

# VARIETY

*Film Reviews*

1985-1986

tricks of the bouncer trade by old hand Michael Parks, in an all-too-brief, but effective, portrayal of a former actor in the James Dean mold now reduced to this demeaning work.

When Parks is gunned down by a quartet of punks, Persekian is shattered and drops out for a while. Meanwhile his girl (Jamie Barrett) has landed in town looking for him and has been taken in tow by the sinister Ron Kohlman. To make matters worse, Curtis is being squeezed by a new generation of Mafia types who want the lucrative dope deals that take place unofficially at the nightspot.

All this probably sounds stronger than it plays on screen. Writer-director Norman Thaddeus Vane provides some glowing scenes, in which Curtis and Parks, particularly, shine, but the pic is uneven and a bit undeveloped, and the numerous musical numbers seem thrown in rather than properly integrated.

Jamie Barrett makes an appealing heroine, and her waterbed love scene with Persekian is a highlight. Film could attract audiences on its blend of modern music and youthful action, but prospects look somewhat iffy. It's technically tops, with expert lensing by Joel King and a well-produced music soundtrack.

—Strat.

### Hot Water (CANADIAN-COLOR)

Cannes, May 16.

A Cinema International release in Canada. (No production company credited.) Produced by Don Carmody. Directed by Jim Hanley. Executive producers, Andre Link, John Dunning. Featurs entire cast. Screenplay, John Maxwell and Don Carmody; camera (color), Maurice de Ernsted; editor, Jacques Jean; design, Paola Ridolfi; music, Ken Roberts and Allen Gerber. Reviewed at Olympia, Cannes (Market), May 16, 1985. Running time: 83 MINS.

K.C. .... Suzanne DeLaurentis  
Jo .... Linda Singer  
Luke .... Michael McKeever  
Bud .... Ken Roberts  
Junior .... Jeremy Ratchford

Nasty minded, bloody and bigoted, "Hot Water" has two hookers released from jail, attacked by their pimp and fleeing to a small waterfront community to reopen a run-down marina.

Townsmen, including the sheriff, have southern U.S. accents and are all slobbering, booze-guzzling rowdies given to random violence, the latter because they resent the ladies' presence. Chief of them is a pathological crazy who rapes and in one sequence destroys the marina's interior with a chainsaw while his demented mother watches gleefully from afar with binoculars.

The curvaceous hookers, who wear a collection of different bikinis throughout the pic, are befriended by the only two men who do not

have southern accents. One of the women saves herself from attack by igniting a Molotov cocktail from a small boat while circled by would-be rapists.

Their two male protectors are killed brutally as is almost everyone else and the hookers decide maybe opening a marina, wasn't such a good idea after all.

Sometime well-paced editing rescues slow direction and brutal plotting. Pic was made on the set of "Meatballs III" in quickie fashion and on a low budget of \$C6,000,000 or maybe less.

With little to recommend it beyond repeated acts of violence, pic shows possibilities for homevid and theatrical playoff in grind situations. Acting and other production values are uneven. —Adil.

### Here Come The Littles (FRENCH-ANIMATED-COLOR)

Hollywood, May 27.

An Atlantic Releasing Corp. release of a DIC production. Produced by Jean Chalopin, Andy Heyward, Tetsuo Katayama. Executive producers, Chalopin, Hayward. Directed by Bernard Deyries. Screenplay by Woody Kling, from a book by Jon Peterson; camera (CFI color), Hajime Hasegawa, Kenichi Kobayashi; music, Haim Saban, Shuki Levy; editor, Masatoshi Tsurubushi; art director, Mutsuo Koseki; sound, Sound West; animation director, Tsukasa Tannai, Yoshinobu Michihata; tracing and painting, Hiroko Kondo, Mari Nakamura, Tomoko Yamamoto; associate producer, Koji Takeuchi; assistant director, Sunao Katabuchi. Reviewed at the Hollywood Egyptian Theater, Hollywood, Calif., May 24, 1985. (MPAA Rating: G.) Running time: 75 MINS.

Voice characterizations: Jimmy E. Keegan, Bettina Bush, Donovan Freberg, Hal Smith, Gregg Berger, Patricia Parris, Alvy Moore, Robert David Hall, Mona Marshall.

First feature outing for the Littles, popular Saturday morning kiddie characters, "Here Come The Littles" should prove familiar ground for its target audience. Animated feature lacks the intensity and satisfaction of a true film experience and is closer to an expanded television program. Pic, however, can expect decent returns from the growing kiddie audience in regional playoffs.

Curious creatures something like human mice, the Littles maintain a totally human existence within the walls of a house. Big difference between Littles and humans is that these characters go around with perpetual smiles on their faces, even in the face of numerous calamities.

It seems Henry, the young boy who lives in the Littles' house, is being sent away to live with an evil uncle because his parents have disappeared in the jungle. Little Tom Little and sister Lucy accidentally get trapped in Henry's suitcase, setting off a series of misadventures.

Script by Woody Kling explores themes important to kids growing up as young as five. Issues raised in-

clude homelessness, loss of parents and the importance of family and friends.

Even when things get darkest for the Littles and young Henry, nothing gets too heavy, and the emotions are basically mild and non-threatening. Consequently, characters come off as agreeable but one-dimensional.

Animation is serviceable without being particularly exciting or imaginative. The Littles and humans have only a limited range of expressions. Like any good stars, the Littles carry the film, but next time they should hold out for better material. —Jagr.

### Heart Of The Garden (COLOR)

Washington, D.C., March 18.

A Roland Films presentation. Produced by Raymond Chavez. Written and directed by Lavinia Currier. Camera (color), Ed Lachman, Arthur Ornitz; art direction, Ben Edwards; editor, Denine Rowan; music, J. Aaron Diamond. Reviewed at American Film Institute Theater (Women Make Movies IV), Washington, D.C., March 17, 1985. Running time: 64 MINS.

Nora ..... Morgen Leigh  
Cully ..... Freddy Koehler  
China, the vagrant ..... Kaulani Lee  
Nimrod ..... Joe Seneca  
Nanny ..... Madeleine Thornton-Sherwood  
Cellist ..... Yo Yo Ma

The two children, Nora and her little brother of wealthy Virginia landowners are left alone with the servants to get along in a virtual paradise of an old estate in "Heart Of The Garden."

Enter a mad woman, dubbed China after she shatters the china breakfast dishes, who tells the children of the wide world, mesmerizes young Nora, gets her to run away, then confirms what the girl knew in her heart: her parents are dead. Nora drives China away, is fetched back home and has to scale the gate in the last scene as her final attempt to escape her home and childhood. The story is told with care and cunning with little concern for realism.

Structured with flashbacks to show the beauty and love of the past, the pic features elegant locations and dreamy glamor as the child's memory of the not-too-distant past. A Fourth of July fireworks display implies the death of something greater than just the Southern way of life, as the pyrotechnic display lights up as an American flag, then fizzles out.

Ed Lachman has photographed the lush Virginia countryside in a lyrical and languorous sweep, giving the story time, perhaps too much time, to evolve out of the mood of an indulgent Mother Nature. Psychology consumes the dramatic conflict and is appropriately swampy, seen through the eyes of a

pubescent girl.

Thespian credits are tops, with Joe Seneca's entertainment value as an ante-Bellum black named Nimrod leaving us wanting more of him. Actors Studio veteran Madeleine Thornton-Sherwood delivers a small part of the nanny with panache, and Kaulani Lee is histrionically mad.

The powerhouse performance is young Morgen Leigh as Nora. She is never self-conscious before the camera, and director Lavinia Currier modulated the balance so none of the professionals upstage the young protagonist. Her open face gives credibility to the sensitivity of this story of abandoned children and tones down the sometimes excessively poetic dialog.

It's rare that indie debuts assume such a polished and dramatic stance that would earmark them instantly as serious television programming. American Playhouse would be an appropriate goal for "Garden" with its Chekhovian view of the South.—Kaja.

### Return To Waterloo (BRITISH-COLOR)

A New Line Cinema release of an RCA Video Prods. presentation. Produced by Denis Woolf. Written and directed by Ray Davies. Stars Ken Colley; editor, David Mingay production manager, Paul Sparrow; camera (color), Roger Deakins; sound, Bruce White art director, Terry Pritchard; choreographer James Cameron; songs by Davies; music performed by Davies, Mick Avory, Jim Rodford and Ian Gibbons of The Kinks. Reviewed a Magno Preview 9 Theater, N.Y., May 15 1985. (MPAA Rating: PG-13.) Running time: 60 MINS.

With: Ken Colley (Traveller); Valerie Holiman (Traveller's Wife); Dominique Barne (Traveller's Daughter); Hywel Williams Ellis Aaron Probyn; Gretchen Franklin; Betty Ro maine; Michael Cule; Christopher Godwin Wanda Rokicki; Alan Mitchell; Claire Parker; Timothy Davies; Joan Blackham; Tir Roth; Mike Smart; Sally Anne; Lizzi McKenzie; Sheila Collins; Myrtle Devenish Nat Jackley; Wally Thomas; Roy Evans; Su Vanner; Claire Rayner; Michael Fish; Ne Landor, Teresa Pattison.

Conceived by Ray Davies, leader of the veteran English rock group The Kinks, this engagingly bizarre music video sendup of British bourgeois repression was televised originally on England's Channel 4 While "Return To Waterloo" was geared for the homevideo market here (it will eventually be released on videocassette by RCA), its theatrical distributors could reap a decent turnout in specialty situations: word-of-mouth builds.

With virtually no dialog, "Return To Waterloo" is carried by a melodically strong, lyrically cogent rock 'n' roll soundtrack (including three songs from The Kinks' fine recent LP, "Word Of Mouth") and tit visceral, wordless acting of lead Ken Colley as the Traveller, a suburban real estate salesman in mid-life