

A Weak Cry in the dark

by Amber-Leigh Golding

In 1980 during a family vacation, Michael and Lindy Chamberlain's infant daughter was killed by a wild Australian dog. The child's body was never recovered. Subsequently, by a bizarre and ironical turn of events, the dog 'alibi' was discounted and the parents were charged and convicted of murder; the verdict resulting largely from rampant sensational journalism coupled with public antagonism towards the couple. Only after the mother spent time in prison did new evidence surface which exonerated the pair.

Is not this sort of thing the stuff of riveting cinema? Not necessarily so. The Chamberlain story forms the basis for a new motion picture release, *A Cry in the Dark*, directed by Fred Schepisi and starring Meryl Streep.

The film takes upon itself the job of tackling the thorny issue of media exploitation, how it shapes public opinion and wreaks havoc with innocent lives. Unfortunately, in its zeal to

examine media accountability, the film loses touch with narrative art. Poor focus is an all-too-common problem with this sort of movie, usually referred to as a docu-drama. The script, co-written by the director and Robert Caswell, fails to flesh out the two protagonists. The audience is told precious little about them outside of the tragedy that they are engulfed by. Numerous other characters are utilized as little more than peripheral devices, so poorly drawn as to be rendered nearly invisible.

Blame should not only rest on the inadequate script but must be levelled equally on the star. Meryl Streep, surely the decades most overrated actress, has been miscast again in yet another pivotal role. The trouble with Streep is that she too often goes beyond inhabiting a role by overwhelming it. Her performance here is not poor in a conventional sense but rather, inappropriate to the needs of the role at hand. The sad story of Lindy Chamberlain is essentially that of a simple woman caught up in a storm of

sensationalism. It was Lindy and her husband's reserve in the face of tragedy that started the vicious rumours in the first place. Anything other than extravagant emotions, it seems makes people highly suspicious. In Streep's overwrought hands, Lindy spends so much time sobbing and agonizing that the public reaction portrayed in the film fails to make sense.

Sam Neill, though saddled with a less flashy role as the bereaved father, fares much better. His is a performance controlled, precise and consistent with character; a quality which more often than not eludes his illustrious co-star.

Of course, given the facts of the plot, audiences can not help but sympathize with the Chamberlains. A person would have to be heartless not to. It is important to remember however that these feelings are not generated by competent film art but rather from what the audience instinctively knows of the people up on that screen. *A Cry in the Dark* is playing at the new Park Lane Cinema.



Meryl Streep in Aussie regalia

Check those run-off matrices, kiddies

by Andrew M. Duke

The latest dancefloor smash from the Scarborough-based Electric Distribution people — remember Pobi's "Dance With Me" and Kon-Kan's "I Beg Your Pardon"? — is the track "Pop Density" from Live Cinema featuring a brilliant 119 BPM treatment by mega-mixer Dakeyne.

KMFDM (with help from Adrian Sherwood) combine grating vocals, funky grooves, and heavy percussion in their hard-hitting "Don't Blow Your Top" 12-inch. Look for the album of the same name on Wax Trax! Records.

The Pet Shop Boys' 6-track *Introspective* (Capitol) is bound to be viewed as a singles compilation in the future, even though most cuts are lacking in some areas. The Lewis A. Martinec remix of their new "Domino Dancing" single is the best on this offering, with a new mix of "Always On My Mind" and "It's Alright" riding the house wave.

New York's Profile label presents the ultimate house music collection in their *Best of...* with the likes of seminal producer Marshall Jefferson's "Move Your Body" anthem and the often-sampled classics "You used To Hold Me" (Ralphi Rosario featuring vocalist Xaviera Gold) and J.M. Silk's "Jack Your Body". These twelve tracks from 1986 to '88 highlight the original house sounds, a far cry from the mainly unimaginative material being mass-produced today.

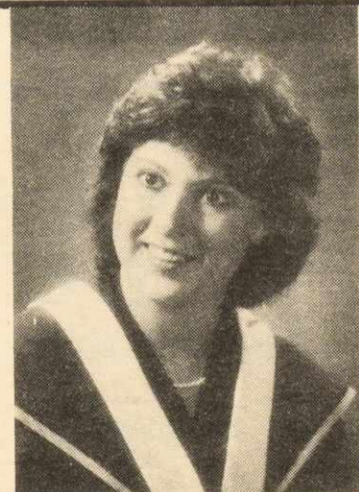
Black Flag's *Wasted... Again* (SST) compiles the best of this group while chronicling the many vocalists and musicians who have been through the ranks. Great stuff for fans of their grungy odes to alcohol and excessiveness.

Two of the best new albums in the "rock" category come from Britain's Primitives, who know the advantage of keeping things simple and show this in the fourteen short-and-to-the-point songs on their self-titled BMG debut, and the *Close Lobsters*. While the

Primitives could be thought of as the Jesus and Mary Chain of pop, *Foxheads Stalk This Land* (Enigma/Capitol) has the Lobsters dealing in the abstract. (Australia's The Church could be a reference). Don't judge them by the titles: "Just Too Bloody Stupid", "I Kiss The Flower In Bloom", "A Prophecy" and the rest are serious tracks that must be felt, though you may want to shuffle your feet a bit too. John A. Rivers (known for his work with Love and Rockets) handles production duties.

The Gazette meets Wednesday at 5:30

GRADUATION PORTRAITS



This is one of several styles

7.50
FOR YOUR SITTING
You keep your proofs

IN EXCITING STYLES CREATED BY

J. Rivers Halifax

For appointment and information call

982 BARRINGTON ST., AT INGLIS HALIFAX, N.S. 423-7089 or 422-3946

Labatt's **BlueLive** presents

JAGUARS

The Newest & Hottest Promotion of the Year

"Dirty Dancing on the Waterbed!"

Cash prizes Weekly and a Waterbed given away Monthly

Super Jam Every Saturday

This Sat. Dec. 3

"Maritime's Most Dangerous Band"

Wayne Nicholson

Brunch 11 to 5 pm

5184 Sackville St. 420- 9543