

FILM

FOR THOSE OF you with a passion for personal, challenging, dare-we-say "offbeat" films, this will not be the winter of your discontent. If the release late last year of David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*, Alex Cole's *Sid and Nancy* and Oliver Stone's *Platoon* signaled the resurgence of the Hollywood outsider, then February and March's offerings represent the apotheosis. Confirmed New Yorker **Arthur Penn** has come up with a masterful thriller, *Dead of Winter* (early February), his most interesting film since 1975's underrated gem, *Night Moves*. Also in February, another New Yorker contributes another interesting release: *Light of Day*, directed by **Paul Schrader**. It is very much a Schrader film—slow, talky, unsentimental, an examination of choices and motivation, with religious undertones. In this case the choices involve a brother-and-sister team of musicians who are occasionally estranged from their parents and each other. In their dramatic debuts Michael J. Fox and Joan Jett are surprisingly compelling, and, as their mother, Gena



Shady Russell



Jett and Fox: Compelling debuts



Mary Steenburgen: Almost dead in *Winter*

Rowlands turns in another Oscar-caliber performance. It is Schrader's most personal film to date; not coincidentally, it is also his most accessible.

In March Robert Altman-disciple **Alan Rudolph** (*Choose Me, Trouble in Mind*) continues his quirky look at love's labor with *Made in Heaven*, in which Timothy Hutton and Kelly McGillis play two souls who meet in heaven and fall for each other but who must then strive to reunite when they're reborn on earth. An even more electric premise is highlighted in *Straight to Hell*, Briton **Alex Cox's** next film, a New Wave spaghetti Western shot in Spain and featuring the likes of

Grace Jones, Elvis Costello, independent filmmaker Jim Jarmusch, the Clash's Joe Strummer—and **Dennis**

Hopper, who plays a nerve-gas manufacturer for the Nazis. Cox says the film has "a lot of sexual tension but absolutely no nudity or swear words." If you can believe it, Dennis Hopper is also in **Tim Hunter's** *River's Edge* (late March), a chilling portrait of teenage nihilism, and *Black Widow* (early February), in which he plays a bit part in a seductive mystery thoroughly dominated by two women: Debra Winger, arguably our best young actress, and Theresa Russell, largely unknown but sure to be noticed after this film. The director is **Bob Rafelson**, who gave the world the Monkees and Jack Nicholson his best part in *Five Easy Pieces*. Finally, in late March and April, there will be something on the light side—and something Dennis Hopper is *not* in. The movie is *Raising Arizona*. It's directed by the **Coen brothers** (*Blood Simple*), and it is our early favorite for comedy of the year.

Dennis Hopper, Bob Rafelson, Joel and Ethan Coen—who are these guys, anyway? And *what* is a Hollywood outsider? To find out, we assigned three inside stories. Herewith, on the following pages, the state of the artists . . .

Heavenly Hutton

