

# Director's latest film vindicates prior efforts

Brian de Palma, one of the most highly regarded young American directors (his *Obsession* has been compared — seriously — with Dante), has always been something of an enigma.

He began his career as an independent, almost underground, filmmaker, making social satires about, among other things, the dangers of "selling out." Feeling that his first Hollywood film had been mutilated, he might have bemoaned the Hollywood system; instead, he left it, making *Sisters* independently. When that was a success, he returned to Hollywood, presumably with enough clout to protect future films from undue interference. To that point, he had seemed like a serious artist, responsibly confronting the

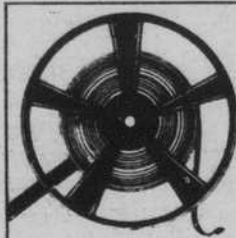
economic imperatives of filmmaking without compromising his work. Confusingly, his next two films, *Obsession* and *Carrie*, the latter overloaded with *Exorcist*-ic special effects and a final "shock" ending plagiarized from *Deliverance*, the former a dull Hitchcock parody with a deodorant commercial slow-motion ending are among his least satisfactory.

Because I didn't like either film, I glibly dismissed de Palma as another young director who had traded his integrity for the dubious privilege of working on a Hollywood assembly line. My mistake. The frenzied apocalyptic anger of his latest film, *The Fury*, resoundingly vindicates him, not only as an improvement over his

recent work, but, hopefully, as the beginning of his evolution into a major filmmaker.

In the past, de Palma's fondness for excess, grotesquery, and parody may have made his films entertaining but they have left him with a problematic relationship to his material. Several of his films,

them. While *The Fury*, too, is not without a sense of irony, its excesses are deliberate, controlled, and expressive; even a slow-motion sequence is shockingly effective as a means of prolonging our experience of the most frenzied and intense action in the film. (Perhaps one measure of the



By DAVID COURSEN

## The Fury

particularly *Carrie*, were hard not to see as joking self-parodies, their excesses artfully concealing de Palma's own lack of belief in

change in de Palma is that, while *Carrie*'s doors were locked by telekinetic trickery, *The Fury*'s are closed by human hands, with special effects reserved for more extraordinary actions.)

Along with its restraint and control, *The Fury* has a fine moral sense that is responsible for its hard edge. The story describes the loss of innocence through the discovery, betrayal/seduction, and corruption of special people. The two youthful protagonists are introduced indulging in the pleasures of summer, he swimming, she walking in the sun and cheerfully forgetting her history lessons. But they both have powers that they are compelled to use before they fully understand them; the process destroys them. While their specific gifts are psychic powers, and their seducers/betrayers are government agents, they might as easily be gifted athletes, packaged into mass media

products, or, more to the point, talented young directors, whoring their talents to the highest bidders.

Appropriately, the film's most chilling moments are those when its innocents are shown losing their moral centers. In this contest, de Palma is able to use a setting as a kind of visual image of corruption or corruptibility. This is implicitly true even in an early, apparently gratuitous camera movement around a table as characters talk; as they do so, the background changes from clear blue water to the dull tan of a beach and the brick buildings behind it.

Through the film, the uncertainty of youth is forcefully contrasted with the coldly methodical precision of the government agents, stalking an enemy or processing, using, and unwittingly destroying the youthful hero. Possibly the most irresistible agent of control is the camera; sets of video monitors seem almost to deny the concept of free will, as characters pass out of the sight of one, only to come under the scrutiny of another.

The film seems to be full of doubles and pairs, but even its oppositions are compromised. There are two psychic young people, and two institutes that house them. Hero Kirk Douglas struggles with villain John Cassavetes, Douglas' protegee/betrayer for control of Douglas' son/betrayer/victim.

The world of *The Fury* virtually reeks of power — psychic, political, sexual. Those who use and pursue it become, without exception, both destroyers and victims, taking the lives of others before finally being consumed themselves.

*The Fury*'s implacable moral logic gives it a kind of nightmare quality that works on two levels. The blood that flows out of people, and, finally, flies through rooms is a physical extension of the moral corruption that pervades the film. In theory, the literal gore should make the film commercially viable, while the spiritual gore gives it artistic substance.

**PERALANDRA**

SCIENCE FICTION  
and  
METAPHYSICAL  
BOOKS

## PERALANDRA

Your favorite SF authors, as well as... Astrology, Tarot, Healing, Theosophy, Pyramidology and much more. Monday, Wednesday-Friday 10-7 Tuesday 10-4 Saturday 12-6

790 E. 11th Ave. 485-4848

Thursday, March 30, 1978

## 1978-79 OREGON DAILY EMERALD EDITOR

Applicants should have knowledge of newspaper journalism and of the University of Oregon.

Term of office is June 6, 1978 through June 4, 1979. Monthly salary of \$500 begins May 1, 1978. Editor must be enrolled at least 6 credit hours, 3 or 4 terms while holding office. Position requires work Sunday through Friday and a minimum of 35-40 hours per week.

Applications are available in Oregon Daily Emerald offices and must be returned to Cheri O'Neil, 300 EMU before 5 p.m. April 21, 1978.

The Oregon Daily Emerald is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Women, minorities and the handicapped are encouraged to apply.

## SPRING AT THE BIJOU

### Rossellini/Vidor and Great Filmmakers

#### Acme Bijou Rossellini & Vidor Mon & Wed

##### ROSSELLINI

The Miracle, 1948, 43m  
Stromboli, 1949, 81m  
Era Notte A Roma, 1960, 120m  
Blaise Pascal, 1972, 135m  
Augustine of Hippo, 1972, 120m  
Casino de Medici, 1973, 84m  
The Power of Cosimo, 1973, 84m  
Leon Battista Albertina, 1973, 84m

##### VIDOR

The Big Parade, 1925, 130m  
The Crowd, 1928, 98m  
Hallelujah, 1929, 109m  
Our Daily Bread, 1934, 80m  
So Red the Rose, 1935, 82m  
Stella Dallas, 1937, 105m  
Northwest Passage, 1939, 125m  
The Fountainhead, 1949, 114m  
Ruby Gentry, 1952, 82m  
MEMORIAL DAY  
War and Peace, 1956, 208m

#### Bijou Dream Guest Filmmakers Tues & Thurs

##### ROSSELLINI

Open City, 1945, 103m  
Paisan, 1946, 124m  
Viaggio in Italia, 1953, 75m  
The Rise to Power of Louis XIV, 1966, 100m

##### VISCONTI

Ossessione, 1942, 135m  
La Terra Trema, 1947, 160m  
Senso, 1945, 115m  
The Damned, 1969, 164m

##### BUNUEL

Un Chien Andalou, 1928, 24m  
Los Olvidados, 1950, 88m  
Viridiana, 1961, 90m  
The Exterminating Angel, 1962, 95m  
Tristana, 1970, 95m

##### TRUFFAUT

400 Blows, 1959, 93m  
Shoot the Piano Player, 1960, 84m  
Jules and Jim, 1961, 110m  
Two English Girls, 1972, 108m

##### KUROSAWA

Rashomon, 1950, 88m  
Ikiru, 1952, 143m  
Seven Samurai, 1954, 200m (approx)

Acme Bijou Films  
Taught in Film Studies 495G

Bijou Dream Films  
Taught in Film Studies 293

See Catalog under  
Speech: Film Studies

Films Shown in 180 PLC  
Admission \$1.25 or Season Ticket

All films will start at 7:00 p.m.

The University of Oregon is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity/Title IX institution