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Liquid Sky

Directed and produced by Slava Tsukerman. Starring Anne Carlisle and Paula Sheppard. (USA, 1983)

Liquid Sky is an amazing film debut from a recent Russian emigre, Slava Tsukerman. This \$400,000 independent production out of New York concerns a much smaller-than-satellite-dish flying saucer which lands on the rooftop of a Lower East Side apartment. The extra-terrestrial craves the heroin-like substance produced by the human brain at the moment of orgasm. The film suggests that Americans have special opiate receptors in their brains, linking the film's miniaturized dish with the flying saucers which were the omnipresent cold war metaphor for Russian invasion. In obtaining the desired chemical substance, the alien kills and instantaneously absorbs the various sexual partners of the androgynous beauty, Margaret (Anne Carlisle) who lives in the penthouse apartment.

Carlisle is remarkable as Margaret, an ex-prototypical WASP from Connecticut, as well as in a provocative double-role. As co-star and co-writer, some of the incidents in the film are based on details of her actual life. Margaret takes a lot of sexual abuse in the first half of the film, ultimately wreaking vengeance using her mysterious power to vaporize her sexual partners upon climax. Other memorable characters include Adrian (Paula Sheppard), Margaret's soft-faced, hard-hearted dominating roommate, who has "no romantic illusions about changing the world"; Jimmy, a spoiled junkie model, "the new Miss America"; and Jimmy's sexually overt mother (Susan Doukas), who aggressively tries to seduce the "German alien" astrophysicist investigating the flying saucer. Combining Manhattan New Wave lifestyle, '80s sexuality and

drug culture, sci-fi and mid-night-black comedy, *Liquid Sky* is simultaneously trendy and universal. "Liquid sky," a 16th century term from India for heroin, is descriptive as well of the film's visuals, magical from start to finish. From the video psychedelics to the magnificent shots of Manhattan and the bizarre costumery (designed by Marina Levikova), Yuri Neyman's cinematography and video art are unique and memorable.

The sound of *Liquid Sky* is a cynical complement to the film's thematic fascination with alienation of all sorts. Its "music-box" score—created using a synthesizer called the Fairlight Computer Musical Instrument—was created by Brenda Hutchinson, Clive Smith and director Tsukerman, who also produced, co-wrote (with his wife, Nina Kerova and Carlisle), and edited the film. There is an incredible amount of technical and creative talent behind the film. The international cast and crew make the film a strange but wonderful hybrid of American and foreign sensibilities.

Liquid Sky is destined to become a cult classic. It is memorable for the way it looks and sounds, and for many of its characters. Those who thought that Gillian Armstrong's Aussie musical, *Starstruck*, was "punk" have a shocking, modern film experience ahead of them. *Liquid Sky* is not for everyone. But those filmgoers who can make space in their heads next to *Eraserhead* and *Divine* movies surely know who they are. *Liquid Sky* was made for those who crave the unique, the bizarre, the memorable film experience.

—Cathy Sarkowsky

(Film reviews by Cathy Sarkowsky can also be heard on KLCC 89.7 FM.)

MOVIES
THIS
WEEK

All the Right Moves: Cinema World (342-6536).

Best Friends: Showing with Risky Business. Fine Arts (747-2201).

Big Chill: A group of old college friends meet for one friend's funeral and spend the weekend together. National (344-3431).

Blue Thunder: Second feature Silent Rage. Oakway Cinema (342-5351).

Christmas Story: A comedy satire of the all-American Christmas in Gary, Indiana. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Cross Creek: Mayflower (345-1022).

Deal of the Century: A Chevy Chase comedy about dealing arms. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

Educating Rita: Stars Michael Caine and debuts Julie Walters as a working class woman who's also a part-time student at the university. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

Fanny and Alexander: Ingmar Bergman's most recent and perhaps last film is about a large Swedish theatrical family around the turn of the century, and the series of events which change their lives. Opens Nov. 23. Bijou (686-2458).

Going Berserk: Slapstick comedy. Cinema World (342-6536) and Eugene Drive-in (726-7412).

Koyaanisqatsi: A Hopi word meaning "life out of balance," this film with no characters or dialogue shows us, through image and sound, what America was and what it has become. Through Nov. 22. Bijou (686-2458).

Liquid Sky: A new wave science fiction film about a tiny alien creature who lands on a rooftop apartment in New York City. Second feature *The Road Warrior*. Dec. 1-7. Cinema 7 (687-0733).

Mr. Mom: Dad satys home to raise 3 kids while Mom pursues her career. Cinema World (342-6536).

Never Cry Wolf: Based on Farley Mowat's book about a man who lives with and studies the wolves. Cinema World (342-6536).

Never Say Never Again: Sean Connery returns to the James Bond role. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

A Night of Heaven: West 11th (342-4142).

Return of the Black Stallion: Showing with Savannah Smiles. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Return of the Jedi: The third Star Wars adventure. West 11th (342-4142).

The Right Stuff: Based on Thomas Wolfe's 1979 book on the early years of the space program. West 11th (342-4142).

Risky Business: Dream and fantasy mix with reality in this tender and humorous film about a teenage boy going through sexual initiation, who meets a big city prostitute through the prank of a friend. Fine Arts (747-2201).

Road Warrior: A futuristic tale, starring Mel Gibson. Showing with *Liquid Sky*. Cinema 7 (687-0733).

Rocky Horror Picture Show: Classic kink. Fri & Sat only. Bijou Late Nite (686-2458).

Savannah Smiles plus Return of the Black Stallion: Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Silent Rage: Showing with *Blue Thunder*. Oakway Cinema (342-5351).

Terms of Endearment: Shirley MacLaine, Debra Winger, and Jack Nicholson star in this sensitive comedy centering around the relationship of a mother and daughter. From a Larry McMurtry novel. McDonald (344-4343).

Wicked Lady: Springfield Quad (726-9073) and Eugene Drive-in (726-7412).

Terms of Endearment

Directed by James L. Brooks, starring Shirley MacLaine, Debra Winger and Jack Nicholson.

Terms of Endearment is a wonderful, funny, and moving film. Based on a novel by Larry McMurtry (*The Last Picture Show*), this film centers around the relationship between a mother and daughter who happen to be polar opposites and the best of friends.

The mother (Shirley MacLaine) is, in the beginning at least, a spoiled, neurotic and prudish widow who persistently tries to control her daughter as well as all the other people in her life, including her several suitors whom she keeps at arm's length. Her daughter (Debra Winger), on the other hand, is a vivacious, earthy and energetic spirit who voraciously scrapes all life has to offer onto her plate. She mar-

ries, has baby after baby, and immerses herself in life and living. Together they explore the totality of the mother/daughter relationship—the closeness and dependency, the rejection and separation, and a final and most touching coming together again.

MacLaine and Winger are indeed an impressive and hilarious acting team. Add in Jack Nicholson as the paunchy, debauched and somewhat lecherous ex-astronaut who lives next door, and you have an outrageously funny yet sensitive film.

This is a film about living and loving and all that these involve. The characters are believable, and like real people, each is in some way changed, transformed, because of their relationships to one another.

—Sonja Ungemach

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REX REED, NEW YORK POST

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VINCENT CANBY, NEW YORK TIMES

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