elaborating that violence constantly occurs, and is as much a part of reality as prostitution.

He went on to say that *The Patriot* is a film about breaking out of shelters to face reality. He used Santa Barbara as an example of a shelter: many people spend their lives in Santa Barbara, never leaving the beachside community to sample life elsewhere. Matt Ryder experiences an increased awareness of reality when he gets caught up in the bomb stealing, and violence is the means he uses to face and resolve the problem.

"This country was founded on violence," continued Piece. "If this country isn't in a war, it will die." He cited World War I as an example of the United States using violence to prevent greater disaster.

There's no question that *The Patriot* is a violent film. Perhaps the writer was trying to rival Shakespeare for the number of bodies left to clear away at the end of the show. As the punches flew and the gunsmoke thickened, I found myself waiting for Sylvester Stallone to show up in a wetsuit, and join the festivities.

I would have been more disturbed by the violent nature of this picture if there had been any reason to take it seriously. Frankly, I wouldn't be surprised if the people who produced this film weren't being just a bit tongue-in-cheek themselves. The unbelievably poor quality of the writing and characterizations led me to wonder if I was watching a third-rate adventure film or a facetious comedy. At one point, a high-ranking Navy official picks up a cigar, looks at it pondering and comments, out of the blue, "Cuba. Boy, did we make a mistake there." I opted for the comedy.

Perhaps there is hope for *The Patriot* in the foreign or home video market; I personally doubt it. My advice: If you're sitting around on a Tuesday night with nothing to do, don't bother with this film. Go out and have a beer instead.

— Cris Carusi

# No New Tricks From Furs

The Psychedelic Furs played a good show Sunday, August 31 at the Santa Barbara County Bowl. Richard Butler was at his most congenial, shaking hands with the crowd, smiling, laughing, dancing. The rest of the band, well, they didn't get up and jump around, but they played well and looked as if they were enjoying themselves. The mix was good. The playlist was good, including everyone's favorites as well as all the chart-makers.

But the show just wasn't very exciting. It seemed to lack some vital energy.

Maybe it was the audience. When the show opened, they seemed reluctant to stand up and clap. They didn't have the vibrancy that crowds carry when they're excited. The enthusiasm built only little by little, climaxing with the pop hit "Love My Way" and other songs from the *Forever Now* album.

Maybe it was the hour of the day. After the Untouchables opened at five, the Furs started playing about 6:30, ending just after dark. Richard Butler said, "It seems odd to play in daylight; we don't usually go out in it." It's hard performing in sunlight when

you're used to darkness and spotlights.

Or maybe it is the fact that there's been nothing new from the Furs. Sure, they played a few new songs, and they were enjoyable, but nothing that couldn't be found on *Mirror Moves*. The Psychedelic Furs need something new. Their sound has changed (pan-albums) from raw and rough to smoother and more sophisticated, as well as more, well, pop. They need to expand, to learn something fresh.

Not that the concert wasn't very enjoyable, especially for a Psychedelic fan like me. It had its high points: "Alice's House" was quite eerie, absolutely fascinating to see him sing. "High Wire Days" was pervasive. Hearing "Sister Europe" from the first album was incredible. The also played a remix version of "Sleep Comes Down" that was interesting.

Visually, they were alright. Butler wore a kimono-wrap jacket and very, very loose, trichromatic baggy pants, which looked much like a long skirt connected at the bottom. With his sinuous movements and his strange clothing, he looked rather cat-like (especially with his skirt/pants

swinging between his legs like a tail). The rest of the band didn't do too much, aside from play well.

All in all, it was a pretty OK (See *FURS*, p.13)



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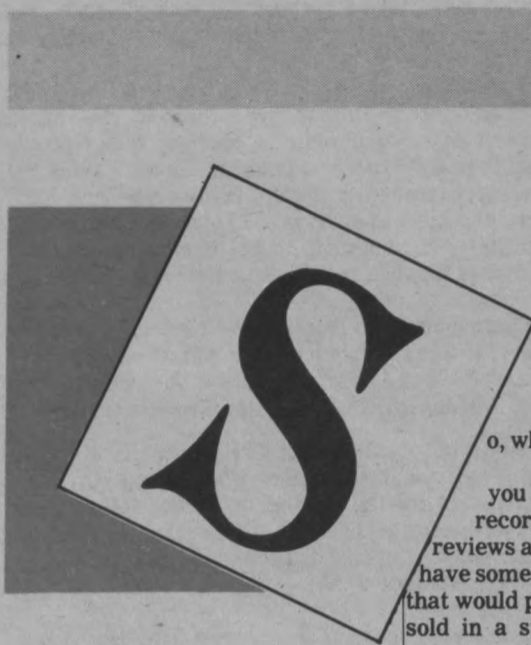


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o, what do you want to know? Okay. Well, first off, did you know that the copies that record companies send out for reviews are damaged? Yeah, they have some kind of defect or another that would prevent them from being sold in a store for the full (read: outrageous) price. So, to prevent waste, they're sent to reviewers. (But I don't know, maybe Robert Hilburn gets perfect copies. It figures that RCA would think that someone from something called the Daily Nexus wouldn't notice the difference.)

But this little point doesn't bother me. The vinyl plays okay, why should I care if there's a couple of small rectangular incisions on the album cover — the fault of some careless machine, no doubt. And hey, the records are free and I get to keep 'em. In some circles, it is regular practice to sell the copies (which the companies have so generously donated) to a used record store, for example, Morninglory Music. I find this habit deplorable and morally repugnant, although lucrative.

This brings up another nagging moral question. Someone once asked me whether I felt any sort of obligation to say nice things about an album or group because some label was going out of its way to provide me with free access to new material. These artists are hanging on my every word, how could I give them a bad review? The way I see it, it's more beneficial to the artists to receive concrete, constructive criticism from an informed opinion and a sensitive ear — especially if the record sucks.

Enough about me, though. Last week, RCA ("his master's voice") sent me a little package of four new albums, a couple of them first efforts. RCA isn't one of my favorite companies; since Bowie fled the label early this decade, Eurhythmics have been RCA's only worthwhile find. But, let's keep an open mind.



Suzanne Ciani, *The Velocity of Love*

You've never heard of Suzanne Ciani? You've heard her music. Her electronic compositions have embellished films and television commercials. An artist working with microcomputers and digital synthesizers, Ciani's music on the album washes more than plays, providing the romantic backdrop to a candlelit dinner. "...slowly, slowly, with the velocity of love," she writes on the back cover, and that pretty much describes how the music works — slowly.

The compositions, all synthesized instrumentals, are almost completely without climax or any sense of time. This is a beautiful sounding record. At her best, Ciani is reminiscent of the atmospheric aural designs achieved on the Andy Summers/Robert Fripp albums. At her worst, Ciani falls back on pop music cliches which leave the compositions flat. And, as good as I think she is at sculpting sound at times, she never seems as challenging or expansive as Brian Eno.

But maybe Ciani isn't shooting for the avant-garde. Most of *The Velocity of Love* is pretty, relaxing stuff. I would like the album as the soundtrack to my life story (or perhaps a collaboration between Ciani, Vangelis and Tangerine Dream would be the ticket), but I can't sit and listen to this without keeping myself busy, like with cooking or typing.




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# Record Rundown

## Daryl Hall, *Three Hearts in the Happy Ending Machine*

The first time I saw the "Dreamtime" video I thought to myself, "Oh, another hit from Hall and ... Hall? Where's that Oates guy?" I confess, I couldn't tell Hall's solo stuff from the work of the chart-topping duo. At first.

Daryl Hall takes a break from the group, invites over a few buddies (including Joni Mitchell, Bob Geldof, and David A. Stewart), and does some songs about love. He makes, like Suzanne Ciani, a pretty good sounding record. I kinda like the songs "Only a Vision" and "Next Step;" they have a good feel to them. His lyrics are, I'm sure, heartfelt and drawn from painful or wonderous real experiences. He sounds like a nice guy who doesn't like playing the sap ("I wasn't born yesterday," he sings). And Hall does put some twists in his familiar formula with Oates; guitars have a crunch, use of percussion is inventive.

It is these twists of technique which really dampen what could have been a cool record. Hall has become such a pop manipulator that he has to take his material, his guest stars, his life, and put them through the works (maybe he feeds it all into his "happy ending machine"). He grinds the personality out of the potential and gives it a heavy pop music veneer. He has talent, and his friends have talent, but Hall wants to make such a personal statement with this album that much of the input goes to waste (for instance, I defy you to find Bob Geldof's voice anywhere in the heavy traffic of the mix).

I know no one asked, but I much prefer *Sacred Songs*, Hall's more challenging first solo effort. I got more fun out of *Three Hearts in the Happy Ending Machine* when I played it on 45 and pretended I was listening to Michael Jackson.



## Wild Choir, *Wild Choir*

A country-tinged outfit led by singers/songwriters/guitarists Gail Davies and Peter Pendras (the two also produced the album). Another record of love songs, but with a traditional AM radio country music flavor. All the themes of passion: busted love, bad love, good love, want love but can't find love. *But*, all in all, the record just lays there.

Wild Choir seem to be missing some kind of vital energy, some kind of blood flow, that would make the whole thing work. Recorded in Nashville, the album walks a fine line between pop and country without ever hitting stride with either style nor a blend. Some of the songs are pretty good (I particularly like "Heart to Heart" and "Action"), but many seem flat or forced.

It's kind of like when love is going wrong; you know it's happening but you can't say just why or how. I can't say what I think is wrong with Wild Choir. The only real objection I can voice is that perhaps the whole thing's contrived, and, being thus, sounds like it.

You gotta realize that some things just weren't meant to be, 'cause this choir ain't wild enough.

## Aviator, *Aviator*

"And the kids all say (Never let the rock stop), 'Rock is here to stay' (Never let...), 'Don't get in our way' (Never...), Let me hear you say (Never...)" If this is your idea of earth-shattering poetry, your idea of profound Truth in lyrics, well, then you can come and take this fucking record off my hands.

Think you'd like to hear a combination of Loverboy, Journey, and Def Leppard? Well, imagine these groups at their worst, weakest, most trite and trivial, that's Aviator. On this entire album, there is not one original or fresh chord, note, beat, phrase or idea. Enough said?

Do yourself a favor, instead of Aviator, buy Camper van Beethoven's "Take the Skinheads Bowling" EP instead. •

— Brett A. Mermer

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## Aliens- The Second Coming

All hesitations regarding movie sequels should be immediately dispersed, because *Aliens* has arrived. Before you automatically decide to ignore my review, let me add that I was forced to pay the full ticket price, twice even, and I was thoroughly entertained both times. I'm willing to wager that this is the best film for you to see from this entire summer — and the five bucks you kiss goodbye will not be missed. This film offers you two-and-a-half hours of nonstop suspense and gratifying amusement, despite some flaws in the script and a shoot-'em-up scenario (gleefully provided by director/writer James Cameron, responsible for both *The Terminator* and *Rambo: First Blood Part II*). The first rate sound and large screen of the Arlington Theater add to the spellbinding effect.

The greatest asset of this film is the main protagonist, Ripley, the sole survivor (save her cat) of the first film, *Alien*. Sigourney Weaver reprises her role with flashy talent and more spunk than ever. Ripley, after a hairy run-in with an all too-deadly alien being, doesn't put up with anybody's arrogance or stupidity, and makes it known early on. Weaver, in the seven years since the original, has put on an aura of confidence and experience that lends itself easily to appreciation. Her role as Ripley is demanding, shifting from an attempt to put her first alien encounter out of her mind to a grim resolve to nuke them out of existence ("It's the only way to be sure"). She handles it with amazing finesse to the very end. She is aggressive, yet charming and clever.

The story avoids a complete conversion of the film's setting, a colonial city built upon the surface of the planet Acheron, to an out-and-out battle zone. A young girl, a character named Newt, was included which gives the film some quieter moments as Ripley

Ash?) Bishop and some select members of our future Marine Corps provide some prime moments, although they fail to be as convincing as those in *Alien*, with such great cast members as Harry Dean Stanton.

This film bristles with excitement at every corner, and I blow my nose at those critics who say that it lacks the claustrophobic feeling of the first. I guarantee you that your Milk Duds will soon disappear, and that your muscles will freeze up due to continual tenseness. Although denied the originality of the first, our alien protagonists still reek of mysteriousness and fear, and their numbers make one feel like General Custer. The effects, thanks to those who worked on 2001: A Space Odyssey and Star



Sigourney carries comrade... and film.

*Wars*, are absolutely remarkable, and the set design is once again masterfully done, including the aliens and their lair, straight from H.R. Giger paintings. The music is subtly interlaced, with some obvious homage paid to the aforementioned pair of films, a quality soundtrack by the world-renowned London Symphony Orchestra.

Whether *Aliens* surpasses its predecessor is hard to say, proving its defiance of the law of sequels. My ultimate decision is that it doesn't, for various reasons, but by all means it is still a finely crafted film. It avoids the usual recounting of the previous film, providing it here in bits and pieces. It does an excellent job of expanding the story without noticeably mimicking the original. Most of all, it preserves the best part of the first, the simple notion that makes this film so scary — the fact that the entire story is conceivable. The entire concept hits home, futuristic or not. Checking in the back seat of the car before riding home is not something to be embarrassed about, because you're not alone. And this might not be the end....

'Nuff said.

— Karl Irving



"So what the hell is it?"

plays mother, building to the added instinct of protectiveness so implicit in the film's ending, where mother meets mother. The other characters, a weasel named Burke, the synthetic (remember

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# Stand By Me For Unexpected Pleasure

If you want to see a lofty, "art-oriented" film, or if you want a flashy action flick with a buff-dude hero, curvaceous yet rakish heroine-in-tow, or if you want a film that makes a statement to which you can relate, you shouldn't see *Stand by Me*. If you do, those of us who can appreciate it for its merits will have to listen to you preach about this or that and our good time will be ruined. So, about those merits, they are honesty, sincerity, simpleness of the most appealing sort and (best of all) the real-life, down-to-earth, no-bones-about-it reality of four boys in late 1950s small town America. These merits are refreshing. I think this is a film with an integrity which is especially rare in these days of intellectual chic. If you dig this sort of counter-pretense pretense thing, you should see *Stand by Me*.

While Richard Dreyfuss gets top billing here, don't be fooled; either he was paid a whole heck of a lot for two small bits and some narration, or parts in which he can truly practice his art are dwindling these days. Even if you are heavy into the teddy-bear type though, you will not be disappointed as the quality of the acting by the four young stars of this film is more than enough to keep you in the theater once the flashback to Dreyfuss' character's youth begins.

Wil Wheaton is the ultimate protagonist as the child we've all seen ourselves as at some point. He is the neglected child, sibling to a high school football star, who is able to express himself only through the stories he makes up. He is the smart kid in the gang, but doesn't want to give up his friends, really his only family, to go on to a college program next year in junior high. River Phoenix (it's a good thing he can act so well because he was obviously typecast by the people who chose this name) is a tough kid from a bad home who really wants to be just a nice little guy but is painfully aware of his social status in Castle Rock. Trite

as this description sounds, Chris Chambers is the character I love the most.

Then of course, there's a chubby outcast, Vern, who incites the day-and-a-half adventure which constitutes the plot of the film, but is afraid to go, sincerely. Perfectly captured by Jerry O'Connell, Vern is the one accepted into the gang as a mercy case, you have to assume. He can't remember the secret knock, doesn't want to hear a ghost story around the campfire because he'll get nightmares and can't pitch in much to the lunch fund because he lost nine dollars in pennies when his mother threw away the treasure map indicating exactly where it was underneath the house where he hid them. You have no choice but to slap your forehead and then be appropriately endeared. To round out the group, there is "the hard luck kid who could never get a lucky break," Teddy Duchamp, played perfectly by Corey Feldman. Everyone in town knows him as the son of the crazy man, and it's true he had almost been killed by his father. But this kid is loyal to a fault and, even as a twelve-year-old, has completely succumbed to the inevitable consequences of his upbringing.

Like the man behind me in line at the record store told his friend about the soundtrack, "It's a great collection of oldies," but be warned that if you love the title song, you'll have to watch all the ending credits to hear it. Rob Reiner's direction is fine, but in a film of this sort, more a character sketch than an outlet for directorial expression, the acting is most important. So, as the pre-yuppiescent members of the commercial brat pack either fade to daytime drama or begin to star in films produced exclusively by their own production companies, watch for these four wonderful actors, and start with *Stand by Me*.

— Judith Smith-Meyer

# Comin' On With A Head Full O' Steam

*Liberty Belle and the Black Diamond Express* is the latest in the Go-Betweens line of strong releases. The album doesn't show the band moving in any radically different directions, instead it emphasizes the strength and quality of the band. The music is founded on the basic elements of rock 'n' roll: bass, guitar and drums. The additional instruments include piano, violin, cello and accordion. Because the instrumentation is basic and almost acoustic, the album has a very human and an almost live quality. The production is also simple with very few over-dubs and studio tricks.

*Liberty Belle* starts off with "Spring Rain," a song which seems to sum up all that has ever been said about the hope and optimism of spring. The song reflects the freshness of the earth

after a spring shower with its clever wrap around chorus which asks, "When will change come, Just like spring rain/Falling down like sheets/Falling down like love." Another of the standout songs on the album is "In the Core of a Flame." The song starts out tough and hard with the lyrics "If

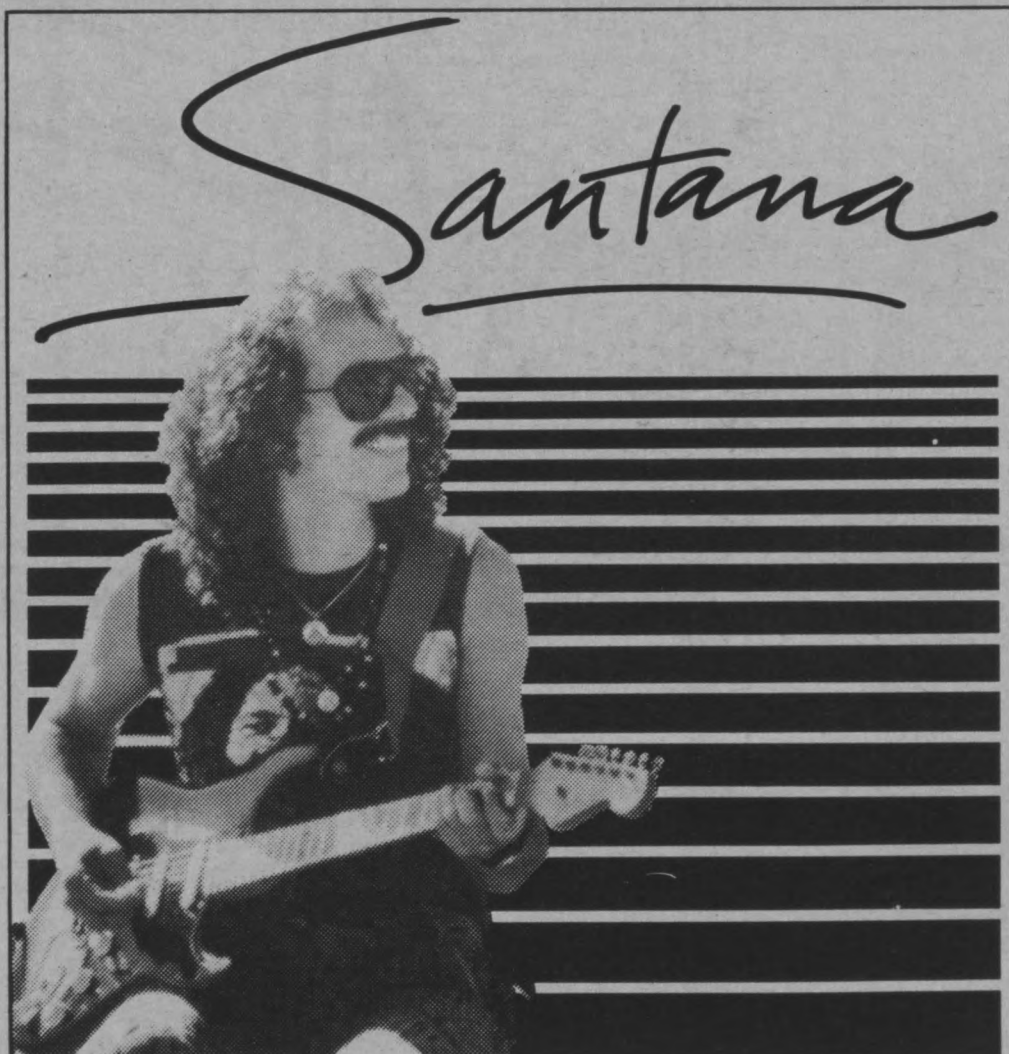
the devil had seen your dress/He would have changed his name," but it quickly turns into a confessional about the speaker's belief in the power of love when he wonders "why burn in hell when you burn for love." The album's lyrics are based on the emotions and experiences of the writers' actual lives and are filled with images of old houses, dark pubs, ghosts, and rainstorms.

The band plays the catchy, melodic and energetic songs, written by guitarist/vocalist Grant McLennan and Robert Forster, tightly and with excellent musicianship. Additionally, although an English band, the music is hopeful instead of emphasizing the darker aspects of life like *The Smiths* or *Echo and the Bunnymen*. The

members are real people, not poster boys, and the Go-Betweens



This is a photo of the Go-Betweens.



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are one of only a handful of groups in the history of music with a female drummer. This fact is the clincher on the group's all around coolness.

After all the praise I've given this band, you're probably wondering why you haven't heard too much about them. This is because the Go-Betweens have a history of (See STEAM, p.12)

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Even amidst a montage, a collage, a barrage of minuet vignettes where crusty upper-crust Bostonian types' children cavort, appalled parents correct, and deluded adults collapse, A. R. Gurney, Jr.'s artificially, superficially philosophical writing in *The Dining Room* cannot be disguised. While the performances of the members of the Theatre Artists Group, were commendable, I must disclose that I heard more than one yawn during a preview performance this summer.

As for the people who mature and ripen in the dining rooms in question, well, they really are an eccentric bunch of fruits. At a child's birthday party, one guest's father comes over and schemes to

run off with the hostess's mother. To symbolize the depth of their love for each other, Mommy removes her wedding ring and slips it over a birthday candle. Deep. Anyway, some great characters under the age of 13 are one reason to see this play.

Guest artist, Lyman Barrett, is the son and the grandfather I want and the father our recently resigned chancellor must have had. Kudos to Frank Ries for capturing the moral muscle of the culture, depicted as a man willing to risk all, even his fully lined suit, to defend the family name when his black-sheep brother is insulted at "his club." Finally, I love Ann Ames, who is among others, a grand young woman about to rebel against cotillion lessons. If you can

appreciate a few good bits surrounded by mediocre playwrighting, "The Dining Room" offers a relaxing, non-taxing evening at the theatre; UCSB's Main Theatre, October 2nd through the 4th.

— Judith Smith-Meyer  
Editor's Note—"The Dining Room" is one of two dramatic arts presentations being revived for fall quarter after enjoying a short schedule of performances this summer. The other play is "Duet for One", a two-actor drama about a psychiatrist and his world-class violinist patient who has been struck with a crippling disease. "Duet" plays October 1-4, 10 & 11 in the Studio Theatre, 8 pm. (No late seating for these performances.)

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## STEAM

(Continued from p.11)

just missing out on fame and fortune. They left Australia for England and although they stayed on the Big Time label (home of Hoodoo Gurus), they just missed out on being part of the "Aussie Invasion." In England, they have a large group of loyal fans but they are constantly being over-


shadowed by bands like Echo, The Cure, and The Smiths. The element these bands have which the Go-Betweens don't have is a charismatic lead singer. The above mentioned bands all have singers who are thought of as visionaries or prophets of their time and the bands exist mainly because of them. The Go-Betweens, on the other hand, place equal emphasis on all members of the band. Because they don't have a singer who is a star, the band

doesn't get the quantity of press their peers get. They are like Squeeze in this aspect because both bands get great reviews and play excellent songs, but both are neglected by the press. Because neither band is easily packageable, they are just ignored. *Liberty Belle* and the *Black Diamond Express* is filled with songs that deserve to be heard and this band deserves a break. So give the Go-Betweens a listen, you won't be sorry.

— Walker "Guitar" Wells

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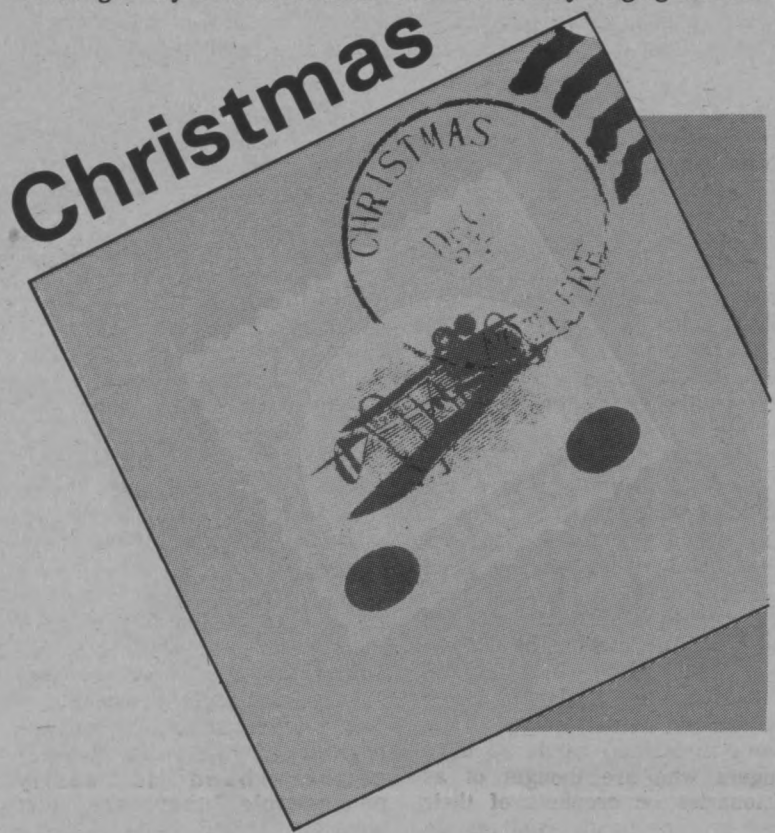
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**I**t's a kid's dream, isn't it? Christmas every day of the year. And for the gift that keeps on giving, I suggest *In Excelsior Dayglo*, the debut album from the Boston-based trio called (incidentally) Christmas. Like the holiday, the band is not your everyday thing.

You might say the members of Christmas have a different slant on life. You might say they don't quite sound like anything you've heard before. You might say they're weird. You might say, "Shut up and let me listen!" — and this would be the correct response. *In Excelsior Dayglo* has a touch of the sixties, a solid base in the eighties and a foot in the timeless. Bands this smart are hardly ever this funny — and bands this funny are rarely this smart.

But that's Christmas, a continually surprising entity. They mainly defy description because they refuse to stay in one gear for very long. The band can drive in "Tommy the Truck," march along with "Boys' Town Work Song," and philosophize about "Girl Police" with equal ease. There's an intricacy to the awkwardness of singer/guitarist Michael Cudahy's lyrical phrasing. The chemistry of Cudahy, singer/drummer Liz Cox, and bassist Dan Salzmann tackles every challenge set before them.

It's hard to resist an album whose anthem begins, "Be a pig amongst men," and whose epic is about Liz's soul-scarring experience with a fish eye sandwich. How can I not like a group which celebrates Mr. Herman ("Pee Wee") and still has the gall to report that "Everything You Know Is Wrong?" My favorite moment finds Liz sweetly singing the am-



"Bands this smart are hardly ever this funny — and bands this funny are rarely this smart."

biguous sketches of "True Soldier of Love" ("The milk of idiot's laughter/flows silently in/to my mouth, I'm/eating dreams again."). Christmas goes one more step towards proving that having a female drummer is the ultimate cool (for further evidence, see Velvet Underground and the Go-Betweens).

I would normally, at this point in a review, temper my enthusiasm for a record or a band with some carefully chosen qualifications — but fuck that. I'm never annoyed to have a Christmas melody popping about my head; I relish this material. *In Excelsior Dayglo* is a pleasant shock to which my writing does little justice. To leave the band to summarize in its own way: "In the stupidest of things there is still a solemn beauty; in the gravest of all truths there is still a stupid joke."

Brett A. Mermer

## FURS

(Continued from p.7)

concert, but it just didn't change my life. I enjoyed it — but I felt no compulsion to go home and listen to all my Furs albums. It didn't

haunt me on the way home; I didn't have that glow in my eyes and that spring in my step that means excitement and exultation. I'd probably even go see them again if I had lots of cash to spare at the time. They just need to learn something new." — Sheri Ledebur

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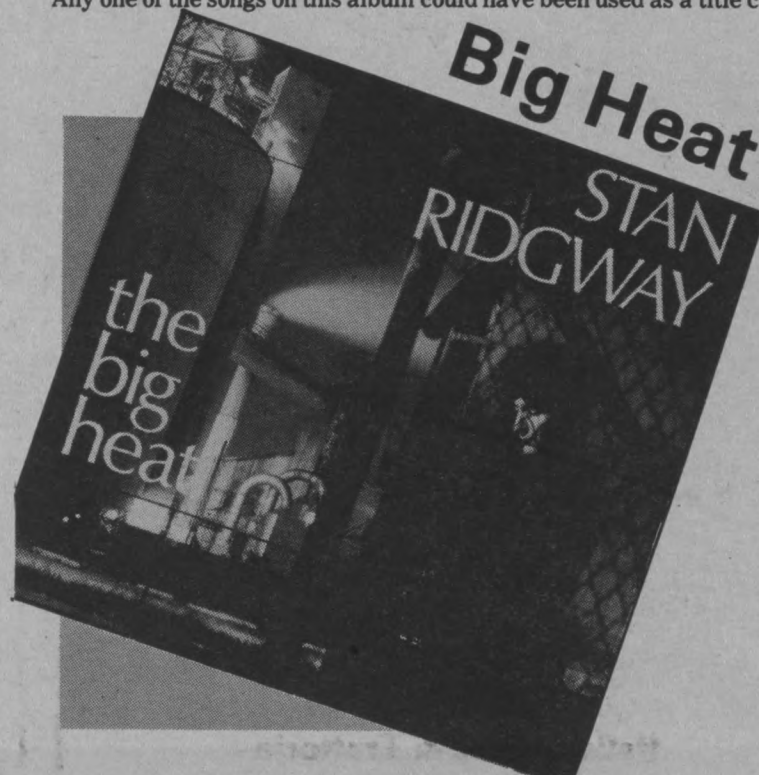
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**H**ow many of us remember and miss the once innovative band Wall of Voodoo? Well don't despair. The main driving force behind the group which brought us such albums as *Call of the West*, *Dark Continent*, and *Grandma's House* is back, and in the driver's seat once again. With *The Big Heat*, his first solo album, Stan Ridgway has accomplished what appears to be one of his major goals: to prove to himself, his fans and his former band members that he can indeed stand on his own two feet without the crutch of Wall of Voodoo.

Originally the lead vocalist and co-lyricist for the band, Ridgway had achieved his greatest recognition in 1983, the year that their hit single "Mexican Radio" was released. With the increased popularity brought by the song and the accompanying video, a greater pressure was put on the band to tour and promote themselves. This touring, however, proved to be too great a strain on the members of Wall of Voodoo, and resulted in certain personality clashes which prompted Ridgway to leave the group later that year.

His initial work away from the band was surprisingly successful. Working with Stewart Copeland of the Police, Ridgway co-wrote "Don't Box Me In," the lead song from Francis Ford Coppola's movie *Rumble Fish*. However, from the time of that soundtrack's release in 1983 until that of *The Big Heat* earlier this year, little had been heard from him. Let's hope that any future dry spells are few and far between, because, if this latest album is any indication, Ridgway is at the beginning of a new phase in his career that could blossom into something larger than ever would have been possible within the confines of Wall of Voodoo.

Any one of the songs on this album could have been used as a title cut,



but the song from which the album takes its name, "The Big Heat," is well chosen. It details the story of a Humphrey Bogart-type detective chasing across America after an unknown fugitive: *Well we followed him from Tuscon, ended up in Baton Rouge. We trailed him from information by/a woman he knew in Barstow/that would like to see him dead./That was four weeks ago ... well, maybe five.*

His music actually rhymes, and at the same time tells a legitimate story; no small feat when one considers that most hit songs today don't put nearly as much emphasis on content as on melody. Similarly, in "Drive She Said," Ridgway gets the storyline of a cabbie with a female bank robber as a passenger across without sacrificing the rhythm of the song:

*Well I watched her grip her hands/on the bag in her lap,/while I scratched the bald spot on my head./I knew my cab was just a getaway car,/but I shut up and drove like she said.*

The contents of the other seven songs on this album range from a piledriver run amuck, to a traveling salesman, to a ghostly Marine in the Vietnam War. This whole album gives the listener a sense of anticipation and mystery, like the pressure felt before an electrical storm on a late summer afternoon. The closest comparison to this would be a musical version of a Ray Bradbury story.

*The Big Heat* is a great album. For those already familiar with Ridgway, and for anyone who is not, I give my full thumbs up for this record to be your next purchase. It's got a lot to offer, and, for anyone but the most closed-minded, will prove to be a valuable addition to your music collection. Without a doubt, Ridgway is back.

— Ben Sullivan

Steve  
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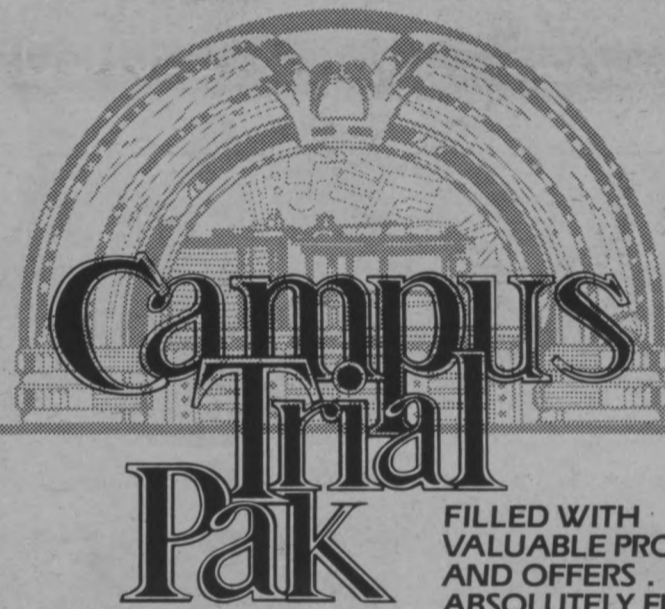
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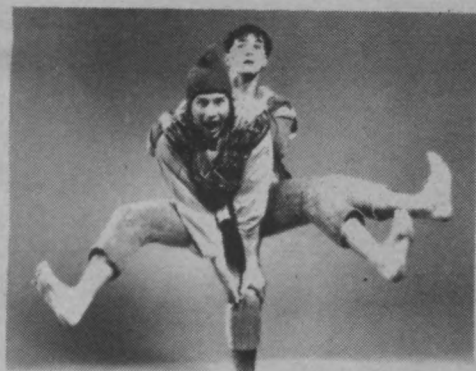
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## Fall Performances

Oct. 8	New York Trumpet Ensemble
Oct. 15	U-Zulu Dance Theatre
Oct. 22	National Theatre of the Deaf
Oct. 29	Flute Caravan
Nov. 1	Washington Ballet
Nov. 12	Moving Picture Mime Show
Nov. 17 & 18	Pilobolus Dance Theatre
Nov. 21	Musica Antiqua Köln
Dec. 2	Aldo Ciccolini, piano

## Films

### *Films from Japan and the People's Republic of China*

Oct. 5	Ran
Oct. 12	The Ballad of Narayama
Oct. 19	Demon Pond
Oct. 26	Himatsuri
Nov. 2	Yellow Earth
Nov. 9	Rickshaw Boy
Nov. 10	Throne of Blood (FREE)
Nov. 16	Broken Moon
Nov. 23	Sacrificed Youth
Dec. 1	An Actor's Revenge (FREE)

### *Cult Cinema*

Oct. 2	Eraserhead
Oct. 9	The Brother From Another Planet
Oct. 16	Eating Raoul
Oct. 23	Liquid Sky
Oct. 30	Night of the Living Dead
Nov. 6	Stranger Than Paradise
Nov. 13	Harold and Maude
Nov. 20	The Harder They Come

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