

Film

PICTURES

Director: Michael Black

That *Pictures* is a film with its conscience in the right liberal place goes without saying. It's ambitious too — on one level a fictionalised biography of the New Zealand photographic pioneers, the Burton brothers and on another a vision of the growing pains and problems of one of the smallest outposts of the 19th century British Empire.

Pictures opens in New Zealand with a host of laudatory reviews from the overseas press, but to one who is hardened to the exotic Antipodean setting, the film has distinct problems. To me anyway, it falls between two stools: its pacing and presentation lack the energy and tautness of a first-rate commercial release and yet it seems a little under-developed for what one might call the arthouse circuit (if there be such a thing in this country).

Visually, the film is undeniably impressive, with Rory O'Shea's camera catching some dazzling Otago panoramas. Acting is variable but the best (Peter Vere-Jones, Kevin J. Wilson, Helen Moulder and Terence Bayler) has sufficient attack to get the most out of Robert Lord's script. Unfortunately Matiu Mareikura's Ngatai is too casually sketched in to bring sufficient presence to a key role. In this respect *Pictures* would have benefited greatly from performances as strong as those given by Anzac Wallace and Wi Kuki Kaa in *Utu*.

THE MAN WITH THE DEADLY LENS

Director: Richard Brooks

A more muddled film would be hard to imagine, with Brooks setting out to offer us a satire on the evils of our television-dominated society and almost immediately letting the film meander in the familiar megalomaniac vein of terrorists, nuclear bomb heists and world ransom plots.

A splendidly preserved Sean

Connery is a latterday television superstar, a roving reporter who's always interposing his lens when there's any trouble brewing on the international scene. His casual style and humour almost get him through but the likes of Katharine Ross, Robert Webber, Henry Silva and Dean Stockwell are miserably wasted.

The opening sequence is brilliant: a horrific television show in which bourgeois discontents can get to bump off wives, husbands, mothers, fathers, etc, who are bugging them. After this, it's time for an extended ice-cream break — like about 2 hours.

MAD MAX

Director: George Miller

Only last year the powers that be in the Film Censor's Office allowed us innocent Kiwis to see Miller's *Mad Max 2*, a brilliantly apocalyptic road movie which, with nerve-shattering Dolby sound and relentless pacing, despatched one from the movie house feeling like a wrung sponge.

The original *Mad Max* was banned when first it appeared, but now it's had a belated release proving, alas, the definite superiority of the later film. By comparison, *Mad Max 1* is far less sure in its effects and its impact is seriously dulled by the misty-eyed romanticism of interminable scenes with Mel Gibson, wife and child. It is the family's "assassination" under the wheels of the villain's bikie gang that turns Gibson into a leather-clad avenging angel.

Mad Max 1 doesn't have such a strongly futuristic bias as the follow-up and accordingly the bizarre moments seem even more so, from the hysterically shrieking couple in the opening car chase to a splendidly laid-back and malevolent gang-leader. One amusing touch — Gibson's colleagues, clad from motorcycle boots to furrowed brows in gleaming leather, look like a cross-section of Sydney's Oxford Street habitués about 3 o'clock on a Sunday morning.

William Dart

FORTHCOMING FILMS

The Killing of America ... a controversial film about the growth of violence in United States society.

Made up of news film and original footage, photographs, interviews and music. Starts July.

Raggedy Man ... stars Sissy Spacek. The story of a Texas woman struggling to care for her two sons alone in the 1940s. Starts this month.

The Year of Living Dangerously ... from Australian director Peter Weir, a romantic adventure story about two foreign correspondents covering the 1965 Indonesian civil war. Stars Guy Hamilton (*Mad Max*) and Sigourney Weaver (*Alien*). Starts July 8.

Breathless ... hunky Richard Gere stars in this drama about the relationship between a streetwise young hood on the run from the law and the beautiful young woman he meets. Starts July.

Best Friends ... a pair of talented young scriptwriters (Burt Reynolds and Goldie Hawn) find their friendship begins to fall apart when they get married. Starts July.

Superman 3 ... Superman attends Clark Kent's high school reunion and personal complications, including the rekindling of an old



Richard Gere seeks inspiration from the *Silver Surfer* in 'Breathless'.

flame, develop. Also stars Richard Pryor and is apparently aimed at a more adult audience. Starts August 12.

Death Trap ... a convoluted whodunnit starring Michael Caine, Christopher Reeve and Dyan Cannon. Starts July.

Flash Dance ... a cast of unknowns in a movie about a woman who yearns to be a dancer but has to spend her days working on a construction site. The single from the soundtrack is currently at the top of the US charts. Starts August.

Yellowbeard ... a pirate spoof starring a galaxy of comedy talent, including most of the Python team and Cheech and Chong. Starts August.

Local Hero ... the film 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.

Film News

New NZ feature films to watch out for are: *John Laing's Lost Tribe* (premiered at this year's Cannes Film Festival) and *Strata* directed by Geoff Steven.

A NZ thriller, *Finding Katie* currently in post-production. Mainly written by novelist Maurice Gee, who used three of the characters he created in TV series *Mortimer's Patch*. Stars Englishman Patrick McGoohan, locals Terence Cooper, Don Selwyn and Sean Duffy ... Bruno Lawrence stars in *Heart of the Stag*, being filmed on location in Te Kuiti, due for completion October ... Auckland Bruce Morrison working on his first feature, *Constance*. Script by Jonathon Hardy (*Breaker Morant*). Donogh Rees stars ... NZ director Roger Donaldson directing Dino de Laurentis' new version of *Mutiny on the Bounty*. Filming will be in Tahiti, London and possibly NZ. Will use the *Bounty* replica ship built here three years ago for the last attempt to film the story ... work proceeds on full-length cartoon feature of Murray Ball's *Footrot Flats*. Expected to be completed mid-1984.

Out The Record

International Discography of the New Wave Edited by George and DeFoe (Omnibus \$22.50)

A discography, as the title says, but also much more. As well as listing more than 16,000 records (including bootlegs) released since the mid-seventies it provides information on more than 7000 bands, 3000 small labels and even 1300 fanzines from all over the world.

RIP IT UP
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US, UK and AU/NZ area reports. Mostly new wave. Features reviews, \$20.000 free monthly. Colorful, tabloid.

If you're planning on travelling overseas you'd be wise to beg, steal or borrow this book and copy off the regional listings section. It has details of record shops, nightclubs, cinemas, radio stations, studios, management agencies, etc, in 21 countries. To cap it all off are guides to record licensing, getting your music published and signing a recording contract. They refer specifically to the United Kingdom but the general principles hold anywhere.

Probably the only major omission is African music, but expect that to be rectified in the next edition.

Useful, informative and often fun to read. The Hitchiker's Guide to the New Wave. RB

The Arrival of B.B. King Charles Sawyer (Da Capo \$15.95)

Subtitled "The Authorized Biography", words which arouse suspicions of a whitewash/glorification created with the connivance of the artist. To his credit, Sawyer, an academic and a B.B. King fan, doesn't neglect less favourable aspects of King's character in presenting his portrait of the figure he argues is the greatest force in black music. But even these sides — B.B.'s enduring self-doubt, his often paternalistic employer-employee relationship, his gambling and lack of money management, his roving eye — are used to confirm the humanity of a man Sawyer obviously likes and respects.

Sawyer's biography concentrates on B.B. King, the ambitious sharecropper who became the number one figure in blues, first to the black, and later a white audience, the constantly-questing musician who remains obsessed by self-improvement courses and

books. Much new information comes to light for the first time.

On the musical side, Sawyer's verbal analysis of King's playing fails to catch its flavour. His "discography" is virtually useless, being merely a list of records and chart placings.

Despite its shortcomings, this book provides the fullest picture yet of B.B. King.

New Rock Record
Hounsone and Chambre (Blandford \$20.95)

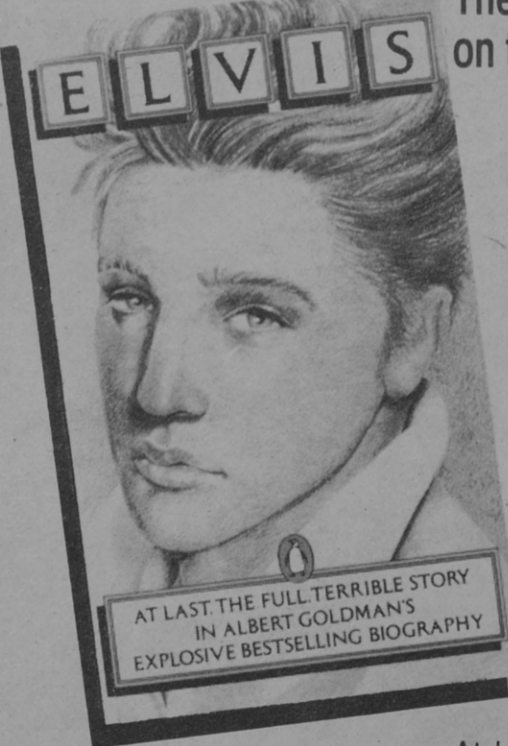
As the blurb says, this book's "sole aim (and it does it well) is to identify the musicians on as many albums as possible". As such, it's really only of passing interest to all except collectors. Those collectors will probably be annoyed that although more than 30,000 albums are listed, little attempt is made to cover important singles, EPs or bootlegs. Every library should have one. RB

Rolling Stones Live (Sidgwick & Jackson \$19.95)

Immediacy is the principle attraction. Photographer Philip Kamin has captured some telling moments from the Stones' 1981-82 USA tour. A thoughtful text by Peter Goddard. KW

ELVIS

BY ALBERT GOLDMAN



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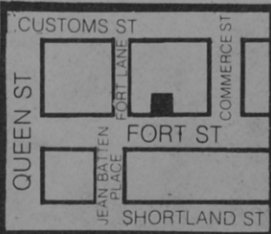
AC/DC

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