

## Surreal Cinema

by Eleanor Malin

### BRAZIL

You could call *Brazil* the brainstorm of Monty Python alumnus Terry Gilliam, but it's more like gray matter fission become technicolor fallout. Released late in the U.S. (because we were thought too simple to understand it), it is truly incomprehensible.

The story line involves a privileged

## ● CINEMA

bureaucrat, a dreamer who dreams of his ideal woman, then sees her, but she is in the process of becoming a more and more desperate enemy of the state. The story intertwines with the busiest sets of details and fullest frames imaginable. Something is always going on, even though you might not be able to figure out what it is.

An underlying theme seems to be that we're all in this mess together. Another is that the individual has all same chance for a happy, full life as a worm facing a mad collector armed with formaldehyde and lots of pins.

In *Brazil*, the state is a mindless labyrinthian bureaucracy, where the untimely death of a fly causes a glitch in the computer which leads to a tragic (though comic) progression of circumstances just too, too bizarre.

*Brazil* is also the song that courses through the bureaucrat's mind when he is spacing out, trying to forget the grim reality of all that he sees going on around him. It was a perfect choice. Gilliam says the idea for this assemblage came to him one day as he listened to *Brazil*, and it gives just the right feeling of abandon, surrender, carnival — to counterpoint the grey, the small, the dismal present.

I loved this movie, but am going to have to view it again, though that's no sacrifice.

### BLISS

Harry Joy falls to his death on his birthday, has an out-of-body experience, and returns to life to find things so askew, he suspects he may have died and gone to hell.

His wife is having an affair with his paunchy

business partner. His daughter grudgingly grants his son sexual favors in exchange for product (drugs), he's selling on the side. And everywhere around Harry, people are getting cancer. One of the accounts his ad agency has had for years pushes a product that causes cancer.

(Trivia buffs: watch closely the scene where the employee tells Harry about the cancer-causing sugar substitute. In the background you'll see Bud Clark's "expose yourself to art" poster.)

Harry leaves his wife, "fires" the customer (whose wife has cancer), and takes up with a hippy call girl, "Honey Barbara," whose affinity for honey must symbolize the simple, wholesome and pure.

Honey Barbara spurns Harry when he goes back to his old life, and he ends up following her out to the boondocks, pursuing her to no avail. Until she gets a meaningful love letter that takes eight years to get there.

Strange movie. But fun.

### TROUBLE IN MIND

Kris Kristofferson plays Hawk, a former cop who just got out of jail where he was doing time for cold-blooded murder. Keith Carradine plays Coop, a down-and-out hippy, whose girlfriend, Georgia, catches the eye of the desperately needy Hawk.

Little scenarios arrive and depart from the central point of Wanda's greasy spoon and apartment building.

Genevieve Bujold plays Wanda, and does her usual fantastic job. Carradine is good, as always, as Coop, who turns into a small time hood with grandiose career plans, and Lori Singer, as the blonde, innocent Georgia, is adequately enough the fair *tabula rasa*.

Kristofferson is relatively wooden as actors go, but that often works to his advantage, and it does here, as Hawk is that kind of man who has never managed to be close to anyone.

He's a borderline hero/loser, with potential, but flawed, doomed even.

The story takes place in Rain City (Seattle), and it's lots of fun to see so many familiar places in a major movie.

Hawk has fashioned a replica of the city he sees from Wanda's window. Car scenes are interwoven from the real streets to the model, which adds a quirky dimension to the proceedings.

As master gangster, Hilly Blue, Divine is fine in this role. Scenes of him in his tawdry palace are filled out with the most preposterous assemblage of partyers and trippy art works.

Militia appear everywhere in this movie; seemingly Rain City is a police state. But the soldiers don't bother any of the characters, and everybody gets to move around freely.

Carradine as Coop, the small-time hood who tries to get some of the action away from Hilly Blue, rapidly transforms himself to a punk in the most outrageous polyester neon threads, with cellophane highlights in his funky haircut, more earrings each time he appears, and finally, eye makeup. He seems to care for Georgia, but only thinks of her intermittently between sessions at the beauty parlor and with hookers.

Altogether, these three movies are busy, entertaining, off the wall. You have to pay close attention to a lot of details, and the overall effect is such that you will probably still be confused when it's over. Moreover, there is so much humor, you might think them comedies. But, laugh though we may, the filmmakers' art reveals to us a world where things are not so different from what we have today. As a species, we are in serious trouble, and in some ways it is very funny, since we think we should know better. In other ways, it's horrible.

**IMPRESSIVE WORK** — by two filmmakers who pulled off great jobs (low-budget, even) — *PARTING GLANCES* and *THE DESERT HEARTS*. Watch for these!

## The Coffee Merchant

The finest imported coffee beans, teas, chocolates, and beverage brewing accessories.

THE BROADWAY COFFEE MERCHANT  
1637 N.E. Broadway • 284-9209

THE HAWTHORNE COFFEE MERCHANT  
3562 S.E. Hawthorne • 230-1222



KOIN CENTER CINEMAS SW 3RD 243-3515 & CLAY

## "A MUST-SEE FILM."

—Jack Curry, USA TODAY

“★★★★”

### SIZZLING AND TENDER.

A love affair between two women done with style and punctuated with humor."

—William Wolf, GANNETT NEWS SERVICE



Desert Hearts

Experience the Extraordinary



## See the Spectacular TURANDOT

by Giacomo Puccini

In Italian with SUPERTEXT™

May 17, 21 & 24, 1986...8p.m.

Tickets \$15-\$30-\$50

Wow!

PORTLAND OPERA  
241-1401

150 SW SECOND AVENUE • PORTLAND, OREGON 97201

## IDS FINANCIAL PLANNING:

### The First-Year Reward.

FREE Guide shows how you could save hundreds, even thousands, of dollars—this year.

More and more people are discovering that financial planning can offer major rewards—can save you as much as thousands the first year, depending on your income. "IDS Financial Planning: The First-Year Reward," tells: Why a big tax refund is a bad sign. Tax strategies which could cut your taxes within a year. Why you should pay yourself first at the beginning of each month. And more.

Mail coupon today or call 255-4900

YES, please see that I receive your free guide, "IDS Financial Planning: The First-Year Reward." I understand there is no obligation on my part.

Thomas Owens  
7931 NE Halsey #100  
Portland, OR 97213

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

IDS

An American Express company  
© IDS Financial Services Inc. 1985