

# Hollywood regurgitates 70s decade



Lindsay Wagner



Tom Cruise

By JONATHAN FREEDLAND  
in Washington

THIS is the story of a lovely lady. A man barely alive. Your mission, should you choose to accept.

Those catch phrases, once part of the language, will soon live again. Hollywood — following the principle that, if you cannot think of a new idea, resurrect an old one — is raiding its archives and recycling the trash TV of the 1970s.

Leading the nostalgia wave are Steve Austin and Jaime Sommers, the *Six Million Dollar Man* and the *Bionic Woman*. The prosthetic duo, half-human half-robot, are back in slow-motion action in *Bionic Ever After?*, a movie merger of the two mid-70s series.



David Cassidy

Starring the original actors, a paunchy Lee Majors and a creased Lindsey Wagner, the film updates audiences on the lives of the secret agents who scaled fences, heard faraway whispers and ran faster than a speeded-up film. The mechanically enhanced couple even get married.

Close behind is Tom Cruise, who starts work in February producing and starring in a big screen version of the decades-old classic, *Mission: Impossible*.

Paramount is paying the actor \$12 million to pull in old fans and win a new audience for the spy story, once a fixture of 70s mid-week TV schedules. According to the current script, Cruise will play a young protégé of the original spy masters, Jim Phelps and Rollin Hand.



Lee Majors

The old timers die in a botched mission, leaving the 1990s hero to seek revenge. That scenario may be dropped, however, by studio executives anxious not to disappoint *Mission* devotees — much as the death of Spock in a *Star Trek* movie provoked such fury it had to be undone in a sequel.

The biggest buzz, however, surrounds the movie adaptation of a Generation X touchstone: *The Brady Bunch*. Often cited as the best example of TV that is so bad it's good, the situation comedy about two families joined into a single, blissful unit is already being hyped as the smash of 1995.

The film hopes to lure the American twentysomethings who now vie to show off their knowledge of Brady trivia.

An new cast has been recruited, but the show remains

firmly in the polyester flares world of the 1970s. A draft script suggested revamping the family for the dysfunctional 90s. Marcia became a lesbian, Alice a sex addict, and Mr Brady a burger flipper at McDonalds. But the show's creator, Sherwood Schwartz, now 78, vetoed the idea. "We felt everybody would want to see the Bradys as they remember them."

Now addicts will get a feature-length dose of the innocently humdrum dramas that hooked tea-time audiences 20 years ago.

And there's plenty more in the 70s pipeline. James Garner is shooting a new *Rockford Files* while Meryl Streep is rumoured to have been cast as Samantha in a resuscitated *Beachcomber*.

As so often, Hollywood is mere-

ly catching up on a trend that has taken hold elsewhere. In music and fashion, 70s chic has been in for a while — from disco revival to platform shoes. That is why the new album by Blondie's Debbie Harry has garnered as much media attention as last year's 70s bonanza, David Cassidy's comeback tour on board the Partridge Family bus.

Jay Kerness, author of *Stuck in the Seventies*, says the trend can be blamed on young producers keen to revisit childhood memories. "The problem is we don't have much great stuff," he says. "Other generations had Elvis, great cars and the drive-in. We have Keith Partridge, lava lamps, the Bee Gees and the Bradys' yellow and brown carpeting."

— The Guardian



Meryl Streep

