

F/X...not so fantastic

By JIM ELLIS
DANNY SAMSON

Hollywood always tries to milk a craze for all its worth. Certainly one of the more popular features in recent years has been special effects, and they have become a common, often gratuitous, feature of Hollywood film making. F/X was apparently an attempt to capitalize on that popularity by making a thriller whose use of special effects went beyond utility to form the basis of the plot. But trying to achieve higher heights is perilous.

F/X falls hard on its face, and the result is even more gruesome than some of this film's bloody special effects. Right from the beginning we know something is a miss. The opening scene has a french-coated stranger massacre all the patrons in a restaurant, gangster-style. But wait, the camera draws back, and gosh they're only shooting a movie. It seems that things could only get better, but F/X manages to fizzle anyhow.

The story centres on Tyler (played by some actor whose name we couldn't bother to remember) who is the master creator of special effects for films. Tyler has all the depth of a puddle. He goes through the motions, but we never care what happens. When his girlfriend gets shot he looks at her mournfully for a second, and then takes off to further mire the plot. We're only fifteen minutes into the movie, and we hope he'll get shot so we can go home.

The Justice Department wants Tyler to fake the murder of an important gangster who is going to testify against his erstwhile buddies in the mafia. But, of course, it's a double double-cross. The plot fails to become intricate, just convoluted.

As bad as main plot is, the subplot is even more tiresome. We can only stand so many gruff cops, bucking the system to get the job done. And we can't forget his bumbling partner who seems to get in the way more than he makes himself useful. There is the obligatory car-chase, the helpful female computer technician, the Justice Department bureaucrat who lived in a 1000-room mansion, and an assortment of other dull characters drawn from the files of the stereotype department at some film company in Hollywood.

Thrillers are supposed to be predictable to a point. You know the hero will somehow get involved with some nefarious scheme, he will be double crossed, someone close to him will be killed (or at least hideously disfigured) he will spend most of the movie running, and in the end he will kill (or main or viciously insult) the man who doublecrossed him (shot his dog, wrote him a bad cheque).

But this kind of predictability does not matter. The "thrill" in thriller is usually a result of how the director manipulates these standard elements and the audiences expectations. Blood Simple (1984) is a superb example of this. The story is extremely simple: A man hires a sleazy detective to kill his adulterous wife. We know from the start that either the husband or the detective (or both) will probably be killed, while the wife will probably survive. We know where we will be at the of the movie, but this doesn't matter: what we really care about is how we will get there. Through a series of mistaken identities, sudden appearances and other standard tricks cleverly employed, the audience is left in an exhilarated state of confusion,



knowing (or thinking they know) just enough of what is going to happen to feel scared for the heroes.

But all of this might have been interesting had it not been such a slap-dash, scissors-and-paste bore. Characters are thrown in and dropped, and circumstances and motivations change simply to facilitate

something else happening. Even that wouldn't be so bad had what was happening not been so predictable, and therefore so utterly boring.

And this is the problem with F/X: we can always see what is about to happen, and by golly, it always does. The director seems to have learned that you have to set up expectations,

but what he didn't realize is that he then should manipulate them, frustrate them, ANYTHING except satisfy them. The result is a thriller without a thrill, about a character we don't care for. It's a pity they canned Charlie's Angels.

DAN *
RATINGS JIM *1/2

Film Society

By NUSIN BROWN

U.N.B. Film Society will be presenting Yellow Submarine this weekend.

A pleasant place called Pepperland, whose people love beauty and music, is attacked by an army of nasty Blue Meanies, who can't stand happiness. Monsters such as the Snapping Turtle Turk, with a starklike mouth in his belly, the Hidden Persuader Man, with pistols concealed in his outsized shoes, the rocketing Ferocious Flying Glove with jet propulsion and a sinister intelligence of its own, and the perpetually grinning Jack the Nipper, whose hands are toothed, indiscriminately perform outrages upon the helpless citizenry. Only one Pepperlander manages to escape and takes off to bring somebody—anybody—to help. Then, racing to their rescue, come the Beatles in a Yellow Submarine, and their rhythm saves the world.

Yellow Submarine is an animated cartoon in which all the cartoon conventions (such as the cuddly animals) have been cast aside. In 1968, it was seen as something of a landmark in that it utterly demolished the slick naturalism of post-Disney cartooning. In the film, the Beatles themselves are recognizable caricatures and so are the inhabitants of Pepperland. But the creatures they encounter on the way and the Meanies themselves are nothing like anyone has ever envisioned outside of a cheerful nightmare, if there is such a thing. In this film, imagination soars. The most important thing about Yellow Submarine is its wondrous visual freedom; the stream of visual effects makes an extraordinary artistic achievement of work is basically a simple fairy tale.

Odds & Entz

By KAREN MAIR

Do you listen to music? Of course, you do. Well, I have records that desperately need to be reviewed (several of which are buried rather deeply in MacKenzie House...R.I.P). If you would like to review albums for the Brunswickan, just stop in the office anytime and see me. P.S...you get to keep the albums.

Things are looking up for the CHSC. Their Irish Bash last Monday night recieved a good turn-out. Keep an eye out for further events.

Lucent is coming to town, or rather the Edmund Casey Auditorium on the STU campus, so don't forget to get your tickets.

Yes, the GROG is back again - Friday - 2:30 - Room 26-be there. Rumour has it that Mr. Semple will be performing.

Although it was before my time, some of you might remember Don Messer's Jubilee. In any case, TNB will be reliving some of the highlights of this well known TV series from April 15 to the 26 at the Play house.

The UNB Bicentennial Choir will be holding a spring concert on Monday, April 7. If you are curious about choirs or simply like choral music get in touch with choir director Steve Peacock for tickets or more information.