



TWO SHY GUYS

THE KAJAGOOGOO STORY



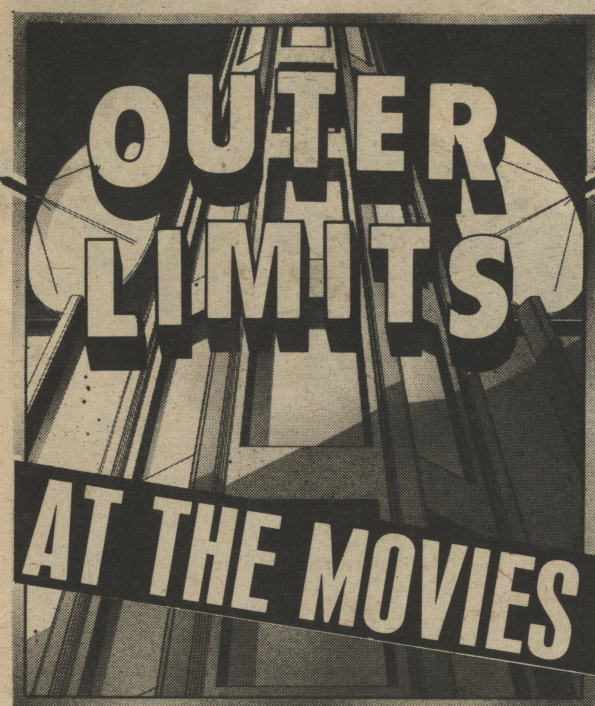
DURAN'S
NICK RHODES
REVIEWS
THE
SINGLES

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THE GEAR FOR THE YEAR: 12 PAGE PULL-OUT



THE EVIL DEAD

WES Craven and Tobe Hooper broke into films through the low-budget horror quickie, and got noticed for nastiness. Thanks to video, the ante has gone up, and the latest craze is the 21-year-old director Sam Raimi who has dashed one off that is twice as repulsive. It will thrill junk theorists everywhere, plus anyone who has ever peaked at finding someone else's obstinately sticky bogey on the underside of his pudding plate. It will make a fortune, and if I were dead I should sue for defamation.

Raimi and his special effects man, Tom Sullivan, were in attendance at the press showing of "The Evil Dead", and put on a display of dismemberment that meant covering the carpets with polythene sheeting. Tom Sheehan and I sat well back, grateful for our brown trousers.

In came a table of artificial human odds and ends, and a volunteer tied to a chair. Sullivan changed ominously into butcher's apron, whetted a carving-knife on its steel, and cut off the victim's hand at the wrist. The critical reaction was to extend the eyeballs like chapel hatpegs. Next followed a virtuoso display of throat and nostril slitting with a retractable blade, followed in its turn by a bravura disembowelling.

Tommy and I had both served a pretty testing apprenticeship at MM editorials, and were able to remain outwardly stony, but when Sullivan pointed out that all these ingredients were available from our neighbourhood drugstore or supermarket, Tommy was off like a long dog before Boots could close. I sat on, staring at a facimile stump, revolving moralities.

In fact, as the director declared, the only effects that had cost a bob had been the contact lenses, a discontinued range, I imagine, as they were uniformly vein-webbed, milky-white, eyeball-less numbers, and so opaque that the actors couldn't actually see each other during filming.

They all worked for 50 bucks a week, plus board, looked so revolting that the crew wouldn't eat with them during shooting-breaks, and should consider an agent.

It was difficult to match up the diffident young chap in the woollie with the ghastly film that followed. "The Evil Dead" will bring them all out from under the stones, and no mistake. It is said that James I delighted in removing his boots to paddle in the still quick entrails of dying stags; expect his spook in your queue, and keep your hand on your ha'penny round the waste ground going home.

Five teenies clock into a backwoods cabin for the hols. No sooner have they parked the toothbrushes than they're off exploring the cellar by torchlight, despite some pretty extravagant indications as to why the let was such a steal. They find an ancient cabalistic volume right next to a torn poster for "The Hills Have Eyes" — strong evidence that their holiday is about to be strafed by a young film-maker. ("Wes Craven? — I walked out! I was in pain! Yes, admiration!" confessed Raimi).

The gang also discover an old tape, play it — and release a fateful incantation that sets the leaf-mould quaking and the curtains flapping. One of the girls strolls out into the woods at night to check in her nightie — (under-motivated, I felt, this) — and gets pinioned and screwed by the vegetation in ways that would puzzle both Fred Loads and Bill Sourbutts. She rejoins the others, a new recruit to the dead, eager for company.

Thanks to our censor, you'll be losing the HB pencil through the Achilles tendon, but little else in her recruitment drive among the frat pals. Far be it from me to spoil your pleasure by itemizing the axe-work on the limbs, the decapitations, spurtings and wriggings of severed veins, but I can tell you that none of these young people have what I would regard as a break from academic studies.

All camerawork is go go go. The oldest trick in the book to establish an anticipation of horrors is to move the camera fast and low over broken ground and, if possible, have it pant in the bass register.

BRIAN CASE follows the nasty trail of modern horror effects



Extra hands sprout through the volunteer's stomach. Pic: Tom Sheehan



Pic: Tom Sheehan



DEAD OR ALIVE?

This we have in truck-stop helpings. If Raimi can shoot up someone's nose or straight down onto the skull or upside-down, he will.

Cut away, the cardinal rule of great horror, does not seem to have been explained. Cut away we do not have. The first teenie to topple hangs about bubbling and hissing like the sterilized milkman on Saturday morning, hoping to settle up, banging the trapdoor up and down like someone, unexpectedly visited, trying to disperse a fart. One laughable misjudgement.

Where do you go from here? All scenes of suspense are disarmed by this permanent reminder of failure to win. The teenies try the usual snags of duff ignition keys, blocked bridges, burial and weapons, but there is no defence against the sheer doorstop persistence of the sterilized milkman.

The script is dreadful. Lissen — it'll all seem different after a good night's sleep is the kind of

optimism I would reject after chopping up two chums. The acting was probably no good, but since they couldn't see each other for contact lenses and knew they were going to be styling their liver 'n' kidneys on the outside in the big scenes, who are we to invoke Brando standards? The film's about camera.

"What's showing here next?" Raimi asked me after the show. It was Walter Hill's "48 Hours". "Wow! I LOVED that — except there's a nasty bit," he said.

I gave the look. "Yeah," he chuckled. "But when it's guns in the streets of San Francisco, I mean, that's reality. My film is fantasy. It's people melting down — I mean, who can relate to that? I made a rack-'em sack-'em and it's fun."

Sam Raimi's next film, currently in production, is a thriller starring ex-Batman Adam West. "This one," confided the young challenger, "has a story."



Cast wait for wages . . .

ISLAND OF DREAMS

THE ISLAND AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD

WALT DISNEY adventure yarns can generally be categorised under two headings — silly, or downright preposterous. "The Island At The Top Of The World" falls unequivocally into the second category.

Not even the total suspension of reason can accommodate the feathery story-line — early twentieth century explorers stumbling across a community of Vikings who are the descendants of Eric The Red's second expedition to Greenland in the tenth century — but then it's doubtful that reason had credibility were ever considered when this film was made in 1974.

Other ingredients include an airship, an eccentric Frenchman, a poodle and an Eskimo guide who "fights like a bear". Fortunately, there are one or two highlights; Donald Sinden unashamedly milking for laughs his role as plummy aristocrat Sir Anthony Ross, and a deliciously lissom Agneta Eckemyr.

Any explanation of the story would be fruitless. Just wait for it to turn up on TV, as it is set to do sometime this year, jack up your feet and have a snooze. — JOHN BARTON