

THAT'S



Hero Gelfling... battle against evil

It's out of this world!

● **THE DARK CRYSTAL** (PG) Plaza 1 offers a trip into the realms of fantasy organised by the men behind the Muppets, Jim Henson and Frank Oz.

Small children might find it a bit scary at times; the story is rather short on surprise and humour, but the puppets on view are intriguing.

The young hero of the piece is a Gelfling—a creature who looks human apart from his pointed ears. He has the task of returning a bit of crystal to its original home before the world falls permanently into the clutches of the evil Skeksis.



Tommy Lee Jones as Gilmore

Menace without a cause

— FILMS —
Ian Christie

THREE things set Gary Gilmore apart from the depressingly large number of petty criminals who commit murder when indulging in larceny.

One is that when he was strapped to a chair in Utah and shot to death by the law on January 17, 1977, he became the first person to be executed in the U.S. for 18 years.

The second is after being convicted he wanted to be executed, and fought a series of legal battles to prevent his death sentence being commuted to one of life imprisonment. The third is that he told his life story to a film producer from the condemned cell.

Hypnotic

You can judge for yourself whether the transaction was worth while if you buy a seat for **THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG** (15) Warner West End and Gate Notting Hill.

It is hardly an edifying, uplifting experience, but personally I found it enthralling because of the hypnotic performances, and director

Lawrence Schiller's uneasy, promising attitude.

We first see Gilmore when he arrives in a small town on parole after serving 12 years for armed robbery. Norman Maller's script gives no indication of what makes him tick, but it isn't long before you realise that the ex-convict is ticking away like a time-

bomb looking for a place to explode.

And explode he does, killing a garage attendant and a motel manager in quick succession, and quite unnecessarily in order to steal a few dollars.

What drove him to murder? And what made him decide that he wanted to die for his crimes? These enigmas are never explored.

But the superb performance of Tommy Lee Jones in the leading role offers much food for thought, showing Gilmore to be impatient, impulsive,

seething with impotent rage, and unable to settle down in small-town society.

It is to the credit of the film that it makes no attempt to glamourise the image of the cold-blooded murderer, or to minimise the awfulness of his crimes.

What does come over, is a picture of an articulate menace to society, without any sense of remorse, who destroys the few relationships he enters into.

Honest

Christine Lahti is both cynical and sensuous as Gilmore's married cousin in whose care he is paroled. Roanna Arquette is provocative as his girl-friend, and Eli Wallach is a pillar of virtue as his honest, hard-working uncle.

A QUESTION OF SILENCE (15) Paris Pullman and Screen on the Green is a feminist film from Holland, directed with some skill by Marleen Gorris.

It deals with the case of three women—strangers to one another—who take their revenge on the male sex.

All the men on view are chauvinist pigs and the case is somewhat overstated I feel. Well acted, though.

POP REVIEW

LUTHER VANDROSS pulled out all the stops in London this week, to justify his reputation as the new, great black hope of American soul music.

In the States the vocal abilities of the 31-year-old singer has led him to be compared with all the great soul singers of the past. And it was the range, and the glorious quality of his voice, that made his sell-out show at the Dominion Theatre an exhilarating experience.

Before finding fame and fortune, Vandross perfected

his craft in New York studios on commercials and sessions for albums like Bowie's "Young Americans."

Later he came to produce other singers like Aretha Franklin between making his own records.

At the Dominion his show was presented with a sense of glamour and affluence, that was as American as the Superbowl. A brightly-lit staircase provided the backdrop for the portly figure of Vandross in a garishly sequinned jacket, a trio of vampish girl singers and a

magnificently rock-hard band.

Despite all the accessories, it was still the Vandross voice which gave the concert special excitement as it soared through funky, upbeat material and also explored the sweet and sour underside of soul on a number like Dionne Warwick's "A House Is Not A Home."

After the rigorous and mechanical sounds of the disco age it was a delight and a surprise to find the latest sensation in black music basically relies on old fashioned vocal dexterity. **JAMES JOHNSON.**