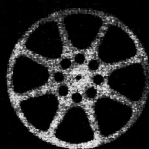


*Germantown's*

# BAND BOX



30 ARMAT ST. (PHILA. 19144)

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# FILMS



**Winter 1974**



Unnoticed, or at any rate unremarked by the pundits, the critics, the public, or the industry itself, American films have become the best in the world. American films are the best films after all! Ten years ago I would no more ask anyone to take American films seriously than I would ask them to believe Richard Nixon's account of the White House Tapes, but the decade since the assassination of John Kennedy, lousy as it has been for us in societal terms, has been rich and wonderful in terms of cinema excellence. The best years have been the Nixon years, too great a price to pay if there is a causal connection between the social philosophy of a nation's leaders and the quality of its films, but at least some salvage if there isn't.

The only causal connection I can see is that Nixonism has produced such a total revulsion among artists and intellectuals that protest has become respectable, and anti-establishment views (postulating Nixon & Co as the establishment) are accepted and espoused by a wider spectrum of individuals and institutions than anyone would ever have thought possible. To put the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal or the CBS communications network or the United States Senate in an adversary position is just too ridiculous to countenance; everybody born before 1960 knows that they have always been high among the most savage and relentless defenders of the status quo, exceeded only by the motion picture industry.

The question whether Hollywood corrupted public taste or merely catered to it has been argued back and forth for years, but in my view is weighted rather heavily toward the former. The demolition of Griffith and von Stroheim, the vilification of Chaplin and Welles, and the emasculation of anybody who tried to break out of the deadly mold of sugar-coated stereotypes and clichés, is to me sufficient evidence of a vast conspiracy of bad taste and reactionary politics. Keep in mind that for most of the time between 1920 and 1960, the studios controlled not only the production of films, but the distribution and exhibition of them. If people like Thalberg and Mayer had taken over the publishing industry instead of the movie industry, they would have done to Babbitt and Main Street what they did to Greed.

The studios lost their stranglehold on the industry when television siphoned off their audience. Some of them folded up altogether, others went into television altogether, still others, impressed by the commercial success of artistic foreign films, aimed for a smaller segment of the mass audience with a higher quality product. The improvement of quality and the concomitant utilization of hitherto taboo subject matter was tentative and hesitant at first, but with audience acceptance leading the way, a veritable tidal wave of fresh talent and new ideas burst across America, most of it so recent that the non-production components of the industry have not had time to adjust. The producers seem to be ready with the money and the organization, and in fact everything on the production end couldn't be better. Dozens of young directors like Francis Ford Coppola, Jerry Schatzberg, George Lucas, Hal Ashby, Norman Jewison, Robert Altman, Irvin Kershner, John Boorman, William Friedkin, John Korty and Paul Newman have all the skills

of their Hollywood predecessors, five times the imagination and ten times the artistic integrity. The cameramen are better, the editors are better, and the actors — well, there's just no comparison there, its like comparing oranges and turds. In the old days of Hollywood's glory there was no such thing as an actor in any major role, there were only personalities. Some of them were very engaging personalities, like Cary Grant, Clark Gable, Spencer Tracy, Bette Davis, James Cagney and Gary Cooper, but you couldn't call them actors in any sense of the word, since what they were doing was the very opposite of acting, the purpose of which is to

accommodate a performer to a role and not a role to a performer. The transformation of George M. Cohan into James Cagney might actually make the world a better place for a few hours, but it ain't acting. Humphrey Bogart played dozens of roles in which he spanned a wide gamut of emotions from extreme irritation to mild anger, but he never deceived anyone into thinking he was anyone but Humphrey Bogart, and he would have been fired if he did.

What a difference we have now with performers like Al Pacino, James Caan, Gene Hackman, Dustin Hoffman, James Earl Jones, Joanne Woodward, Shirley Knight, Katherine Widdoes, Joan Hackett, Jack Nicholson, Bruce Dern, Warren Oates, Cloris Leachman, Robert Duvall, Martin Balsam, Joanne Shimkus, Barbara Harris, Jeff Bridges, to name just a few at random. In fact, to make it in the movies now you *have* to be a good actor; only Linda Lovelace is excused because of her speech impediment . . .

With all this wealth of talent, really good films are popping up all over the place, but the distributors, the ad writers, the PR men and even the critics don't know what to do with them. Once in a while a picture will catch fire with the public, like THE FRENCH CONNECTION, or SOUNDER, or SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE and the critics have another look at it and the distributors pour some money into it, but pictures just as good as these or better are whizzing by them every day such as PETULIA, THE PRESIDENT'S ANALYST, TAKING OFF, LOVING, McCABE AND MRS MILLER, THE KING OF MARVIN GARDENS, BAD COMPANY, THE REIVERS, PANIC IN NEEDLE PARK, THX 1138, THE GREAT WHITE HOPE, LITTLE BIG MAN, I LOVE MY WIFE, and THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER. All of them deliberately, distinctively and defiantly American.

With a view toward stimulating the critics, the distributors and the public toward a recognition of this new and lively American cinema, we have selected a few recent American films that we feel are deserving of more recognition and exposure. Most notable among them is THE RAIN PEOPLE, written and directed by Francis Ford Coppola, now known throughout the world for The Godfather. Five years ago we played his first film, YOU'RE A BIG BOY NOW, which we described then as "a much better film than anyone cares to admit; the critics gave it the short sheet, and the distributor doesn't seem to want to give it any push. It is richly inventive and exuberant in

both sight and sound, Coppola seems very original but very corruptible, and if Hollywood gets to him before his style jells, he could become another one of their skilled hacks."

Well, Hollywood got to him all right, but luckily not before his style jelled, because THE RAIN PEOPLE is as sensitive, personal and poetic a film as you can ever hope to see. The theme is the *angst* of modern woman, exemplified by Natalie, a young matron played by Shirley Knight. Natalie is having an identity crisis, what her mother would have called a "nervous breakdown". In coming to terms with her situation, she does what so many of us would like to do; take some money and credit cards, pack some clothes in the station wagon, point it west and take off without any thought about where, why, or how long. Free as a bird, she sails along across the mountains and across the plains, drinking in the sights, sounds and sensations of Middle America. One day she picks up a handsome young hitchhiker with a view toward a casual encounter, and at this point fate grabs her by the crotch. Her intended victim is none other than Jimmie Kilcannon, known as Killer Cannon, all-American football hero until he got his brain shaken up in a scrimmage. The school knew its duty to its hero; they paid all his medical expenses and gave him a job with lots of good healthy outdoor work. Ultimately he became a source of embarrassment, so they put a thousand dollars in his pocket and turned him loose. That's where Natalie finds him, on the highway, heading home. Except that he can't remember where home is. As you might guess, he becomes attached to her, and she becomes responsible for him, and you might assume the point is that you can't escape responsibility by taking off in a station wagon. In any ordinary film that would be it, but this film is different. Kilcannon is neither a vegetable nor a parasite — he has the body of a man but the soul of a woman — gentle, loving and compassionate; dependent but indispensable; and intuitively poetic. He really loves Natalie, and she loves him. The many faceted nuances of their relationship are captured in a faultless amalgam of writing, directing, acting, photography and editing.

#### T.E.O.G.R.O.M.I.T.M.M.

Beatrice Hunsdorfer, better known as Beatrice the Loon, is the world's worst slattern at 40, and no great shakes in her younger days as we are led to believe by various flashbacks. In other words, she is the typical American mother, pouring a constant stream of vituperous indignities on her two teen age daughters. Ruth, prurient and vapid, is a copy of her mother; Matilda, shy and sensitive, under handicaps that would defeat Julius Caesar, wins a national science competition for her experiments on the effects of gamma rays on man-in-the-moon marigolds. Most of the flowers are dwarfed and stunted, genetic disasters unfit to live, but occasionally a mutant comes forth with double blossoms, sturdier and more beautiful than any of its antecedents.

KID BLUE, played by Dennis Hopper, tired of stealing and robbing which he isn't very good at anyway, wanders into Dime Box, Texas (c.

1902) and takes the only available job, shoe-shine boy in the barber shop. From the beginning, things seem to go against him. He displeases a surly customer and gets fired. A crazy evangelist gets him job killing and dressing poultry, but the business fails and he gets paid off in plucked chickens. He takes one over to his friends, Reese and Molly Ford, but Reese isn't home and Bick allows himself to be seduced by Molly. Reese gets Bick a job in the Great American Ceramic Novelty Company, a new industry which already dominates the economic life of the community. Bick plays it straight for a while until he runs into an old whore he used to know who kind of sort of jokingly threatens to reveal his notorious past. What with Molly kind of sort of knocked up, and Reese kind of sort of sore about it, respectability just hasn't worked out well for Kid Blue. He does what he has to do.

Another common theme in recent American films is the Corporation Drop-Out. This time it's Tommy Smothers in Brian di Palma's GET TO KNOW YOUR RABBIT, the rabbit being a reward and diploma conferred upon him by Orson Welles for passing a course as a tap-dancing magician. Ready to go on the road, he hires as manager his former boss, now completely down and out as a result of Tommy's defection. While Tommy is polishing his act in seedy night clubs and Enjoying Life, former boss is creating a new financial empire out of the new 17-day Tap Dancing Magician's Course for Bored Executives. Get it? Not particularly brilliant or inventive, the film depends a lot on Brian Di Palma's ability to keep a running gag from falling flat on its face.

The most provocative drama of the 1870's turns out to be one of the most provocative of the 1970's, not only because the issues that it raises have barely begun to be resolved, but also because the drama itself is so firmly annealed that it transcends the issues. Claire Bloom took a long time to move into A Doll's House but she is very much at home. She seems to have the same affinity for Nora that W C Fields had for Micawber. The consensus among the critics is that this production is stagebound, but bondage with Claire Bloom, Ralph Richardson, Anna Massey, Denholm Elliott and Edith Evans need not be intolerable. Doubtless Carduner's law is applicable here: The filming of a play always diminishes and destroys it except when it enlarges and enhances it.

LITTLE MURDERS, another filmed play, written by Jules Feiffer and directed by Alan Arkin, deals with the gradual diminution of our capacity for outrage (WHAT!!!!!! Another tape missing! Oh, well, what can you do?) and the sweet contagion of anonymous violence as an outlet for rage and frustration. Essentially didactic, like A Doll's House, but not nearly as well structured, L M occasionally lapses into speechifying that works well on the stage but seems interminable on film. On the other hand, as long as we are making invidious comparisons between the stage version and the screen version, we should point out that there are moments of great visual dramatic impact that can never be achieved on stage. The play lends itself readily to visualization, and where it has been visualized it makes the dialogue sound like Ron Zeigler.

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WED - TUES Jan 2 - 8

**A DOLL'S HOUSE**  
7 & 10:20

(also 3:30 Sunday)

**THE RAIN PEOPLE**  
8:40 (also 5:15 Sunday)

MATINEE SUNDAY



## Claire Bloom

in her award-winning performance in  
**"A Doll's House"**

Screenplay by Christopher Hampton · Produced by Hillard Elkins  
Directed by Patrick Garland · Panavision · In Color

## THE RAIN PEOPLE

A FILM BY FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA

STARRING  
SHIRLEY KNIGHT · JAMES CAAN AND  
ROBERT DUVALL

**R** RESTRICTED-PERSONS  
UNDER 16 NOT ADMITTED.

WED - TUES Jan 9 - 15

**GET TO KNOW YOUR RABBIT**  
7 PM only (except Fri-Sat)

**O LUCKY MAN** 8:40 only

Fri-Sat **RABBIT** 6:45 &  
11:15; **MAN** 8:30 only



Music and songs by ALAN PRICE

Ralph Richardson · Rachel Roberts · Arthur Lowe  
Helen Mirren · Dandy Nichols · Mona Washbourne

Get to know  
your rabbit



STARRING  
TOM SMOTHERS AND JOHN ASTIN GUEST STARRING  
KATHARINE ROSS - THE TERRIFIC  
LOOKING GIRL  
AND ORSON WELLES WRITTEN BY  
JORDAN CRITTENDEN AS MR. DELASANDRO  
DIRECTED BY  
BRIAN DE PALMA

WED - SUN Jan 16 - 20

**KID BLUE** 7 & 10:40 (also  
3:20 Sunday)

**MARIGOLDS** 8:50 (also  
5:10 Sunday)

MATINEE SUNDAY

The Paul Newman Production of the 1971 Pulitzer Prize winning play

With Nell Potts and Roberta Wallach

Screenplay by Alvin Sargent, Based on the play by Paul Zindel

## JOANNE WOODWARD

in  
"THE EFFECT OF GAMMA RAYS ON MAN-IN-THE-MOON"

## MARIGOLDS

He was a good kid,  
but a rotten bandit.

**DENNIS HOPPER · WARREN OATES  
PETER BOYLE · BEN JOHNSON**

"KID BLUE"

co-starring LEE PURCELL JANICE RULE  
produced by MARVIN SCHWARTZ directed by JAMES FRAWLEY

January 21, 1974 January 22, 1974

THE AMERICAN FILM THEATRE

Brock Peters, Melba Moore,  
Raymond St. Jacques in Kurt Weill &  
Maxwell Anderson's **Lost In The Stars**

"BEST PICTURE" · "BEST DIRECTOR"  
"BEST SCREENPLAY" · "BEST ACTRESS"

LIV ULLMANN

—NEW YORK FILM CRITICS

HARRIET ANDERSSON  
KARI SYLWAN  
INGRID THULIN  
LIV ULLMANN  
ERLAND JOSEPHSON  
HENNING MORITZEN  
GEORG ARLIN  
ANDERS EK

## INGMAR BERGMAN'S CRIES AND WHISPERS

**R**

A FILM FROM INGMAR BERGMAN

## 'SKAMMEN' SHAME

starring LIV ULLMANN · MAX VON SYDOW · GUNNAR BJORNSTRAND

**R**

SUN - TUES Jan 27 - 29

**JE T'AI ME** 7 & 10:25  
**WAKE** 8:40

A brilliant, elegant film  
about memory. A man  
who had attempted  
suicide is chosen  
for a scientific  
experiment in  
which he enters  
a time machine in  
order to re-live one  
minute in his past.  
Color. France.

A SCIENCE FICTION.  
A THRILLER.  
A LOVE STORY.

## Alain Resnais' Je T'aime, Je T'aime

## Finnegans Wake

A film by  
Mary Ellen Bute

Based on the book by James Joyce



## THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE

WED - SUN Jan 30 - Feb 3

**CHARM** 7 & 10:40  
**MURDERS** 8:45

Cast: Fernando Rey, Delphine Seyrig, Stephane Audran, Jean-Pierre Cassel, Paul Frankeur, Bulle Ogier, Julien Bertheau, Claude Pieplu, Michel Piccoli.

Luis Bunuel's brilliant lampoon of the European upper middle class begins with an elegant group of friends arriving for dinner on the wrong day. The film goes off in all sorts of merry directions, sometimes pausing for strange dreams and dreams within dreams. A devastating, dazzlingly comic film; very inventive and blessed with a superb cast, including Delphine Seyrig and Stephane Audran, the two most glamorous women in films today.

"A MAD, MAD MOVIE. DEVASTATINGLY  
FUNNY. AND COMICALLY DEVASTATING"

—JUDITH CRIST, NBC-TV



## little MURDERS



ELLIOTT GOULD DONALD SUTHERLAND LOU JACOBI  
...ALAN ARKIN

Directed by ALAN ARKIN

February 4, 1974 February 5, 1974

THE AMERICAN FILM THEATRE

Zero Mostel, Gene Wilder  
and Karen Black in Eugene  
Ionesco's **Rhinoceros**

Benefit childrens' matinee  
2 PM Sunday Feb 10. Film  
to be announced.

WED - TUES Feb 6 - 12

**TRAFFIC** 7:30 & 10:35  
**OUTBACK** 8:50

"IT IS INTENDED TO SHOCK, AND IT  
SUCCEEDS. IT MAKES 'WHERE'S POPPA?'  
LOOK LIKE A MOTHER GOOSE STORY."  
—Howard Kissel, *Women's Wear Daily*

## HEAVY TRAFFIC

...Heavy Entertainment! **X**

DONALD PLESENCE · GARY BOND  
CHIPS RAFFERTY · SYLVIA KAY

## "Outback"

Directed by TED KOTCHEFF

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Tango in  
Paris*

