

TOP TEN FILMS OF 1986

by Lois Wadsworth

Let's get my biases, inadequacies, and preferences right out here on the table. I don't review many Hollywood movies because I don't like exploitation films, gratuitous violence, mindless car chases, cops as heroes, Rambo clones, skin flicks, or women as victims. I prefer films by independent American filmmakers or foreign films. I'm interested in the director's sensibilities and skill, whether the screen play tells a good story well, the cinematic quality and technical level of the production, and the actors' believability.

At the Movies and People will review *Top Gun* (a military recruitment ad) and *An American Tail* (a total-concept marketing strategy) when they come out, but they probably won't tell you anything about the films that the studio keeps in the can for years like *UForia*, *Heartbreakers* or *Brazil*. From the mainstream media you won't hear about the more original and creative new films unless they become smashing successes like 1985's *Kiss of the Spider Woman* and make tons of money.

I feel fairly safe in predicting that none of the 1986-released films on my list will garner a nomination from the Academy Award establishment. I think those industry folks will choose from some good pictures (which I saw and liked) including *Hannah and Her Sisters*, *Crimes of the Heart*, *Stand by Me*, *Children of a Lesser God*, *Room With a View*, and *Peggy Sue Got Married*. Or maybe they'll go for one of the films we haven't seen yet here in Eugene: *Round Midnight*, *Platoon*, *Sid and Nancy*, *True Stories*. None of these films appear on my list—I know that Hollywood will take care of its own.

My many-times-revised-but-now-absolutely-final top ten films seen in Eugene in 1986 are:

#1 *Absolute Beginners*. Directed by Julian Temple. Starring Eddie O'Connell, Patsy Kinsit, David Bowie, James Fox.

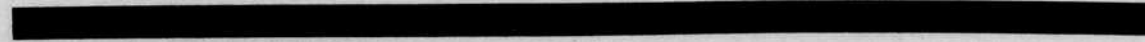
- #2 *Angry Harvest*. Directed by Agnieszka Holland. Starring Armin Mueller Stahl, Elisabeth Trisenaar.
- #3 *Fool For Love*. Directed by Robert Altman. Screen play by Sam Shepard. Starring Sam Shepard, Kim Basinger, Harry Dean Stanton.
- #4 *Blue Velvet*. Directed by David Lynch. Starring Kyle MacLachlan, Isabella Rosselini, Dennis Hopper.
- #5 *UForia*. Directed by John Binder. Starring Cindy Williams, Fred Ware, Harry Dean Stanton.
- #6 *Something Wild*. Directed by Jonathon Demme. Starring Jeff Daniels, Melanie Griffith, Ray Liotta. With music by David Byrne, Laurie Anderson, Sister Carole.
- #7 *The Official Story*. Directed by Luis Penza. Starring Norma Leandro.
- #8 *Smooth Talk*. Directed by Joyce Chopra. Starring Laura Dern, Treat Williams.
- #9 *Men*. Directed by Doris Dorrie.
- #10 *Heartbreakers*. Directed by Bobby Roth. Cinematography by Michael Ballhaus. Starring Peter Coyote, Nick Mancuso.

A group of five film fanatics (a couple of whom saw over 100 films in 1986) compiled their weighted choices to come up with this list: *Angry Harvest*, *Ran*, *Fool For Love*, *Favorites of the Moon*, *Shoah*, *Horse of Pride*, *UForia*, *Sheer Madness*, *Absolute Beginners*, *Insignificance*, *Blue Velvet*, and *Mirror*.

But don't leave anything this important to film junkies. Just for fun sort through the films you've seen this year, pick out the ones that impressed you, analyze why, limit yourself to ten, rank them, develop your skills as a moviegoer/film critic. After all, no one knows what you like better than you. There are no experts, just other film lovers. See you at the movies!



Sam Shepard in *Fool For Love*, one of Lois Wadsworth's "Ten Best" of '86.



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