



the movies.

Louise Snider

'Breaking Away' still deserves '79 top honors

Each year in tallying my ledger of film experiences, I am chastened by the glut of opportunities I have missed. Take the matter of superlatives for instance.

Last August, in an expansive moment, I referred to "Breaking Away" as the best film of the summer and the year, an opinion I still hold. However, compared to the hyperbole I see in other reviews, this is faint praise.

Film criticism is not a medium for restraint. One should be bold. It seems, even rash, as when Rex Reed endorses "Yanks" — "In every decade, a truly memorable motion picture comes along." Or as Andrew Sarris pontificates about "Manhattan," "The one truly great American film of the '70s."

And descriptions of "Apocalypse Now" constitute a movie script in themselves.

"APOCALYPSE NOW" appeared on the screens as a significant event about two significant events: the Vietnam war and the making of "Apocalypse Now." The eerie sequence of a bridge demolition in a watercolor fog and the Wagnerian bombast of Robert Duvall and his troops taking a beach for surfing stand out as remarkable film achievements.

But my enthusiastic recollections are checked by the sobering thought that 1,200 gallons of gasoline were used in the bridge destruction and another 1,200 in a simulated napalm attack. Putting this epic aside, 1979 appears as a year without any heavyweight contenders for top awards, but with some interesting and entertaining films. I would like to enumerate them. Related through my list may be, I hate to miss still another critical opportunity.

First, the explanation of a few omissions. I omit "Hair," which has won some accolades, because, saints preserve us, I didn't see it. I omit consideration of "Being There" and "All That Jazz" for the same reason. Finally, I omit foreign films because they are not always accessible to movie audiences.

This leaves me with a group of 1979 films, in no special order, anyone's "all time greats" list, but on a scale of 1 to 10, they are about seven and a half.

"THE INLAWS," for the inspired comical pairing of Alan Arkin and Peter Falk; "Time After Time," for its wit and intelligence; "The Great Train Robbery," also for its wit and its stylishness; "The China Syndrome," for Jack Lemmon's performance and for knockout timing; "The Life of Brian," for its irreverence; "Kramer vs. Kramer," for solid acting and acute observations of parent-child relationships; "Star Trek," for reuniting the characters in a worthy way; "Norma Rae," for a gutsy story and topnotch acting by Sally Field and Pat Hingle; "Manhattan," for Woody Allen's uniquely personal, comic interpretations of universal concerns.

Finally, "Breaking Away" still strikes me as the best film of '79 for many reasons: its original story and locale, its ability to convey youthful enthusiasm and exuberance, its use of fresh faces, its brisk direction, its non-patronizing attitude toward baffled parents, and its very recognition of social distinctions in middle-class, middle America.

Along with "Manhattan," it's the only film on the list I could sit through twice.



Bob Fosse's film

Director Bob Fosse, above, casts a critical eye during production of "All That Jazz," a film that strips shop business of all its glitter. Ann Reinking, below, as Joe Gideon's mistress performs a routine with his young daughter Michelle, played by Erzsébet Földi, in "All That Jazz." The film, rated R, is a 20th Century-Fox release, opening Feb. 22 at Detroit-area theaters.



what's at the movies

NEW RELEASES

ALL THAT JAZZ (R). Bob Fosse's rowdy, autobiographical musical about hard-working, hard-driving choreographer.

AND JUSTICE FOR ALL (R). Al Pacino is a young trial lawyer dedicated to his profession and profoundly troubled by the legal system.

APOCALYPSE NOW (R). Francis Ford Coppola's epic film of the Vietnam war interwoven with the characters and stunning impact of Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness."

AVALANCHE EXPRESS (PG). Adventure-suspense drama about KGB agent defecting to the West. Filmed in Italy and Germany; climactic scene is, you guessed it, avalanche.

BEING THERE. Peter Sellers is a TV-educated economist in satire that pokes fun at our political and social concerns.

BLACK HOLE (PG). Disney's expensive entry into sci-fi, space adventure with strong cast and action story.

CHAPTER TWO (PG). Autobiographical Neil Simon story about a man starting over after death of his wife.

CUBA (R). Sean Connery and Brooke Adams in romantic adventure during last days of Batista regime in Cuba.

THE DEER HUNTER (R). An emotionally gripping and violent film about the lives of three friends from a small steeltown as they are affected by the Vietnam war.

ELECTRIC HORSEMAN (PG). Jane Fonda is a reporter and Robert Redford an ex-rodeo champion in satirical romance.

THE EUROPEANS (PG). Exquisite period film of Henry James' witty novel. Lee Remick is seductive adventuress who returns to New England to seek a secure marriage.

GOING IN STYLE (PG). Offbeat comedy about three pensioners who decide to "go in style."

THE JERK (R). Steve Martin in comedy about a white boy raised by black sharecroppers.

KRAMER VS. KRAMER (PG). Perceptive, well-acted drama about a broken marriage and a custody battle. Dustin Hoffman and Meryl Streep star.

THE MAIN EVENT (PG). Barbra Streisand is a perfume manufacturer who manages a retired boxer, Ryan O'Neil, in comedy about the fight game.

MANHATTAN (R). The inhabitants are somewhat frayed, but the Big Apple looks glorious in Woody Allen's witty peek at the pairings and partings among New York literati.

1941 (PG). John Belushi and host of others in comedy about mythical Japanese attack on Los Angeles.

PROMISES IN THE DARK (PG). Well-acted film with Marsha Mason as a doctor dealing with a terminally ill, young patient.

QUODROPHENIA (R). Story of disillusioned young man during '60's era of mods and rockers in England. Music by The Who.

THE ROSE (R). Bette Midler as '60's rock star living life of emotional extremes that suggest some parallels with career of Janis Joplin.

RUNNING (PG). Susan Anspach is the wife of Michael Douglas who is training to qualify for the Olympic marathon.

STAR TREK — THE MOTION PICTURE (G). Space-film epic brings together familiar faces of Enterprise crew in semi-new setting and with razzle-dazzle special effects.

STARTING OVER (R). Romantic comedy with toned-down Burt Reynolds torn between his ex-wife, Candice Bergen, who records a hit song, and his new love, Jill Clayburgh, an independent schoolteacher.

10 (R). Comedy with Dudley Moore who tosses out his tenured roommate, Julie Andrews, in his search for the perfect "10."

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.

Ethnic program explores Chinese food

The International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit will kick off a three-month-long series of Chinese cultural programs with an ethnic Sunday afternoon entitled "Eating the Chinese Way" from 2:30-4:30 p.m. Feb. 10. The International Institute is at 111 E. Kirby, one block east of Woodward in the Cultural Center.

Elizabeth King is author of a new cookbook of the same title and president of the Chinese American Educational and Cultural Center of Michigan. She will make a two-hour presentation on whys, hows and whats of Chinese food, showing how Chinese food is part of the art and culture of China.

Mrs. King, Southfield resident, will present a slide lecture, a Chinese cooking demonstration featuring some of the 30 different techniques of Chinese cooking, an exhibit of ancient Chinese cooking utensils, instructions on how to use chopsticks, and food tasting experiences featuring shrimp sticks, fried won ton, sweet won ton and shrimp chips with Chinese tea.

through the games, music, food, arts and crafts, language and calligraphy of Chinese children.

Mrs. King's cookbook, scheduled for publication this summer, includes a survey of 80 of the 200 Chinese restaurants in the Detroit metropolitan area and 85 sample menus from those restaurants. She will preview those menus and pass out recipes at the Feb. 10 program.

The afternoon program costs \$5 per person. Reservations are necessary.

Following the Feb. 10 program, The International Institute will present "The Chinese Way — Through a Child's Eyes" every day from Feb. 11 through May 15. The two-hour join-in program is geared to school and recreational groups of children grades 3-7. It focuses on Chinese culture and art

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE Chinese lantern making, playing the tangram seven-piece puzzle game, and music and stories of the Dragon Boat Festival. A showcase exhibit, "The Chinese Way — Through a Child's Eyes" is also on view at the institute daily. Call ahead for viewing times.

The program cost is 50 cents and is scheduled by reservation only.

A "Chinese Way" program modified for adults is also offered to adult civic groups at a minimum charge. For reservations and more information call The International Institute, 871-8600.

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