

Parties feting First Nighters

You can become a First Nighter at Meadow Brook Theatre, Oakland University, near Rochester.

The Meadow Brook Theatre Guild will sponsor two First Nighter Parties. The first party will be held Thursday, March 1, the opening night for "The Deadly Game." The second party will be held Thursday, March 29, opening night for "The Adventures of Scapin."

Each evening will begin with a 6 p.m. reception at Meadow Brook Hall, followed by dinner in the Christopher Wren Room at 7 p.m. The evening will include informal touring of Meadow Brook Hall and a talk with the play's director after dinner.

Valet parking at the hall will enable patrons to move directly to the theater for the 8:30 p.m. curtain, and special parking will be arranged at the theater. Participants also will meet the cast following the performance.

Reservations are \$50 per couple, per play. Guests may attend either or both evenings. For information, call 377-3316.

Theater



Charles Nolte is guest director for "Deadly Game."



Cheryl Giannini portrays Nicole in "Deadly Game" coming to Meadow Brook Theatre in March.

'Train Robbery' stars Connery, runs fast track

Sean Connery is the mastermind criminal who plans to steal 25,000 pounds in gold bullion in "The Great Train Robbery" (PG). The setting is Victorian England, 1855, when the British regularly are shipping gold to the Crimea to pay their embattled troops.

This is a briskly moving adventure with suspense and a few laughs as Connery and his cohorts work out the details and execution of their historical caper, the first robbery from a moving train.

In an unusual casting move, Donald Sutherland successfully plays the role of a quirky, comical locksmith, a (ahem) key accomplice.

Another accomplice, and a delightful one, is Lesley-Anne Down. She assumes several disguises to help obtain the keys necessary to open the gold-laden safes (ah for the good old days before plastic explosives).

THE INVENTIVE schemes for obtaining the necessary keys provide the principal interest in the film. The logistics, however, break down at the hurried conclusion where the sequence of events seems to defy the logic of everything that came before.

The dialogue is peppered with double entendres. Although these often are more blunt than subtle, the language still adds a stylish note to the film.

Double entendres are particularly abundant in a titillating garden scene where Connery is about to court a plain young lady, but is nearly waylaid, so to speak, by the lady's amorous mother. Through it all, the young lady's mother, father and Connery continue to discuss the garden's ruins.

Niceties of research such as this one—which reveals the Victorian penchant for creating rusticity and "scenic ruins"—lace this lightweight film with tidbits of historical interest.

The efforts of research in costuming, furnishings and language are brought together adroitly and meshed with the story under the crisp direction of Michael Crichton. Crichton also wrote the screenplay based on his own novel.

HE HAS BEEN ably supported by cinematographer Geoffrey Unsworth and production designer Maurice Carter. Together they have created a very attractive period piece that reveals some of the richness and contradictions of the Victorian era.

In this respect, the film shows kinship to "The Seven Percent Solution," another expertly crafted period piece that delighted with its attention to historical details of manners, dress and speech.

"The Great Train Robbery" is light, pleasant entertainment—the movie equivalent of a Chinese dinner, if you know what I mean.



Deli clerk's dream

Gabe Kaplan stars as a New York delicatessen clerk whose dreams come true when he lands a job as coach of a college basketball team, in "Fast Break." The PG-rated comedy from Columbia Pictures is making its Detroit premiere Friday.

Glimpses

NEW RELEASES

- AUTUMN SONATA (PG). Acting fireworks from Ingrid Bergman as concert pianist estranged from Liv Ullmann, her less talented daughter, as they meet and pour out their feelings. Ingmar Bergman directed.
- BRASS TARGET (PG). Accident that killed General Patton was no accident, according to suspense film with George Kennedy and Sophia Loren.
- CALIFORNIA SUITE (PG). Neil Simon's comedy of four episodes about guests at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Starry cast includes Jane Fonda and Walter Matthau.
- EVERY WHICH WAY BUT LOOSE (PG). Country-western-style action comedy with Clint Eastwood, Sandra Locke and Clyde, the orangutan.
- FORCE 10 FROM NAVARONE (PG). High-powered thriller with Edward Fox and the late Robert Shaw on a team whose target is a vital bridge.
- ICE CASTLES (PG). "The Other Side of the Mountain" meets "Slow Dancing in the Big City" in teen romance of skater who overcomes handicap.
- INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS (PG). Remake of chilling sci-fi thriller about alien invasion in the form of plant pods.
- KING OF THE GYPSIES (R). Three generations of gypsy life in America are chronicled in film of best-selling novel. Sterling Hayden is the patriarch and Shelley Winters the queen.
- LORD OF THE RINGS (PG). Hobbits and the creatures of Middle Earth are energetically revealed in Ralph Bakshi's animated version of J. R. Tolkien's classic fantasy.
- MOMENT BY MOMENT (R). Contemporary love story of young man (John Travolta) and older woman (Lily Tomlin).
- MOVIE, MOVIE (PG). Expert and entertaining spoof of past double-bill movies with George C. Scott in fight movie and Busby Berkeley-type musical.
- OLIVER'S STORY (PG). Spongy sequel to "Love Story" with Ryan O'Neal and some new playmates, Candice Bergen and Nicola Pagnetti.
- SUPPERMAN (PG). Christopher Reeve plays Big S, Marlon Brando is father and Gene Hackman the villain in this humorous fantasy.
- WATERSHIP DOWN (PG). Animated adventures of a group of rabbits who leave their doomed warren to seek a safe home. Multi-leveled story of interest to adults and children.
- THE WIZ (G). Lavish but lumbering version of the Broadway musical presenting Diana Ross in an updated black "The Wizard of Oz."

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.

Orson Welles' film scheduled

Orson Welles' only American-made picture in the last 30 years will be shown at 8 p.m. Feb. 26 and 27 in the Cranbrook Institute of Science auditorium, 500 Lone Pine, Bloomfield Hills.

"A Touch of Evil," sponsored by Cranbrook P.M. and Encore Cinema Club, stars and is directed by Orson Welles.

Also appearing in the cast are Charlton Heston, Janet Leigh and Marlene Dietrich. The film tells the story of a narcotics officer and his bride in a Mexican-American border town.


Discussion moderator will be Cranbrook School English teacher, Jeff Welch, who became interested in film as an academic subject while studying at Harvard and the University of Michigan.

Tickets, \$5 at the door, include the film and its commentary, an open discussion, program notes and a gourmet dessert with coffee.

Cranbrook P. M. with Encore Cinema Club is sponsored by the Cranbrook and Kingswood Schools Mothers Clubs for scholarship programs.

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