



Vinetta Strombergs, Stephen Witkin and Michael Rapport pound the humour out of

victim Jack Zajfman in For Piano, Drums and Violence.

## It's a bloody good show

By DANNY ZANBILOWICZ

Hurt. Maul. Pummel. Garotte. Inflict pain.

If the above list inspires reams of hysterical laughter, then the musical comedy revue For Pianos, Drums and Violence, enjoying an indefinite run at Harold's Stage Door, 89 Avenue Road, is just your cup of poison.

A group of four entertainers called The Trust Company takes a stab at some of the revered symbols in our culture and punches holes in our most cherished beliefs. Rest assured that this is no hack job. In a rapid-fire series of sketches, dances, and songs, we are bled dry of all our laughter.

If the music doesn't strike your fancy, then you'll get a great kick out of the comedy sketches, which suffer no lack of continuity despite the chopped-up style in which they are presented. Among the most biting satire is the show's jab at Jewish reunions, in which relatives are portrayed as opponents in a wrestling match. (The skit was a hit!)

Some of the show's material hinges on puns and word games which occasionally lack the sting of the more effective skits, but as a whole, the show's a riot.

Tickets are regularly around three dollars; rush seats are two. The number is 923-1116. If it's busy, hang it.

### Thrilling melodrama

## A dynamic political drama based on fact

By BRIAN MILNER

Costa-Gavras has done it again—a thrilling political melodrama so timely you feel you could read about it in tomorrow's New York Times.

Like Z, a 1969 film dealing with the suppression of political freedom in Greece, State of Siege is concerned with oppressive police tactics applied by the State to maintain "law and order." In this case, the country is Uruguay and the police target is the Tupamaro guerilla movement.

The film is based on fact: the actual kidnapping and murder of an American ostensibly serving as an advisor to Uruguayan police on traffic and communications, but in reality a secret advisor on counter-insurgency programs. Yves Montand, who starred in Z, gives an understated believable performance as the American finally assassinated by the Tupamaros when the government refuses their demand to release all political prisoners.

Also factual is the massive police and military manhunt launched to release the victim and crush the Tupamaros. But Costa-Gavras allows few other facts to get in the way of his powerful, manipulative film. For if State of Siege were reduced to its most basic form, stripped of its suspenseful plot and fast-paced direction, it would be nothing more than an exercise in propaganda.

Immediately, the word propaganda conjures up nasty vision of totalitarian regimes socking it to thier people in heavy-handed, dreary documentaries. But the fact is that propaganda films are a recognized art, an industry within the industry. Properly constructed, as in State of Siege, they make for thoroughly enjoyable entertainment. Moreover, when they're put together by a master like Costa-Gavras, they stand a better than even chance of getting their message across.

The essence of propaganda is the message. And Costa-Gavras has a surprisingly simple one. In Z, The Confession (1970), and now State of Siege, he has portrayed repressive politics—both right and left—and their effect on an individual or political group which doesn't fit the status quo. The repression succeeds—in Greece, in Czechoslovakia, in Uruguay—but at great cost. Political freedom is crushed. Finally, in State of Siege, we see a group fighting back, urban guerrillas who adopt the violence and terror used only by the State in Costa-Gavras' earlier political works.

The violence, though, is remarkably clean—and this is where Costa-Gavras shows his true skill as a manipulator. The police are all presented as villains, fat, bald and ugly—real heavies in old-time movie tradition. The guerillas, on the other hand, all come across as gentle, handsome, basically peace-loving folks who only wish they had a really democratic system of government. The assassination is never shown.

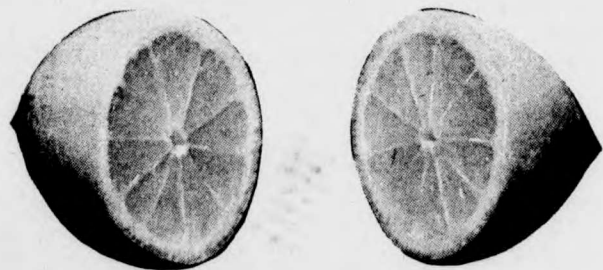
The pointed contrast is underlined by scenes showing police torturing, beating and murdering the opposition, while the Tupamaros offer their kidnap victim mild, and take incredible risks to treat a wound inflicted on him accidentally.

In between, the audience is treated to mini-lectures on the evils of American capitalism masquerading as aid for underdeveloped nations.

All in all, if Costa-Gavras is able to use his art to convince even a small minority of the middle class audiences he's aiming at, it will have been an exercise well worth trying.

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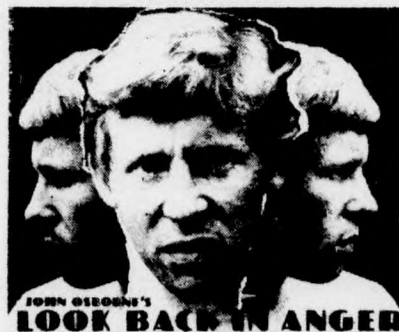
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