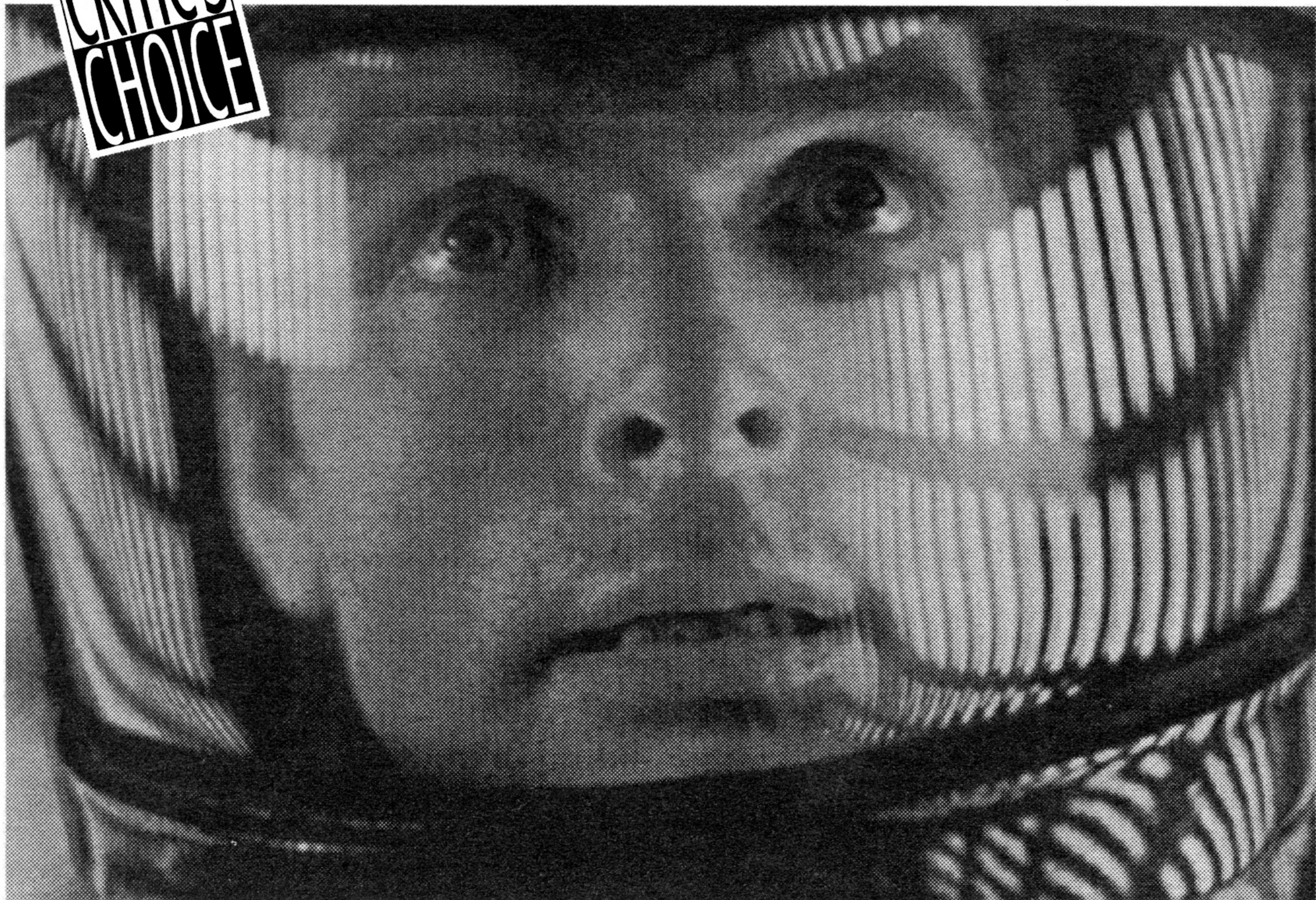


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## **2001: A Space Odyssey**

*Chicago Reader, March 29, 2002, p. 6*

**T**he rerelease of this 1968 masterpiece in 70-millimeter, planned by director Stanley Kubrick well before his death, was so indifferently promoted by Warner Brothers in New York last year that most people were unaware it had even happened. Now the film is belatedly hitting Chicago in a limited release, digitally restored and with remastered sound, providing an ideal opportunity to rediscover this great spectacle, adventure, and mind-blowing myth of origin as it was meant to be seen and heard, an experience no video, laser disc, or DVD setup, no matter how elaborate, could ever begin to approach. The film remains threatening to contemporary studiothink in many important ways: Its special effects are used so seamlessly as part of an overall artistic strategy that, as critic Annette Michelson has pointed out, they don't even register as such, and

thus are almost impossible to trivialize, a feat unmatched in movies. Dialogue plays a minimal role, yet the plot encompasses the history of mankind (a province of SF visionary Olaf Stapledon, who inspired Kubrick's cowriter, Arthur C. Clarke). And, like its flagrantly underrated companion piece, *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*, it meditates at length on the complex relationship between humanity and technology—not only the human qualities that we ascribe to machines but also the programming we knowingly or unknowingly submit to. The film's projections of the cold war and antiquated product placements may look quaint now, but the poetry is as hard-edged and full of wonder as ever. 151 min. Music Box, Friday through Thursday, March 29 through April 4.

—Jonathan Rosenbaum