



From sock hops to backseat sex, it's all 'Grease'

There's enough stuff in "Grease" (PG) to spread around for everyone. For the nostalgia buffs, there are sock hops, French inhaling, D.A. hair dos, hot rods and drive-in restaurants.

For the teenage children of the nostalgia buffs, there is the entertaining spectacle of observing their parents' generation preoccupied with dating, back seat sex and acting cool.

This is brisk summer entertainment. The opening titles set up the mood. Done in animated cartoon style, they took base with the dress, mores and pop images of the '50s. It was a contradictory decade when leather jackets and Elvis Presley bumped up against white peter pan collars and Debbie Reynolds.

John Travolta plays Danny Zuko, the leader of a hot rod gang of high school seniors. It doesn't compare with the meaty role he mastered in "Saturday Night Fever," but he's an engaging presence whenever he's before the camera. He plays Danny with a disarming combination of boyish charm and swaggering bravado.

Olivia Newton-John is an able, if bland, love interest. Her transformation at the end from Goldilocks to stinky vamp is the only burst of vitality one sees from her on the screen.

The supporting cast is generally excellent. Stockard Channing is compelling as Rizzo, the leader of the Pink Ladies. Jeff Conaway is her brash boyfriend Kenickie; Didi Conn creates the gooty but lovable character of Frenchie, the "beauty school dropout," and Eve Arden flawlessly delivers one zinger after another as the high school principal.

Casting Sid Caesar as the athletic coach would have been a terrific idea if he had been given fresh comedic material to work with. He wasn't.

Fortunately, this doesn't trim the movie's drive, because the numerous musical numbers don't allow for much "recitative" in between. The music—singing, dancing, staging—is what this movie is all about.

In the most campy number, a white-on-white dream sequence, Frankie Avalon descends a staircase and croons "Beauty School Drop-out" while surrounded by girls with their hair piled high in a beehive arrangement of curls.

In another fantasy sequence, energetically choreographed by Patricia Birch, Danny and his gang do a toad-to-prince restoration on Kenickie's junk car.

Thus "Grease" not only recalls the pop culture of the '50s, but does so in the fantasy manner of the decade when spectacular musical numbers could burst forth at the drop of a "what if?"

Now that fantasy is once again in, as demonstrated by the success of comic book movies and TV shows, maybe "Grease" is a sign that we also are sliding toward a new era of musicals.



John Travolta asks Olivia Newton-John to wear his class ring in "Grease."

Glimpses

- CAPICORN ONE (PG.)** Hoax about a space shot is the gimmick in this flick with lots of action and lots of loopholes.
- COMING HOME (R).** Powerful story of Vietnam era with Jane Fonda as officer's wife who falls in love with disabled vet (Jon Voight).
- DAMNED: OMEN II (R).** The nasty kid from "The Omen" is now 13 and he's back to kill more people as the world of heads for Armageddon.
- THE END (R).** Black comedy about misadventures of an about-to-die guy. Burt Reynolds and Dom De Luise star.
- F.I.S.T. (PG).** Sylvester Stallone as union organizer in film that spans decades from early struggle and idealism to national strength and corruption.
- GREASE (PG).** Broadway musical about the funky '50s is translated to film with John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John.
- THE GREEK TYCOON (R).** Jacqueline Bisset and Anthony Quinn in story of Jackie and Ari Onassis. Explosive movie with banal dialogue.
- HARPER VALLEY PTA (PG).** You heard the song (in the '50s), now see the movie as Barbara Eden and Nanette Fabray thump the hypocrites.
- IF EVER I SEE YOU AGAIN (PG).** A movie no one will want to see again, if he/she was unfortunate enough to see it once. It's a movie-length commercial with music.
- JAWS 2 (PG).** Unimaginative recap of original "Jaws" as another shark with a case of overbite and a taste for teens terrorizes beach resort.
- MADAME ROSA (PG).** Tender story of old Jewish woman (Simone Signoret) who raises Arab boy. Won Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. English subtitles.
- THE MAN WHO LOVED WOMEN (R).** Francois Truffaut's amusing and charming story of a womanizer.
- MATILDA (G).** Kangaroo becomes professional boxer and pockets the cash.
- PRETTY BABY (R).** Red-hot district of New Orleans in 1917 as seen by a child prostitute in lush, unromanticizing film by Luis Malle.
- RABBIT TEST (PG).** Joan Rivers directed this wild comedy about the world's first pregnant man.
- SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER (R).** John Travolta (of Kotter's sweathogs) is the main man in film with plenty of disco action.
- THANK GOD IT'S FRIDAY (PG).** Not much dancing but a lot of sound in this sophisticated comedy about an evening of mix 'n' match at a disco called The Zoo.
- AN UNMARRIED WOMAN (R).** Jill Clayburgh in top form as woman who picks up the pieces after her husband leaves her, then finds there's more to life than scotch tape. Written and directed by Paul Mazursky.
- BACK AGAIN**
- THE JUNGLE BOOK (G).** Animated feature from Disney about Mowgli, the jungle boy, and his friends who are threatened by a savage tiger. Based on Rudyard Kipling stories.

MOVIE RATING GUIDE

- G** General audiences admitted.
- PG** Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.
- R** Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.
- X** No one under 18 admitted.

2 area talents joining in show

By MARY MCCARTHY

Jan Budzen of Birmingham and Michael Lindquist of Rochester will join the international cast of Up With People at Meadow Brooks Sunday, July 2.

Both travel with other Up with People casts, but will appear at the music festival on the Oakland University campus in Rochester. The concert begins at 7:30 p.m.

This marks the third year that Up With People has performed at Meadow Brook's Pop Concert Series. The international cast includes 80 singers, dancers, and musicians.

Ms. Budzen, a 1975 graduate of Birmingham Groves, is currently touring with the summer cast of Up With People. A member of the cast for the last 11 months, she has toured throughout the U. S., Canada, and Mexico.

Ms. Budzen said she became interested in joining Up With People through a friend who was in the group. "I saw them perform in Ohio and Chicago and decided to interview," she said.

Since completing the year with Up With People, Lindquist plans to attend MSU and major in hotel-motel management.

Tickets for the concert at Meadow Brook in the Baldwin Pavilion are

Concerts

Ms. Budzen will return to Michigan State University in the fall, with a possible major in public relations.

MICHAEL LINDQUIST, a graduate of Rochester High School, joined Up With People in January. He saw Up With People perform and decided to interview.

Lindquist, who plays acoustic guitar, looks forward to traveling in the Up With People cast, but discards a full-time career in entertainment. "I look forward to someday, somewhere settling down," he said.

Since joining the group, he has toured the southeast and Midwest. His cast has performed on national television at the Indianapolis 500.

After completing his year with Up With People, Lindquist plans to attend MSU and major in hotel-motel management.

Tickets for the concert at Meadow Brook in the Baldwin Pavilion are



JAN BUZDEN



MIC LINDQUIST

available at Hudsons, Wards, Sears and the Meadow Brook box office.

A SPECIAL Independence Day candle lighting ceremony and fireworks display will follow the concert.

Two Birmingham residents, Robin Beard, a Birmingham Groves graduate, and Penny Davis, a graduate of Seaborn, will join the cast of Up With People beginning July 9.

Steve Martin is everybody's idiot

By ERIC MOBEY

Several years ago I remember seeing Steve Martin on one of the big talk shows. He came onstage with an arrow through his head and sporting a beard on only one half of his face.

He proceeded to play banjo, make "fun balloon animals" and utter things like, "Hey, we're havin' some fun tonight!" I laughed like an idiot watching an idiot, but Steve Martin says, "Hey, I get paid for what I do!"

So now it's June 1978 and Steve Martin is a millionaire. He headlined at Pine Knob twice last week and sold out both shows. He's still acting like an idiot and fans are now paying \$3.50 to see him do it.

It took a long time for people to catch up with Martin's bizarre approach to comedy, and his old gags are suddenly new to a much larger following.

Review

MARTIN STILL wears the arrow, plays the banjo, makes "fun balloon animals" and gets paid very well for doing it. His material hasn't changed a great deal but that's the point: Nobody cares.

Fans know most of his bits by heart from having seen him on Johnny Carson, "Saturday Night Live" and listening to his album. Yet, when they hear Martin deliver his fancies, "Well excuse me!" (for perhaps the hundredth time), they roll in their seats laughing hysterically.

From the moment Martin came onstage, he had people in stitches. His animated body movements, moronic

smile and general kitziness is contagious. Martin clowned and mugged for several minutes to a standing ovation. As he swaggered coolly to center stage, he suddenly slammed his face into the microphone.

Another one of Martin's microphone stunts is to take a drink of water and spit a big mouthful out on the stage. Unaware of any danger, he grabs the mike and goes into spasmodic jerks as he appears to be electrocuted onstage.

Martin becomes the butt of his own humor and the audience feels totally uninhibited about watching him reduce himself to a moron.

THIS IS BEST exemplified by Martin's characterization of a Czechoslovakian swinging bachelor. This poor Czech is hopelessly uncool but works very hard at being a swinger.

Martin puts everything into this character and when he did his

shimmy-style walk and belted out, "I'm just a wild and crazy guy," the crowd went crazy. Too.

Midway through the act Martin took a break and showed a film short "The Absent-Minded Waiter" featuring himself and Funk Henry. The film was just as funny as the live show yet provided a break from Martin's intense stage presence.

After the film, Martin wasted no time in regaining his momentum. He handled an occasional heckler with ease. "I remember my first beer, too," a r.d., "Why don't we all just kill that guy?"

The performance was a complete ensemble of Martin's repertoire from "happy feet" and "cat jokes" to "King Tut." Martin's humor was totally blatant, senseless and without any socially redeeming value. That is why he's the hottest comedian in show business today.

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