

Movies

Coppola has hit with "Cotton Club"

By **MARCY BASILE**
Movie Reviewer

One of the best movies to come out within the past few months is Francis Ford Coppola's "The Cotton Club." Set in the late 1920s, "The Cotton Club" intergrates the violence of the period with the growing unrest of Harlem's black population.

The Cotton Club was an actual Harlem night club owned by Owney Madden, a mobster supreme who used the Cotton Club as a front for bootleg alcohol. (His own, of course.) During its reign, the Cotton Club offered the best in black performers, but to an all white audience. That racial code was strictly adhered to: blacks on stage and whites in the audience. Rumor had it that the name Cotton Club was derived from the club's racial policy; sort of a subtle reminder that the blacks were there to perform for the whites just as they did on Southern plantations.

"The Cotton Club" stars Richard Gere, Gregory Hines, Diane Lane and Lonette McKee as fictitious Cotton Club performers and/or customers who become involved with the gangsters and celebrities who call the Cotton Club home.

Dixie Dwyer, portrayed by Gere, is a cornet player who plays in Harlem nightclubs. After the conclusion of a set, Dwyer saves the life of Dutch



Caught up in the middle of gangster feuds, Vera Cicero (Diane Lane) and Dixie Dwyer (Richard Gere) fall in love but have problems getting together in Francis Coppola's "The Cotton Club."

Schultz, a mobster bent on cornering the Harlem numbers racket. Grateful for Dwyer's actions, Schultz hires him as a "go-fer," thus entangling Dwyer in the world of violence that men such as Schultz thrived on.

In and amongst all the shoot-outs, Dwyer begins a love

affair with Schultz's mistress, Vera Cicero, played by Lane. Cicero, a cocky teenager, is looking to get more out of Schultz than love — she wants her own nightclub. (See guys, liberation is not a recent endeavor.)

Meanwhile, Sandman Williams, played by Hines, and

Lila Rose Oliver, played by McKee, begin their own romance as they glide through the routines of the Cotton Club. Williams, who tap dances, falls in love with Oliver, who is one of the showgirls. When Oliver quits the Cotton Club to perform at Vera's Club, Williams follows her and eventually

meets up with Dwyer who is, by this time, a Hollywood star. Amazingly amazing.

The original Cotton Club showcased some of the best jazz performers ever. Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington and Billie Holiday were all Cotton Club performers. The shows were elaborate and the dancing superb. Coppola effectively uses the on-stage performances to compliment the off-stage action.

Along with being one of the best, "The Cotton Club" is also one of the most controversial movies to come out in a while. It is rumored to be the most expensive film ever produced (approximately \$50 million), and was reportedly rewritten more than forty times during production.

Despite these few setbacks, Director Francis Coppola finished the film only a tad behind schedule. Pretty awesome considering the work that went into editing and just the basic overall photography. Coppola directs violent death well. Even people who cried at "Bambi" can handle most of the shoot-out scenes without any problem. Coppola also changes storylines in odd and unusual ways. By utilizing wipes and masks, Coppola moves the audience from scene to scene without the awkward blank-screen syndrome so often seen in movies. **A_E**

Music

By **WALTER SMITH**
Music Reviewer



Bronski Beat
The Age of Consent
MCA Records

Dropping this disc onto the turntable, I sit back and wonder why Bronski Beat decided to name their first album "The Age of Consent." Endless pondering while I wait for the stylus to lock into the lead-in groove.

My thoughts are shattered by a shrill a cappella voice adamantly demanding "Tell Me Why?" Immediate regression to childhood's confrontations with mother.

I snap to reality as the song evolves into a catchy dance number, complete with all the necessary synthetic gadgetry. The music is good but the lyrics are confusing. Why, oh why, would this person be labeled an "illness" and a "sin" by others simply because of kissing the man she loves.

Revelation to follow.

Further examination of the record sleeve reveals lyrics to additional songs, proper credit to those who assisted, and an odd chart listing the age of consent for lawful homosexual relationships in 32 countries.

So that's the reason for the huge pink triangle and the National Gay Task Force's telephone number.

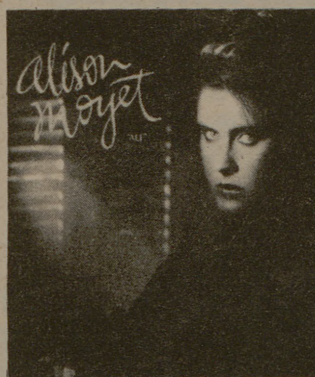
Final revelation. *She's a he.* Jimmy is credited for the lead vocals; whether or not he uses a falsetto for the effect is indiscernible. Last names are missing for drummer Steve and keyboardist Larry as well.

The opening song and "Smalltown Boy" are the two most dance-oriented cuts, at least in the vein of neo-disco. But if one is partial to tapdancing, then "Heatwave" should be delightful. "Need A Man Blues" is the best song for demonstrating Jimmy's wide vocal abilities.

The diversity of their original music wanes when compared to the material they have borrowed. George and Ira Gershwin's "It Ain't Necessarily So" and Donna Summer's "I Feel Love" are just two examples.

"The Age Of Consent" is an exciting album from a promising group. The question remains, however, as to whether

or not the American record-buying public is willing to push aside prejudice in the name of art.



Alison Moyet
"Alf"
CBS Records

When singing lead vocals for Yaz (Yazoo, if you're from the other side of the Atlantic), "Alf" seemed to be of neutral gender. This person of manly stature belted out songs in a

tenor that could please even the most picky of Pavoratti fans; but why would "Alf" be singing odes to boys.

"Alf" still looks and sings the same, but now we know which restroom she would use at McDonald's; she now goes by her *nom vrai*, Alison.

On "Alf," her first solo effort, Alison Moyet heart-wrenchingly delivers one song after another with a spirit and passion unseen in most popular performers.

Whether she's singing dance songs like "Love Resurrection" and "Honey To The Bees," or slow ballads like "Where Hides Sleep" and "Invisible," she exudes a certain essence that shows how intimately personal this music is to her.

Although her true musical loves are jazz and blues, this intriguing combination of Moyet and machine should excel, even in America. **A_E**