

Expertly disgusting

Exorcist squeezes gasps from the audience

By J.B.M. FALCONER

The Exorcist, currently grossing large sums of money at the University Theatre, premiered over the past holidays in Los Angeles and Toronto. It opened to long line-ups of assorted thrill-seekers, Christians, philosophy majors, and agnostics.

It received generally good reviews in L.A. and Toronto, though one Toronto critic (guess who?) damned the film on the grounds of fascist content and overall nastiness.

By now, the highly publicized anecdotes and assorted mishaps surrounding the film's production, and also some of the more distressing incidents in the film itself, have probably been blabbed all over hell's half acre. But there remain a few other things which can be said about this expertly disgusting film.

As a production, The Exorcist is excellent: the direction is exceptional, the photography superb, the script marvellously intelligent, the make-up jobs super, the special effects really tacky (I don't know why these have been praised; the levitation scene is what is known as 'old hat') and the acting is credible. In fact newcomer Linda Blair, who plays the naughty little girl, is quite good.

I suspect however that the real winning charm of The Exorcist lies in the fact that it manages the exceptional feat of diverting one's attention from thinking about the film; because it simply has nothing significant to say about anything. It is a fine, entertaining melodrama, guaranteed to nauseate if it should fail to frighten.

Boris Karloff, Mr. Fright Night himself, once remarked that present horror films, unlike the older ones, don't terrify as much as they horrify. This goes a long way in explaining the perverse attraction of The Exorcist.

Some bright soul (perhaps Blatty, the film's producer) seems to have realized that the only way for a horror film to succeed is by means of excess. "If you can't scare 'em anymore, make 'em so sick they'll wish they'd never forked over three bucks." And this impeccable logic results in a pretty revolting film, which moves you along so briskly that you don't have time to think about it.

It's also interesting to note that The Exorcist has finally brought the whole furtive element of sexuality in horror films clearly, if not cleanly, out into the open. After all, let's face it, we're old enough to realize that those pallid ladies wandering around Castle

Dracula weren't there entirely in the capacity of soirée hostesses. If The Exorcist portends any future film crazes, perhaps we can expect to see not only a stake being driven into the vampire's heart but maybe even his castration.

If you crave horror films with unnatural desire, The Exorcist is probably the best of that genre to come along since Gimme Shelter: it's violent, profane, shocking, possibly obscene, and if you harbour any traces of religious feeling, the film will probably prey on your mind for a long time.

It also might be useful to see it in order to talk to people in the next few months about movies, and to appreciate the glut of parodies which will no doubt soon appear. Let's see how about Rosemary's Baby Grows Up?



Chris MacNeil comforts daughter Regan in shock flick The Exorcist.

Bob's Sea

By RICHARD GOULD

There's one thing you can't take away from Bob McBride, and that is his obvious vocal talent which quite rightly won him last year's RPM Juno award for outstanding performance by a Canadian male vocalist.

His album Sea of Dreams is a sensitive production with great depth in sound variations and tempo changes. Quiet Livin' Feelin' and Perfect Day would both qualify as good solid single material.

The most encouraging fact is that this is a complete Canadian product, except for outside mastering in Los Angeles. The talented ensemble on this production includes Aarons and Ackley, Terry Clark, and 16 string players from the Toronto Symphony.

Although at times pretentious in lyric, the environment created by McBride and his musicians is a dreamy and sensuous one.

They aim to offend

This is the latest entry in the "Why I Like the York Cabaret" contest which the cabaret is running (they're giving away director Rick Wolfe to the loser).

"We are prepared to admit that minority groups who happen to be in the audience at the time of an odious joke have been offended and all three have stopped coming," says the letter, a cabaret promotion piece.

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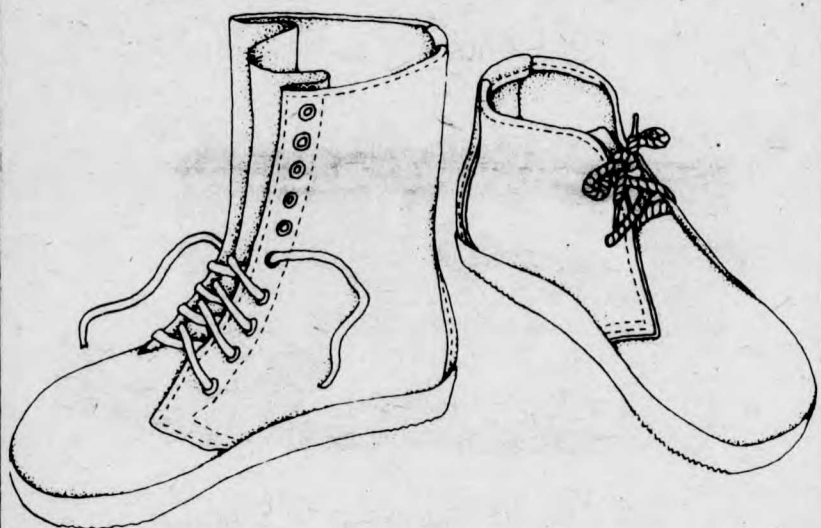
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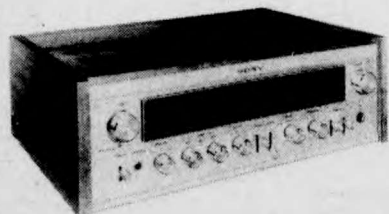
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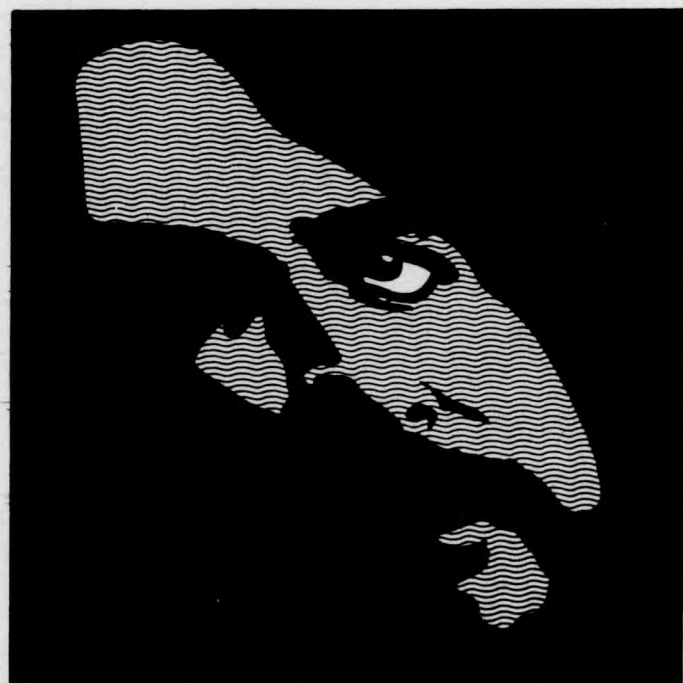
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