

# Cinema

## JUNGLE FEVER Director: Spike Lee

*Jungle Fever* is *Guess Who's Coming To Dinner?* with style, guts and Cannes approval, highlighting ethnic tensions in New York through the tale of an extramarital affair between a young black architect (Wesley Snipes) and his Italian secretary (Annabella Sciorra). The ethnic struggles of *Do The Right Thing* were direct and confrontational: those in *Jungle Fever* are often more subtle, more insidious and more ugly.

Lee's script is his tightest yet, and the theme of conflict runs through the film on different levels — between Snipes's crackhead brother and his fundamentalist father, between Sciorra and her bigoted chauvinistic stronghold of a family. There is a neat irony when a spruce Snipes and daughter walk to school through some of the rougher streets of Harlem, and Lee seems more interested in the burgeoning black urban bourgeoisie

than in any other of his films (Snipe's wife is a buyer for Bloomingdales).

Music has always been an integral element in Lee's films and *Jungle Fever* is no exception. Snipe's parents seem to listen to noone but Mahalia Jackson, and unsentimental scenes are constantly underscored with lush string passages — at one point we watch a savage beating to the accompaniment of a Stevie Wonder ballad. Yet Wonder's songs can be chillingly tough, as in the trance-like scene in the crack house.

This eerie sequence is only one of many brilliant scenes in this saga of the struggle between Harlem and Bensonhurst. Another is one in which Snipe's estranged wife sits with her women friends discussing the foibles and failings of black men, with a touch of naturalism that recalls similar scenes in Lizzie Borden's *Working Girls*. Lee's script reverberates with stories untold, from the long-suffering Ruby Dee caught between her crazed husband and his sons, to Anthony Quinn's pathetic candy shop owner.

Amongst a marvellous cast, Snipes and Sciorra are superb, and so too is John Turturro as the nerdy, nerdish Paulie. Lonette McKee is Snipes's

sophisticated wife and Lee himself plays best friend Cyrus, a mediator in the marital front.

*Jungle Fever* is Spike Lee at his most considered and hard-hitting. It will be interesting to see what comes of the Malcolm X project currently filming in the States.  
WILLIAM DART

## THE OBJECT OF BEAUTY Director: Michael Lindsay-Hogg

Lindsay-Hogg moves from the wider political moralities of *Scandal* to a more personal plane in his new film. There's an irony worthy of de Maupassant in *The Object of Beauty*. John Malkovich and Andie MacDowell are two slick yuppies living beyond their hotel bill and setting up an insurance scam around a Henry Moore statuette that MacDowell owns. The statuette is stolen: noone believes them, they don't even trust each other.

This, in itself, has the makings of a delicious comedy, but there is a more serious sub-plot. The thief is a pathetic young deaf and dumb woman (an incandescent performance from Rudi Davies) who works as a maid in the hotel and who stole it because it spoke

to her. The eventual return of the statuette is beautifully ironic.

*The Object of Beauty* has a literary air about it: it depends on a certain moral symmetry — its wit is in the subtle shifts in attitude and the flexibility of the relationship between Malkovich and MacDowell (her ex-husband is around, Malkovich is having an affair with best friend Lola Davidovich). They're the most charming pair of yuppies this side of Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore in *Ghost* without any assistance from special effects, pottery wheels or the Righteous Brothers.  
WILLIAM DART

## RIP IT UP FLICK LIST

Movies soon to be showing at a theatre near you:

- **WHAT ABOUT BOB?** Starring Bill Murray & Richard Dreyfuss, opened Sept 13.
- **THE PERFECT WEAPON** with Jeff Speakman, also opened Sept 13.
- **TOO HOT TO HANDLE** with Alec Baldwin & Kim Basinger, opens Sept 20.
- **JUNGLE FEVER** directed by Spike Lee, starts Sept 27.

- **PACIFIC HEIGHTS** starring Michael Keaton, Melanie Griffith & Mathew Modine, opens Oct 4.
- **FILOFAX** with James Belushi, Oct 4.
- **A KISS BEFORE DYING** starring Matt Dillon & Sean Young, opens Oct 4.
- **NOT WITHOUT MY DAUGHTER** with Sally Field, opens Oct 4.
- **DYING YOUNG** with Julia Roberts, Oct 11.
- **THELMA & LOUISE** directed by Ridley Scott, starring Susan Sarandon & Geena Davis, starts Oct 18.
- **DOC HOLLYWOOD** with Woody (Cheers) Harrelson & Michael Joe Fox, starts Oct 18.
- **TEEN AGENT** starring Richard Gere, Oct 25.
- **LIFE STINKS** with Mel Brooks.
- **DEATH WARRANT** starring Claude Van Damme.

## FUTURE RECORDINGS

- 2 LIVE CREW, Sports Weekend.
- PUBLIC ENEMY, Apocalypse '91: The Enemy Strikes Black.
- DIANA ROSS, The Force Behind the Power.
- KARYN WHITE, Ritual of Love.
- JOHN LEE HOOKER, Mr. Lucky.

- TACKHEAD, Videohead EP.
- MC OJ & RHYTHM SLAVE, What Can We Say?
- VOICE OF THE BEEHIVE, Honey Linger.
- TESLA, Psychotic Supper.
- ANDY SUMMERS, World Gone Strange.
- MEATLOAF, Bat Out of Hell 2: Back into Hell.
- TIN MACHINE, Tin Machine.
- PET SHOP BOYS, Best So Far.
- JOHN COUGAR MELLENCAMP, Get A Leg Up.
- LITA FORD, Dangerous Curves.
- SIMPLY RED, Stars.
- DONNA SUMMER, Mistaken Identity.
- CHRISTIE MOORE, Collection.
- ERIC CLAPTON, 24 Nights (live).
- POGUES, Best Of.
- FAMILY STAND, Moon In Scorpio.
- JOHN PRINE, The Missing Years.
- RICKIE LEE JONES, Pop Pop.
- BRUCE COCKBURN, Nothing But a Burning Light.

# DE LA SOUL



"THE BEATLES OF RAP" — NEW YORK TIMES

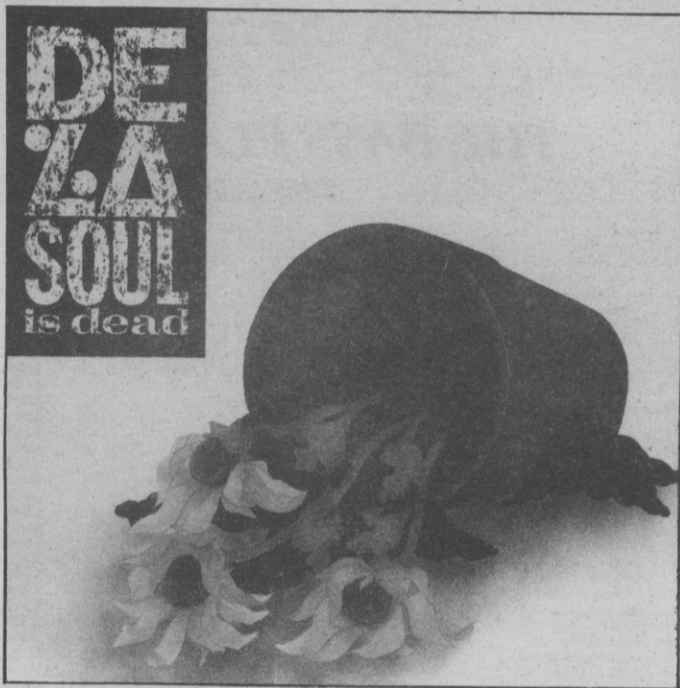
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## SCARF



## ON TOUR

### OCTOBER

- 4 AUCKLAND — Powerstation
- 12 LEVIN — Oxford Tavern
- 16 PALMERSTON NTH — Albert Lodge
- 17 WELLINGTON — New Carpark
- 18 NAPIER — Onekawa
- 19 GISBORNE — River Bar
- 30 TAURANGA — Otumoetai Hotel
- 31 AUCKLAND — Powerstation

### NOVEMBER

- 1 WANGANUI — Riverside Tavern
- 2 NEW PLYMOUTH — Westown Hotel

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