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CALENDAR * FILM SPECIAL
EVENTS

Aug. 27 - Sept. 2, 2004

in this week's issue

features

Give Protests a Chance

Tens of thousands of protesters will hit New York next week. So what? The peace movement struggles in part because the message gets muddled by calls against Israel's occupation of Palestine and globalization. ROBERT GREENE examines the new world of protests and asks, What did pre-emptive war have to do with Mumia?

Not in My Neighborhood Council

The idea of street-level democracy sounds so appealing, even Platonic. But it's not working well in Los Angeles. Many sessions of the nearly 90 neighborhood councils, from San Pedro to Van Nuys and beyond, are marred by squabbling, inaction and lack of purpose. What will it take to make them work? BY ROBERT GREENE

news

IMAGE CONTROL

"We're #1," by SARA THUSTRA. Plus, Filtered.

Election 2004: 10 weeks and counting

Pimps and wimps: Never has a campaign been as dirty as the swift-boat folly dreamed up by Karl Rove and his pals. BY MARC COOPER

Prom night: DAVID CORN offers a few tips for George Bush's speechwriters.

Vulgar Betrayal: What a batch of indictments in Chicago says about the FBI's troubled history with terrorism, and the credibility of FBI whistleblower Robert Wright. BY JIM CROGAN

Just Deserters?: Soldiers are singing "O Canada." Is it the beginning of a Vietnam-like trend? BY VINCE BEISER

Plus, CHRISTINE PELISEK on a Hollywood landmark under fire.

YIDL MITN FIDL (YIDDLE WITH HIS FIDDLE)

Along with the 1937 double-header of *The Dybbuk* and *Green Fields*, this beautifully restored classic of Yiddish cinema resurfaces every few years — this time courtesy of Yiddishkayt Los Angeles, a nonprofit organization devoted to rescuing Yiddish language and culture from impending oblivion. An international hit in its time and (remarkably, given the rumble of oncoming Nazis) one of the three top-grossing Polish movies of 1936, the movie was mostly shot on location by U.S.-immigrant co-director Joseph Green in his native Poland. This chipper tale of a girl who dresses as a boy in order to join a band of itinerant klezmer musicians and save herself and her father from poverty was essentially a vehicle for the glorious shtick of Molly Picon, the beloved star of Yiddish theater who successfully crossed to the big screen without significantly changing her act or her cheeky-waif persona. Shot in the mostly Jewish town of Kazimierz, the movie boasts a terrific wedding scene complete with a nifty montage of the wedding guests. The movie's bucolic pastoralism, however naive and dated, has a fresh appeal for the jaded urbanites among us, and there's something oddly contemporary about the way the narrative roots for its women — a bride who runs away from her own wedding, and a cross-dressing girl who ends up an international diva. For all its buoyant optimism, *Yidl Mitn Fidl* carries, with hindsight, some tragic baggage: It was the last Yiddish film to be made before the Germans invaded Poland. The movie screens with a dinner and live music mix by Josh Kun. (At *Cinespace*, Sun., Aug. 29, 6:30, 8.30 & 10:30 p.m. See *Film and Video Events*. 323-817-3456

—Ella Taylor

FIFTH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF FANTASY, HORROR & SCIENCE FICTION — MALPERTUIS

Malpertuis is a Flemish word, Harry Kümel's stylish 1971 horror film informs us, for a fox's lair, and slang for the devil's house. Here it's the name of the many-corridor home of Cassavius (Orson Welles), a malevolent patriarch who summons his relatives and servants to a reading of his will. His nephew Jan (Mathieu Carrière) first appears to us as a handsome, white-suited sailor, a homoerotic Billy Budd, disembarking from a decrepit schooner straight out of *Nosferatu*. Indeed, *Malpertuis'* black comedy works on one level like *The Old Dark House* or *The Fearless Vampire Killers*, as both homage to and parody of horror films. But director Kümel, best known for his lesbian vampire thriller *Daughters of Darkness* (also 1971), had higher ambitions for this obviously personal film — from the opening sequences of Jan fresh off the boat to the ominous, narrow brick streets of some nameless northern European town, Kümel and cinematographer Gerry Fisher (a Joseph Losey regular) evoke a haunted, nostalgic beauty. Jan finds himself trapped in the labyrinth of *Malpertuis* as he encounters the hidden desires of its inhabitants, especially the vivid needs of three women (all played with unexpected erotic languor by

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A CONSIDERABLE TOWN

Make war, not breasts: Mary Carey bares all to protest boob jobs for GI Jane. BY DANIEL KAPELOVITZ
Throw your hands in the air: A symphony of *clickety-clack* at 7-Eleven. BY A.J. RILEY
Plus, a cartoon by BRUCE ERIC KAPLAN.

OPEN CITY

Melancholy baby: The Black Dahlia as cocktail. BY STEVEN MIKULAN

JOHN POWERS ON...

Jingo bells: Prime-time pride, manly girls vs. girly girls and fear of a black dream team.

DEADLINE HOLLYWOOD

Hirsch's hornet's nest: The éminence grise of Hollywood lawyers provokes pain in parting. BY NIKKI FINKE

COLUMN DAVE

The Perfect Schwartz. BY DAVE SHULMAN

LETTERS

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arts

FILM

Self-service without the smile: ELLA TAYLOR on Vincent Gallo's dog of a *Brown Bunny*.

Less than zero: E. Elias Merhige's *Suspect Zero* takes a wrong turn. BY SCOTT FOUNDAS

BOOKS

The ideal elegist: Alan Furst's *Dark Voyage*. BY BRENDAN BERNHARD

Plus, GREG GOLDIN on *The Myth of Solid Ground*.

THEATER

Chekhov in China: Chay Yew's evocative, troubling *A Winter People* relocates *The Cherry Orchard* to 1935 China. BY STEVEN MIKULAN.

MUSIC

Groove juggling with Master of Reality *Chris Goss*. BY JAY BABCOCK

Animal Collective: A new generation of radicals. BY ALEC HANLEY BEMIS

A Lot of Night Music: A tale of two Bernsteins. BY ALAN RICH; Plus, a web extra: Read a [2001 interview](#) with Elmer Bernstein.

Live in L.A.: Love international: Scenes from Sunset Junction Street Fair.

COMICS

"BEK," BY BRUCE ERIC KAPLAN

Living Free's Susan Hampshire). *Malpertuis* was cut into a more straightforward horror flick for its 1972 appearance at Cannes, and further butchered and dubbed by its international distributors. Now, with this restoration of Kümel's original cut and Flemish dialogue track, viewers have a chance to judge this ambitious surrealist film on its own terms. (*American Cinematheque at the Egyptian*; series thru Aug. 29. See *Film & Video Events for schedule and information*. 323-466-3456)

—Jon Strickland

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