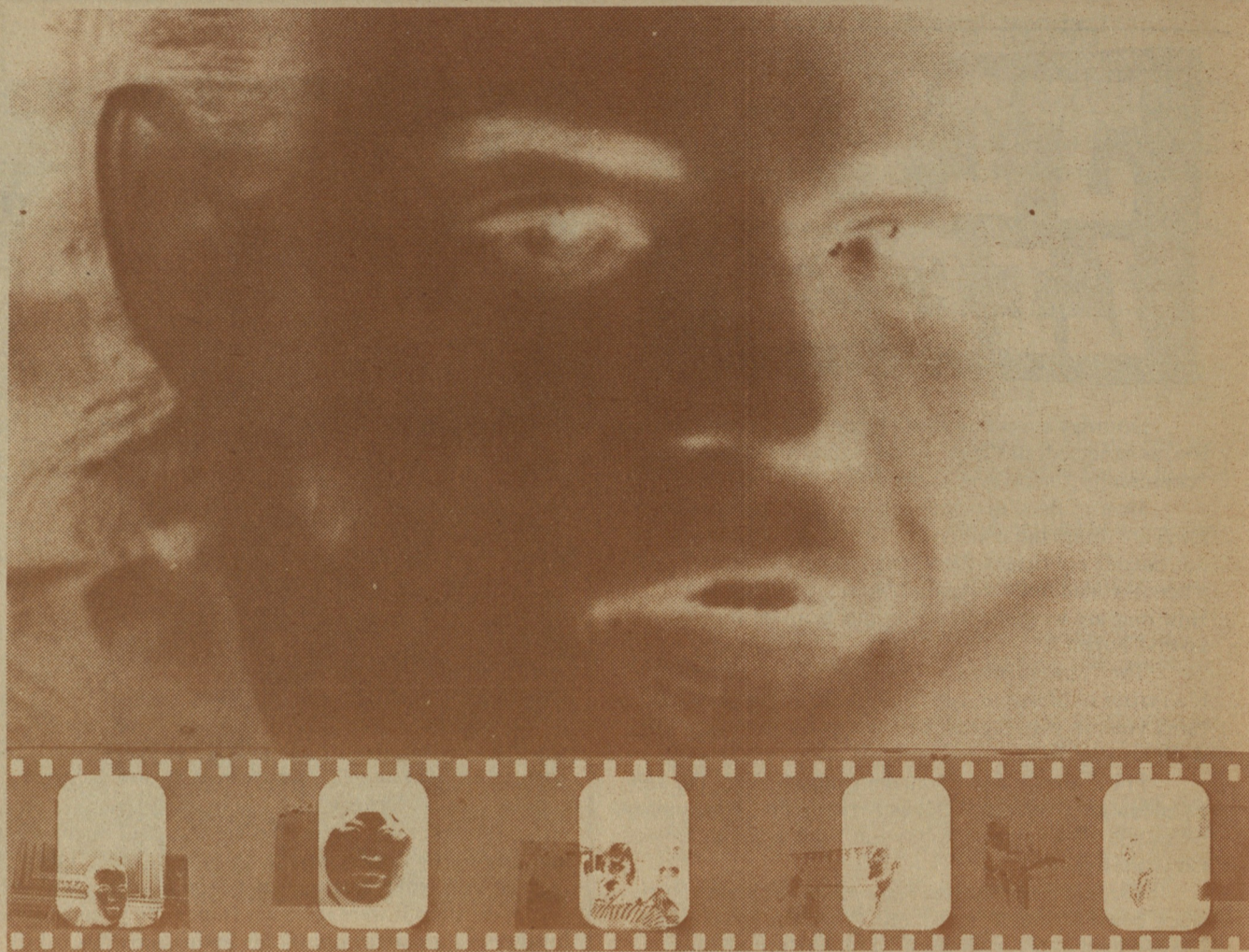




charlie cushing



carter tomassi

Performance, starring James Fox and Mick Jagger and playing now at the Broadview Plaza, is my favorite movie yet about the death culture and the counterculture. Maybe you don't see that polarity; if that's the case, you needn't read further. Blindness to this reality led the "liberal" movie reviewer for *Life Magazine*, Richard Schickel, to call *Performance* "a completely worthless film," "loathsome," "disgusting." Schickel can somehow stomach President Nixon and his genocidal war in Vietnam which has been regularly reviewed in his magazine since 1962, but when a film and a culture comes along which examine the roots of this violence, and reject it, he is "disgusted."

The plot: a particularly vicious and cold-blooded young gangster (James Fox) kills a fellow criminal and becomes the hunted. He holes up in ex-rock star Turner's (Jagger) house. The relationship between the two is the movie's core (at least for me). Fox is real—from his Glen Plaid suit and rep tie to his Buford Highway style woman's apartment; he is the crystallization of the amoral sterile IBM culture Amerika has built in the last twenty-five years. It hardly matters that the setting is England, in fact it points up the degree the Amerikan way of life has pervaded the world. When Fox has to get out, he plans to escape to Amerika, where he is assured he'll do well.

Fox and his organization, which seems founded on successful Amerikan management principles, show you what man is in the old society. Jagger and friends are the force within—the new man. The old values unfold in Fox: aggressive, sadistic, alone, afraid, uncreative, death-dealing, money-motivated. . . . But Jagger, ahhh, he's beautiful!!! Creative, caring, loving, soft, generous, struggling, sexual. Jagger shows us in his lifestyle (ugh) what

In case you haven't picked up on the drag show at the Centaur Club (corner of Peachtree & 11th), then you don't know what you're missing. These days the crowds are younger, freakier, louder, hipper and a lot more fun to be with than what you might have imagined—Atlanta is coming out, to say the least! Chuck's Rathskeller has rock bands and dancing, but the Centaur's drag show is a whole other scene.



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We'll leave it up to you: inside the gay bar, do the masks go on, or do they come off? Are the queens who are up on stage entertaining us actually practitioners in the art of deception, or, instead, of revelation? You may discover that YOU are in a kind of drag that you were not even aware of. In any case, for your delight and education, you will find on weekdays and weekends, Baby Jane, Dusty, Aretha, Fancy, Desiree, Lisa, Audrey and Elaine ("Billy's Beautiful Boys"), all of whom do a pantomime thing, and, oh yes, the Queen of All Glamour, who has just blown everybody's minds by her latest innovation: a rock & roll band and a live mike. No one who was there



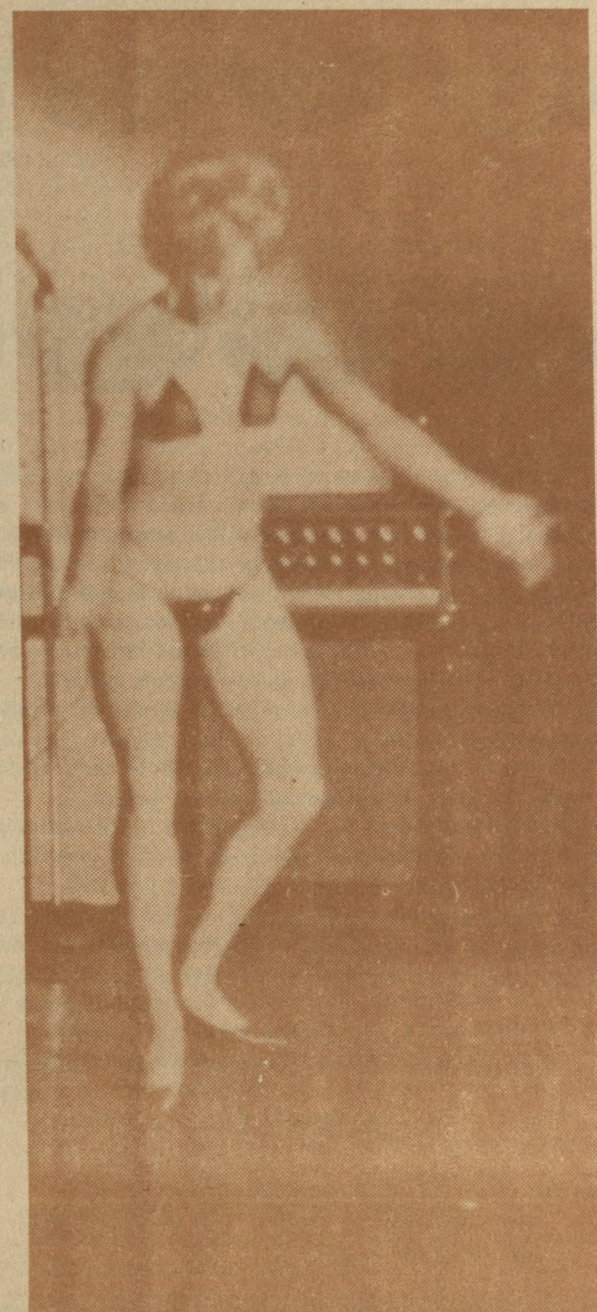
we've heard and seen before from him. Like a drag queen he mocks our old idea of man to destroy it. Anyone who has ever listened closely to a song like "Back Street Girl" or watched little Mick strut outrageously around a stage, knows he is *not* the devil, not superego-tripping, ultra masculine man, but that he plays with our stereotypes to rid us of them.

Jagger, and the acidfreakrock revolution he has helped us create, is a change in the idea and reality of what a man is, and thus it's political, moral, sexual at once. The revolution is *now*, and it's not in the streets, it's in your head. The trip Fox takes in the movie, is a trip you and I are taking with tripguides like Jagger. Liberal Schickel doesn't share our trip. He freaked out, found his limit, and joined the hysterical throngs of threatened Middle Amerika.

A possible flaw: the women in this movie seem to me to be mantoys, beautiful and vacuous, same as usual. The movie is about man feminized, softened, living. Woman is a prop. It's a failing, the fault of an industry producing films for a sexist audience.

By the way *Performance* is beautifully and ingeniously photographed, witty, and bloody. The music, especially Jagger picking out random blues and later doing maybe the best dramatized version of a song I've ever seen ("Memo From Turner") is dynamite. Go see it.

—smokey kaufman



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Friday and Saturday nights for Diamond Lil's premier live performance will ever be the same. They call themselves Diamond Lil and the Converse All-Stars, and if the boys in the band look more than a little sheepish and freaked out by their new "vocalist" and their new setting, well that's just part of the show!

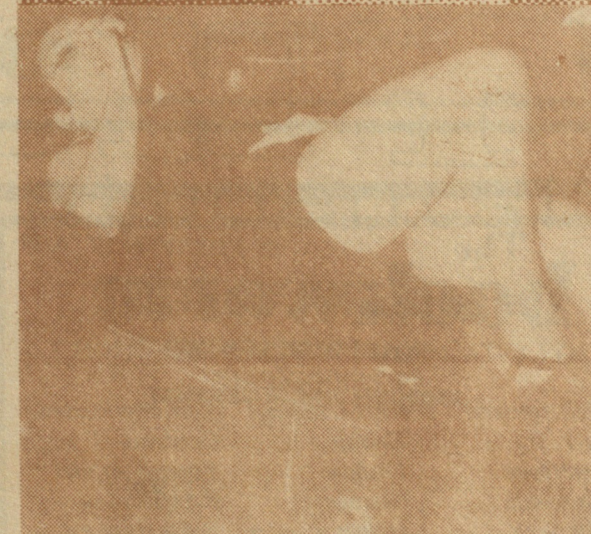
Also part of the show is a heavy adrenalin rush you will get from the boys in a very different



band, the uniformed pigs who traipse in and out, off and on, and who keep you aware that just a shot and a kiss away from the stage, the lights, the gowns, the music and the make-up, there is a new world busy being born and a pitiful, helpless old world busy dying. Folks are just beginning to dig that it's all the same struggle, whether you smash the state with a gun or with glitter—or both. So if you want to understand just how ugly Attorney General Mitchell really is, feast yourself on the beauty of Diamond Lil and the show business that she and the other queens are taking care of at the Centaur Club.

Let's give Amerika something to do when it goes down on its knees!

—miller



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