

# Our celluloid selections: *Applause's* ten best

By Michael Giltz

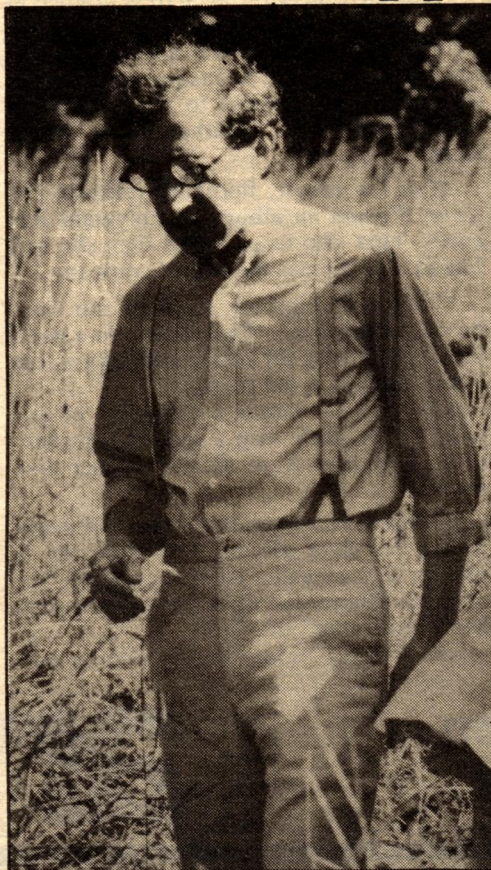
"Ten Best" lists were once only of interest to die-hard movie buffs and film critics. But the advent of the video cassette recorder has changed all that. Now you don't have to stare at a list of movies — half of which you probably didn't get a chance to see — and wonder if they're really any good. You can just stop in at your local video store and check them out for yourself. So, in the interest of keeping you better informed, here are my selections.

**Best Film of the Year—*Hannah and Her Sisters*** may well be Woody Allen's best film yet, and that is saying a great deal. This dramatic comedy contains a rich cast of characters portrayed marvelously by the likes of Michael Caine, Mia Farrow and the wonderfully manic Diane Wiest. It is warm, witty and, above all, genuinely moving. After 20 years and terrific movies like *Take The Money And Run*, *Annie Hall* and *The Purple Rose Of Cairo*, it appears that Woody Allen has only been stretching his muscles.

**The Runners-Up—*Brazil***—a dizzying and terrifying achievement of the imagination about a dreary, futuristic world and a lonely man who only wants to dream. It's a bizarre blend of Walter Mitty, 1984 and Monty Python, with a dash of acid thrown in for good measure. The story is brought to life by breath-taking sets and outstanding special effects. And the ending, which manages to be unnerving and philosophically hopeful at the same time, is one of the greatest I have ever seen.

***Trouble In Mind***—an offbeat romance set in Raincity, a mythical town designed by director Alan (*Chose Me*) Rudolph that re-creates the feeling of old gangster flicks. This movie has enough memorable one-liners to fill up 10 screen plays. No mere description of events can prepare you for the pleasures of this unique film.

***A Room With a View***—a hilarious comedy of manners about a young woman (Helena Bonham Carter) engaged to a prig (Daniel Day Lewis) but in love with the unabashedly romantic, unconventional young Mr. Emerson. The entire cast is delightful, but Maggie Smith is a standout as the very proper Aunt Charlotte. Besides, the skinny-dipping scene alone is worth the price of admission.



*Woody Allen has his best and biggest hit so far. He wrote, directed and starred in the best movie of 1986, Hannah and her Sisters.*

***Something Wild***—a giddy, exhilarating movie about a young business executive (Jeff Daniels) who finds himself being whisked away by the subversive and sweet Lulu (Melanie Griffith). This unpredictable and entertaining film glides smoothly from comedy to romance to violence without missing a beat. *Something Wild* is enough to restore your faith in the movies, but I'm left with one nagging question: Why the hell wasn't it a hit?

***Blue Velvet***—if only for being so damned different. Writer/director David Lynch has cooked up a brilliant satire of art films and small-town life guised in the unsettling story of a nightclub singer tortured by a sadistic rapist. The ludicrously happy ending is just the final elbow in the ribs of mainstream

American films. Lynch described *Blue Velvet* as "The Hardy Boys Go To Hell" and he couldn't be more on target. Just don't forget to laugh.

***The Fly***—may well be the gooiest love story of all time. Geena Davis is excellent as the inquisitive, sensitive reporter and Jeff Goldblum turns in an Oscar-caliber performance as the scientist who finds himself slowly metamorphosing into a fly. It's not for the weak of stomach, but horror movies don't get any better than this.

***A Trip To Bountiful***—the story of an old woman who wants to make one last journey to the house she grew up in. It's a small tale perfectly realized by the exquisite dialogue of Horton Foote's screenplay and the tight, ensemble cast. At the center of it all is Geraldine Page, who never ceases to amaze. The Oscar she received last year was probably for her entire career as much as this one role, but she deserved it nonetheless.

***At Close Range***—a harrowing drama about a young man (Sean Penn) who follows in the footsteps of his father, a criminal. Penn has been delivering one great performance after another (let's just pretend "Shanghai Surprise" was a gift to his new bride) and Christopher Walken is truly terrifying as his violent, amoral father. The result is a detailed and unflinching character study.

***The Mosquito Coast***—an intellectually and emotionally satisfying story about an inventor who drags his family to the Mosquito Coast, where he slowly degenerates into madness. Peter Weir directed with taste and finesse and Harrison Ford is better than ever. Frankly, I still can't believe this subtle and unconventional movie was even made.

***Manhunter***—an engrossing, pulse-pounding thriller produced by Michael Mann of "Miami Vice." It tells of an ex-FBI agent called back into service to help track down a serial killer. The first half of the film is a fascinating study of how he narrows down the list of suspects. Then, the movie unexpectedly changes its point of view and shows us events from the killer's twisted perspective. While we certainly want him put away, this startling twist actually makes us feel sorry for the poor, mixed-up fellow. That twist makes "Manhunter" one of the best and most innovative thrillers in years.