

# Spring-A-Round fun arrives



## As union organizer, Stallone punches his way to power

In "F.I.S.T." (PG), his first movie since "Rocky," Sylvester Stallone comes out slugging, but in a different kind of fight. As Johnny Kovac, a "hunky" laborer from Cleveland, he rises from union organizer in 1937 to national president of the Federation of Interstate Truckers (F.I.S.T.) in the '50s.

The early, bloody days of union organizing are vividly re-created in the first half of the film which builds to a climax in a brutal clash between the company and the fledgling union.

When a trucking firm uses goons to break up a strike, Kovac fights back by bringing in mobsters. From then on, it's goodbye idealism, hello power. Corruption becomes inevitable. The seed is planted for the eventual destruction of the union and Kovac.

Meanwhile, Kovac emerges from this baptism by fire to become a dynamic organizer and leader. He's a Hoffa-like character whose rise to power parallels the union's growth from a handful of puny locals to a mighty organization capable of shutting down the entire country with a national strike.

THE TIME SPAN and dramatic change in the union's fortunes are underscored by László Kovacs' stunning photography. He re-creates the '30s using dark tones and compositions which bring to mind the paintings of the American "ashcan" artists and realists of the early decades.

In contrast, the '50s are depicted with harsh light, flat designs and plastic anonymity. These are the palmy days of the union. Their officers, wearing business suits, driving big cars and occupying expensive quarters, hardly can be distinguished from management.

Among the union bigwigs is Peter Boyle who plays the national president, a self-serving, shifty-eyed cheat. He's maneuvered out of office and replaced by Kovac. However, Kovac doesn't enjoy his triumph long. He's subpoenaed to testify before the Senate committee investigating labor's ties to organized crime.

Both Rod Steiger and Tony Lo Bianco effectively create different but menacing characters: Steiger as a doggedly determined Senator and Lo Bianco as a Mafia kingpin. Their opposition makes the explosive ending a foregone conclusion.

The union never does get free of the mob. There's always one more "favor" required. Kovac is a compliant accomplice. He's not above using muscle to force reluctant workers to join the union. The script would like to play it both ways, to show his blemishes and then pretend they don't exist, or at least don't matter. This approach don't work.

KOVAC'S ACTIONS clearly support an anti-humanist belief that the end justifies the means. His concern for an abstraction (the union) outweighs his concern for individuals.

"F.I.S.T." is an entertaining albeit lengthy (two and a half hours) movie. It's a successful showcase for Sylvester Stallone's talents, but it is not social documentary or powerful drama. It does not have the guts of an unimpressive movie like "Blue Collar" or the originality of a stunner like "On the Waterfront."



Brandishing clenched fists, the symbol of the Federation of Interstate Truckers, labor leader Johnny Kovac (Sylvester Stallone) delivers a pep talk to his men in a scene from "F.I.S.T."

Old fashioned fun with a disco beat will arrive in Birmingham May 12 and 13 when Common Ground again stages Spring-A-Round.

The event offers young and old, families and singles a chance to get acquainted with the shopping center in downtown Birmingham.

A kaleidoscope of entertainment is planned, especially the evening of May 12. Eighty-nine merchants in Birmingham requested the closing of city streets to allow the staging of events.

East Maple from Park/Brownell to Woodward and W. Maple from Woodward to Chester will be closed 7 p.m.-midnight May 12. Hamilton Street from Woodward to Ferndale will be closed 5 p.m.-midnight May 12 also.

THE BIRMINGHAM police urge visitors to use the ring road circling Birmingham and to park in the parking structures.

One show stopper will be the Oakland University Jazz Ensemble directed by Doc Holladay. The 18-member group will perform May 12 near the Maple/Woodward intersection.

Marvin (Doc) Holladay, director of jazz studies at Oakland University, explains that he actually directs three jazz ensembles at the university. Doc, who has his Ph.D. in world music from Wesley University, points out, "My students are not the typical collegiate types. They are all working professionals in the Detroit area and 18 of them make some groups."

Holladay's background includes recording, transcription, directing his own jazz quintet and playing his baritone sax with such jazz notables as Thad Jones, Mel Lewis, Charlie Mingus, Quincy Jones, Stan Kenton and Woody Herman.

Professional mime Jonathan Haglund, from Valley Studios, University of Wisconsin School of Mime, will perform at Spring-A-Round. So will Jim Altmeyer, professional mime and clown who was trained at Marygrove College. Another clown coming to Birmingham May 12 is Crispy, considered to be one of Detroit's finest professional performers.

ALSO SCHEDULED are Rowena and the Minstrel Mousers organized by Dan Cantwell. Cantwell explains that mungers means "message carriers" and musical tales will be performed by the group on a vividly decorated flat bed truck affectionately called The Red Dragon!

The troupe consists of Cantwell who is a guitarist; Bill Phillips, a juggler; John Russ, the sad clown; and Rick Beaudrand, guitarist, as well as Rowena, the grand lady of folk.

Children will have a holiday starting at 5 p.m. May 12 in downtown Birmingham. There will be rides on a special double decker bus and puppeteers, mimes, clowns, balloons and fun fobs. Birmingham's own YMCA young women gymnasts will add special notes of gaiety to this family-oriented affair.

The whole family can hear the 65-member South Oakland Concert Band, directed by Walter F. Mison. The band will perform at 7:30 p.m. concert May 12 in midtown Birmingham.

Mison explained that the band, sponsored by the Southeastern Systems of Oakland Community College, is one more gesture of good will towards the community from the college.

ARTISTS, HOMEOWNERS, school principals, policemen, nurses—and the eldest member being 82—and the

youngest a high school student—make up the band, which is booked solidly all summer.

Mison is a teacher in the Berkeley Schools where the band practices each Monday night. He also plays clarinet with the Detroit Concert Band. The Misons live in Southfield.

Additional performers include dance troupes, blue grass groups, ethnic dancers, walking minstrels and folk guitarists. The 17-year-old Slavic Folk Ensemble from Oakland University will perform during the evening.

The group which toured Poland in 1976 will be exhibiting the dance of Slavic countries. Another feature of the evening will be Detroit Folk Dance, a Cranbrook-based group.

One unique stage will be the Burger-King paddlewheel boat float used in Hudson's Thanksgiving Parade—no doubt complete with banjo players.

THE PAINT CREEK Folk Lore Society has responded by providing Buffalo Nickel, a group which plays an old-time hammered dulcimer and string band. Simple Gifts, performing folk and blue grass and old time, along with Laurie Cleland, who plays traditional and contemporary folk, will be on hand.

Eddie Damm will play dulcimer and tin whistle and Cece Horodko will fiddle and banjo for the Spring-A-Round crowds.

Staging this largest entertainment extravaganza in the history of Birmingham is Friends of Common Ground with the support of the Birmingham-Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce, the Birmingham city commissioner and city officers.

The evening will feature Cheese Disco, directed by Franklin Sterns. Entertainment for Spring-A-Round is

being co-ordinated by a new staff person at Common Ground, Andrzej Roznecki, 26, who is currently directing the Cripple Creek Sandwich Theatre there and developing plans for a street theater which will play for thousands in 1978 and 1979.

Roznecki, who is a professional dancer and mime himself, said, "The experience gleaned from the 1977 Spring-A-Round, plus the closing of Birmingham's major streets, give us direction and courage to stage the largest in-city extravaganza in Michigan."

COMMON GROUND is a human services center located at 1090 S. Adams in Birmingham. Director Diane Vinco said she believes "in strengthening the community through fun and wholesome entertainment. "It's the best way for people to stay mentally healthy," she said, "and that's what we are all about."

The agency offers free crisis counseling, medical and legal clinics plus community organizing and education. Its Intake and Referral telephone lines, 645-9676, get 1,000 calls monthly and are staffed by 40 volunteers.

Common Ground has a staff of 14 and 330 volunteers.

Friends of Common Ground, a fund-raising group for the agency, hopes to raise \$5,000 from Spring-A-Round to supplement the agency's 1978 budget of \$189,000. Money is raised by Birmingham merchants paying the agency for the organization of the event and publicizing the extravaganza.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Alice McCarthy or Ed Stevenson at Common Ground, 645-1173.

## Well-blended talents enhance 'Cole'



Nancy Grahn (left), Frank Root and Michele Mulen are among the eight singing, dancing stars of the musical "Cole" devised by Benny Green and Alan Strachan, now playing Meadow Brook Theatre.

Following is a portion of Ethel Simmons' review of "Cole" which was cut in Thursday's paper due to limited space.

John Sharpe directed and choreographed "Cole" with a fine, light touch, making the show go down like another old-fashioned—zingy and smooth.

"Make It Another Old-Fashioned, Please" happens to be the name of one of the numbers in the "Love" sequence. It's an effective love-gone-wrong tune sung with style by Marianne Chails.

Tall brunette Nancy Grahn is socko as she deadpans her way through "The Laziest Gal in Town," another "Love" routine.

Besides all the bright tunes and clever lyrics you may be familiar with, there are the songs that came as delightful surprises. "When Love Beckoned on 52nd Street" is a lively production number. In this song canny Cole rhymes "suburban" with "Deanna Durbin."

"Cole," which was originally produced at the Mermaid Theatre in London in 1974, continues through May 21 at Meadow Brook Theatre on the Oakland University campus in Rochester.

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## Glimpses

### NEW RELEASES

AMERICAN HOT WAX (PG). Story of rock 'n' roll era with guest shots by Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis. Tim McIntire plays deejay Alan Freed.

THE BOYS IN COMPANY C (R). Lives of a cross section of young men from Marine boot camp to Vietnam. Good individual performances.

CASEY'S SHADOW (PG). Sensitive movie about impoverished Cajun (Walter Matthau), his three sons and the horse that becomes pivotal to their future fortunes.

COMING HOME (R). Powerful story of Vietnam war with Jane Fonda as officer's wife who falls in love with disabled vet (Jon Voight).

THE FURY (R). Director Brian DePalma unleashes the special effects in gory film about secret government agency and two teenagers with strange psychic powers.

HOUSE CALLS (PG) Walter Matthau and Glenda Jackson in entertaining comedy about amorous adventures of widowed doctor and complications in hospital politics.

I WANNA HOLD YOUR HAND (PG). Beatle hysteria of the '60s in story of six youngsters who go to New York to see the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan show. Sound track of Beatles' recordings.

MADAME ROSA. Tender story of old Jewish woman (Simone Signoret) who raises Arab boy. Won Academy Award recently for Best Foreign Film. English subtitles.

PRETTY BABY (R). Red-light district of New Orleans, in 1917 as seen by a child prostitute in lush, unromanticizing film by Louis Malle.

RABBIT TEST (PG). Joan Rivers directed this wild comedy about the world's first pregnant man.

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER (R). John Travolta (of Kotter's sweatshops) is the main man in film with plenty of disco action.

SILVER BEARS (PG). Would-be comedy about a rundown Swiss bank, a bogus silver mine and some tricky business dealings. Good cast put poor direction. A SPECIAL DAY Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni are excellent as lonely individuals caught up in bombast of Italian fascism. Subtitles.

AN UNMARRIED WOMAN (R). Jill Clayburgh in top form as woman who picks up the pieces after her husband leaves her, then finds there's more to life than Scotch Tape. Written and directed by Paul Mazursky.

### MOVIE RATING GUIDE

G General audiences admitted.

PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.

R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.

X No one under 18 admitted.