

Number ten on my list is the pitch-black comedy, *The War of the Roses*. This bitter, almost surreal, vision of divorce assaults you with both physical comedy and disturbing drama. Kathleen Turner and Michael Douglas light up the screen, but the real star is the surprisingly effective, tour de force direction by Danny DeVito.

At number nine is Michael Moore's documentary *Roger & Me*, living proof that truth is stranger than fiction—and, in this case, funnier as well. Moore's biting condemnation of big business is a unique mix of humor and tragedy.

Number eight is *The Fabulous Baker Boys* starring real-life brothers Jeff and Beau Bridges as lounge singers on the nightclub circuit in Seattle, Washington. Sultry Michelle Pfeiffer joins the act, and sparks start to fly, especially when she makes whoopee on a concert grand piano in one of 1989's most talked about scenes. First-time director Steve Kloves' tale of brotherly-love and wasted potential is incredibly well-acted and surprisingly poignant.

*For All Mankind*, number seven on my list, was one of the year's special treasures. Director-producer Al Reinert painstakingly assembled millions of feet of NASA footage from the Apollo missions into one mythical journey to the moon. Every few minutes, you had to remind yourself: "These are not special effects. This is the real thing!"

*Cousins*, starring Ted Danson and Isabella Rossellini, had everything you could ask for: a witty script, inspired performances, a whimsical sense of humor, and a large, magnificent cast. The movie understood human nature extremely well, milking it for every possible laugh and heart-tug.

At number five is the year's one great war film,

*Glory*—the true story of the first blacks soldiers in the Civil War. *Glory's* large black cast is uniformly outstanding, especially Denzel Washington as a pushy runaway slave. Director Edward Zwick's masterfully shot battle scenes make the film a harrowing depiction of war.

Number four on my list, *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, is vintage Woody Allen—a return to form for the talented filmmaker. Allen demonstrates once again his knack for juxtaposing humor and drama and for juggling large, ensemble casts.

And now the big three. *When Harry Met Sally...* was the consummate mix of humor, romance, and human nature—a true collaborative effort between director Rob Reiner, his talented cast, and screenwriter Nora Ephron. The big surprise was Billy Crystal, whose subtle performance brilliantly conveyed both the pathos and humor within his character.

With *sex, lies, and videotape*, number two on my list, Steven Soderbergh made a remarkably self-assured directorial debut. The extraordinary performances by Andie MacDowell, James Spader, and Laura San Giacomo yielded an intriguing psychological study of marriage, infidelity, and sibling rivalry.

Finally, my pick for the best film of 1989 is *Dead Poets Society*, director Peter Weir's tribute to youth, passion, courage, and poetry. Weir used the film medium to its fullest, bringing together breathtaking cinematography, an incredibly literate script, and exceptional performances by the entire cast, including Robin Williams, Robert Sean Leonard, and Ethan Hawke.