

Movie of the week...

Here's looking at you kid

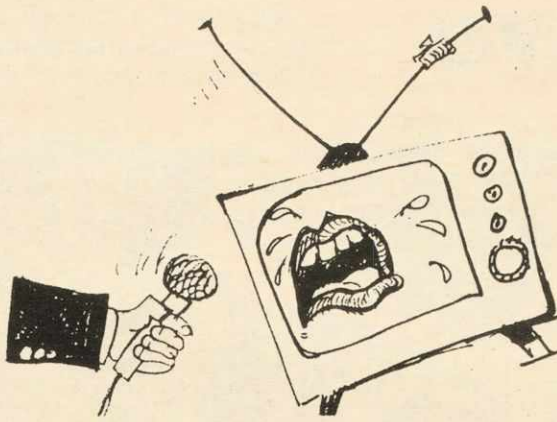
by Paul Webster

FILMS about video. Videos about film. Photos of TV. Films about TV. TV about T.V. And so on and on, *Ice Thief*, *Speaking Parts*, *Family Viewing*, *Sex Lies and Videotape*, *Videodrome*, all recent films concerned with the postmodern self-reflexive media focus on media.

The postmodern era seems to have dawned on Halifax, if *Movie of the Week* is anything to go by. The 16mm full-length production is directed by Andrew Ellis and Thom Fitzgerald, who also take centre stage as the film's chief *dramatis personae*. *Movie of the Week* won several prizes at the Atlantic Film Festival. These included prizes for best special effects, best editing and most promising new directors.

Movie of the Week draws on postmodern notions of media collage and assemblage through its use of media forms ranging from video and 16mm to the inclusion of a separate manually-developed 8mm film, titled *Espresso*, as an introduction. And there is a strong element of postmodern self-reflexivity in its narrative approach.

The narrative tells the story of a young alienated homosexual, Matthew, played by Thom Fitzgerald, coming to terms with the social and psychological impact of his sexual orientation in an homophobic, TV manipulated consumer culture. For seventy-odd minutes we are indulged in Matthew's nihilism, his angst, his vanity and self-doubt, his soliloquys and rage. His room-mates and psychiatrist are the foils



against which these emotional outbursts take form.

There are major problems with this film. Technically it is flawed by the low production values necessitated by a \$35,000 budget. Intellectually it dallies with a host

of notions thoroughly cliched, as most of the post-modern themes have now become. Self-reflexivity as a growth industry in the arts has had its day, even in this part of the world. And I'm not sure that the continuous equation of homo-

sexuality and misery, alienation and rejection is socially helpful. Whatever happened to gay pride? Why doesn't anybody make films about the sense of community so many gay/lesbian/bisexual people have found happiness in?



Diving into the Black Pool

by Paul Webster

THERE'S a lot of bands around sounding like U2. And a lot who sound like REM, the Pixies, the Pogues or the Waterboys, for all I know there are bands out there imitating Corey Hart. Well why not? So long as everybody is having fun just about anything seems OK.

When I went to see Black Pool at the Flamingo a couple of weeks ago I thought they sounded a lot like REM. I wound up wondering, as I slipped into my third vodka tonic, what it's like to be in a band that sounds like somebody else's idea. And I was revolted when they lapsed into a round of "show me your naked body" Rock 'n Roll sexism.

It was only after I wound up being lent a copy of 'We the Living', the record which was being feted that night at the Flamingo, that I realized it does sound like REM, Blue Rodeo and the Silos tossed together with a Canadian (Queen Street) urban country

dressings, but it still sounds good. The production values are passable and Black Pool play danseable/listenable songs with talent and energy.

The most interesting aspect of the record, for which it earns my benediction, is the lyrical writing. There's a refreshing sense of historical consciousness apparent in songs like *Between the Tracks*; "I thought the trains forever would remain/ But now fate scraps the rusted tracks of Halifax/ Just another age of reason gone insane".

Some of these songs carry vivid images of the working character of Halifax past and present - reminding us that this is a city full of tough stories, tough realities like those REM, U2 and friends have evoked in different contexts.

Still, Halifax is a different place; a place which should carry a music and a message distinctly local. Black Pool is a local band with lots of talent. They need to be careful to keep their sound, their style, their music local, original and distinct.

Not enough Fire under the funk pot

by Andrew Duke

RUMOURS were circulating that this, the second full-length release from the duo of Kevin Sauderson and Paris Grey, would be completely mainstream R&B.

The first single, "That Man (He's All Mine)" is an attempt at R&B but comes across sounding like techno swingbeat. Clocking in at barely three minutes in length, the song is certainly underdeveloped. "Vibes" proves a James Brown backbeat does not a funky song make and, along with the tracks that open and close this disc, has Sauderson doing an annoying Jazzy B-type voiceover. "What Does It Take", featuring rappers 2 The Hardway is interesting, but only because it is different.

"Till We Meet Again", which has Grey dueting with Byron Stingily of Ten City, is the only track of their four attempts that actually succeeds at slowing down the tempo and getting funky. This is a great song, and forces one to ask why, if a change in direction was the idea, was this not the first single?

Had the disc been completely on the funky tip, it would have been a disaster because Inner City is defined by the perfect blend of Sauderson's lush keyboard strains and Grey's warm vocals and uplifting lyrics.

"Lovelight" pairs acidic bleeps with a variation on the keyboard line from their 1989 "Big Fun" hit, while the title track is a return to techno house. Additional keyboards on "Fire" and the following

two stand-out cuts were provided by Tommy Onyx of The Voice In Fashion; though Onyx is more known for his freestyle work, his touch is not out of place on this disc.

"Hallelujah" bounces along with its fuzzed-out bass, and "My Heart's Not Here With You" is a spot-on representation of the distinctive Inner City sound that DJs fell in love with in 1989.

Fire is a good follow-up to their first release, *Big Fun*, but could have been much better had they stayed away from dabbling in the funk pot. Techno house is what

Inner City is known for doing best, and in the techno house realm is where they had best stay if their goal is to produce quality dance music.

Swimming in a sea of soul

by Chris Lambie

HERE'S the situation: it's mid-November, every assignment, essay and reading that you put off for the past six weeks is due and your eyes have dried in their sockets because that new bottle of visine you bought this morning is already empty.

Well, clear those desks Kids; the *Seahorse* is calling. In an attempt to relieve post-midterm, mid-essay, pre-exam stress, my spiritual adviser and I have decided that a night on the town is in order.

While all the prefab, plastic joints that have been growing in the downtown core (somewhat like mould in a damp basement) are very nice, they have no soul. The *Horse* is situated somewhere deep in the bowels of an Argyle street dungeon; its solace is the answer to those strange academic dreams that have been plaguing you since you read *The Odyssey*. You know, the ones that feature a half-naked

Greek hero clicking his heels together three times while telling his dog Toto he just wants to go home...

Ten years ago, this tavern acquired the reputation of attracting a strictly gay clientele. About ten years before that, mythology hints that it was a pretty rough waterfront hang-out type place for dockworkers and other similar characters with huge neck muscles.

Now, the *Seahorse* is one of the most popular, and easily the coolest, spot in town. While they don't have a dance floor and, c'est dommage, no disco, the music is consistently appropriate. Everything from reggae to Zeppelin at volumes ranging from very soft - to a billion decibels, just depending on how the bartender is feeling.

The entire place is relatively peaceful. Chances are, if you tried to cause trouble, the large staff of bouncers and waiters would beat you like a mad dog. A pool table in the back is profusely dented and

worn as a testament to constant occupation. Other popular pastimes at this bar include darts, shuffleboard and strange conversations with people you suspect might have been there since noon. Luckily, the drinks are cheap, the budget being so tight and all - as are most university students.

Crowds range from lots of those modern, urban bohemian types who speak with a pseudo-surfer sound-track, to the usual kind of people you find in bars - you know, wearing black... to amazing finds like the Indian artist in the corner who swears he will carve a life-size model of my friend, if only we can find him a giant redwood before morning. Intriguing, isn't it?

The *Seahorse* is almost always full of people. It's a haven from the campus babe-markets in a refreshing, yet comfortable sort of way. An eclectic festival for the ardent soul-searcher; the *Seahorse* has it all.