



Harrison Ford in 'Blade Runner'.

## Film

### BLADE RUNNER

Director: Ridley Scott

If you're into high tech sci-fi, then *Blade Runner* is the film for you. Set in Los Angeles in 2019, we follow Harrison Ford through a futuristic jungle as he searches out and destroys a collection of Nexus 6 Replicants (human-like robots) who have managed to get back to earth from one of the space colonies. And what a depressing place this earth is as Jordan Cronenwath's Panavision cameras glide over a drab, neon-glaring Chinatown perpetually shrouded by rain — a long step from the immaculate cities of the future which sci-fi movies used to promise us in the good old days.

*Blade Runner* is vaguely in the genre of *Star Wars* and *Raiders* but Scott chooses to linger more with the visual details and peripheries of the movie rather than follow the narrative demands of plot structure. And so what one remembers from *Blade Runner* are assorted images such as Replicant Daryl Hannah hiding among a collection of puppet-like robots or the magnificent sets (in particular the dingy splendours of the deserted apartment block). It's all ultra-stylised from Ford's laconic voice-over commentary to the finely chiselled choreography of the hero's struggle with the last Replicant. All in all, this must be one of the quirkiest films of the year.

### FRANCES

Director: Graeme Clifford

*Frances* is a morality tale, albeit on the long side, telling us how ruthlessly Hollywood deals with its idealists. In two and a half hours we follow the saga of Frances Farmer from the dewy-eyed young schoolgirl of the opening scene to her degradation into a life of alcoholism, breakdowns and mental institutions. It all sounds like a rather more savage version of *Mommie Dearest*.

Whereas the source of *Mommie Dearest* is a possibly unreliable biography by Crawford's daughter, *Frances* is taken from Farmer's own autobiography. Why they didn't adhere more closely to this, God only knows. In omitting some details from the book and then wilfully inventing others (eg the Sam Shepherd character) the film has turned out to be more than a little chaotic. It's a lost opportunity, for there's a marvelous ring of truth in Jessica Lange's

poignant yet tough performance as the battered heroine and that of the indefatigable Kim Stanley as a stage mother to end all stage mothers.

### THE BOAT

Director: Wolfgang Petersen

Hitler sent 40,000 men aboard U-boats in the Second World War and less than 10,000 returned. The German cinema's first Second World War epic tells of the adventures of one such crew.

*The Boat* is basically a rattling good wartime yarn and Petersen makes it all move at a cracking pace. While there's none of the poetry and atmospherics of Sam Fuller's 1953 stranded-in-a-submarine flick *Hell and High Water*, the tone is astutely ironic throughout. A fine cast of unknowns is headed by Jurgen Prochnow in a mighty performance as the disillusioned captain.

### TIME IS ON OUR SIDE

Director: Hal Ashby

Ashby's first directorial project since *Being There* is, to say the least, unexpected — filming the Rolling Stones' 1981 tour, the success of which could certainly justify the film's title.

Ashby is on the Stones' side too. There are a few cinematic effects and touches, one being the sped-up segment with the stage crew setting up while the group sing Smokey Robinson's 'Goin' to a Go-Go', but generally backstage business is kept to a minimum. It's the band onstage who dominate the movie. Bill Wyman still seems as embarrassed as ever, Ron Wood and Keith Richards maintain their cynical presence throughout and Mick Jagger of the eternally trim figure bops around stage with the energy of one half his age.

William Dart

### FORTHCOMING FILMS

**First Blood ...** based on David Morrell's novel, stars Sylvester Stallone as Rambo — Vietnam vet meets Mad Max. Starts June 17.  
**Raggedy Man ...** stars Sissy Spacek. The story of a Texas woman struggling to care for her two sons alone in the 1940s. Starts June.

**Local Hero ...** the movie of the Mark Knopfler soundtrack. A comedy set in a little Scottish fishing village and starring Burt Lancaster as a Texas oil tycoon who gets involved with the locals.  
**Videodrome ...** a weird series of illicit broadcasts that draw the viewer into a trance-like state fascinates the head of a cable TV company. Gradually they begin to take him over and he is engulfed in a world of violent, erotic hallucinations.

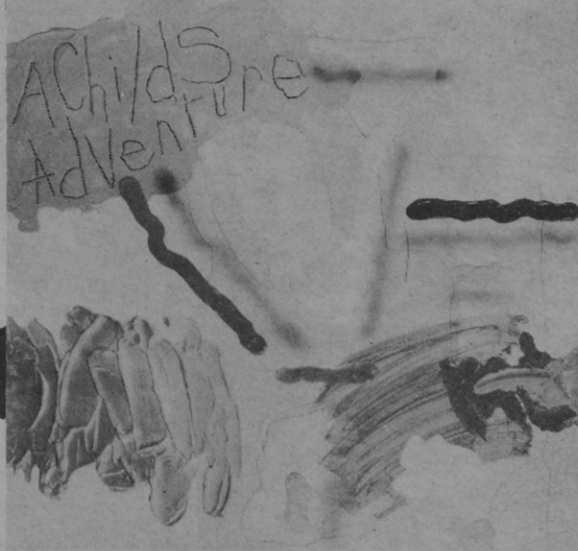
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