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— *"Ain't too proud to beg"* —

'DAMNED' FROM PAGE 12

"In some ways. But what it really meant was that you used to end up having really long conversations at parties with people that didn't really know what it was all about. So you used to have to spend a lot of time explaining that it wasn't just people being sick at airports and making a noise, it was actually constructive."

And what does someone who was there think of the controversial *Sid and Nancy*?

"I didn't even bother to go and see it. I thought it was a cheap shot personally. But that's what you've got to expect I suppose. People will always glorify a couple of junkies."

Then, the Damned's stage act was known for its fast, furious and theatric pace. While the theatrics may remain, the pace had definitely slowed down when they performed here last year, so what can audiences expect this time round?

"We do as much as we can of everything. It's a bit difficult when you've got 10 years behind you, there's a lot of songs obviously that a lot of people want to hear, so you kind of pick and mix. We just tend to pick the songs that we enjoy playing the most rather than the crowd pleasers." How did the Damned get on the latest *Miami Vice* soundtrack album?

"I dunno, somebody that puts the music together for *Miami Vice* likes the band, cos they've used two tracks for the show. I'm really quite pleased about it cos I think people should hear our records cos I think they're good records, even if it is played at the back of *Miami Vice*."

Play and be Damned, huh?

Babs Baker

Film

THE MISSION

Director: Roland Joffe

Despite its lacings of European culture, South America remains perhaps the most mysterious of continents, with regions such as the Amazon forests still clinging to their autonomy. Werner Herzog, in both *Aguirre Wrath of God* and *Fitzcarraldo*, showed reckless Eu-

ropeans scoring Pyrrhic cultural victories over the land; more recently, films like John Boorman's *The Emerald Forest* and *The Mission* have tried to capture the extraordinary qualities of this area of the world.

Like *Aguirre*, *The Mission* has an historical perspective, set in colonial Spanish/Portuguese America in the 18th century. Jeremy Irons is a priest trying to save a tribe of Guanari Indians, Robert de Niro a soldier of fortune who is converted to the cause.

The first half of the movie is rhapsodic to the point of lethargy, induced to some degree by the distractions of the spectacular surroundings, but more directly by Robert Bolt's screenplay which is portentous rather than incisive. There are enough words in the opening section of *The Mission* to fill *Aguirre*'s script four times over, yet *The Mission* is so much less acute in its observations. Directorial touches such as the drawn-out slow motion sequence when de Niro is accepted by the Indians, played against one of the more fullsome moments in Morricone's score, are embarrassing.

Once the government forces are in hot pursuit, one is given a sense of real conflict and the film starts to move at a little less stately a pace. Nevertheless, the simplistic representation of the main characters remains. Jeremy Irons positively simpers at times as the virtuous priest, training his choirs of cherubic Indians to sing acapella 18th century church music and leading violin classes *a la Vivaldi*. De Niro too, has given more subtle performances and, as for the Indians, they remain resolutely cardboard figures. With all the burden of its Rousseauian naivety, *The Emerald Forest* did at least allow its Indian characters to make their impact.

The greatest burden of *The Mission* is its depressing "respectability." The publicity for the film contents itself with quotes extracted from hyperbolic reviews, awards, nominations etc. Here is a "big" film with a "big" subject; from the early scene of a martyred priest tied to a cross hurtling to his death over the falls, to the image of a violin and candelabra floating together in the debris of the mission, the symbolism is strained and nudging. Even Ennio Morricone seems defeated by the project —

only in its choral sections does his score really come to life.

William Dart

PEGGY SUE GOT MARRIED

Director: Francis Coppola

In Frank Capra's classic *It's a Wonderful Life*, James Stewart had the opportunity to travel into the future and see what his small town would be like without him; in Coppola's new film, Kathleen Turner returns back to 1960, when she collapses at her old school's 25th anniversary dance. With more than a few echoes of Rod Serling's *Twilight Zone*, she can see what it is that has made up her life.

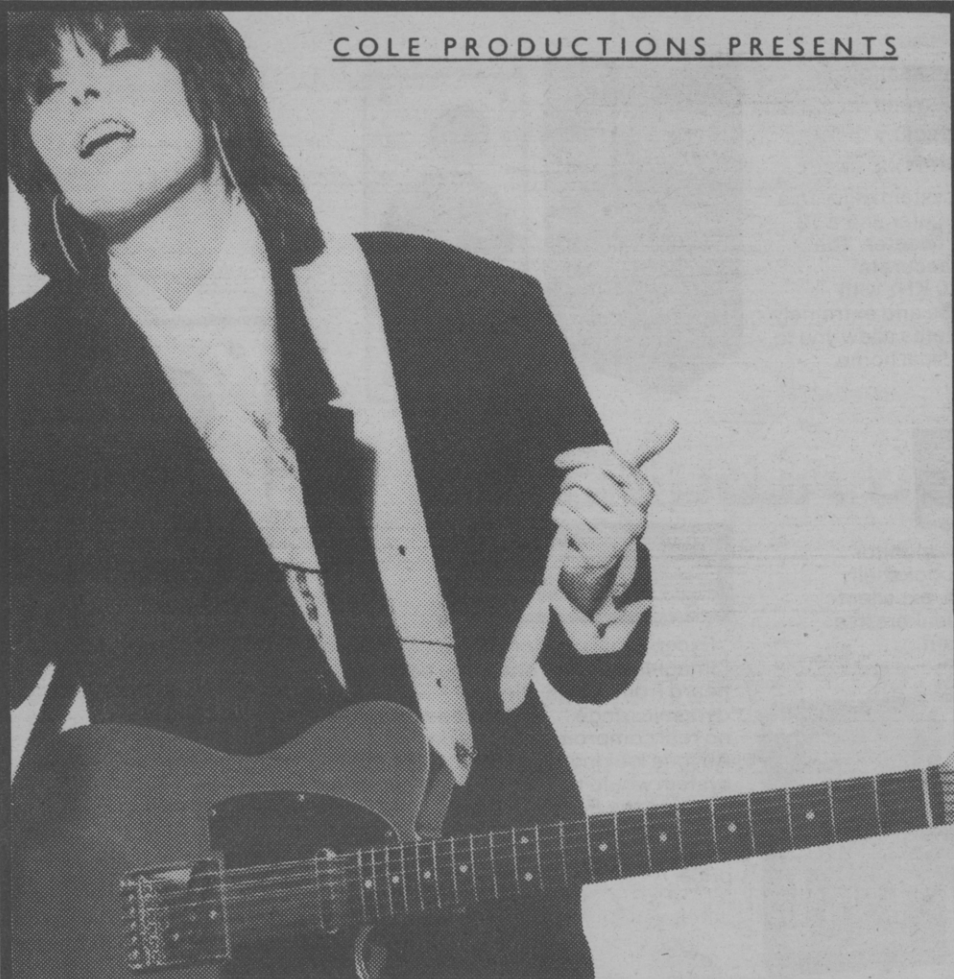
In its surface detailing, *Peggy Sue* is dazzling. The subject enables Coppola to recreate a period setting which he does immaculately. He has that ability to invest the simplest of scenes with a sense of the bizarre, the eerie — the opening school dance being a case in point, the Grandfather's weird lodge meeting another. The recreation of Smalltown USA 1960 is magical, due in part to the surroundings of Petaluma, California, but also owing much to Jordan Cronenweth's magnificent camerawork.

The characters, with all those gawky teenagers stranded in the dawn of the 60s, have an extraordinary rightness to them — the intense young beatnik poet of Kevin J O'Connor, Nicholas Cage's engagingly loopy Charlie, and naturally enough, the splendid Kathleen Turner, making the most of her 25 years' experience by putting down a 60s hood with a sharp "Get lost you macho schmuck." One of her friends remarks with a cynicism worthy of Sophie Tucker that "men are like houses, always trade upwards" — a line that could have come straight from the mouth of Carolyn Jones in *Majorie Morningstar*.

For all the delights of *Peggy Sue*, one does get the impression that Coppola and his scriptwriters have embarked on a stylish roller-coaster ride, and that there's no getting off. Considering the 60s from the vantage point of an 80s consciousness is extremely revealing, but it is disappointing to see Peggy Sue return to 1985 only to fall into the arms of the rather insensitive Charlie. Is that "band of gold" as crucial as Buddy Holly would have had it?

William Dart

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