



## Oliver arrives, Superman, too, for Christmas

Beginning this Friday, the seasonal tide of holiday movies will reach Detroit, and about a dozen big-name, big-budget films will be vying for your attention. Let's take a quick look at what we can anticipate.

For openers, on Friday we have "Oliver's Story," the sequel to "Love Story," and "Superman." Christopher Reeve stars as the comic book hero, and he's in heavy company with Marlon Brando and Gene Hackman.

On Dec. 20, Clint Eastwood displays his flair for comedy in "Every Which Way But Loose." This is not a "Dirty Harry" film.

After that, a person could get punchy viewing the barrage of movies scheduled to open Dec. 22. These will include the action film, "Force 10 from Navarone," based on Alistair MacLean's novel and starring the late Robert Shaw along with Franco Nero and Harrison Ford.

ALSO IN THE military vein will be Sophia Loren in "Brass Target," a film that suggests a plot against Gen. Patton.

"King of the Gypsies," from the novel by Peter Maas, deals with the occult and features Shelley Winters, Susan Sarandon, Brooke Shields and Eric Roberts.

Weird in a different way is "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." Leonard Nimoy and Donald Sutherland star in the remake of this 1966 classic about a small town whose population is taken over by life forms from outer space.

Romance and comedy are on tap in "Moment by Moment" and "California Suite." In the former film, John Travolta is a denim-clad young man who falls in love with Lily Tomlin, a diamond-clad lady. In the latter—a prestigiously populated comedy by Neil Simon—Alan Alda and Jane Fonda, Michael Caine and Maggie Smith, and Walter Matthau and Elaine May appear in individual skills.

Richard Adams' compelling novel "Watership Down," about a group of rabbits whose tribulations suggest allegories to human history, makes its appearance as a vividly animated film.

TWO MORE FILMS which might open in December (the dates are uncertain) are "Born Again" and "Autumn Sonata." "Born Again" is the story of White House lawyer Charles Colson, from complicity to contrition. At the other extreme in filmmaking is Ingmar Bergman's "Autumn Sonata." (If it were film festival time, we might call these from con to Cannes.)

Bergman matches up two of the world's greatest actresses, Ingrid Bergman and Liv Ullmann, in an emotional duel as a talented mother and untalented daughter.

Parents thinking about movies for their children won't find it difficult to make a selection. They can choose "Watership Down" (appropriate for adults and children) or "Superman." I haven't seen "Superman," but I assume it would be appropriate for children. One other contender is not a new film but a re-release, Disney's original "Pinocchio."

## 'Spartans' reveals crisp view of war

"Go Tell the Spartans" (R) just might be the least-heralded, most underrated and best movie yet on the Vietnam War.

With refreshing conventionality, it presents a set of circumstances, actions and events free of moralizing, sentimentalizing or psychoanalyzing. In other words, it uses convention to make matters clear quickly and refrains from subjective commentary.

Credit for this no-nonsense, workmanlike approach must go to screenwriter Wendell Mayes (his other credits include "The Poseidon Adventure" and "Anatomy of a Murder") and director Ted Post.

However, it is Burt Lancaster who is responsible in an important way for establishing and maintaining the sense of credibility. Lancaster gives a solid performance as the crusty Major Barker, a weary professional soldier in charge of a contingent of Americans working with South Vietnamese troops.

THE YEAR IS 1964 and the Americans are present as "advisers." Following orders, the colonel directs his American and South Vietnamese troops to take a village. The wretchedness of this business, the questionable actions of individuals—soldiers and civilians—and the pointlessness of the assignment are elements which anticipate the fiercer, more extensive, dilemma-ridden conflict to follow.

A number of young actors contribute notable performances. Among these are Craig Wasson as an idealistic draftee and Marc Singer as an ambitious officer.

"Go Tell the Spartans" is a gutsy, unpretentious film. Its effect lingers as the final image, a French cemetery overgrown by the jungle, makes a sad and provocative point.

## Glimpses

**THE BIG FIX (PG)** Another fetching performance by Richard Dreyfuss, who plays a former college activist turned private eye.

**THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL (R)** Some fine actors at their worst (except for Laurence Olivier) in a jokey film about a fiendish Nazi plot.

**A DREAM OF PASSION (R)** Melina Mercouri and Ellen Burstyn star in modern story that strains in its parallels with Greek drama, "Medea."

**GIRL FRIENDS (PF)** Melanie Mayron and Anita Skinner star in Claudia Weill's directorial debut that focuses on marriage versus career.

**GOD'S SOUTH (PG)** Fine character study by Jack Nicholson in adventure that proves there's still hope for the Western.

**INTERIORS (PG)** Woody Allen's serious film explores the tensions within a family where neuroses and artistic sensitivity dominate their lives.

**LORD OF THE RINGS** Hobbits and the creatures of Middle Earth are energetically recreated in Ralph Bakshi's animated version of J.R.R. Tolkien's classic fantasy.

**MAGIC (R)** Anthony Hopkins is a psychotic ventriloquist with an x-rated dummy.

**NATIONAL LAMPON'S ANIMAL HOUSE (R)** Outrageous and raunchy comedy about life at Delta Fraternity House, the bottom-of-the-barrel fraternity on a small college campus in the early '60s.

### MOVIE RATING GUIDE

- G General audiences admitted.
- PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.
- R Restricted. Adults must accompany person under 18.
- X No one under 18 admitted.



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