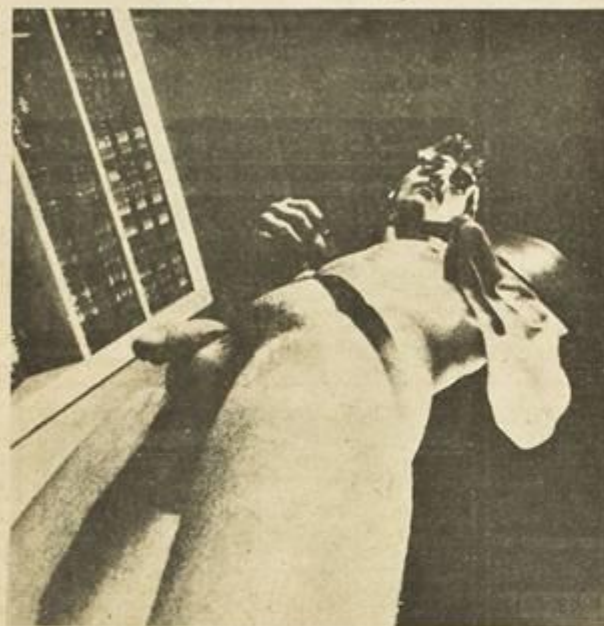


I'LL TAKE MANHATTAN

It's Spring! Who Do I Hate?



A "wild scene" from BROTHERS—the latest in-no-hum-skinflicks.

BY VITO A. RUSSO

Well, it's Spring. The government is crashing down around what's his name's ears, Intro 475 has been defeated for a third time in the New York City Council, plans are well under way for the Fourth Annual Gay Pride March, people are already throwing parties on Fire Island, Christopher Street looks like bargain day at Saks, the era of hiszoner Mayor John V. Lindsay is coming to a close, hundreds of gay people are holding hands across the George Washington Bridge, there are over 800 Gay Liberation groups in the United States, Bette Midler is lying on the beach in Jamaica, they're trying to erect a fence around Washington Square Park and Liberace has just announced the publication of his autobiography entitled *Why I Never Married*—a real cliff-hanger. Just another season in the ol' Big Apple. Aren't you glad you don't live in Chicken Puck, Idaho?

I've decided that this is my Ode to Spring Issue. The beginning of the year wrap-up. Have you any idea how many things are happening here right now? This was the week my mother called me and said "I watched that Press Conference for Intro 475 on the news last night. Where were you? Aren't you supposed to be at those things?" After explaining that I do have to work sometimes I said "OK Mom, I'll see you soon." "Soon? I'll see you Sunday at the George Washington Bridge. Aren't you holding hands?" This was the week that the telephone rang in a Village gay bar and it was the bartender's mother asking if her son had been arrested at City Hall and he did need any bail money. It was the week when the news came that Intro 475 was defeated again by one vote and gay people, in fits of anger, called their parents long distance and announced that they were gay and not hiding anymore.

Another Spring filled with loves and hates. We love Tommy Tune this Spring for his breakthrough portrayal of an unsteriotyped gay man in a musical comedy, *Seasat*; Ben Vereen of *Pippin* for a *New York Times* interview in which he volunteers opinions about gay people which couldn't be dragged out of some gay actors with a forceps; Arthur Bell for his dynamite article on Intro 475 in the *Voice*; Franklin Roosevelt Underwood at the piano in Walter's Apartment for his superb new lyrics to Cole Porter's "Anything Goes" ("A limp wrist today is a fist today"); John Paul Hudson for spearheading the Gay Pride March this year and fighting Stonehill Publishers like a tiger; Jim Oweles and Chuck Choest for getting on the ballot and reaching out to their people; Walter Keat for his many kindnesses to the gay community; Jean De Vente for handling the GAA Cabarets with grace and a touch of fury; Arnie Kantrowitz, Nath Rockhill and Bruce Voeller for telling Jack Paar where to get off; Sylvia Rivers for her leather-lined lungs and spiked heels; Lill Tomlin for coming out in *The New York Times*; Jerry Fitzpatrick for trying to wake up the bar people in New York—and succeeding; and Michael Maye for getting bounced as head of the Uniformed Firefighters Association.

This Spring we hate Aileen Ryan for taking a ride in traffic instead of playing in it; Michael DeMarco, Stanley Simon, Joseph Ribustello and Eugene Mastropieri for voting against Intro 475 and Thomas Manton for not even having the courage to make up his mind; Ronald Reagan for saying that the Watergate burglars aren't really criminals, just people who tried too hard to re-elect the President; William F. Buckley on general principles; David Suskind for being stupid; Jean Gordon of *After Dark* magazine for being intolerant; Judith Crist for the phrase "limp-wristed 'young men'; straight people who pretend their head and tail you slow down they

are that Intro 475 failed but fail you when you ask them to write to the City Council and gay people who don't even care enough to know what's going on, thinking they're free if they're allowed to hide in a bar.

We also love and hate some films.

In Peter Bogdanovich's *Paper Moon*, Ryan O'Neal finally makes his contribution to the art of acting: his nine-year-old daughter Tatum, set in Kansas during the Depression, is a deceptively funny film about a crooked bible salesman named Moses Pray who stops at the funeral of a loose woman acquaintance and inherits Addie, her daughter. His task is to get the child to her aunt in St. Joseph, Missouri. His plan to blackmail one of her mother's old boyfriends with the child backfires when he discovers Addie to be a bigger crook than he is—and much better at it.

Addie and Moses have a hell of a great time, traveling around Kansas together, swindling people into buying bibles supposedly order by their deceased loved ones. It's the oldest trick in the book and Addie catches on at once. The kid is superb. She hoodwinks salesladies out of \$20 bills, smokes like a pro, carries her cigarettes and money around in a cigar box and writes gushy letters to "Franky" Roosevelt whom she obviously adores. In short, she's the brains of the outfit. When Moses takes up with a carnival floozy named Trixie Delight and her black maid Imogene, Addie plots to get back her rightful place in the front seat of the car with devastating timing and style. Always present in her performance is the sense of dread of reaching St. Joseph, Mo. and having to settle down and become a little girl. Her acting is so good it's disconcerting. You keep waiting for her to fall on her face but she's a natural. It's more than just a cute child performance. Of course we all remember Patty Duke, so maybe it's better to wait awhile before giving her the Sarah Siddons Award.

Tatum O'Neal's performance finally betrays the film, however. You eventually realize that her flashiness makes up for the lack of substance. It's inconsequential. Not inconsequential in the way forties comedies were; they had that fulfilling sense of poetic justice that kept the smile on your face for a week. When this one ends you just say "oh."

It's a great series of vignettes, though, and a hell of a lot better than most things playing now. You'll love Madeline Kahn as Trixie Delight, all tits and ass, always stopping the car to go "winky tink." The part of Imogene, her maid, is played to perfection by P.J. Johnson, whose timing is flawless ("I tried to push her out a window in L.I. Rock once"). As for Ryan O'Neal, he wears this mustache in it and it looks very nice . . .

Here Comes Everybody, which I hope is still at the Festival Theatre by the time you read this, is an interesting and valuable experience. The documentary feature which was first shown at the Whitney Museum last year, focuses on a three-day encounter session at Esalen Institute in Big Sur.

It's hard to relate to a film like *Wicked, Wicked* . . .

without making value judgments about Encounter Sessions. Firstly, you must consider that like the Loud Family on NET's *An American Family*, these people knew that they were being photographed and can't fully be said to have been caught unawares. That's a basic problem of documentary filmmaking. No matter what emotions we see in them, we are sitting in a theatre and they are the show. There's no way to escape that. The action is so very interesting, however, that we get caught up in it and find ourselves relating to them as they are trying to relate to each other. It's only when you catch yourself that you say "Hey, wait a minute; I didn't sign up for this."

Many fascinating things happen; some ugly, some beautiful and all ultimately very revealing. A man and a woman who've been married for a short time cannot bring themselves to be open with anyone including each other. An extroverted woman named Janie is goaded by the group into admitting her cover-up hostilities and finally says what she really feels; an overweight named Betty verbalizes her sense of loss and frustration at being too fat and not having a child to look after. A gay man named Stun is confronted by a straight guy and through an amazing series of changes, is forced to defend himself and his lifestyle, though tired of doing just that. I felt myself reacting to the same things he did, being scared when he



The psycho-killer in "Wicked Wicked."

was and relieved when he was.

I don't know that people have to go to Esalen to be honest with each other but seeing *Here Comes Everybody* might make them more aware of the concept of honesty and do something about it right here.

Wicked, Wicked is what we used to call a camp and a half. It's the film you love to hate—the best piece of shit in town. It is shot in Duo-Vision, a new process by which you see two images, side by side on the same screen. This provides for endless possibilities, most of which are explored to death. Literally.

It's the story of a psychopathic killer who had to relate to a film like *Wicked, Wicked* . . .