



## SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER

by Cheryl Downton

The promo reads: "Catch the fever . . . Saturday Night Fever . . . Catch it"; one can only hope it's not contagious. There is really no plot, talent is practically non-existent, the settings are flashy and inconsistent. The music is repetitious and unimaginative and the acting is so unstable it tarnishes the faintly realistic scenes and turns the movie into a choppy, not even believable hodgepodge.

Admittedly John Travolta can dance and cut a dynamic figure in \$27.50 shirts, pink pants and white suit. As for acting ability—he doesn't really get much of an opportunity to display much talent of any kind. Saturday Night Fever is attracting large audiences, but once the flash of the disco scenes wears off, there is very little left.

The story is one that has been used many a time before, with a few minor variations: Tony (Travolta) is a nineteen year old paint store clerk who lives at home with his Italian family. There are the usual family hassles which are supplemented by having Tony's older brother become a drop-out from the priesthood. Tony hangs around with his three friends whom he feels are just a little bit different from himself. He

is their self-styled leader and undisputed 'king' on the dance floor. No one falls in love, and there are the somewhat quasi scenes of a semi gangbang and a semi gang fight. Nothing really outstanding.

It's a shallow story with mediocre performances by all. Even the sub plots are not carried effectively, and relationships that have the potential to develop are ignored. The central relationship between Tony and Steffanie (Karen Lynn Gorney) falls firmly flat on its feet—there just isn't enough there to keep it going.

The ending seems to suffer the same fate as other current movies on the market—something is definitely amiss. In **Saturday Night Fever**, there are three things at fault: the preceding story refuses to support the conclusion reached, it's an unrealistic and therefore unbelievable conclusion, and the actors do not have the strength to carry it off.

by Robin Metcalfe  
**Saturday Night Fever—Nostalgia for the Seventies**

It had to happen. As we have sunk down through the depression years of the 1970's, North Americans have taken to gazing backwards at the (supposedly) happier

past. Hollywood gave the 50's a facelift in "American Graffiti" and a cult was born. In "Saturday Night Fever" we are presented with the latest twist, nostalgia for the present.

The basis of nostalgia is the creation of myth. Instead of reality, we are shown what we would like to believe about the past (or the present).

Disco is Hollywood's latest discovery. Originating in the gay subculture, it was ignored until straights took it up. Now we have two heavily-promoted films in quick succession, "Looking for Mr. Goodbar" and "Saturday Night Fever". Like their forerunner, "Carwash", they depict the tension between the reality of working people and the escapist dreams of Success and Power that are sold to them. None of these films succeed, however, and "Fever" is the biggest failure. "Carwash" did have the common touch, a feel for the gritty everyday textures of work. "Goodbar" captured some of the frightening brutality of sexuality in our society. "Fever", however, never rises above cliché.

The story (with some uncanny similarities to that of "Goodbar") concerns a 19-year-old Italian Brooklynite named Tony, who works in a paint store, hangs around with his punky friends and comes alive once a week at the local disco. The "Odyssey 2001" is a palace of fantasies, where working-class youths dress like fashion models and life is transported into an ideal world for one night a week. Unfortunately, the disco scenes are a bit too slick and glamorous to be believable, and unlike in "Goodbar", the distinction is not made between reality and the main character's fantasies.

The film becomes a sort of updated 1960's surfing saga. The conflicts are trite and predictable. Tony and his friends suffer the usual adolescent traumas, and our hero "grows up" a little, but nothing important is learned. As in the old teen movies, women are depicted as less-than-human sex toys, always ready to be fucked. (The film's favourite word must be "cunt") Judging from the audience response when I saw it, the film plays for low comedy; slapstick at best, "dirty talk" at its most juvenile. It amazes me how adults can be sent into nervous giggles by something as ordinary as John Travolta scratching his crotch. The university students who dominated the audience are perhaps not as comfortable with their sexuality as they would like to believe.

"Saturday Night Fever" looks at the present through a rear-view mirror. It distorts our reality instead of confronting it.

## B.B.!

by Andrew Gillis

B.B. King will walk onstage March 30 at Q.E.H. Auditorium and be met with a standing ovation. He is the most popular bluesman in history.

B.B. is not only a best-seller; he is legendary, and he is that because he is an innovator. A best-seller and an innovator—all in one. He is quite alive and well, and a healthy 52 years old.

B.B.'s recent albums, though, have been anything but worthwhile. Less guitar work, and less straight blues material, are to be found in each successive one. The only exception to this rule has been the release of two "reunion" live albums which B.B. has recorded with the big voice, Bobby Blue Bland. (Bobby, as Gregg Allman tells us on an old record of his, really brought "Stormy Monday Blues" to fame.) But "Lucille Talks Back" (ABC 1976) is an example of B.B.'s problems: the album contains much less than a half hour of music.

Also, B.B.'s crowds recently have been smaller and smaller. Not long ago, when B.B. was revived, and he responded with "Alive And Well", "Completely Well", "Cook County Jail"—the crowds for B.B. were huge.

"Cook County Jail" is the B.B. to be remembered: a perfect record, made in the Chicago area jail where until 1969, naked female inmates took on male inmates for heroin hits and sex; in the corridors, anywhere. The blues has always seemed healthy when iniquity is there.

The world can only take so much of a legend; it has only a certain amount of reverence on hand. B.B. has so many good years left in him that he has to try to create a new repertoire with his new albums. He has to win new fans. He's damned if he doesn't create some new material, because the supply of reverence will run out and the crowds will thin. For blues habituals like me, though, he's damned if he leaves the old stuff behind. Who would want to be a legend in his own time? B.B. is one and he has suffered for it.

But if B.B. comes into Q.E.H. and cuts out with all the "Cook County" material, ain't nobody gonna pay no mind. It will be his first time here, and I know guys who have waited the eight years since 1970 to hear that Cook County stuff. That standing ovation is guaranteed, and deserved. I will be standing, anyway.

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