

# Film

## THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARP

Director: George Roy Hill

Transferring the complex structure of John Irving's novel to the screen would have been a considerable challenge for any writer, but *Garp* was fortunate in having as scriptwriter, Steve Teisch who also worked on Arthur Penn's recent *Four Friends*. It shows — both films have an extremely laid-back style that one might label as pure Americana, but yet both have their plot structures occasionally ruffled by bizarre moments. This is even more noticeable in *Garp* with such eccentric additions to the roster of characters as the Ellen Jamesians, a group of ultra-radical feminists who have cut off their tongues as a tribute to Ellen James, a child rape victim who was mutilated in this way by her rapist.

Hill's films at their best have been marked by a gentleness of

style and intent — just think of *The World of Henry Orient*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* and *The Sting*. This is particularly evident in *Garp*, whether it be in Robin Williams's ingratiating performance as Garp or John Lithgow's marvellous turn as the sex-changed quarter-back, Roberta Muldoon (sic). Against this background the two central assassinations are all the more horrific.

Among the other bonuses are Glenn Close's resolutely pragmatic mother, a swaggering portrait of a tart with a golden heart from the appropriately-named Swoosie Kurtz and two charming cameos from Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn in the opening scene of the movie.

## SOPHIE'S CHOICE

Director: Alan J. Pakula

Pakula's latest film takes as its source William Styron's semi-autobiographical novel about the life and loves of a mysterious Polish emigrant, Sophie Zawistowska, in Brooklyn in the summer of 1947.

It's curious that in the same year that Jeremy Irons plays a young Pole in Skolimowski's latest,

*Moonlighting*, Streep should do a similar turn in *Sophie's Choice* and it's a tour de force. So much so at times that it tends to seriously unbalance the film. Not that the central trio of Streep, Kevin Kline and Peter MacNicol don't engender a nice screen chemistry, but Streep's presence does dominate almost every scene of the film.

*Sophie's Choice* is long, indeed too long in many respects. The Auschwitz sequences are drawn out and handled rather pretentiously with Pakula showing a heavy directorial hand as a tearfully reminiscing heroine is shot through various colour filters.

By the time this review is printed, Streep may well have won her Oscar. She deserves it.

## THE VERDICT

Director: Sidney Lumet

On the surface *The Verdict* might seem to be an overly earnest affair with its reverberating theme of social conscience, a sure-fire vehicle for Paul Newman and James Mason to get Academy Award nominations. However, Lumet saves what could have been an exercise in Stanley Kramerism with a tightly controlled sense of

style. Lumet was one of the directors who came from television in the 50s and 60s. He has obviously survived but what has happened to his contemporaries Franklin Schaffner and John Frankenheimer?

## THE SECRET POLICEMAN'S OTHER BALL

Director: Julian Temple

Poor Donovan, to walk on stage and have someone in the audience shout out, "I thought you were dead". *SPOB* is not so much a film, but a record on celluloid of a rather engaging variety show, of which Donovan is one of the star turns.

There's a good cross-section of 1980s British humour and, on the rock side, there's definite interest in seeing Sting and Bob Geldof doing solo numbers. And for those hankering for a blast from the past, there's Donovan singing 'Catch the Wind'. But, when it comes to ye olde social proteste you can't go much better than Mr Dylan, as the company prove when they line up for a moving rendition of 'I Shall Be Released'.

WILLIAM DART



Mick in 'Time is on Our Side'.

## FORTHCOMING FILMS

*Blade Runner* ... described as "a detective thriller set in the near future" and directed by the man responsible for *Alien*, Ridley Scott. Starring Harrison Ford as a police detective who exterminates synthetically made humans when they go haywire. May 6. *The Boat* ... the story of a German

U-Boat crew, based on the best-selling German novel of the same title. Called "a first-rate adventure yarn" by *Time* mag. Director Wolfgang Peterson has worked extensively in German TV and won the Paris Film Festival Award in 1978. Starts June 3.

*Time is on Our Side* ... starring Mick an' Keef an' Charlie an' Bill an' Ron. The Rolling Stones live on tour in the USA. Starts May. *Raggedy Man* ... stars Sissy Spacek. The story of a Texas woman struggling to care for her two sons alone in 1940s May.

*Silent Rage* ... karate ace Chuck Norris gets another chance to show his chops, this time as the sheriff of a small Texas town he has to save from a virtually indestructible, genetically engineered, psychotic killer. Starts June 3.

*The Man With the Deadly Lens* ... Bond-type intrigue without the slapstick. Starring, appropriately, Sean Connery as the TV news reporter who knows all the world's leaders (and the beautiful women who follow them). Starts June.

*First Blood* ... based on David Morrell's novel, stars Sylvester Stallone as Rambo — Vietnam vet meets Mad Max. Starts June 17.

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