

Film

STOP MAKING SENSE

Director: Jonathan Demme

Demme's track record to date has been a sketchy one, and restraint might have seemed the last quality to expect of this director. However, it is precisely Demme's directorial restraint and self-control that make this filming of a handful of Talking Heads concerts one of the best rock movies of recent years. David Byrne's laconic and quirky little songs are given their perfect cinematic setting and Talking Heads of course give a riveting performance.

VIGIL

Director: Vincent Ward

Vigil takes considerable risks for a New Zealand film and the director who gave us the exquisite

State of Seige and the poignant *In Spring One Plants Alone* has made a startling feature debut. Arguably one of the most sophisticated films to be made on its scale in this country, Ward's stance in *Vigil* is an uncompromising one, as he paints in sound and vision the secret world of a child's fantasy.

PARIS, TEXAS

Director: Wim Wenders

German director Wenders, in his first American film, creates a timeless allegory that spans from the harsh and unrelenting deserts of rural Texas to the eerie glass prisons of downtown Houston. Taking much of its power from the extraordinary performances of Nastassia Kinski and Harry Dean Stanton, Wenders' Texas becomes a striking metaphor for non-communication in modern America.

THE COTTON CLUB

Director: Francis Ford Coppola

The cynics and Cassandras have been predicting a spectacular flop for Coppola for some years and his recreation of the legendary Harlem club of the '20s could

well have been just that. Coppola has come up with a brilliant and complex film, weaving together the music, the social fabric of the time and the struggles of his characters.

A PRIVATE FUNCTION

Director: Malcolm Mowbray

Not a great film to be sure, but there must still be a place for screenplays as witty as Alan Bennett's and performances as flamboyantly theatrical as Maggie Smith's. Not for vegetarians.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HARVEY MILK

Director: Robert Epstein

We're miserably starved for big-screen documentaries in this part of the world. *Harvey Milk*, like the other rare specimens, made its bow in the July Festival and then was taken into general release. This re-telling of the life and eventual assassination of one of America's heroes of the new Gay Consciousness was clearly a labour of love. Whether through the intensely human documentation of the various interviews or through the impressive visuals of the cand-

leight parade commemorating Milk's murder, *Harvey Milk* delves beyond its immediate subject and offers commentary on some of the deeper issues of our times.

CAME A HOT FRIDAY

Director: Ian Mune

Irrespressible in its energy and, in the final count, just tremendously jolly fun, Mune's film of Ronald Hugh Morrieson's novel leads a large cast including Billy T. James, Peter Bland and Don Selwyn through a picaresque romp that suggests we could attain to becoming the Ealing Studios of the '80s.

MR WRONG

Director: Gaylene Preston

Preston's first feature film also offers a lot of giggly fun, but there's a serious edge to it, a superbly crafted thriller which shows that a feminist angle can be all the more effective for being presented more obliquely. Heather Bolton's marvellous performance in the lead role sets the tone for an auspicious debut for Preston.

AND THE SHIP SAILS ON

Director: Federico Fellini

The huge cast are stranded in their 1914 luxury liner which is similarly stranded in the cavernous Cinecitta — all the Fellini hallmarks are here in an idiosyncratic melange of the extravagant and sentimental, fantasy and reality. Perhaps the director is doling us out a series of wry footnotes for survival ... in any case, *And the Ship Sails On* shows a welcome return to form for Fellini after such recent efforts as *City of Women*.

BROADWAY DANNY ROSE

Director: Woody Allen

In Allen's latest film (*Purple Rose of Cairo* opens in February), his self-effacing hero is a smalltime Broadway talent agent who finds himself up against the New York mafioso. Immaculately shaped with all the gags perfectly integrated within the film's narrative structure, *Broadway Danny Rose* blends visuals which seem to be seen through the eye of Diane Arbus with a wit and perception that is pure Woody Allen. There's a special bonus, too, in Mia Farrow's performance as (would you believe it?) a blowsy blonde ...

WILLIAM DART

Singles Bar

Artists United Against Apartheid

Sun City (Manhattan) 12"

Star-studded protest song, which uses the South African Las Vegas-like entertainment centre as a symbol for the political system of apartheid. This bites even harder than the two previous musical protests, with some hard raps from Run DMC and hot vocals from Bobby Womack, Joey Ramone, George Clinton and many others. The 12" is state-of-the-art production from Arthur Baker, Stevie Van Zandt and Keith Le Blanc. An essential political statement and essential music. One of the records of the year.

Princess

Say I'm Your Number One (Stimulant) 12"

Vital dance cut with an irresistible beat and fine vocals, that has already crossed to the pop charts. All to the credit of the men behind the Stimulant label, who knew that soul of this calibre needed local release. Let's hope they continue to have further successes.

Nona Hendryx If Looks Could Kill (D.O.A.) (RCA) 12"

I suspect this one is going to be a sleeper — not as immediate or beat crazy as 'I Sweat', more melody and less rhythm. A good subtle mix from Arthur Baker, and the Latin Rascals allow Nona to sing at her most soulful. After a few listens you'll be hooked.

Freddie Jackson

You Are My Lady (Capitol)

Second side from the cool soulman's great album. A few might find it a bit M.O.R., but have a close listen to the way he uses his voice, and that great bass line. This is far too hip to be M.O.R.; for discerning turntables anywhere.

The Cure

Close To Me (WEA) 12"

This is a strange one. Lots of great horns with a jazzy tinge, add a nifty shuffle beat. As with 'Love Cats' we find Robert Smith in a poppy mood, but this is just so much better. A possible hit.

Dazz Band

Hot Spot (Motown) 12"

A disappointment after the bone-crunching 'Let It All Blow', this one just doesn't go anywhere. The Dazz Band are capable of better than this, and hopefully their forthcoming album will prove it.

Sheena Easton

Do It For Love (EMI) 12"

After her recent black chart success with Prince's 'Sugar Walls', Sheena tries for another one with reliable Nile Rodgers, but the Scottish nightingale and Mr Nile sound a bit tired. The song consists of Sheena saying "Do it" lots of times and Nile doing a sub-Madonna mix on her. It's time for Nile to return to his roots.

Phantom, Rocker & Slick

Men Without Shame (EMI) 12"

Well you just better like guitars, because Mr Slick plays 'em long and hard, while Mr Phantom and Mr Rocker make the rest of this bar band *menage a trois*. The title just about says it all.

The Damned

Is It A Dream (MCA) 12"

The A-side is an extended cut from the folky *Phantasmagoria*, but the B-side has a neat live version of the Pistols' 'Pretty Vacant' and a sloppy 'Wild Thing' — I always did like the Damned when they were loud and obnoxious.

George Thorogood & the Destroyers

Rock 'n' Roll Christmas (EMI)

Jeez, I just love Christmas songs and I love really dumb rock 'n' roll songs even better — so this is a double winner. All George wants for Christmas is "a Chuck Berry album and a picture of Elvis too." Great rockin' sax and nifty guitar. As George says: "Go Santa, go, go, go!"

Kerry Buchanan

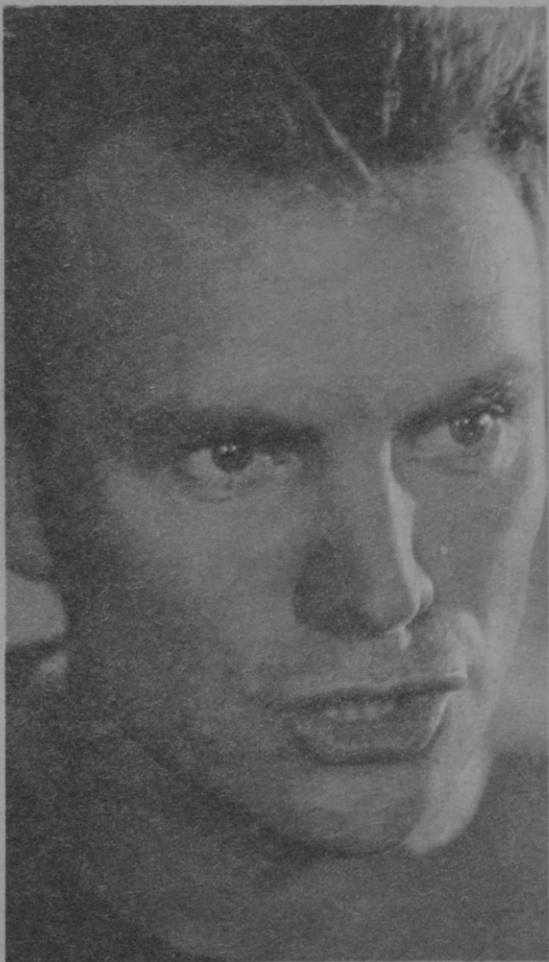
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