

New Bond film shines

by Bryan Fantie

We thought we'd never see it happen. But, as the title suggests, never is not a word to be used lightly. Sean Connery still is James Bond and *Never Say Never Again* (playing at the Paramount) confirms it.

Once again we have a 'serious' Bond film where the plot and characters are not just distract-

tions from a carnival of special effects. Tongue still is firmly planted in cheek—but the humour, aside from being clever, is well spaced and seems spontaneous rather than contrived.

Basically a remake of *Thunderball*, the film follows Bond's return from a teaching post to active duty in order to thwart

SPECTRE's attempt to extort the wealth of the world with two stolen American cruise missiles.

Max Von Sydow makes essentially a cameo performance in the role of Ernst Blofeld. The major villain of the piece, Largo, is magnificently portrayed by Austrian actor Klaus Maria Brandauer who received kudos for his performance in the Oscar winning *Mephisto*. Connery himself has described Brandauer as "possibly the greatest actor in Europe today." Brandauer provides *Never Say Never Again* with a villain that is more than a Dick Tracy caricature; he is motivated by the complexities and aberrations of a full personality.

Bond's greatest threats are sent

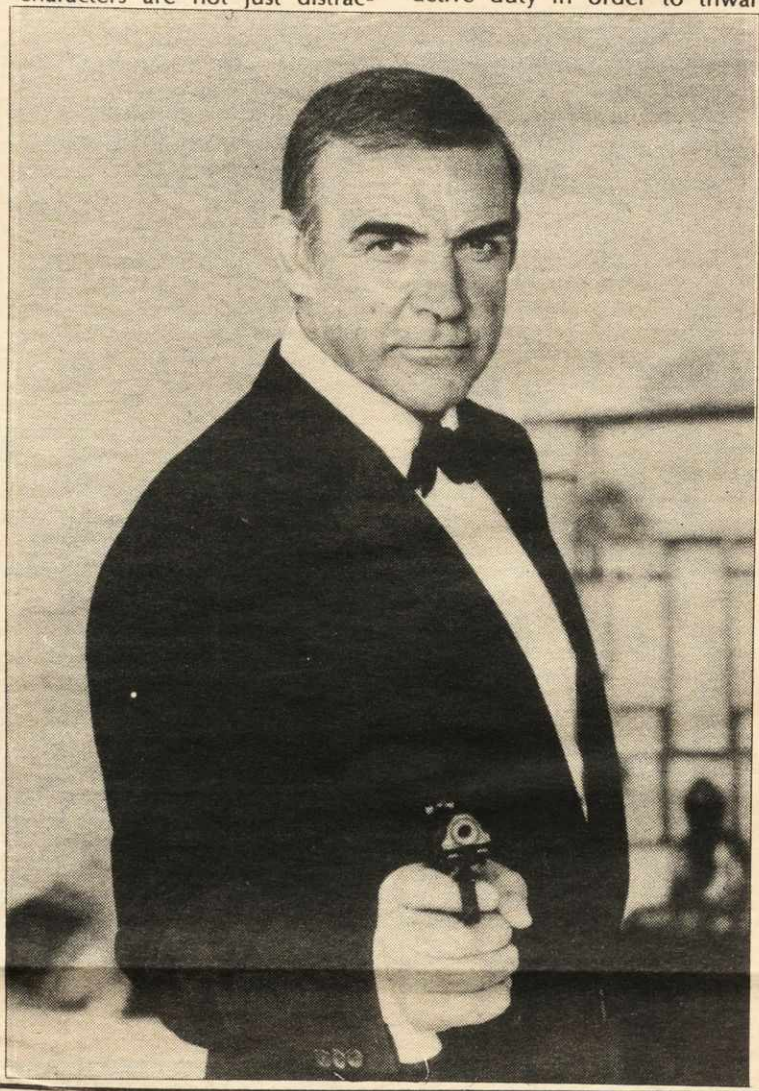
his way via the deadly assassin Fatima Blush played by Barbara Carrera. Carrera may have finally involved herself with a success after a series of unfortunate, well-publicized bombs like *Embryo* with Rock Hudson and *I, the Jury* with Armand Assante.

Kim Basinger (from T.V.'s *From Here to Eternity* and *Katie: Portrait of a Centerfold*) is the 'love interest' of both Bond and Largo.

The first two-thirds of the movie are vintage Bond. Connery takes his role seriously and it shows. He may not be as young as he was (who is?) and have a little too much mascara on in the early scenes but he still manages to fill the action sequences with a feeling of genuine peril.

"Good to see you back, Mr. Bond. I hope this means we'll have plenty of gratuitous sex and violence," jests Algy (Q), the armourer. Clearly designed to be excerpted for promos, this statement proves rather ironic. The lack of explicit nudity, and practically bloodless killing, is anything but gratuitous.

Although the ending was weak (a problem shared with director Irvin Kershner's previous *The Empire Strikes Back*) I thoroughly enjoyed seeing Connery again as Bond. If you read Fleming's novels the resemblance between the literary Bond and Connery is chilling. It is easy to see that Connery has a great affection for the character and great respect as well.





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T-Bone holds up mirror

by David Lutes

Proof Through The Night, T-Bone Burnett's second major release, paints the listener a bleak, pessimistic landscape. And yet Burnett, a deeply religious man, manages to avoid preaching to the masses à la the convertible Bob Dylan. Instead, he portrays the sad shape of American culture, with a hope that he will make us see what is wrong and try to change it.

Burnett is a beautiful storyteller and sometimes a minstrel. Whether he is telling us of a misguided young starlet, as in "Fatally Beautiful" or ridiculing the corporate power structure and struggle in "Hula Hoop," Burnett makes you feel his silent rage at the things that remain as central goals in our society. Other cuts tell of the horrors of a "winnable" nuclear war ("The Murder Weapon") and of the materialistic world at its worst ("Hefner and Disney").

Something Burnett seems quite affected by is the transition of society from the 60's to today. The innocence of the youth of the time comes out in "After All These Years," a ballad of a lost love.

On "The Sixties" Burnett is at his most vicious. He sings of how society worships the more hedonistic aspects of the age of Free Love and rampant drug use,

while at the same time ignoring all the ideals that generation once held so high.

To prevent this moralising from becoming tedious, Burnett holds our attention with the music. Imagine a hard-edged, folk-rock sound with some inspired playing and interesting back-up harmonies. Then, add the talents of an impressive array of guest artists, from Pete Townshend to Richard Thompson. This gives the music a more modern sound. The more I listen, the more I learn and enjoy this sometimes unique style.

Burnett even pays tribute to some obvious influences with varied success. The sounds of Louisiana Cajun music are heard on "Shut It Tight." "After All These Years" is very much reminiscent of early Dylan. It is only on a Hank Williams-flavoured cut, "I'm So Lonely," that the homage falls short. Though not a bad song it fails to capture a true country sound as well as not fitting in with the rest of the album.

Overall, *Proof Through The Night* remains an excellent record and should help establish Burnett as a strong force on the music scene. Unfortunately, the targets of lessons on the albums, the people that should hear these songs, probably won't—or can't.

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