Invasion of the Body Snatchers: Beware of little yellow flowers


By Shaw Wilson

It is generally known that science-fiction movies are mindless showcases for special effects; that a remake is rarely unpalatable in quality to a classic original; and that Leonard Nimoy can't play any role that does not involve pointed ears. In works to come it will also be generally known that the new production of Invasion of the Body Snatchers follows none of these rules.

The effects are used sparingly; they don't overpower the story. The performances are well-handled by Donald Sutherland and Brooke Adams as the Health Department officials who determine why the citizens of San Francisco are acting strangely. Leonard Nimoy as their pop-psychologist friend, and Jeff Goldblum and Veronica Cartwright, who provide some comedy as a flaming bohemian poet and his wife.

The story opens on a landscape literally of another world. Without a word of narration, we see alien plants lift into space and migrate to Earth, incarnating as seed pods with little yellow flowers. Their purpose is to plant little seedlings that will grow into new copies of humans. The plot is a simple one: grow a perfect copy of a human, then dispose of the human. Further elaboration cannot be done without giving away something, and the experience of one hair standing on end is too exhilarating to miss.

This applies to fans of the original, also. The new Body Snatchers is every bit as tense and nerve-boggling as the old, yet it isn't exactly a faithful copy. The changes in the plot keep everyone where the director wants them.

Leonard Nimoy is a high-quality director, but he shows off. His gimmicks plague the first minutes of the film; unexpected closeups of inanimate objects, a bizarre camera angle here and there, and an overemphasized view of the Texas-American pyramid, headquarters of United Artists. Invention is rare;

The performances are generally good, with Nimoy's being superfluous; his work in general remains tasteful and professional.

That word, truly, could be used to describe the cast, Michael Chapman's cinematography, Thomas Burman's plants, and just about everyone involved. Body Snatchers was, and is, the classic horror story.

Rock news for 1979

By Joel West

For those of you unwilling to wait 12 months, here's what the pop scene will bring in 1979:

Tragedy strikes the rock world again this year. In June Al Stewart released his long-awaited double album, History of Western Civilization before a summer tour in the States. The single "Ike of Elba" does well in the U.S., while in Britain World War II nostalgia keeps "Dark Streets of London" among the charts.

However, in November Stewart follows in the footsteps of Buddy Holly and Jerry Lee Croce; while on vacation, his plane crashes on a foggy evening in Morocco. Investigations show that pilot Amy Johnson never saw the landing lights. Arista quickly packages a greatest hits album in time for Christmas, entitled It Ahead of Time.

Brisen tries the bow for a new version of their album, Why Not Look Back? The single "Boredom Feeling" (with an 8-minute drum solo and drums for instrumental) fails miserably. Meanwhile, in the wake of Keith Moon's death, The Who attempt to meet its identity crisis head-on with the album Who Am I?, a question even more difficult for fans to answer. On the Southern California scene, Glen Frey and The Eagles follow the lead of colleagues Jackson Browne with their autobiographical expose of the innocent pleasures of the recording industry; the album Dying Young. The magazine High Times offers the title single with subscription renewals, while band members fill themselves submerged by the L.A. Grand Jury and the newly revived House Commit-tee. In the middle Atone, Brown's work is seen on an overly political tune in his first studio album since 1976, Friend of the Earth.

Here in Boston, The Cars sell out the Garden after the release of their second album on Elektra/Asylum, Southeast Exp.

pressway. The single "Good N' Ready" tops the national charts for 4 weeks, while a red-faced Gov. Ed King withdraws his endorsement of the album after a reporter reads him some of the lyrics. The Nitti gets his fourth major group with the formation of the Brookside-based MBTA. After they are refused by Columbia, A&M puts out their debut album, Colors of the Rainbow, on the strength of the single "Red-Hot Woman" and "Green With Eury.

As August benefit on the Common has only limited success, though the proceeds more than pay the campaign debts of Michael Dukakis.

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