

Video

CBS/Fox offers this month *Over the Edge*, one of the current breed of youth movies, starring Matt Dillon and featuring a soundtrack including the Cars, Cheap Trick, the Ramones, Little Feat and Hendrix; *Under the Volcano*, with Albert Finney, Jacqueline Bisset and Anthony Andrews; and, in its 'Cine' range, the original award-winning *Cyrano De Bergerac*.

Palace has a bunch of interesting releases, with Carlos Saura's film of *Carmen*; Elizabeth Taylor in the award-winning *A Little Night Music*; the star-studded *The Hotel New Hampshire*, with Nastassia Kinski, Rob Lowe, Jodie Foster and Beau Bridges; the Australian film *Man Of Flowers*, an erotic film which picked up the Best Actor award for Norman Kaye in the Aussie film industry's national awards; and a couple of horror flicks in *Golden Needles* and

The Curse of the Screaming Dead.

Roadshow turns up *The Adventures Of Buckaroo Banzai*, the English rock-comedy-sci-fi film starring Peter Weller and John Lithgow. There's also Roger Donaldson's film *The Bounty*, starring Mel Gibson and Anthony Hopkins; *Defiance*, starring Jan Michael Vincent as a discharged merchant seaman who ends up taking on the gang which controls a Philadelphia neighbourhood; Bill Wyman's little indulgence, *Digital Dreams* (which features animation by Gerald Scarfe); Jamie Lee Curtis and James Keach in the steamy *Love Letters*.

Rumble Fish (RCA/Columbia)

Rumour has it that after going bankrupt with *One From the Heart*, Francis Ford Coppola was keen to find something quick and cheap to make with which he might refinance Zoetrope Studios. Then some high school kids wrote requesting he film S.E. Hinton's popular teen novel, *The Outsiders*.

Coppola had found his material and he also bought the rights to *Rumble Fish*, a companion book. The two films were then made in quick succession.

Being Coppola however, the director-producer was unable to subsume his stylistic obsessions to the dictates of commercialism and both films are indelibly stamped with his profligate artistry.

Consequently, both present sumptuous visual contexts that serve to romanticise the very juvenile delinquency Hinton's stories were intending to deflate. In *The Outsiders* Coppola got away with it because he limited his self-indulgence and because the narrative was sufficiently strong to take it. But with *Rumble Fish*, easily the worst of Susan Hinton's novels, he seeks to compensate for trite material with flamboyant style.

Hence we see clocks ostentatiously prominent in several scenes and clouds are always speeding across the sky. All of which is to underline, gulp, the

mortality of the characters. Where *The Outsiders* was shot in lush technicolour, here we get poetic monochrome — albeit stunningly shot — because the Motorcycle Boy only sees the world "in black and white with sound turned low." But, just in case we miss the point, the fish of the film's title which serve as the Motorcycle Boy's symbol of freedom are hand-coloured. Heavy stuff man.

Nor is the book's two-dimensional characterisation any better dealt with. Matt Dillon's Rusty-James is a teenage parody of early Brando with dialogue by Cheech and Chong. (Yeah, that boring.) Both Rusty-James and the Motorcycle Boy are intended as inarticulate existentialists but actually amount to no more than collections of overworked mannerisms.

And then there's the film's pacing; it's all askew. While the first half-hour has the requisite movement and violence to satisfy a teenage audience, it soon thereafter slips into a slow, brooding contemplation of Rusty-James' dimly dawning selfhood.

Dammit, I've been a Coppola fan for years — I'll even rhapsodise over *One From the Heart* — but this time I'm with his growing number of detractors. *Rumble Fish* is a mess. Think I'll check out *The Outsiders* again to restore my faith.

Peter Thomson

Car Wash (CIC)

The French call it *cinema verite*; film with a documentary feel. A great sprawling comedy about a day in the life of a city car wash, with no "real" plot, just characters coming and going. There's a neat bit with Richard Pryor as TV preacher Daddy Rich, a guy called 'The Fly' with just the best afro ever, Ivan Dixon from *Hogan's Heroes* and a beautiful doberman called Sparky. A film about the dignity of labour, with one of the best soundtracks ever, wet and very wild.

Slaughter's Big Rip Off (Roadshow)

Jim Brown, Richard Pryor's old shooting mate, stars as Slaughter ("You don't fight a bull that big, you kill it.") on a mission against the Mob. Teaming up with a pimp called High-Life, he steals "the list" and then the action really hots up.

Lots of gratuitous violence and sex, neat shirts and lots of white powder. A film so hot it broke my video machine and the tape — sheeit!

Superman III (Thorn EMI)

From the outset director Richard Lester puts his stylish stamp on proceedings with one of the longer and funnier running sight gag sequences I've seen. We meet up with all the familiar faces at Metropolis's premier paper, *The Daily Planet*; Lois Lane is ushered out of the movie on holiday, leaving the way clear for Lana Lang, who is languishing in Smallville, where Clark Kent is heading for a high school reunion ... Sounds placid enough but there's trouble brewing. No cosmic bad bods here though, Supes is up against the 20th Century's No.1 bad buzz — computer crime! Richard Pryor plays a jive-talkin' down-and-out who discovers he's a keyboard whizz and gets way out of his league when he's discovered pilfering not-so-petty cash by his boss Robert Vaughan (who must now join the upper echelon of safari-suited baddies). Being rich and greedy and a spoiled prat to boot is not enough; he wants the world, so with his severe sister and Pamela Stephenson, in a disposable role as his "psychic nutritionist", he uses Pryor's "hacking" skills to set about it. Of course it's all good fun, with Supes thwarting them and them thwarting him by subjecting him to ... you guessed it, green kryptonite. He's turned into a mean, asskicking redneck drunkard, unshaven and grubby ... dark days indeed, will Superman recover in time to best the villains and their ultimate computer? Will Lana Lang leave Smallville? Will anyone notice how much alike Clark Kent and Superman look? Hell, I'm not going to tell you that. Best you get a big bowl of popcorn, turn the lights out, put yer feet up and check it out yourself. Enjoy!

The Beatles A Hard Day's Night (Vestron)

Probably the best fictional "pop" movie made thus far, if only because it's a very well made film with the most influential pop group of the last 30 years as subject matter and stars. The Beatles may not have been much like those in Richard Lester's film of Alun Owen's screenplay and, cer-

tainly, life on the road is not as portrayed in this most innocent of depictions, not even in 1964, but this is a pretty accurate reflection of the whole phenomenon of Beatlemania. The average Cliff Richard/Elvis Presley/beach bunny movie would never be quite as acceptable after this and the songs are good. The video looks considerably greyer than a good theatrical print, which is a pity, but the film (and the Beatles) shines through.

Angelo My Love (Palace Academy)


Robert Duvall is among the most esteemed of movie actors. His work in such films as *The Godfather*, *Apocalypse Now* and *Tender Mercies* has seen to that. Here however, he debuts on the other side of the camera with a feature he wrote, produced, directed and personally financed. It originated when, one day in 1978, Duvall came across an eight-year-old gypsy boy flirting with a woman on a New York street corner. Once Duvall got to know Angelo Evans he wanted to capture the boy and his lifestyle on film.

The result is a refreshing near-documentary in which a cast of New York gypsies play either themselves or nearly so. The plot, involving a feud over a stolen heirloom, is minimal and little more than a frame on which to hang various scenes exploring such gypsy traditions as bride purchasing and inter-family trials.

As the central character young Angelo is shown being pulled in different directions. He is a smart, though illiterate, child who lives in an adult world of street bars and family vendettas. He is a street-wise American city dweller who is bound by European traditions at home. At times Angelo's charm is enchanting, at others his pre-teen macho treatment of females is already adult-obnoxious. It is, however, always captivating.

Angelo My Love represents an increasing rarity in American feature film making, an independent and individual work that's unconstrained by the dictates of marketing-minded studio accountants. And while it is therefore not surprising that it failed on the American commercial circuit, it is nonetheless precisely the sort of movie that festival audiences seek out.

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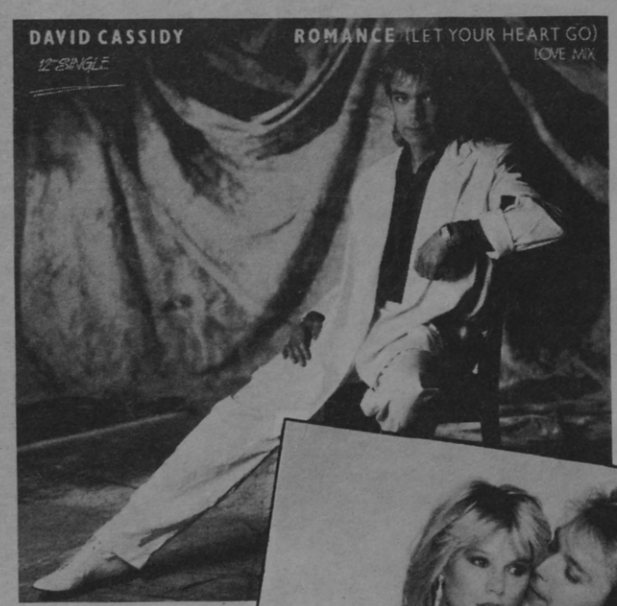

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