

Fox's fall lineup

by James MacDonald

The summer of 1985 was the first in a few years not to have any real blockbuster stand-out film. Oh sure, *Rambo*, *Cocoon*, and *Back to the Future* were all contenders, but on the whole this summer was a tame one in terms of super-hits and mega-grossers. Thus we look to the fall lineup, which is always less frivolous than its summer counterpart. As we return to the books, special effects give way to dramatic effect in the minds of filmgoers. Here is a look at 20th Century Fox's fall lineup:

Mordecai Richler has adapted his own novel for the screen in *Joshua Then and Now*, starring James Woods and Alan Arkin. The film spans four decades in the life of Joshua, a media personality played by Woods. He spends a day looking back at his turbulent life when an outrageous scandal threatens him and his family. The movie explores Joshua's relationship with his gangster father, Arkin, and with his wife, played by Canadian-born Gabrielle Lazure. In fact, there is a lot of Canadian talent involved with this picture, and it may be a shot in the arm for the Canadian film industry. The plot actually sounds similar to Richler's own life story, and if you like his writing, as I do, you'll probably enjoy it.

Fox's quota for heavy drama is filled by *Plenty*, starring everybody's favourite pro-trayer of a woman's soul in anguish, Meryl Streep. This one has Oscar written all over it. It's got a dynamite cast, including Sting (though I still don't think he can act), Sir John Gielgud, and Ian McKellen, best known for his one man Shakespeare reminiscences on Broadway. It is a period piece, set in post-war London, and concerns the activities of an Englishwoman (Streep) who, after fighting in the Resistance in France during the war, finds it difficult to adjust to her docile life as the wife of a rising young diplomat. A series of sexual liaisons follow, and she begins to fall into madness. The boys on *Sneak* Previews raved about it, so it might be worth checking out.

The most interesting-looking of Fox's fall fare is *Enemy Mine*, starring two of my favourite actors, Dennis Quaid and Louis Gossett Jr., and directed by *Das Boot's* Wolfgang Peterson. The film is set one hundred years into the future, and concerns a battle-ravaged Earthman, played by Quaid, who crash lands on a remote planet after a dog-fight with one of the intergalactic enemy. The alien pilot (Gossett) also crashlands on the same planet. Together the two must overcome their instinctive hatred towards each other if they are to survive on the extremely hostile planet. If you're thinking that you've seen this one before, you probably saw the same Battlestar Galactica episode I did a few years ago, where much the same premise was employed. Still, even if the concept isn't totally original, this is its first time on the silver screen, and the combination of great actors and great special effects (from George Lucas' ILM company) promise to make this one worth seeing.

Not worth seeing is *Commando*, starring (and I use the term loosely) everybody's favourite behemoth, Arnold ("Has anybody seen my Rub A5-35?") Schwarzenegger. Can't wait for *Rambo: Senseless Violence and Death Part Three*? You'll probably enjoy this one. Arnie plays a retired army colonel (I can't wait to find out how they explain his



Arnold Schwarzenegger

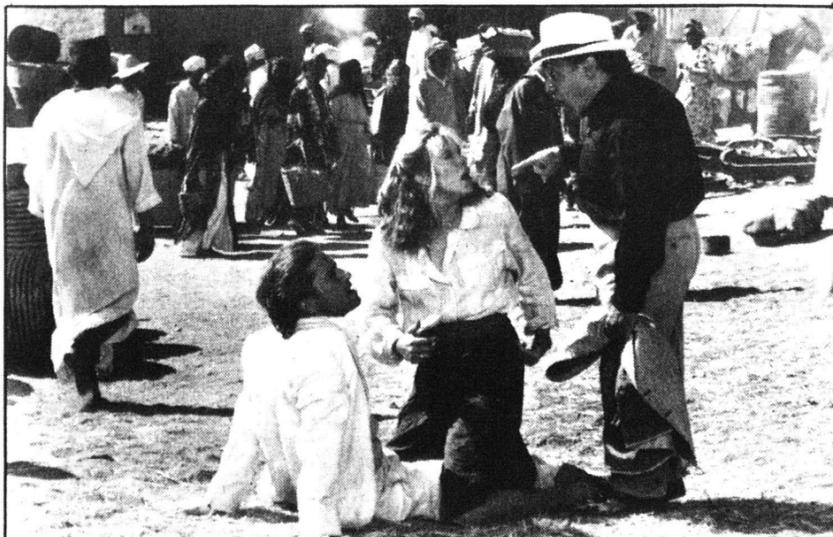
Austrian accent) whose daughter is kidnapped by some international bad guys (now the Red Menace is stealing our children, too) forcing him to wage a one-man war for her return. This movie looks like such a *Rambo* rip-off that even the poster design is identical. I only hope that this isn't the beginning of a trend.

In the grand tradition of sequels, here come *The Jewel of the Nile*, reuniting the *Romancing the Stone* gang. After the surprise success of the original there will have been more money spent on this one. This means that, like the *Indiana Jones* series, there will be more special effects and stunts in this one, and thus more thrills and chills. All I can say is: if you like the original, you'll probably like this movie. If you didn't like the original, stay away from this movie. And if you didn't see the original but wanted to, you have another chance.

Next on the list is *Bad Medicine*, a comedy that sounds like it will be either the sleeper hit of the fall or the worst of the autumn releases. The plot concerns the hijinks of a young rich kid (played by Steve Guttenberg) who, coming from a long line of doctors, is pressured to enter the profession. The kid is reluctant to do so, however, and his marks aren't good enough for any American medical school, so he is dispatched to a small Latin American medical school. The movie co-stars Alan Arkin and Julie Hagerty, so there is some comic talent involved; and although Guttenberg's done three times as many bad pictures as good ones, I liked him in *Diner* and *Cocoon*, so this may work out. This one's a toss-up.

Last on Fox's fall lineup is a Gothic thriller, entitled *The Doctor and the Devils*. The film is based on the exploits of two real-life 19th century graverobbers, Burke and Hare, and is a meditation on life and death, and the question of the end justifying the means. This film sounds intriguing, especially so because the original screenplay was written by Poet Dylan Thomas in 1953, and adapted by Ronald Harwood. This could mean that, depending on the adaptation, the film will already be dated, but it should be an interesting look at Thomas' writing just the same. The film stars Timothy Dalton, Jonathan Pryce, and Twiggy.

20th Century Fox has put forth a variety of films for our enjoyment this fall. Obviously, only time will tell just how good or successful any of these movies will be, so watch for the reviews.



Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner and Danny DeVito in *Jewel of the Nile*

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