

DRUMMER REVIEW

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Drummer Views Two Flicks...

MOVIE MOVIE IS TACKY TACKY

by **Jack Fritscher**

- This entire review "Movie Movie Tacky Tacky" is also available in Acrobat pdf.
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AUTHOR'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT INTRODUCTION



DRAFT VERSION



Written November 14, 1978, and published in *Drummer* 27, February 1979. This little pair of reviews plays with Hollywood's camp acknowledgment of the distinctly non-camp Mine Shaft in New York, as well as with the erotic aspect of *Superman* and its fetish appeal to *Drummer* readers whose approach to movie-going reflected homomasculine values. As a teacher of film I couldn't resist leading *Drummer* readers into some light "film interpretation" by connecting the actors and directors to other gay-themed films they might otherwise miss.

The in-joke about the Mine Shaft is similar to the in-joke later in *The Bird Cage* where Robert Mapplethorpe was turned into a punch line. –Jack Fritscher, August 14, 2000

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Movie Movie, that's the title, is a single feature double-bill "tribute" to the fight movies and the musicals of the 30's. It shoulda stood in bed. The spoof wears thin in ten minutes flat. The boxing section has some male meat, yeah, but none of it erotic. The musical section looks like outtakes from *New York, New York* or any other *bad Liza Minnelli* movie (if that, luv'er as we do, is not redundant).

SEQUINS IN THE MINE SHAFT

Movie Movie's dialog, written in New York, contains for *Drummer* men what has to be the most "In-Joke" of the silver screen. At the height of his musical-mania, Broadway producer George C. Scott, throws in a gratuitous line that is lost on all but a few of us hardcore creatures of the Manhattan night: "More sequins," he shouts, "more black sequins for the 'Mine Shaft number'!"

That's good, George. But not good enough for four bucks.

After all admission to the *wunder* bar, the Mine Shaft itself, is less than that.

SUPERMAN **SUPER MOVIE**

MORE THAN MEETS THE X-RAY EYE

The high-school football coach in *Superman* has the real super "Look" in his grey flannels, muscles, deep voice, and command presence. Holy cream jeans! What is *his* identity? As usual, the supporting actors click off more bold power than the stars. Never only watch where the director directs your eye.

The *Drummer* eye sits front-row center and quick-scans all across the screen spying out more than bargained for. The hottest is not always screen center.

That high-school coach, who puts a real gym-energy ["gym energy" is coded word play on the name of bodybuilder Jim Enger] to Clark's jock-beginning, is solid macho evidence that a muscle man can truly fly.

SECTION 1: STAR WARS

Superman I is a three-part movie waiting for the serial of *Superman II* (already in the can and awaiting release). Dedicated to cinematographer Geoffrey Unsworth who died during filming, *Super I* is three movie styles perfectly reflective of the times they warp through.

First, a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, Megastar Marlon Brando sends his only begotten son down to Earth in a trip that is light years related to *2001's* concluding Star Child spinning screen-left to screen-right back to this Great Green Planet.

The Destruction of Krypton (supermusic by John Williams) is shot in the contemporary style of *Star Wars*. So far, so good. Especially since Brando is aided by Susannah York (*The Killing of Sister George*) as Superson's Kryptonian mother, Maria Schell—she of the most engaging and famous smile this side of the Mona Lisa—lends her iconic face to support the common sense of Brando's Superbaby blast-off.

The Destruction of Krypton, by the way, opens with a futuristic bondage scene that sends the Pasolini/Fellini hero Terence Stamp (*Teorema*, *Toby Dammit*) who was the best screen *Billy Budd*, off into a time warp. Too bad *Super!* never shows Terence's beautifully decadent face again, but we know Stamp will turn up, very postage due, in *Super II*. [And again in *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*]

SECTION 2: GRAND MOVIE MAKING

Once Superboy lands on Earth (c. 1947), enter Glenn Ford and Phyllis Thaxter, two of the best sci-fi actors of the 40's and 50's. Here, the cinematography changes from the trendy *Star Wars* style to the grand manner of David O. Selznik. *Super I* becomes very generous moviemaking: wheatfields of Kansas with horizons no studio backlot ever knew; vast horizons straight out of *Gone with the Wind*; even a staticky "Rock around the Clock" soundtrack to show the passage of time.

All this, as Superboy whose cute little peepee shows up twice on the GP screen, grows up in the traditional Hollywood style movies once had, once lost, and here recapture.

This second section of *Super I* follows accurately all the *Superboy* comics. *Super I* evokes all our childhood remembrances. Exactly. Even more: it's an exercise in classic movie making. Any son who's ever buried his father, or said goodbye to his Ma, will be jerked into movified sympathy. The wheatfield parting between Clark and his Earth mother is a tear-tug somewhere this side of the classic *Grapes of Wrath*. Hardly expected. But nicely turned.

SECTION 3: SUBTLE SEX

Again, the movie style changes to reflect the passage of time. *Now is* the hour and Clark Kent, fully emerged as the mild-mannered *Daily Planet* reporter, jousts with Lois Lane (Margot Kidder) in clever repartee worthy of Tracy-Hepburn in any movie or Segal-Jackson in, say, *A Touch of Class*.

In between the fast-moving dialog, Superman provides answer to every titanic disaster movie that the 70's have paranoiacally produced. He proves, just as much as the audience wants, that there is a physical/moral/spiritual superhero somewhere out there who just might save us from all the real-life disasters that have—this side of Watergate and Guyana—become weirder than all the ABC-TV movies edited together.

When Superman takes Lois for a Peter-Wendy fuck-flight, he lifts her higher and higher and then drops her into cosmic orgasm, only to catch her in his big blue arms.

If you've ever made love to a real Muscle Man, you'll believe this stunned-to-the-quick Lois who says, "I feel I've touched the hand of a God."

FUN WORTH THE MON

Super I is worth the admission price. Not a wire shows in this technically perfect film. New star Christopher Reeve almost makes the "Vanilla Look" hot. His carefully jock-cupped Supersuit is okay, but pales by comparison to the fetish his body makes of a three-piece business suit.

Chris Reeve is no Steve Reeves, but he proves muscles have not only intelligence but good humor. *Superman I*, in short, is an experience exactly like you remember from reading the comics. Even better, the Mario (*Godfather*) Puzo script answers all the

questions we sicko's wondered about; or, as liberated Lois Lane, herself kidded by Kidder into a rather inquisitive kink, asks: "Do you have normal functions. I mean...do you...do you...do you...?"

"Eat?" says Reeve x-ray-eyeing her pink panties.

"Yes!" she says.

"I'm starving," the heretofore virginal Superman answers.

Is this somehow subtly like the famous "eating" scene in *Tom Jones*?

This is when the Supercouple soars up into their spaceless, timeless, highly romanticized fuck-flight.

If this is just the first of *Superman*'s parts, *Drummer* can't wait for the one-two punch of *Superman II*!

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