

This is Robert Reiner...

by Matthew Rainnie

Rob Reiner's name probably sounds familiar.

After all, he played Mike "Meathead" Stivic (Archie's son-in-law) on *All in the Family* for seven years. During that period he won two Emmys (for the 1973-1974 and 1977-1978 seasons) as best supporting actor in a comedy series.

Reiner is also the son of Carl Reiner, a veteran television performer (*Your Show of Shows*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*) and feature film director (*The Jerk*, *All of Me*).

Reiner has become one of the hottest directors in Hollywood, having completed five successful films since 1984. His most recent project, *When Harry Met Sally* will be available on videocassette on December 14. Here are all of the Rob Reiner films you can pick up at your local video store.

This is Spinal Tap — released 1984

Reiner's first film, a fake rock-documentary, is hilarious. Christopher Guest, Michael McKean and Harry Shearer play three members of the legendary British rock band, Spinal Tap. Reiner himself plays Marty DiBergi, the film-maker who follows Spinal Tap on their American Tour. Some moments, such as the Stonehenge production number and the amps that go to 11 will stay with you for a long time. Reiner not only directed and co-starred in this movie, but co-wrote both the script (which was often improvised) and the soundtrack (which includes such classics as "Sex Farm" and "Big Bottom"). Be forewarned — after watching this movie you may find yourself talking with an accent for quite a while.

The Sure Thing — released 1985

This is an enjoyable romantic comedy starring John Cusack as Walter "Gib" Gibson, a college student who wants to go to L.A. for his Christmas break. When he signs up for a ride, he ends up in the same car as Alison Bradbury (played by Daphne Zuniga), a girl he once asked out, unsuccessfully.

The development of their romance is fun to watch and both the lead actors turn in good performances.

Stand By Me — released 1986

The story involves four boys; Gordie (Wil Wheaton), Chris (River Phoenix), Teddy (Corey Feldman) and Vern (Jerry O'Connell) who go in search of a dead body. However, this is not the main objective of the film. Along the way the boys talk and learn more about each other and about themselves. This film was developed from the novella "The

Body," found in the book *Different Seasons* by Stephen King. *Stand By Me* is a true enjoyment and allows its viewer to experience a vast array of emotions.

The Princess Bride — released in 1987

The Princess Bride is a great big fairy tale brought to life. It has everything; action, romance, comedy and, of course, fantasy. There are too many characters to

mention individually but the most memorable are Inigo Montoya (played by Mandy Patinkin), a man desperately in search of his father's killer, and Vizzini (Wallace Shawn), a tricky little rogue. Billy Crystal has an amusing cameo as Miracle Max. *The Princess Bride* is a lot of fun. Just don't feel too bad if you can't make out a word Andre the Giant says.

When Harry Met Sally...

released in 1989

Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan play Harry and Sally, two people who meet, can't stand each other, eventually become friends and then fall in love. The two leads are great, with Ryan aptly holding her own against the inventive Crystal. The now infamous fake orgasm scene has to be seen to be believed. (By the way, that's Rob Reiner's mother who says that hilarious line after

Ryan is finished.) Bruno Kirby and Carrie Fisher lend solid support as Harry and Sally's friends. The jazzy soundtrack, featuring Harry Connick Jr, gives just the right atmosphere to this work.

What's next? Rob Reiner's next directing assignment is apparently an updated film adaptation of William Golding's symbolic masterpiece *Lord of the Flies*.

Bragg doesn't need to

Dear Dick,
After all these years, I finally went to see Billy Bragg. He was playing at the Pub Flamingo last week-end.

He started out with a poem by Longfellow, and then kicked into "The Love We Had Is So Important". He talked for a bit, then played "Levi Stubb's Tears". Dick, I don't know what it is about you Brits, but you all seem to like to talk about masturbation. Billy spent about five minutes comparing the CN tower to a big penis, and he had some interesting ideas about that revolving restaurant too. Then into some jokes about the pyramids and Ramses as "King Elvis the First".

He then played "Ideology", "The Time It Takes" and a new one, called "Tank". I was off in a corner talking to someone when I really heard the harmonies. Bill had a piano player named Cara and a bass/guitar player called Wiggy. The three of them sounded really nice together.

He played a song I didn't recognize, called "Dancing on the Berlin Wall". Big crowd response. One thing that bugged me was the lack of response to his political talk. People stared at him, open-mouthed like so many little fish, watching the Bragg-god. I think I prefer the African Baptist style, where they say "Amen" if they hear something they agree with.

He carried on with some of my favourite tunes like "Between the Wars" and went on to talk about "Galloping Glastnost", how the eastern bloc is rushing headlong from Stalinist Marxism to free-market capitalism without thinking about the division of poverty

that is present in most countries, east or west.

He finished off by quoting Sam Cooke, "a change is gonna come", and by explaining that socialism is ultimately about humans. Then, "New England" and off to thunderous applause.

It was a good show Dick. The extra instruments added some thickness to the music, and the tunes I already love. I wonder if the politics he talks about gets lost in the beery haze. He exhorted people to get involved in local politics, and I hope that happens.

Well, Dick, I guess I have to thank you for introducing me to Bill's music.

It's the kind of stuff we need to hear more of today, that's-for-sure.

Hey, you owe me a letter now, wot!

Before my typewriter blows up, in

Love
Peace,
Sandy X

