



## At the movies

### 'Mercies' slow but strong



If excellent acting is the criterion movies are judged by, then "Tender Mercies" is a great film.

Set in a remote West Texan town, "Tender Mercies" is a story about people — and the actors come across as people. Robert Duvall turns in a brilliant performance as Mac Sledge, a former great country singer who is down on his luck and stranded in a Texas motel.

His way back up the road to success and his return to singing is sparked by the owner of the motel, a young widow (Tess Harper) and her 8-year-old son (Allan Hubbard).

The conflict in the movie is supplied by Sledge's desire to see his 18-year-old daughter (Ellen Barkin) from an earlier marriage and his ex-wife's (Betty Buckley) desire to keep him away.

Duvall, whose other performances in-

clude the role of Maj. Frank Burns in the movie "M\*A\*S\*H," appearances in both "Godfather" movies and the role of the crazy air cavalry officer in "Apocalypse Now," plays Sledge as a quiet man — but his expressions and gestures add enormous depth to the character. The one scene of Sledge in a bathtub waiting for his baptism is itself worth the price of admission.

Harper and Hubbard also turn in strong supporting performances. Hubbard, in particular, does a good job of getting his character across without falling into the "cute kid" routine.

Buckley, better known for her role in TV's "Eight is Enough" combines the right amounts of show-biz hardness and hysteria in her performance.

The problems with this film are more in what isn't seen than what is. There are some disturbing jumps in the time scheme of the movie. We see Sledge begin work at the hotel, then miss several months while he gives up drinking and continues work. We see him propose, but miss the wedding.



As Max Sledge, a down-and-out country singer, Robert Duvall delivers a great performance in "Tender Mercies."

This understatement can leave the viewer with the feeling that he has missed something important.

Australian director Bruce Beresford, who is known for his work in "Breaker Morant," "The Getting of Wisdom," and "Baby, the Rain Must Fall" sets a slow and leisurely pace through the movie; viewers more in tune with "Raiders of the Lost Arc" may become bored — but the movie is well worth some patience.

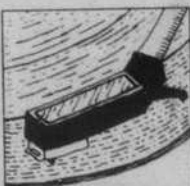
Beresford takes full advantage of the

Texas landscape to shoot some striking long-distance shots of the Texas landscape.

An unexpected bonus is the country music. Duvall wrote two of the 10 songs in the movie and performs four of them — and does a good job of it. He can now add singing to his list of accomplishments. Buckley also does a good job in her singing performances.

"Tender Mercies" is rated PG and is now playing at the Mayflower Theatre.

Frank Shaw



## On record

### Style Council breaks from the confines of rock'n'roll

"Speak Like a Child" 45  
"Money-Go-Round" EP  
"a' Paris" EP  
Style Council  
Polydor

Paul Weller knows well the bitterness and cruelty of being called a genius — a spokesman for a generation of young Britons. Weller wears these titles with much the same sullen and sarcastic bravado as one would wear the King of Fools' cracked crown.

Unfortunately, and much as Weller resists it, he is indeed a bona fide spokesman for a generation, and, in the keenest sense, a genius. Weller's body of work with The Jam and now with Style Council provides indelible proof of his genius.

It's difficult to talk about Style Council without mentioning The Jam. Style Council was formed from the rubble of The Jam as a

stunned populace looked on. Everyone believed The Jam would go on as durably as the The Clash. The Jam were the prototypical neo-mod band of the late '70s and really were the ones to fulfill Pete Townshend's promise of "maximum R&B." But Weller disbanded the group at the height of their popularity in Europe and Japan and just moments away from breaking in this country.

Why? Because he felt that if they went on it would only shatter all they had created.

Since spring Style Council has released two EPs and a 45: "Speak Like a Child," "Money-Go-Round" and the latest "a' Paris." Each is markedly different from the previous, both in personnel and musical direction.

"Speak Like a Child" is Weller's stepping-off from the trappings of The Jam. At this time Style Council consisted of Weller, Mick Talbot and drummer Zeke Manyika from Orange Juice. "Speak Like a Child" is an upbeat number deftly using synthesizer

and a horn section. The horn section is reminiscent of the late '60s Stax/Atlantic sound Weller became so obsessed with at the close of The Jam's career.

The EP "Money-Go-Round" contains the title track along with "Headstart for Happiness" and "Mick's Up." "Money-Go-Round" is a buoyant musical diatribe against the moneyed class' manipulation of the lower classes in Britain. It's the class struggle put to a danceable beat. This stinging political protest is reminiscent of The Jam's early days when they, The Clash and the Sex Pistols were at the fore of social and musical protest.

"Money-Go-Round" was inspired by the chauvinistic absurdity accompanying the Falklands War and opens a vein similar to Elvis Costello's ire in "Pills and Soap."

Weller hates the so-called rock culture and rock star myth. He does everything he can to shatter that image. His distaste for the accessories of rock'n'roll are evident in Style Council's latest EP "a' Paris."

These tracks were recorded in Paris "because," Weller writes on the liner notes, "we felt they all had a similar 'Blue Mood' and a certain French flavour about them." The "Blue Mood" is apparent in the emotion and style of the songs. The songs are as "blue" as the Dave Brubeck Quartet during their "Take Five" and "Blue Rondo a la Turk" period.

"Long Hot Summer" is an electronic funk track that shows again the versatility of a few instruments. Weller has learned the effectiveness of restraint in his arrangements.

Probably the best track on "a' Paris" is the torchy "The Paris Match." Weller becomes again the "miserable bugger." It is his most effective guise. This song sounds and contains sentiments like "The Bitterest Pill", but lacks the strings and dense arrangement. The accordion break in "The Paris Match" is startling and might have flopped, but it works within the ambience of the song.

Cort Fernald



LUNCH - DINNER  
SUPPER

HAPPY HOURS  
MUSIC  
Live Jazz  
Bill Sabol Trio

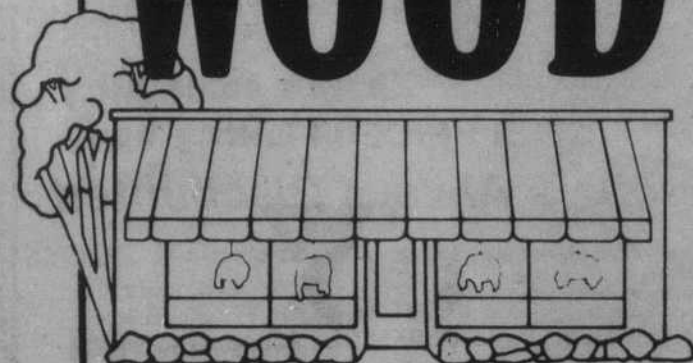
CARRY OUT ORDERS TO GO!

756 W. Park  
Smeede Hotel Bldg.  
Across from the Hult Center  
on Willamette  
Order to go 343-9587

Lotsa gifts &  
free gift wrap  
at your  
Bookstore.



# THE GLEN WOOD



Eugene's popular breakfast  
place is now open  
on campus too.

1340 Alder

2588 Willamette

Look for the Cafe Express...