

YULE ESCAPE

No modern technology can replace the merits of getting out and going to the movies

by Kelly M. Bryan

The holidays are hard on us all. Extra pressure, extra worry, extra stress—and all at a time when we are culturally programmed to feel as if we ought to be relaxed, cheerful and reveling in the bosom of family bliss. Is that little cartoon thermometer over your head reading a dangerous level? Is smoke coming out of your ears? Take heart. Portland is reputed to have more cinemas per capita than any other U.S. city. (Bookstores and coffee

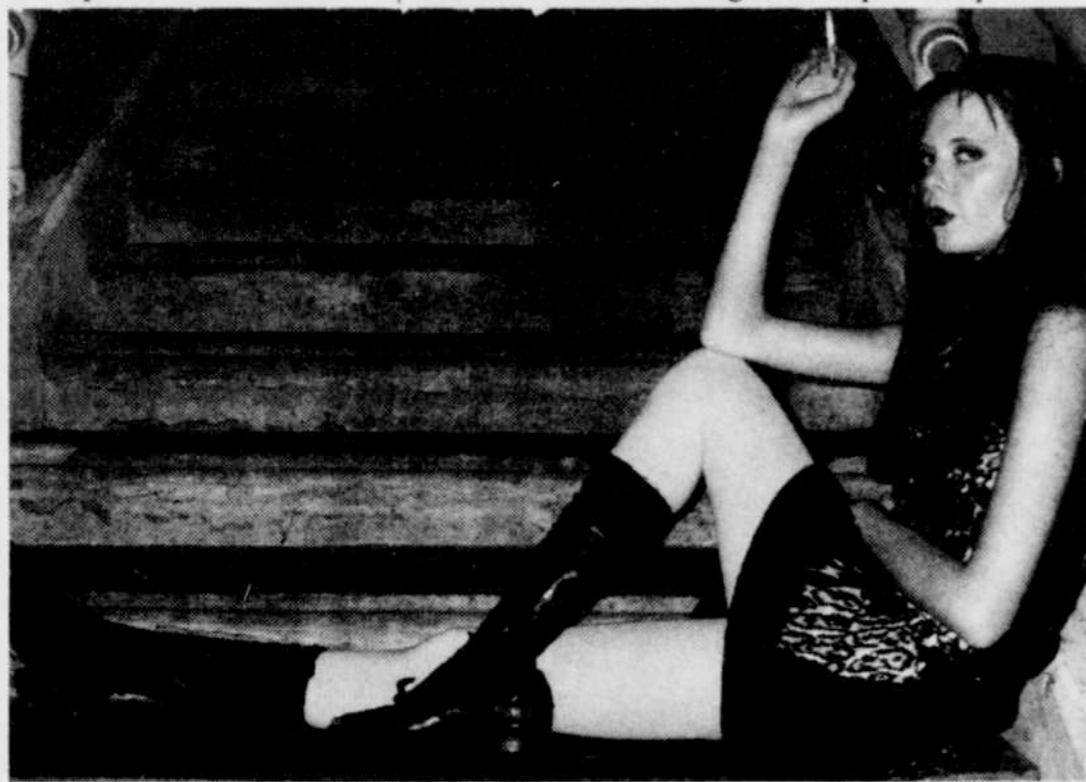
Cinema

outlets must be close to achieving this status.) So, whether you're escaping the elements or the manic consumer melee of the season, you should have an ample array of films to turn to for shelter.

CLINTON STREET THEATER

End-of-the-year events here include an evening of short works by local filmmakers on Dec. 30 and 31 promisingly titled "Shoot Hollywood in the Head." The headliner is the premier showing of an 18-minute video, *Pathetic*, produced and directed by Title Sritecha and Michael LaRocco.

The short, the pair's first film, is a slacker-flavored look at fantasy and reality. A young woman, Michael (Sarah Rosenberg), is caught between the nagging, neurotic "wife" she has (played by Aire Norell), and the alluring, carefree sprite (Bianca Otero) that she spends most of her time thinking about—unfortunately, the latter is but a dream. The relationship between the two women deto-



Sarah Rosenberg in *Pathetic*

mates in slow motion as we watch: Michael is increasingly involved in her fantasy, which leads to the rising shrillness of her love/hater. Stylishly acute camera angles and a certain flatness in the script contribute to an eerie geometric quality that pervades this portrayal of a *Go Fish* gone rotten. Sritecha comments that while there are many new queer films out there, there's a lot more to say about queer relationships. "We wanted to move beyond girl meets girl," she says. "We wanted to look at what happens next." (Note: La Luna's Queer Nite on Monday, Dec. 26, will benefit the makers of *Pathetic*, to help with their post-production costs.) The other shorts in the program were unavailable for preview. They include *The Cleansing Machine*, directed by Pat Baum and photographed by John Campbell (he also shot *My Own Private Idaho*); and Patti Lewis' film *Virginia*, wherein dancer/actor Joe Morales (who died Oct. 7, 1994, from complications of AIDS) plays a "washed-up starlet... caught in a slow downward spiral of booze, cigarettes and dime-store pearls." And don't forget the Ed Wood classics *Glen or Glenda* and *Plan 9 from Outer Space* playing Dec. 26 to Dec. 29. You get a discount on your ticket if you come in costume; an Angora sweater ought to suffice. Call the Clinton Street Theater (2522 SE Clinton St.) for show times and prices, 238-8899.

CINEMA 21

The flyer proclaims "J.C. is coming for the holidays," but this time it's Hong Kong action hero

Jackie Chan that's here to save us. A smorgasbord of Chan's rollicking, comic martial-arts adventures (*Drunken Master 2*, *Dragon Lord*) is on screen until Dec. 22. On Friday, Dec. 23, a viewing of the unforgettable *Sunset Boulevard*, with Gloria Swanson and William Holden, is yours for donating one or two items of nonperishable food, which will be given to Blanchet House. Opening Christmas Day is *Lacho Drom* (Safe Journey), a world-beat lover's dream: a color-splashed, epic, dialogue-free anthology of Gypsy music etched out by Gypsy musicians from India, Egypt, Turkey, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, France and Spain. Call Cinema 21 (616 NW 21st Ave.) for show times and prices, 223-4515.

NORTHWEST FILM CENTER

The Film Center, thumbing its nose at the sentimentality of the season, is offering a retrospective of Alan Clarke films—gritty depictions of the state of the British union in the '70s and '80s. Clarke is a cohort of the likes of Mike Leigh and Stephen Frears but is less well known in this country because his work was done for the BBC. He takes as his subject the people Margaret Thatcher would have liked to forget and explores topics that

are explosive as hand grenades. *Contact* (1985) and *Elephant* (1989) look at the situation in Northern Ireland: the first follows tense young British soldiers who must patrol the Irish countryside, the second presents 18 assassinations—without identifying victim or perpetrator. These films show Dec. 22; call the Northwest Film Center (1219 SW Park Ave.) for schedule and prices, 221-1156.

ACT III

Amid the abundance of movies that will open over the holidays at Act III theaters all over town are some intriguing possibilities: Robert Altman's send up of the fashion industry *Pret-a-Porter* (Ready-to-Wear), with Sophia Loren, Lauren Bacall and a cast of 30; Roman Polanski's political thriller *Death and the Maiden*, with Sigourney Weaver and Ben Kingsley; Gillian Armstrong's *Little Women*, with Winona Ryder as Jo and Susan Sarandon as Marmee; *Queen Margot*, a 16th-century romance mixed with political and religious strife, starring Isabelle Adjani and Daniel Auteuil; *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle*, about Dorothy Parker and her comrades at the Algonquin Round Table, directed by Alan Rudolph and featuring Jennifer Jason Leigh, Matthew Broderick and Campbell Scott; and *A Man of No Importance*, wherein Albert Finney plays an Irish bus conductor of uncertain sexuality who can't get Oscar Wilde out of his head. For venues, times and prices call 225-5555 (you need a touch tone phone).

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