

TOMMY

the movie

Leaning over the glowing pinball machine, he sways side to side as he plays the game. Buzzers go off, bells ring and lights flash, but the boy can't hear or see any of it. He is counting on his instincts to get him through the game, and with every movement becomes more a part of the machine. He plays impeccably; every move is flawless. He is the greatest pinball player of them all. He may be just a "deaf, dumb and blind boy," but he is Tommy, the pinball wizard.

In 1975, The Who released their rock opera, *Tommy*, about a boy who witnesses his father's murder by his mother's lover as a small child. His mother and her lover tell Tommy not to say anything, and the trauma leads to the development of a psychological handicap that leaves Tommy unable to hear, see or speak. The loss of his father, along with neglect from his mother and stepfather, cause Tommy to lose all sense of happiness. That is, until he finds solace in a pinball machine.

Among the wreckage of cars in the dump, Tommy finds a pinball machine and begins playing. The buzzers go off and the lights glimmer in the darkness of the night. From that night on, Tommy continues to play pinball, as the world discovers his great skill. He becomes the the object of religious cults and people everywhere.

The idea behind Tommy? Pete Townshend's rejection of psychedelic drugs and discovery of mysticism. He wanted to represent different states of consciousness with the story and music in this film. ■ Madi Watts

pinball WIZARD

Marching band gears up to rock audiences with The Who's *Tommy*.

