Film Reviews

Forever, Lulu
(COLOR)

Campy vanity production.

A Tri-Star Pictures release of a Lulu production. Executive producer, Michael Steinhardt. Written, produced and directed by Amos Kollek. Stars Hanna Schygulla. Camera (color); Lisa Rinzler; editor, Jay Freund; music, uncredited; sound, Felipe Borrero; production design, Stephen McCabe; set decoration, Victor Zolfo; production manager, Sarah Green; assistant director, Gary Marcus; costume design, Candace Clements; editing consultant; Ralph Rosenblum; casting, Merrie Schulmann. Reviewed at Columbia screening room, N.Y., April 14, 1987. (MPAA Rating: R.) Running time: 85 MINS.

Elaine Hines ..... Hanna Schygulla
Dirk ..... Deborah Harry
Buck ..... Alec Baldwin
Diana ..... Annie Golden
Robert ..... Paul Gleason

Also with: Richard Westheimer, Raymond Serra, George Kyle, Harold Oaklis, Bill Colvin, Sebastian Freeman, Amos Kollek, Charles Ludlam, Cathy Gati, Beatrice Pons, Sally Jane Heit.

"Forever, Lulu" is an amateurish effort desperately seeking laughs but getting mainly unintentional ones. Fortunately not the clone of "Desperately Seeking Susan". Its plot summary suggests, picture is still wide of the mark as entertainment and will be mainly of interest to midnight movie followers of high camp. Mystery is why Tri-Star acquired the indie production, presumably of interest to undemanding homevideo and paycable users but hardly a theatrical entry.

Hanna Schygulla toplines as Elaine Hines, a European transplant living in New York who is working at temporary jobs while writing her novel. Film comically depicts her growing list of misfortunes: fired from her job; stuck with the check on a big date; stuck in the rain; evicted from her apartment, etc. Things pick up when she contemplates suicide: wielding her gun creates confusion and results in a well-dressed couple depositing their coats in her arms out of fright.

Elaine becomes involved in a goofy adventure when she finds a package in the man's coat pocket, which leads her to an apartment where she becomes involved in a gun battle between gangsters and the police. Only Elaine survives, making off with two cases containing drugs and $500,000 in bills.

Pic's resemblance to Susan Seidelman's hit "Susan" ends when Elaine finds a pocketbook named "Forever, Lulu." The previous heroine (played by rock singer Deborah Harry) also starts searching for her, after earlier placing personals ad in the paper to locate owners of the coats. Unfortunately for the film (and Harry's fans), perhaps by her billing over the title with Schygulla), she doesn't appear as Lulu until the very end, with Harry getting perhaps one line of dialog, what amounts to an extended cameo, popping up on the outskirts of the action as a bystander from time to time. En route to this underwhelming conclusion, Elaine becomes a hit novelist due to the media attention she receives after she turns in the money to the police.

Filmmaker Amos Kollek, who in addition to his behind the camera credits delivers a poor performance as Elaine's cynical literary agent Larry, directs ineptly, with most of his would-be funny lines falling flat. Gimmick of Schygulla, talented dramatic star from the R.W. Fassbinder troupe, giving odd, heavily accented readings to "hip!" expressions is more embarrassing than funny. Pic's camp-value is finally realized in an over-the-top climax staged at the Fulton St. fish market.

Cast tries hard, with sympathetic readings by Annie Golden and Paul Gleason as Elaine's best pal and ex-lover, respectively. Schygulla has her moments, but is at the mercy of very weak material. Not to be faulted is some extremely colorful pastel lighting by cinematographer Lisa Rinzler, which brightens up the low-budget production.—*Lor.*

Summer Camp Nightmare
(COLOR)

Parable for teens is an uneasy mix of hijinks and lecture.

A Concorde Pictures release of a Crow Pryds presentation of a Butterfly production. Produced by Robert T. Crew, Emilia Lesniak-Crow. Directed by Bert L. Dragin. Screenplay, Dragin, Penelope Spheeris, from William Butler's novel "The Butterfly Revolution." camera (United color); Don Burgess; editor, Michael Spence; music, Ted Shapiro, Gary Chase; sound, Stephen von Haase; production design, Richard McGuire; art direction, Barry Fraumeborg; set decoration, Jennifer Pray; stunt coordinator, John Branagan; coproducer-production manager, Andy Howard; casting, Bergeron & Colin. Reviewed at Mark Goodson theater, N.Y., April 15, 1987 (MPAA Rating: PG-13). Running time: 87 MINS.

Mr. Warren ..... Chuck Connors
Franklin ..... Charles Stratton
Donald ..... Adam Carl
Chris ..... Harold P. Pruett
Heather ..... Melissa Brennan
John Mason ..... Tom Pfiffer
Stanley ..... Stuart Rogers
Hammond ..... Sharon McLemore
Debbie ..... Samantha Newark
Tyrie ..... Nancy Calabrese
Jerome Blackridge ..... Michael Cranes
Bill Heinz ..... Rick Fitts

Beneath the intentionally [illegible] leading release title "Summer Camp Nightmare" rests an uneasy mixture of teen hijinks pic [illegible] lecture for young [illegible] adapting William Butler's novel "The Butterfly Revolution." film's original [illegible] title dud[illegible] 1985 lensing), [illegible] make[illegible]. Dragin and co-[illegible] Pen[illegible] have created an all-too-[illegible] fascist [illegible] which [illegible] entertaining the [illegible] Hintons or even [illegible] comedies.

Pic [illegible] reel[illegible] "Meatballs" [illegible] but [illegible] for lack [illegible]. but [illegible] flat) [illegible] Nor[illegible] dreary [illegible] ly ol[illegible]s at n[illegible] Camp Pin[illegible] in the [illegible]tment in cam[illegible]ector Chuck Connors, styl[illegible] strict disciplinarian who only [illegible] an all-[illegible] chance to [illegible] the camp [illegible] misbehaving boys [illegible] up in a [illegible]dion cabin.

Pic takes a dark turn after 35 min[illegible] when a co[illegible]lor, played by [illegible]les Stratton, organizes an insta[illegible] revolution, leading up Connors and his adult s[illegible] and having the[illegible] and students' roles run [illegible] up in militar[illegible]shion. He [illegible] extends his control to the camp, locking up all the adults [illegible]oo.

[illegible] teens and kids running the [illegible] film gradually tries for "Lord Of The Flies" commentary, as Stratton's fascist behavior leads to several deaths and the kids descend into barbarism. Unfortunately, Dragin's direction is very soft, denying the film the tough-minded points and power of such forerunners as Harold Becker's "Taps." Instead, we get an alternation of comedy and seriousness which represents a candy-coated lecture few kids will swallow.

Acting is passable, with Stratton very good indeed at suggesting a likable (on the surface) yet megalomaniacal character.—*Lor.*

Walk Like A Man
(COLOR)

Incredibly stupid 'comedy.'

An MGM/UA Distribution release from MGM Pictures. Produced by Leonard Kroll. Executive producer, Robert Klane. Directed by Melvin Frank. Stars Howie Mandel. Screenplay, Klane; camera (Metrocolor), Victor J. Kemper; editor, Bill Butler, Steve Butler; music, Lee Holdridge; production design, Bill Malley; set design, Richard J. Lawrence; sound, Gary Bourgeois, Chris Carpenter, Dean Okrand; assistant director, Roger Joseph Pugliese; casting, Jane Jenkins, Janet Hirshenson, Dottie Chapman. Reviewed at MGM/UA screening room, Culver City, Calif., April 15, 1987. (MPAA Rating: PG.) Running time: 86 MINS.

Bobo Shand ..... Howie Mandel
Reggie Henry ..... Christopher Lloyd
Margaret Shand ..... Cleo Cachman
Rhonda Shand ..... Colleen Camp
Penny ..... Amy Steel

Hollywood — "Walk Like A Man" can easily take its place on anyone's list of the 10 stupidest films ever made in Hollywood. The story is ludicrous, the script hollow, the acting wooden, and on and on. Laughs are zilch, about what this stinker should deliver at the box-office.

Originally named "Bobo" for Howie Mandel's lead character, film is an excruciatingly boring [illegible] tempt to create comic plau[illegible] from an empty premise.

Mandel is lost in the [illegible] a youngster and is not [illegible]or 28 years — during wh[illegible] he has been raised by [illegible] wolf. Returned to t[illegible]y animal behaviorist A[illegible] this t[illegible] scarring a[illegible] all fo[illegible]d act like su[illegible]ned can[illegible].

A[illegible] non-[illegible]antics [illegible] surely lo[illegible] over [illegible] years-old or with [illegible]ove. Purported plot has [illegible] the prestige of Steel, wh[illegible] to trick [illegible]s she's [illegible] fa[illegible].

[illegible]cal's Pa[illegible] thought[illegible] [illegible], of course, [illegible]bly evol[illegible] a half-bake[illegible]nce while t[illegible] [illegible]s Lloyd[illegible]s to cop his s[illegible] [illegible] mill[illegible].

[illegible]asing of all amidst [illegible]eedings is the [illegible] [illegible]man [illegible] guy [illegible]not [illegible] instinct[illegible] kills [illegible].

Other [illegible]ly femme, Colleen Camp [illegible]s wife, is left with a dimwit p[illegible] freedy alcoholic who reso[illegible] [illegible]some reprise of drinking [illegible]here and anywhere.

As told, [illegible]s one of those in-[illegible] which the whole is less than [illegible]s parts.—*Tege.*

Johnny Flash
(WEST GERMAN-COLOR)

A Werner Nekes (Mulheim) production. Directed by Nekes. Stars Andreas Kunze, Helge Schneider. Screenplay, Nekes, Peter Ritz; camera (color), Bernd Upmeyer, Serge Roman; editor, Astrid Nicklaus; music, Helge Schneider; sound, Andreas Wilki, Wolfgang Wirtz; sets, Dore O. Reviewed at the Berlin Film Festival, Feb. 24, 1987. Running time: 81 MINS.

Johnny Flash ..... Helge Schneider
His mother/manager ..... Andreas Kunze
Producer ..... Heike Melba Fendel

Berlin — Billed as a "musical grotesquerie," "Johnny Flash" is the first commercial film from avant-garde director Werner Nekes. Though it has its funny moments, the plot is uninvolving and the humor frequently strays off into corniness.

Johnny Flash (Helge Schneider) is the stage name of a nerdy electrician who hits the big time with a two-finger organ piece called "Liebe ist Nicht Peinlich" (Love's Not Embarrassing). The new star is trapped quickly in a power struggle between his mother (actor Andreas Kunze, with a wig), his manager (Kunze, without the wig), and a bosomy tv producer (Heike Melba-Fendel).

The two lead actors, who also play a variety of cameo roles, aren't nearly as funny as they think they are, and the entire production, especially the sets (a crowd scene of a dozen people), smacks strongly of amateurism. Still, the film's subject and kitschy humor may appeal to college audiences.—*Yan.*

Dolls
(COLOR)

Middle-of-[illegible]edy-horror [illegible]

An Em[illegible] Brian [illegible] Band [illegible] play[illegible] Bow[illegible] Gabri[illegible] Hill[illegible] [illegible]ley [illegible] Morris

Hou[illegible] — "Dolls," on Gor[illegible]'s latest efforts [illegible]," preemed a [illegible]. Film. Best [illegible]ding a toned-down vers[illegible]ld-horror gore with [illegible]ear of the [illegible]oore, pic can[illegible]dience mem[illegible]eems seek from [illegible]orthcoming [illegible]

Ca[illegible]ning [illegible]tle Judy Bower, [illegible] star of the film, wh[illegible]nocence is the only key [illegible]when her father [illegible] step[illegible]become victims of [illegible]ential [illegible]n and take shelter in [illegible]the mansion. Rosemary Bow[illegible]ayed nicely as the more-[illegible]cked stepmother by Carolyn [illegible]y-Gordon, almost runs over a [illegible]r of rain-sopped teenage hitch-hikers and verbally abuses step-daughter Judy at every opportunity. The instinct to hate becomes automatic, particularly when the giglio-style father gives in continually to the aging but rich partner on the couple's vacation. Caught in one of London's perpetual rainstorms, the couple seek shelter at a house of a kindly but quirky white-haired couple whose greatest joy in life is children and unique dollmaking.

The trio is later joined by an unassuming businessman who retrieved a pair of teenage punkers from the storm and together they all find temporary shelter.

Little Judy witnesses the first sign of horror and attempts to alert the others but finds only one believer, the bumbling businessman Ralph Morris. In one gory scene after another, the dolls fiercely attack almost everyone sparing Ralph only when Judy intervenes. The cruel father is attended to personally by the Hartwicke couple in a scene that borrows heavily in special effects from "An American Werewolf In London." In the end only Judy and Ralph are allowed to leave while the remaining guests become permanent residents on the dollmakers, shelf. Another storm, another stranded couple take their place in the end and the wheel of misfortune continues.

While there is nothing strikingly new about "Dolls," a working combination of all the classic and contemporary horror flicks should make this a reasonable boxoffice success.—*Pink.*

Wild Thing
(COLOR)

Dated fairy tale is preachy, not funny.

An Atlantic Releasing release of an Atlantic Entertainment Group production in association with Filmline Int. Produced by David Calloway, Richard Clemmons. Executive producer, Theodore Coleman. Director, Max Kalik. Screenplay, Kalik, Clemmons, John Sayles, based on a story by Sayles, Jerry Stanton; camera (Foto-Kem color), Russ Terrill; editor, Battle Davis; Steven Rosenblum; casting, George S. Clinton; production design, John Vaughan; Stephen Jon Lewis; art director, Richard Hoover; assistant director, Peter Kramer; second unit director, [illegible]. Reviewed at [illegible] April [illegible], 1987. (MPAA Rating: PG-13.) Running time: [illegible] MINS.

Wi[illegible] ..... [illegible]
[illegible] ..... [illegible]
Chopper ..... [illegible]
[illegible] ..... [illegible]
[illegible] ..... [illegible]

The [illegible] "Wild Thing" is [illegible] possible [illegible] urban Ta[illegible] by street gangs [illegible] gangs uprising [illegible] nonviolence [illegible] the neighborhood priest. One can only watch with a curious fascination and wonder what in the world is going on here.

Originally conceived by Peter [illegible] and Larry Stanton, film must've had a good deal of fun [illegible] about the contrasting types of [illegible] they [illegible] be confronted by. In actuality, [illegible] Wild Thing" is a deadly serious business. It's a film with its head in the clouds and it never really comes back down to earth.

Picture opens with the brutal killing of two peace-loving hoodlums adversely mixed up in a botched drug deal as their young son flees for his life only to grow up to become the savior of the ghetto — the legendary Wild Thing.

It's a rather dated fairy tale that could have been fun in the right hands. Unfortunately, staging by Kalik is consistently clumsy without establishing a groove of its own. With Kathleen Quinlan as a naive social worker who falls in love with the Wild Thing and archvillain Chopper (Robert Davi) trying to hide his crime of years earlier, picture is like a stew that hasn't been stirred enough.

Performances come in all sizes and shapes here and Betty Buckley as the shopping bag woman who raises the young Wild Thing gets to recite lines like "the blue coats work for the company and the white coats scramble your genes." This is definitely the work of writers' heavy efforts as a screenwriter.

As Wild Thing himself, Rob Knepper is indeed adept at scaling buildings and is a gifted primitive artist to boot, but he doesn't speak much and as attractive as he may be, there is hardly a character hidden behind his warpaint.

Although the villains often take on the tone of cartoon cut-outs to Wild Thing's pseudo-superman, Davi is a powerful and menacing presence and by far the most intriguing character here.

David Ventar's cinematography is chrystal and stylish but reminiscent of dozens of other hard-edged urban actioners. Although the Trogar rock-anthem "Wild Thing" is used freely it has little to do with the character he's meant to describe.—*Jag.*

More Film Reviews
Additional film reviews appear on pages 26 and 28.