

The Brady Bunch Movie

director: Betty Thomas
 starring: Shelley Long, Gary Cole, Michael McKean

US kids have been plugged into the Brady Bunch for nearly 25 years now, glued to the sickly sweet tale of a woman and her three daughters linking up with a guy and guess what, three sons. The movie follows exactly the same track as the TV programme, based in suburban LA. it's saccharin sweet and guaranteed to make you puke.

It's very much in the same vein as the Addams Family /Munsters. Totally cookie families who for some abnormal reason think they are totally normal. Ok not original, but a fair starting point.

The big problem is it isn't exactly enough to keep you entertained for 98 minutes in a cinema. The only real funny line that comes out of it is two guys describing the frigid Marcia Brady as harder to get into than a Pearl Jam concert.

No one excels in their roles, not even Michael McKean (of Spinal Tap Fame) manages to pull it off as the grumpy neighbour. Probably more down to the crassness of the part than the directing.

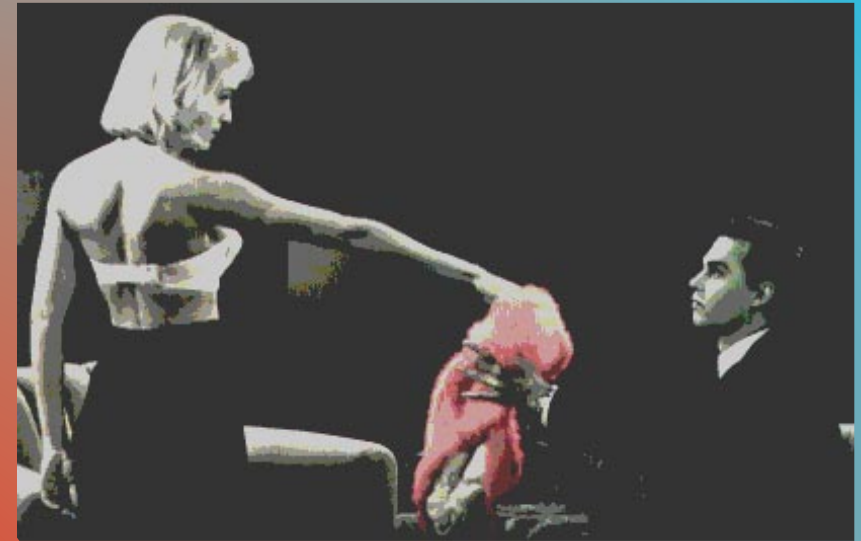
It's definitely a video film, where you've got the option to go out and make yourself a brew when it gets all too tedious. Our advice, spend your hard earned cash on something else and wait till it hits a video store near you.

Ed Wood

director: Tim Burton
 stars: Johnny Depp.

This is a cracking movie from Tim Burton of Batman, Beetlejuice and Edward Scissorhands fame. The story is centred around one guy, Ed Wood, who brought us Plan 9 From Outer Space, which is without doubt the worst sci-fi shocker ever made. The film centres in Wood's early career, highlighting his love of cross dressing. (Yes, Johnny Depp does look divine in that little mohair number). And it also tracks his rather bizarre relationship with Bela Lugosi (played brilliantly by Martin Landau who fully deserved the Oscar for this role), Plan 9's drugged up, clapped out star.

Depp, who is definitely flavour of the month at the moment, plays Wood with an adorable innocence. The only criticism being that at some points you feel you are taking the proverbial piss out of Wood, rather than giggling along with him. Depp, in the role of Wood, shows



that he is one of the most talented actors of his generation. His only problem right now is that he may fast be creeping towards over exposure.

Shot in black and white Ed Wood is a dream to watch - you just don't somehow want it to end. If you don't go and see anything else this month, you've got to see this one.

Don Juan De Marco

Director: Jeremy Leven
 Starring: Marlon Brando, Johnny Depp, Faye Dunaway

Yes, it's a bit of a Depp month this month, he also pops up in another two movies - Arizona Dream which is so bad it doesn't warrant a review and the fabulous Ed Wood. Depp, pretty much branded now for lunatic roles, plays a young New York kid who is convinced he is



Don Juan stalking the sidewalks in a mask and velvet cape seducing women on the strength of a few choice phrases and a shag that will rock the world. Unfortunately, like Don Juan, he also believes he has been jilted by his life's real true love and decides on the wimpy option, suicide. In steps Marlon Brando, who plays the shrink Dr Jack Mickler, to sort out nutcase Depp out. Mickler fast falls under our Don Juan clone's spell and questions whether it is a good idea to exorcise his romantic delusions, having first looked at his own life and seen what pretty unsatisfactory humping sessions he has with his life, played by Faye Dunaway. He takes some advice from Don Juan and attempts to put some real electricity into his humping sessions with Faye. You get the picture, the full romance bit, bubbly, bouquets the lot, in return for a snazzier poke. Finally Depp pops a few pills and returns to earth and Brando and Dunaway are at it like bunnies. That is about the extent of the plot, which is thin by anyone's imagination. There's no real message, apart from the fact that shrinks can get a lot more from their patients than simply a session on the couch. Worth going to see on a wet afternoon, but



don't hold your breath.

Imaginary Crimes

Director: Anthony Drazan
 Starring: Harvey Keitel, Kelly Lynch, Fairuza Balk

This Harvey Keitel revival movie unfortunately doesn't quite pull it off. Keitel fans out there who associate him with twisted crimes - remember Pulp Fiction, will be sorely disappointed. Keitel plays a mad cap inventor in the 50s/60s who is always just one idea away from making his family very rich indeed.

We live with his family through his succession of failures as they lose more and more faith in him on his road to nowhere. All very sad indeed, but realms away from the

misleading title of the movie. Why Keitel agreed to this movie is anyone's guess. It is a confusingly bad movie and it would be very interesting to know what Keitel thinks of it in the cold light of day. Our advice, read those scripts a bit more carefully Harvey.

Video CD

The latest releases on Video CD come from CD Vision who have release five cult vampire movies from their Redemption catalogue. The movies are Female vampire, Fascination, Flavia the heretic, Haxan and Tender and Perverse Emanuelle. Sounds dull eh? But you would be totally wrong. The movies are about the most hilarious things we've seen in a long time. They're all pure seventies bad acting, shoddy sets and are totally without plot or substance. Combine this with appalling dubbing and even worse subtitling and you have five films that put the Carry Ons to shame. The bare breasted Countess features Lina Romay who spends the entire film wandering around sticking her chest out, and fellating poor shepherds to death. Fascination seems to consist entirely of a semi-naked women running around gothic castles, and snogging each other. (£17.99 from 0181-503-0589)





Pinball



Stephen Jelbert rants about pinball, beer and invents a few fantasy games.

The word on pinball, but first a rant about beer, because let's face it a lot of you probably play most of your pin down the local pub while your mate gets the beers in.

One thing that amazes me is just how stupid the public is. Basically all cask conditioned beers contain some sediment, both on starting and finishing a barrel. No big deal, you might think, that's a natural side effect of the process used to make them. If you don't like the taste don't drink them, and leave them for those who do. But apparently major breweries, already affected by the flood of cheap euro beer hitting these shores are desperate to balance the books even to the point of demanding complete accounting for where the entire contents of a barrel of beer have gone. Of course in effect this means that what you get to drink, if you like bitter, the dregs with some pips squeezed into it.

Conversely, under pressure from brewer/owners, your pint

of lager could easily be

watered down to cope with the beer written off by drinkers who refuse to sup the bottom of the barrel. It's not unknown for over 100% of a barrel to be accounted for. And as we get used to drinking watered down lager, and spoiled bitter, the dumbing down of the nation continues apace.

Which leads me to my theme this issue. Value for money. How often have you put your money into a game, fingertips a-tingling with anticipation, well up for a bit of silver ball action, and found one of the following

1. That the not especially useful flipper somewhere on the left hand side, that you don't actually need until the time comes to hit the big jackpot shot, has about as much power as the Crystal Palace FC forward line after they've visited a few Amsterdam coffee shops, and is there for purely decorative reasons.

2. The tilt mechanism has been set so sensitively that simply giving the

table a hard stare as the third ball on the trot makes a fleeting appearance with the message 'You can look but don't touch' results in a crowing 'Danger then Tilt' signal. For f**ks sake what are they saying about us? The French have sex with their machines and nothing happens (except for the French having sex with their machines of course), in America the tilt mechanism works as designed- to stop musclemen hoisting the table into the air whenever a ball looks like going out, in showrooms here the tilt is turned off, perhaps to allow the players to pick up the finer elements of the game for their customers. But as soon as it turns up in an arcade or pub it rips you off as soon as you sneeze at it. Grrrr.

3. None of the lights work, so you have no idea which features you have going, or near to going at any given time. Of course you could always read the backboard, but who does (apart from me)? You're playing pinball for Christ's sake, a game needing skill, concentration and hand to eye co-ordination. So remember. If they're going to treat you like a moron while taking your money, why not react like a moron. Just smash up any game that doesn't work properly, perhaps with a stuffed animal or a Haynes manual for a 1979 Austin Metro or summat. Or better still, just reach





under the table, on the right at the flipper end, and feel about until you find the power switch, and just turn off the game. In an arcade its probable that they wont notice, so no one else will lose their cash, and in a pub all you have to do is tell them that the game doesn t work and could be unsafe (a good lie usually works wonders) and leave knowing that no one else will be ripped off for oh, hours possibly. Well, if you hired a car and the brakes didnt work you d hardly feel shy about complaining. And yet its assumed that pin players wont complain. Well, as the Who once sang, in Tommy We aint gonna take it . Dont get ripped off, get even.

Frank Thomas Big Hurt
(Gottlieb)

Only last week I was discussing Games we d like to see with a member of an American rock band and he proposed a table based on the other indigenous sport of Baseball. And, as sure as wishes come true, here it is, and damn good it is too. Gottlieb s games have been very hit and miss in recent years, with a few stinkers about, especially those tied in to video games such as Super Mario Bros and Streetfighter , but lately they seem to have



had a run of form with sports connected tables such as Shaq Attaq , about a hundred times better than basketball, and now this. Of course baseball is as arcane as

cricket, a large part of its appeal to jaded Brits, and therefore I cant explain the meaning of such terms as Grand Slam , and Home Run Derby . Let it be known that the features are excellent, the multi-balls frequent and frantic and that the collection of player cards is a relevant part of the game. Also there s a ridiculous plastic glove that catches the ball, or lets it past, which leads to the unusual experience of effectively batting and fielding simultaneously. What the hell, its great fun.

Sadly there s only one new game about this month so here s a few we dont want to see that are bound to be coming our way, much like Brazilian killer bees will soon hit Disneyland.

The Rolling Stones - there has already been a Stones pinball, made sometime in the late seventies or early eighties before they were receiving their pensions, but expect no stone to remain

untuned, or unrolled as the Cedric Browns of rock n roll bore your pants off and dont even impress the old folks with their money hunger . They re bound to get involved, or more likely pay some Belgians or someone equally unlikely to make one for them. Manchester United -its bound to happen. You can see those features now. Cantona s Disciplinary Hearing (you wont get what you think you deserve), Giggsy s Mazy Run (takes you nowhere but visually satisfying) and Paul Ince Ball Save (where the ball refuses to go, until eventually persuaded with enormous bonus payment). Price, three quid a ball.

Tory Government - soon to become a thing of the past, but fondly remembered in popular memory through a revival machine, just like Twilight Zone. Of course actual footage will lead to horrifyingly obvious realization that it was crap all along, and revival will end in disaster .

Next issue- a review of dodgy amusement arcades, and a complete collection of whats coming your way soon.

Stephen Jelbert is partly responsible for The Pinball Report., an occasional periodical. For more details contact PO Box 2427, London N4 2BJ.





Opera

The Force Of Destiny Karen Trevelyan

For those who are linguistically challenged and believe opera is not for them, should prepare themselves for a surprise. A cathartic experience awaits you at the London Coliseum, on St Martin's Lane, where the English National Opera is currently performing some stonking stuff, needless to say, in English.

Especially recommended, in the more traditional vein, is Verdi's *The Force of Destiny*, (libretto i.e. lyrics by Piave) which is set in Spain around the time of the Peninsular War (1800 and something).

It opens with a fairly bland room set, where the catalyst for the ensuing murder, torment and mayhem, unfolds. Just as you are fidgeting in your seat, thinking this is not for me, the stage and cast erupts into a riot of outrageous sets and colourful costumes. Blood red crucifixes lurch out of the walls at alarming angles and sweeping staircases spin and turn, transforming into taverns, monasteries and

MASH like hospital scenes.

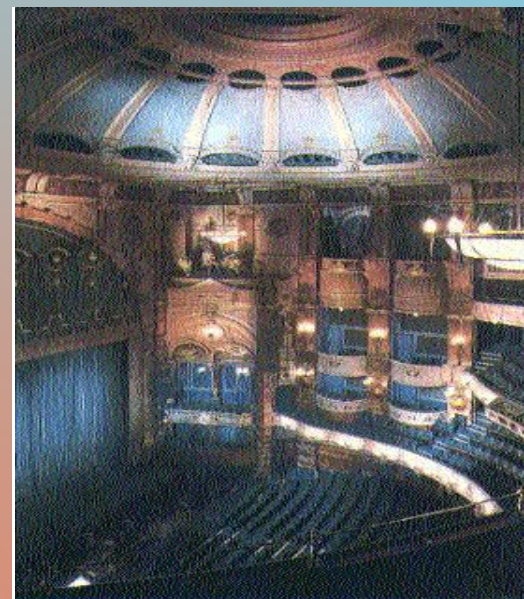
The leading players include:

Mini Meatloaf David Rendall, who plays Don Alvero - the wronged suitor of Leonora, has a wonderful, charismatic voice. His rock image is endorsed by the black leather thigh high boots, sadly traded in for sensible sandals in Act four.

Leonora, played by Janice Cairns, starts off as a dithering wet and, not surprisingly, after being banged up in a cave for two acts, metamorphosis into a Germaine Greer look alike, and executes some powerful vocals by the end of the opera.

Jonathan Summers, as Don Carlos, is the archetypal sad bastard who forms conditional relationships in his obsessive quest for revenge and consequently, as a character, has no redeeming features - an excellent baddie. Bizarrely he is a dead ringer for the Duke of Kent.

Mortician posturing Richard Van Allan, as The Father Superior and Arwel Huw Morgan, as Melitone,

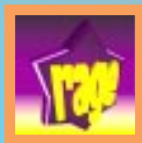


an ungracious monk, provide a good double act.

Preziosilla - the gypsy, played by Anne-Marie Owens, clothed with a shocking disregard for colour co-ordination freaks, leads an enormous cast in various energetic sing alongs.

As with most opera stories, a good dose of therapy, after the opening scene, would remove the necessity for anything beyond Act One. The story takes a while to crank up, but when it does, this reviewer - despite two bar breaks in which to recuperate - was, by the end, happily, emotionally exhausted.

For more information on The English National Opera, season which ends July 1st, call the box office on 0171 632 8300.





Street Theatre

Islington Festival Karen Trevelyan

Any budding anarchists who were wandering the streets of Islington in early June would have been over the moon. As they would have witnessed Dutch artist, Eric Hobbijn's epic fire sculpture - DANTE ORGAN - erupt from the roof of Islington Town Hall, Towering inferno eat your heart out.

Those of you who wish to be at one with invertebrates would have loved to slip in to one of the special caps, supplied by German cyber-space artist, Ulrike Gabriel. They would have experienced a special showing of TERRAIN 01 - a solar robotic insects - inside Artec's Electronic City Cafe, at the Business Design Centre. Controlled by the electrical activity of your brain waves, their signals are sent through a computer to a lighting rig, which heats the solar panels on the robot insects backs. The more relaxed you are, the faster they go.

For more spiritual communing, the Bar des As had a

special event every half hour, where this mirrored and glass salon-bar, whisked its clientele 30 metres into the air, allowing you to float with and above The Angel, whilst sipping the drink of your choice, now that's what we call a bar.

These are just a small selection of the events at the first Islington International Festival, which also included Cirque du Dr. Paradi on Highbury Fields and Les Machines Extraordinaires du Dr. Ed Monde - a collection of sixty mechanical sculptures offering a modern fair-ground experience on Islington Green. More bizarre events included the road show featuring Ready Mixed Rock - a band playing inside a transparent, revolving cement mixer! Friches Theatre Urbain provided further pyrotechnics on stilts with their presentation of the Faustian legend Mephistomania and Airvag which decorated the rooftops of Upper Street with huge inflatable stars, cones and crescent moons that shone and pulsed in the night.

Stoke Newington is having an Arts Festival between 12-18th June,

culminating in a huge party in Stoke Newington Church Street on the 18th. For more information <http://www.poptel.org.uk/stoke-newington/>





Poetry

Jem Rolls reviews two of the leading lights on the London Poetry scene.

A profile of two of the kickingest acts in town. If you never see them, you won't know you've missed them.... because you couldn't possibly imagine they exist. They're showbiz skewed AWOL, they're everything you grew up to think poetry wasn't, and they're bags of fun. They are Pink Sly and Mr Social Control.

Pink Sly - God knows what planet he's on, but I wouldn't mind a trip there sharpish. Sly comes on like a seventies black dude, sharp straight suit and floppy hat. Sly is hyper-rap number one, cooler than f**k and sharper than a razor. Sly flies rhythm and rhyme around like no-one else ever. Sly is hard and heavy, cool and dreamy, mad and silly... Sly can put a stupid "y" sound on the end of every word just to make them rhyme.. and get away with it. Sly can put a "beep" sound in the middle of every line... Why ? Well Sly not. Sly sings and croons, Sly sways and dances, Sly gives you the coolest richest funniest raps around. His raps are city crazy, club oozy, estate grimy, dope dealy. Sly never does the same poem the same way twice. Sly can make you jump out of bed, standing

on your head. Sly can get half the audience to hum a rich rising "mmm" sound while the other half chants "take it easy, take it easy" and he cruises his rap over under and through the middle. Sly is charm, Sly is flabbergasting, SLy is the rule-book ripped up, Sly is catchy.. I've spent whole days with "take it easy, take it easy" or "the government you are calling knows you're aching, please hold the line, they're trying to affect you" running out of control around my head.

I first saw Sly storming at the Plunge Club in October, and since then he's just got better and better. Who is Sly ? where does he come from ? and how soon before he transmogrifies into a star ? He kicked ass for the Big Word at the London Poetry festival, he's going to boggle the hazy thousands on the Jazz stage at the Glastonbury festival, he's even done the Southbank. Pretty soon he's going to be everywhere. catch him now before he gets too big.

Mr Social Control - God knows what planet he's on , but I think I'll make a visit in VR not AR (actual reality). you ring him up and say "Where you been ?" and he says, "I got in my submarine and took it down to fifty thousand fathoms" and you say "what ?"

This man is preposterous. He comes on stage through a kicked open door, he

struts on arch and kinda camp to light a stupid cigar, and then rolls his rap. You might think social control is an abstract concept, invisibly exercising it's influences upon you and us. And you might well be right, but here's the man who says he's it. He is the physical manifestation of control, and that might sound a tad weird but when you see him, you see what he means, because he is social control. He does poems you can't explain afterwards. he does this poem called "Act of faith" which talks and jokes about the Banks and World markets and somehow proves , utterly convincingly, that the whole World system is based upon the work that we haven't done yet, upon the assumption that we're going to do it. It winds these rambly lines in the air round the head, slapdashly this-and-thattng before he expertly pulls on the loose knots his line has spun to suddenly jerk your head. People go away shaking and scratching their heads, they talk about it afterwards but it only makes sense when he, tip top charmer and anarcho ranter, gives it you real. He's mad, he's silly, he's achingly, aisle-clutteringly funny and you don't know you're born till you've seen him.

These men are plainly not a product of the same evolutionary process as the rest of us. Or is someone somewhere constructing such glorious creations ? whatever, the future's going to be a lot more fun with them around. When will the whole World know their names ? Not soon enough.

