

FILMFEST 92

Bill Gosden, the man who decides the line-up of movies in our annual International Film Festival in Auckland, didn't go to London last year to check out the 70-plus movies on offer next month, choosing instead Berlin, Vancouver and Toronto as the main sources of the cinematic goodies we are about to see.

Gosden points out that there are many more American films in this year's festival, but with the exception of David Cronenberg's *The Naked Lunch* they are all independent productions. They range from John Sayles's *City of Hope*, an engrossing tale of the insidious evils of civic corruption, to *Swoon*, a first feature from Tom Kalin, tackling the same Leopold-Loeb murders of the 20s that inspired Hitchcock's *Rope*.

Where else but the Festival would one be able to see Park Kwang-Su's *The Black Republic*, a sampling of the new and lively South Korean cinema, or some of the mighty documentaries that Gosden chases up? Too few documentaries make it on to New Zealand cinema screens, and when they're stunning 35mm prints, like Peter Cohen's *The Architecture of Doom*, a film about Nazi notions of artistic, medical and racial deformity, the loss is sorely felt.

Many titles prove difficult to get hold of and some film makers are cautious — "many festivals are fly-by-night operations, run by individuals purely to make

money," says Gosden who has his frustrations with the major chains bidding for some titles (Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* was not available, but will receive a general release later this year). It's the distributors and not director

Peter Jackson who will say if the festival can screen *Brain Dead*, and two other local films, fresh from success at Cannes, Alison Maclean's *Crush* and Leon Narbey's *The Footstep Man*, have decided not to participate in the event. This is disappointing, as New Zealand premieres, from *Ngati* to *Ruby and Rata*, have invariably proved to be highlights of the festival. There will be a good number of Kiwi shorts, including Nicky Marshall's *Mon Desire* hot from Cannes, but not much is finalised yet, as "many of the film-makers are working flat out trying to get them finished in time".

New Russian films lined up include Viatcheslav Krichtofovitch's *Adam's Rib* and Lydie Bodrova's *Hey You Wild Geese*, but it's not as easy as it used to be getting Russian or Soviet films. These days the Russians are marketing, rather than handing out free samples. Gosden was particularly impressed with Bodrova's debut, calling it "a wonderful, personal film — the sort of thing that just couldn't happen under the old system".

Gosden finds that different festivals reflect their countries — "all the people involved in the Berlin Festival had a vase of flowers on their desk" — but declines to comment on New Zealand audiences. He feels that we could be more film-literate than we are, and that television could be doing more to bring us up with the state-of-play by showing background material and more and better movies! Indeed, does anyone else remember the halcyon days of New Zealand television in the mid-60s when we had seasons of Preston Sturges, Billy Wilder and Orson Welles films — four titles from each director!

The newly-restored Welles *Othello* has been one of the great international successes of 1992, and Gosden agrees that the Festival could feature a greater selection of older films. This year

we're having a batch of Murnau classics, including the classic *Nosferatu*, with its amphetamine coach rides and Edward Scissorhands fingernails, in a superb print from the Munchen Stadtmuseum, Filmmuseum. This, together with the director's *Sunrise* and *Tabu* will all be accompanied by live music.

Some of the highlights? Watch for Annie Lennox's stunning appearance in Derek Jarman's *Edward II*, singing Cole Porter's 'Every Time You Say Goodbye' to the doomed lovers (Jarman directed Lennox's video for 1990's *Red Hot and Blue* television special). David van Taylor's *The Story Behind James Vance vs Judas Priest* looks at the legal issues stemming from a teenage suicide pact supposedly inspired by the lyrics of Judas Priest and Paul Yule's *Damned in the USA* has nought to do with Bruce Springsteen, but investigates censorship issues ranging from Richard Mapplethorpe photographs to Madonna's Pepsi commercial.

Europa Europa is a delightfully picaresque and often very moving account of how to be Jewish and join the Hitler Youth Academy. Bill Gosden picked up Christopher Munch's *The Hours and Times* in Toronto, and he describes it as a "weird obsessive kind of film" dramatising a weekend that John Lennon and Brian Epstein spent together in Barcelona in 1963.

Two Les Blank documentary shorts, *Marc and Ann* and *Puamana* offer tasty samplings of Cajun and Hawaiian music respectively and even though Spalding Gray's *Monster in a Box* isn't a patch on his 1990 *Swimming to Cambodia*, it comes with a synthly wonderful score by Laurie Anderson. Other soundtrack treats include Tom Waits' contribution to Jim Jarmusch's *Night on Earth*, perhaps the ultimate taxi film with the casting coup of Winona Ryder and Gena Rowlands in the same cab. k.d. lang makes her big screen debut in Percy Adlon's

Salmonberries, a touching film, and a worthy companion piece for Martha Coolidge's *Rambling Rose* which, with its Academy Award nominations, should have made it into mainstream movie houses months back. lang is also one of the featured artists in the soundtrack to Wim Wenders' *Until The End of the World* and the festival is giving us the three-hour print instead of the official two-and-a-half hour version. Who knows, there might be an extra song or two.

WILLIAM DART

MY COUSIN VINNY

Director: Jonathan Lynn

Joe Pesci won an Academy Award last year for his role in Martin Scorsese's *Goodfellas* and more recently was David Ferrie, the object of Oliver Stone's homophobia in *JFK*. Now, in black leather jacket and cowboy boots, Pesci plays an inexperienced Brooklyn lawyer recruited to defend his cousin and a young friend in a trumped-up murder charge in Wahoo City, Alabama.

In this delightful comedy, Pesci is aided and abetted by Marisa Tomei as his spandex-clad fiancée, a young woman whose prodigious knowledge of things mechanical eventually saves the day. Although Tomei is stunning, Pesci has strong support from Fred Gwynne as an irascible judge, and Austin Pendleton as a flustered DA.

Jonathan Lynn is an Englishman with an undistinguished cinema record (his previous opus was *Nuns on the Run* — he's best known for the TV series *Yes Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister*). But then Dale (*Ruthless People*, *Blind Date*) Launer's script does most of the work, feeding the actors many wonderful moments in this gentle study of culture clash as Brooklyn hits the Deep South. Tomei's last appearance on the witness stand is delicious.

WILLIAM DART

WHORE

Director: Ken Russell

Ken Russell's cinematic adaptation of David Hines' play about a day in the life of an everyday prostitute, is a startling film. Some will see its brashness and unabashed outrageousness as a return to form after Russell's literary dalliances of the last few years. Others, I suspect, will remain sceptical.

Theresa Russell (no relation to the director) is Liz, the Shirley Valentine of



Marisa Tomei and Joe Pesci star in 'My Cousin Vinny'. He's the inexperienced lawyer and she's the girlfriend he should listen to.

CINEMA FILE

the hookers, taking us around her walks, tossing quips and snatches of philosophy at the camera. This is a woman who has trudged on the wild side — she can cheerfully cope with all manner of distressful situation, from a colleague having her throat cut to her drunken husband throwing up in his dinner-plate. She's broad-minded too, thinking nothing of administering a little S&M to an elderly gentleman in a rest home (to the great amusement of the eavesdropping patients).

For all its humour — and it would be unbearable without that humour — *Whore* has its bleak aspects. Liz's pimp, Blake (Benjamin Mouton) is an odious piece of work, cold and, unusually for a Russell film, unflamboyantly so. Outside of this, Russell the director deals mainly in rich caricature, such as a bicycle-riding young Indian who always asks Liz for condomless sex or indeed Russell's own over-the-top performance as an au fait waiter in an excruciatingly funny restaurant scene.

WILLIAM DART

That's the May school holidays done with — now for some real films... from the makers of *A Room With A View* comes HOWARDS END, a stunning adaptation of the E.M. Forster novel. It follows the lives of two families first united by the romance of one couple and then the marriage of another. Any English period film must star HELENA BONHAM CARTER and this film is no exception... MY COUSIN VINNY sees the return of the Karate Kid's RALPH MACCHIO, albeit in a smaller role. JOE PESCI takes the title role in this comedy which also features The Munster's FRED GWYNNE. A most enjoyable romp... the prolific BOB HOSKINS joins TOM BERENGER and GRETA ("Is there a nude scene?") SCACCHI in the erotic thriller SHATTERED. Tom emerges from a near fatal car crash with amnesia. Trying to put his life back together it seems darling wife Greta may just

Guild

An American Tradition

An American made guitar has always meant high quality. In the last couple of decades it has also come to mean expensive. Guild has rewritten the book on guitars with the introduction of our new Natural Satin Series. All American made, traditional Guild quality with a satin laquer finish at prices you won't believe. (Ask Shona Laing!)

JF-4 — A Jumbo guitar that has all the features of the D-4 with a 17 inch wide, 5 inch deep, body. The JF-4 is lightweight with a big sound. It has Guild traditional shaved X bracing. Available with Fishman pickups and end pin jack as a JF-4E.

D-4 — A Dreadnaught guitar with Guild's new streamline neck design, solid spruce top and solid mahogany sides. It has an arched mahogany back and a rosewood fingerboard. Available with Fishman pickup and end pin jack as a D-4E.



MORE GOOD NEWS!!! A full Range of Guild Strings now available for Acoustic, Electric and Classical Guitars, from only \$9.95 (set). TOP QUALITY GUILD STRINGS & GUITARS now at your nearest 'Switched On' Dealer.

SOUTH PACIFIC MUSIC DIST. for further details.
P.O. Box 29-131, Auckland. Ph (09) 443-1233, Fax (09) 443-2529.



You'll laugh. You'll cry. You'll hurl!



WAYNE'S WORLD

PG-13

A PARAMOUNT COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY
TM & COPYRIGHT © 1992 BY PARAMOUNT PICTURES. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

OPENS JULY 3
SEE IT AT A HOYTS OR VILLAGE
FORCE CINEMA NEAR YOU