



The Beat's Ranking Roger.

DANCE CRAZE

When Ska emerged in 1980, black and white was the 2-Tone image, an image maintained for marketing purposes by Chrysalis Records with 2-Tone, Stiff with Madness and Arista with The Beat. Ska was so black and white in image from album covers to clothes, I almost expected *Dance Craze* to be a black and white movie. No it's technicolour. Anyway the clubs and live venues of Britain pictured in the movie are neither colourful or comfortable. *Dance Craze* gives you a view of act and audience,

almost always from the side of the stage, there's little backstage information or talk, just non-stop live ska, some of which you may have already sampled on Chrysalis' single album soundtrack. The record has 14 tracks while the film has 26 songs performed. Like all movements of style and attitude in music, the magic is greatest when acts are on their way up, working hard to win fans and of course sell records. For those months, the musicians are accessible, the dividing line between audience and band least clear. *Dance Craze* captures that excitement, from the diffidence of the Beat, Dave Wakelin appears the least confident frontperson, while the Specials are all energy, with the exception of Terry Hall, mock fights and all, the Specials



Caulfield, Pfeiffer in 'Grease 2'.

do the jumping round and dancing, while the audience shuffle, packed standing up. They paid at the door for a glance not a dance. But no one is complaining and you can see it all from the safety of your theatre seat ice cream in hand, peanuts in pocket or potato chips all over your trousers. From my seat, Pauline Black was the biggest surprise, she along with Selector delivered the goods with punch, stylish in white trew and her's easily the best vocalist in UK ska-ville. I still can't take Bad Manners seriously or in jest, I just can't stand bad manners. Body-snatchers are one point where audience and musicians become confused, they really are just a garage band, yet that's part of their charm, and why ska was a popular movement in music, it was credible in the garage, in a way Gary Numan or Police ain't. NME's Paul Du Noyer described *Dance Craze* as primarily suited for "card carrying fan of 2-Tone-ism in all its forms", yet for a New Zealand audience it offers more — not just the only chance to see ska acts live (with the exception of Madness, a better band on record that on stage where vaudeville dissipates their energy) but also the opportunity to see the UK venues, audiences and whether we miss much by seeing rock stars as tourists' at the local town hall or whatever. My impression was that Mainstreet is better set up for audience, band and PAs, than at least two of the venues *Dance Craze* was filmed in.

One Paul Du Noyer concluded that, "the trouble is that stuck on film, it leaves the rest of us outside looking in." Yes, it's ska for voyeurs. Sit in your comfy seat and see some live UK music, one of the most positive expressions to emerge in recent years. Note that *Dance Craze* opens September 4 in Dolby stereo theatres, for voyeurs with two ears. Murray Cammick



Mad Max 2
Director: George Miller
The worthy censor may have denied us gentle Kiwis the opportunity to see Miller's first *Mad Max* film, but the second has made the hop across the Tasman. The film offers a stark vision of Australia in the wake of World War III. Life and death is centred around fuel as the masked giant Humungus and his marauding punks attack a small community



Mr. Spock in 'Wrath of Khan'.

built around a petrol refinery. But along comes Mel Gibson as Max Rockatansky to uphold the forces of good in a stunning melange of western, bike movie and comic strip. *Mad Max 2's* budget was ten times that of its precursor and it shows — a film with real visual elan and presence. Miller has cleverly balanced the demands of each of the film's genres, tied it all together with some of the tightest editing this side of the *Odessa Steps* sequence and the Dolby soundrama is cataclysmic. **The Cat People**
Director: Paul Schrader

It must have seemed an interesting project this, taking one of the classic Val Lewton horror films of the 40s and updating it for the 80s, thus taking advantage of a more generous budget and the opportunities for more explicit violence. Graphic sequences of arms being severed may strike a responsive note in some bosoms, but somehow it doesn't quite come off. Like many of the Lewton films, *Cat People* has a fairly preposterous plot, and a more oblique treatment is altogether more effective than Schrader's more realistic conception.

The film hinges on the feline duo of Malcolm McDowell and Nastassia Kinski, although I warmed more to the pragmatic Annette O'Toole, and Ruby Dee does what she can with a very underwritten part. The last twelve months have seen a spate of re-makes — *The Postman Rings Twice*, *Body Heat*, and now *Cat People*. *Body Heat* wins by a mile ... or two. **Britannia Hospital**
Director: Lindsay Anderson

Anderson is not the sort of director who exactly floods the theatres of the world with his films and, after his last, the 1976 *O Lucky Man*, the new *Britannia Hospital* was tempting fare.

Taking *Britannia Hospital* as a microcosm of the ailing British establishment itself, Anderson opts for a complex plot structure based around a megalomaniac transplant surgeon, the imminent visit of H.R.H. (a sweet old character actress who has a few features in common with the Queen Mother) and various union and political strife.

The energy and gusto of *Britannia Hospital* is undeniable and is one of the things that holds the film together. Graham Crowden as the crazed Professor Millar, last seen grafting hitchhiker's heads on to sheep's bodies in *O Lucky Man*, the marvellous Vivian Pickles is the starchiest of matrons (to hear her deliver the word "succour" alone is worth the price of the



Dianne Freeling (Jobeth Williams), seized by violent supernatural intrusion in Spielberg's 'Poltergeist'.

ticket), and other memorables include Dandy Nichols, Arthur Lowe, Joan Plowright, Marsha Hunt, Robin Askwith, not forgetting Malcom McDowell in his continuing role as Mick Travis.

Here is a film that is rich in detail, as was *O Lucky Man*, but such profusion of incident and character is not served as well as it was in the earlier film. That it doesn't quite add up to the sum of its parts is disappointing, as is the involvement of Alan Price, whose contribution seems to be mainly a series of variations on 'Rule Britannia' whereas his songs in *O Lucky Man* were an integral part of the film's structure.

Death Wish II
Director: Michael Winner

Charles Bronson stomping his way through a rampage of revenge, systematically picking off a group of hoodlums who raped and murdered his housekeeper and then did the same thing to his daughter, who had not yet recovered from all the awful things done to her in the first *Death Wish* film.

Complete with a sub-plot questioning the police's efficiency in controlling violence and the 'duty' of the private citizen to take the law into his own hands, *Death Wish* has pretensions to seriousness. If it works at all, it is because of the ghoulish fascination of waiting for each of the five punks to come to his bloody end. Most of the deaths, however, are distinct anti-climaxes after the spectacular demise of the daughter.

The film has its gruesome fascination and I could well imagine supporters of the new Moral Majority getting a vicarious kick out of it, while Charles Bronson and Jill Ireland give two of the most wooden performances this side of the State Forest.

William Dart

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Phantom Records
Pitt Street, Sydney.

Record Plant
Imperial Arcade, Sydney.

Missing Link Records
Port Phillip Arcade, Melbourne.

FORTHCOMING FILMS

Dance Craze ... lively ska movie with Specials, Beat, Madness, Selector etc. Concert footage in lovely technicolour. Opens September in three theatres with Dolby stereo; Christchurch's Mid-city, Wellington's Academy and Auckland's Classic. Sept 4.

Time Bandits ... by Handmade Films with John Cleese, Sean Connery, songs by George Harrison. It's about dwarfs who work for God, find holes in the universe and set about stealing from other areas. Starts Dunedin Sept 10.

Riddle of the Sands ... set before WWI. Britain is invaded down on her exposed West Coast. Stars Michael York, Simon McCorkindale. Starts Auckland Sept 3.

Poltergeist ... Steven Spielberg movie. Adolescent energies and psychic phenomena. Starts Aug 13.

Grease II ... English boy at US school falls for head biker lady and establishes 'one biker' identity to win her. Starts Aug 13/20.

Star Trek II ... set in the 23C. Khan from the 20C is out to get Admiral Kirk. He steals a top secret device capable of destroying the universe and sets out on his murder mission. Starts Aug 13/20.

Rocky III ... Sylvester Stallone gets bigger and beefier and Rocky goes on. Written and directed by Stallone. Theme revolves around Rocky's new adversary Clubber Lange. Starts Aug 20.

David Bowie is lined up for a role in *Merry Christmas*, *Mr Lawrence* being filmed in Rarotonga with NZ, UK and Japanese crew. It's directed by Oshima (*Realm Of Senses*) ... Bo Derek will film on location at Greenhithe ... alternative film makers from Australia, Arthur and Corinne Cantrill are in Auckland Sept 1-4. They'll be showing recent Australian alternative films and end the stay with a day workshop at the Maidment ... Police drummer Stewart Copeland has been commissioned by Francis Ford Coppola to write the music for his new film *Rumble Fish* ... ex Roxy Club DJ Don Letts edited Clash, Subway Sect, Siouxsie material shot by himself on super 8 for the *Punk Rock Movie* out now in the UK. He's working on a Clash feature entitled *Radio Clash*.

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