

# TV FILMS

TV FILMS VIDEO

# VIDEO

## SCREENINGS

Friday-Sunday, Tuesday-Thursday, Tate Gallery, Millbank, SW1 (821 1313) [W] Weekdays and Saturday 11.00-5.00, Sun 2.00-5.00. Free.

**Anglo-French Video Exchange.** Last week of the French tapes programmed by the Tate in collaboration with LVA (see ICA below and News). Tapes include a love affair with the Villette abattoirs, childhood, synthetic landscapes and outer space. A programme of British tapes is being screened in the Lecture Room on Friday 11.00 to 5.00 and Saturday 11.00 to 3.00, including several from the current ICA season. And others.

■ Tuesday, ICA Cinematheque, The Mall, SW1 (930 3647) [S] 6.30, 8.30. £1.40 b/w kble (Day pass 50p).

**Summary Video UK 84.** Third of four slices of British video culture, this one on the theme of 'Culture, Image and Language'. I've not had a chance to see Vida's 'The Gap', but the three other tapes are adequate incentive to drop everything and get down to the ICA. Steve Hawley's 'The Dictionary' is an alternately hilarious and unsettling set of games with language that draw on Magritte, Ionesco, mathematics and those ghastly educational TV language teaching programmes (I wish an apple very ripe and with skin pink). Jez Welsh presents his beautifully made 'Tense/Shout', vividly coloured, intricate, intelligent and with a strong synthesised soundtrack. The evening ends with the funniest 35 minutes on tape, the hilarious remake of 'Double Indemnity' by Akiko Hada and the Japanese-American Toy Theatre of London. Those of you who've not caught this company on the tabletops of London will be amazed; those who have will probably be glad of a better view. The Fred MacMurray and Barbara Stanwyck parts are taken by two-inch tall wind-up models of Godzilla and the Creature From The Black Lagoon, the Edward G part is played by a woodentop on a bucking bronco that really bucks, and the crime is committed with a heart attack brought on by Japanese rock and roll music.

Their gloriously literal and gaudily shot hallucinations—as the fear is overcome by guilt—are wonderful: 'Fear attacked him' intones the voice over as the Creature lies in a doll's cot with a rubber lobster flapping wildly over him. Very definitely to catch while it's hot.

■ Wednesday, Pimlico Festival Arts and Media Scheme, 1-3 Charwood St SW1 (821 1612) [A]

**Unemployed Women's Video Project** starting the first of a series of ten workshops on community based video work including programme design and editing. The course is free to unwaged women. Judging by responses to other recent women's projects, you'd be advised to book early to ensure your place.

## NOTES

The GLC-sponsored day conference on 'British Media, British Imperialism' on the weekend of June 3 was an angry and embattled affair. Speakers from movements as diverse as the Black Media Workers Association, Sinn Fein and the NUM found common ground in the ways in which the third world, racism and working class struggles are represented in the media. In the workshop I attended on stereotyping, a 14-minute tape slide presentation on the representation of black people in the press focused a good deal of attention on the common experience of distortion, misinformation and downright inflammatory language. Produced by Leizer, an A-level student at City and East London College, the presentation was a tough and moving tribute to Fleet Street's powers of rabble rousing. Detailing particularly the coverage of the New Cross Massacre demonstrations (with headlines like the Sun's 'Black mob on the rampage') it's both an excellent use of the tape-slide medium and a powerful example of the value of media education in the post-school sector.

## NEWS

There's a genuine problem with the bigger independent distributors: it's always possible that your video will get lost among the plethora of titles in a fat catalogue. Most video makers are most intensely involved with the business of producing the tapes and have neither the energy, the expertise or the personnel to deal with promotion.

This is, of course, what distributors are for. But distributors put their part of the money and work into producing copies, mailing and promoting, and the vital work of invoking and getting their hands on the money. Exhibitors are as often as not the people who put the major chunk of time and energy into researching the communities they serve. Venues like Moonshine, with their programmes of workshop videos from around the country once a month, or the Rio with their commit-

a comedy with a few car chases to spice it up. Yes, it probably sounded like a good idea when first dreamed up. With Peter Fonda, Susan George.

■ **Where Does It Hurt?** (Rod Amateau 1971) 10.30-12.05 Thames

Peter Sellers in a piece of trash which anyone who treasures his frequent brilliance will want to ignore.

■ **Ends and Means** (Stewart MacKinnon 1984) 10.45-12.45 C4

Machiavelli, Robinson Crusoe and a Victorian merchant industrialist are the triple strands that weave a dense picture of such non-visual questions as the nature of power, class, capital and exploitation. Myth, history, silent film, theory and drama combine to examine the roots of those questions and the results — to be seen in the present day decay of a northern industrial town. Uncompromising use of all the sources reveals a fascinating journey through ideas and time. With Jake Denman, Doone Byrd, Andrew Rashleigh, Philip McGough, Paul Copley.

## TUESDAY

■ **Because of Him** (Richard Wallace 1946 b/w) 6.15-7.40 BBC2

Slotted in here as a 'Deanna Durbin film', it's actually a Charles Laughton film — few could stand up to such a presence — Deanna was not one of them. As it is he plays an actor (!) and is thus given free rein to mug and upstage unmercifully. A tour de force from Charles.

■ **Angel City** (Philip Leacock 1980) 9.00-10.50 C4

A made-for-TV movie from a director whose credits in both film and TV series segments are considerable. From a novel by Patrick Smith it follows the misfortunes of a farmer, his wife and teenage daughter after they sell their farm and go in search of jobs and a new life. Unlike 'The Grapes of Wrath' they do not head North or for California but aim for Florida where Southern traditions of worker exploitation and murder are the descendants of slavery. Tricked into 'Angel City' they find it isn't much less than a prison where their labour is forced and hard. It takes the abduction of his daughter to finally galvanise the farmer out of servitude into action. With Paul Winfield, Mitchell Ryan, Jennifer Warren, Jennifer Jason Leigh.

## WEDNESDAY

■ **The Cow** (Daryush Mehrjui 1968 b/w) 9.30-11.30 C4

In the 'World Cinema' slot is this prize winning film from Iran. (International Critics award of 1971 from Venice). A simple story — ostensibly — that actually encompasses the intricacies of what is or is not important in rural Iranian life (rural agrarian life in many places in fact). Mashdi Hassan leaves his most prized possession — the cow — in the care of fellow villagers while he goes away on business. In his absence it dies, it is the only cow in the village and his friends are afraid to tell him what really happened, so they say it strayed. In reality it was buried in a wall of his house. Hassan's obsession with the animal turns to insanity as he tries to become the missing animal. Deceptive and powerful.

## THURSDAY

■ **Fight To Berlin** (Christopher Petit 1983) 9.30-11.15 C4

After 'Radio On' and 'An Unsuitable Job For A Woman', Chris Petit's new film came as a surprise and a disappointment. The surprise is that the ex-film critic has produced a symphony of colour and movement, better composed than any recent colour film. The disappointment is that this runs to the beat of such an indolent script — a series of muted question marks, circling themselves. Tusse Silberg is the young woman fleeing London, away from an unexplained killing to Berlin, and several brief encounters, with a diffident young Scot, a gangsterish Frenchman and a veteran B-movie actor. But behind this case of new 'friends' lurk hidden motives... In fact, too many mysteries populate a story that seems to be nudging its way to simple answers. Too many touches of deliberation weigh down a film which ripples with zest — from its musical soundtrack by CAN, to the edgy handful of central performances. (Chris Auty)

■ **The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean** (John Huston 1972) 9.00-11.00 BBC2

Paul Newman stands at the centre of this unfortunately muddled modern western whilst its principal creators heave in opposite directions — it shows. Not a spoof, not a comedy, not an action-packed drama, not a loving recreation of the western myth — but a bit of them all. Patchy and really only for Newman fans. With Ava Gardner, Jacqueline Bisset, Tab Hunter, Stacy Keach, Roddy McDowell, Anthony Perkins, John Huston and Victoria Principal in an uncredited bit part.

Irwin's swimming pool back in Beverly Hills. In the deluge: Richard Basehart, Carol Lynley, Teresa Wright, Roddy McDowell, Robert Culp, Barbara Hershey.

■ **The Honkers** (Steve Ihnat 1971) 10.30-12.10 BBC1

James Coburn is the central character — an ageing rodeo cowboy who finds it increasingly difficult to cope with the wild bulls he rides for a living and women, in particular his wife. A quietly observed portrait of one of America's favourite myths: the man of few words and much action in the harsh dusty landscape and environment that he occupies. With Lois Nettleton, Slim Pickens.

## SUNDAY

■ **Key Largo** (John Huston 1948 b/w) 2.10-3.45 BBC1

A war veteran's pilgrimage to the father and widow of his slain buddy sours in the greasy heat and sleaze of post-war Florida. The experience turns into a low-key nightmare as the gangster arrives, symbolising the resurgence of every day evil and the further death of illusion and idealism. It was also a splendidly moody thriller with a heavyweight cast. With Humphrey Bogart, Edward G Robinson, Lauren Bacall, Claire Trevor, Lionel Barrymore.

■ **This Time Forever** (Larry L Kent 1980) 7.15-8.50 BBC1

Student militancy, Vietnam — 1967 — and the two starcrossed young lovers have not only those dilemmas on their plates, but also the social and cultural problems involved when he is an American and she is a French Canadian of snotty family — do they shake up together and risk wrath of mere and pere? Does he draft dodge or march off to 'nam? Would one care either way if this did not also feature Cloris Leachman and Eddie Albert as the boy's luckless parents?

## MONDAY

■ **Sink The Bismarck!** (Lewis Gilbert 1960 b/w) 2.00-3.50 Thames

One of those small budget stiff-upper lipppers which made gritty romance out of the British war effort with the aid of clear-eyed chaps and thin-lipped Jerries. The hunting of the battleship Bismarck by a fleet of lesser Royal Naval vessels was unfortunately represented by models in a tank of Atlantic where the cruel sea was caused by stage hands just out of shot. Much better when it concentrates on the human dramas going on aboard the dreadnoughts. With Kenneth More, Dana Wynter, Karel Stepanek, Carl Mohner, Michael Hordern, Maurice Denham.

■ **Dirty Mary, Crazy Larry** (John Hough 1974) 9.25-10.55 BBC1

'Easy Rider' meets 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid' and we make one of them a girl so we get a romance out of it... better make it

## FRIDAY

■ **After Office Hours** (Robert Z Leonard 1935 b/w) 11.15-12.35am C4

Murder-mystery, romance and comedy set in the editorial offices of a newspaper, with Clark Gable and Constance Bennett as the pair to whom it all happens. Scripted in the quick-fire style of Hollywood at its best by Herman J Mankiewicz who was to win the Oscar in 1941, with Orson Welles, for 'Citizen Kane'. With Stuart Erwin, Billie Burke, Harvey Stephens.

■ **Slaughterhouse Five** (George Roy Hill 1972) 11.20-1.05 BBC1

Kurt Vonnegut's Dresden fantasy was a tough nut to crack on film and director Hill didn't quite manage it. Nevertheless with a good performance from Michael Sacks as the time traveller Billy Pilgrim, and Valerie Perrine as the future, there is more than enough going on to make this well worth noting. With Eugene Roche, Sharon Gans, Ron Leibman.

## SATURDAY

■ **Hail The Conquering Hero** (Preston Sturges 1944 b/w) 2.25-4.15 C4

A bit of welcome satiric relief in C4's series 'Hollywood at War' — which could run until Doomsday the way 'war films' continue to be churned out. This one acquired an Oscar nomination for its screenplay (also by director Sturges) which suggests that the sharply observed pokes at the things small-town America loves best went over or under the committee. As it is, Eddie Bracken is the 'hero' who returns home to adulation when the truth is that he was invalidated out... with hay fever. A great cast as well orchestrated along with the classic small town setting. With William Demarest, Ella Raines, Raymond Walburn, Franklin Pangborn, Mildred Harris, Chester Conklin et al.

■ **Tarzan and the Green Goddess** (Edward Kull 1938 b/w) 3.10-4.10 BBC2

Not the latest sex scandal to rock the Tory party as Michael Heseltine's early morning aerobics frolics are not revealed to the nation's breakfasters. Actually this rather disjointed mish-mash is the result of a cull from a twelve part serial to fit the feature length. Edgar Rice Burroughs himself was involved in the production but any kind of authenticity is not thereby guaranteed. It was shot in Guatemala with the Olympic shot-putt champ of 1928 as The Jungle Man. He revelled in the name Herman Brix until some unimaginative soul got him to change it to Bruce Bennett.

■ **Flood** (Earl Bellamy 1976) 6.40-8.15 BBC1

After 'Fire' it seemeth like the plague of disasters is upon us — and lo — God shall smite the hand of the scrofulous wretch who buyeth in such a load of old cobblers. And he shall say in a terrible voice: seeketh not to increase the licence fee, whilst thou contributes to the upkeep of my servant



Passion, penury and exploitation in the deep South. Leacock's ANGEL CITY. (Tues C4)