

'Mousetrap' snaps with suspense

By ETHEL SIMMONS

Take a bunch of mysterious characters, assemble them in an English country house, and you have set the scene for murder.

Agatha Christie's phenomenally long-running London stage hit, "The Mousetrap," is now playing at the Birmingham Theatre, with a New York cast that creates a taut, teasing suspenseful evening.

Milton Moss directed "Mousetrap," which runs through Jan. 27.

The plot has enough twists and turns to keep you guessing throughout the two acts. A body discovered ends act one, which is enough to keep you intrigued through intermission.

THE SECOND ACT has a police lieutenant interrogating everyone present. The young husband and wife who have just opened their first season for Monkswell Manor guest house, in 1951, and the four expected, paid guests, plus one drop-in.

Things get off to a fine start when Giles Blazon (John Blazo) arrives home at the inherited manor, unwinding his light scarf from his dark coat and removing his soft felt hat.

Wife Mollie (Sherry Skinner) is about to hang these articles on the front hall coat hook when the radio broadcasts news of a murder in the area. The suspected killer was seen, naturally, wearing a dark coat, light scarf and soft felt hat.

As Giles and Mollie, Blazo and Ms. Skinner both display low-key, appropriately wide-eyed personalities. They are the English innocents who embark on the guest house venture and find themselves in for more than they bargained for.

Mr. Skinner has an opportunity to display additional facets of the character, when Mollie reveals other sides to her nature. She's not the only one to open up and show a different side but to tell more would be giving away the plot.

ONE AMONG THEM is the killer, who has already killed once, will kill again in the manor house and maybe once more. "Three Blind Mice" is the killer's calling card, whistled before strangling.

The guests include Christopher Wren (Bill Buell), a wild-haired, wild-eyed young man whom you expect, like Dracula's made Renfield, to start eating flies any moment.

He has a flighty manner, a little-boy attitude toward life, and seems to be mentally unbalanced. Buell builds up our sympathies as the drama progresses, but his mad cackle is so pronounced at times it almost drives one from one's theater seat.

Mrs. Boyle (Pauline Flanagan) is the grey-haired, overbearing guest who de-



Mysterious characters abound in Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap." They are (from left) guests at Monkswell Manor, portrayed by Bill Buell, Pau-

line Flanagan, Richard Zavaglia (background, the uninvited guest), Leon Shaw and Lois Hicks.

review

mands everything to her liking. She is revealed as the one-time magistrate who sent to prison a farmer and his wife who had abused several children placed in their charge.

The late farmer's wife has become the late wife when she is murdered (the victim, told in that first radio message).

Ms. Flanagan makes us indignant with the irritating Mrs. Boyle and manages to convey the strength the role demands.

LOIS HICKS is nicely bitchy as Miss Caswell, who arrives on the scene and goes determinedly about her business. This character has a masculine quality that heightens the intensity of an aggressive adversary.

Leon Shaw, portraying Major Metcalf, is amiable, as called for. He strolls through the role, letting the retired British officer backdrop and balance the others' eccentricities.

Richard Zavaglia plays the unexpected guest, Mr. Paravicini, whose car is overturned in a snowbank. The entire action of "Mousetrap" takes place during a snowstorm, where ev-



Zavaglia as Mr. Paravicini is questioned by Roger Baron as Detective Sergeant Trotter in "The Mousetrap."

everyone is snowed in and the telephone lines cut.

One is never sure if Paravicini is truly devious, or simply harmless. That's the element of his mystery, and Zavaglia brings out the dual aspects.

ROGER BARON is the blond, hard-jawed police Detective Sergeant Trotter, who must sort through the maze of clues. He arrives on skis in the beginning of the snowstorm and, although his skis are lost during the ac-

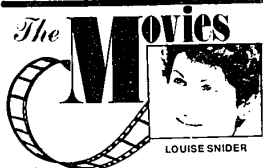
tion, they do turn up, along with the killer, at the end.

Baron conveys with vigor the sergeant's straightforward, no-nonsense deciphering of the killer's activities.

The entire company skillfully portrays each character's breadth. Set design by Dick Block, lighting design by Gerald Janesick and costume design by N. Deborah Hazlett are in keeping with the mystery's mode, without drawing undue attention from the story itself.



Jane Fonda stars as a no-nonsense newscaster who follows an ex-champion cowboy into the Nevada desert in "The Electric Horseman."



Redford, Fonda teamed smartly in mod western

"The Electric Horseman" (PG) is a beguiling movie with two winsome stars (Robert Redford and Jane Fonda) at their sexy, charming best; some beautiful western scenery; good supporting performances (especially, by John Saxon), and an apple-pie, American story about the little guy fighting corruption and giant corporation.

Redford plays Sonny Steele, and ex-rodé champion who shills for a breakfast cereal. During a major promotion in Las Vegas, he's dressed in a lighted cowboy suit and given a champion horse to ride, equally lit and decorated.

When Sonny discovers that the once-spirited racehorse has been drugged to stay calm and manageable, he simply rides off with the horse — out of the neon lights and into the mountains.

Jane Fonda is a television reporter (a near-replay of her "China Syndrome" role) who tracks him down. She eventually rallies to his cause, and the two of them strive to outwit the corporation, the police and everyone else who is hunting them.

SYDNEY POLLACK has deftly directed this film. It has the light touch and simple, positive values that made Frank Capra's films (such as "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town") so popular and appealing.

When the tired travelers trek into the sunset, leading the horse they have saved from drugs and exploitation, and singing "Ameri-can, can the Beautiful," it has to be one of the corniest, most ironic and most engaging moments on film — it's Redford and Fonda as a Saturday Evening Post cover.



Robert Redford is "The Electric Horseman," a proud ex-cowboy reduced to huckstering breakfast cereal.

Bizarre effects mar 'Black Hole'

Walt Disney Productions reputedly spent \$20 million to put together its most costly film "The Black Hole" (PG). For the money, the studio got a lot of action and a striking but peculiar-looking set, a spaceship interior that is more Gothic than modern.

They also got one of the worst ensemble acting performances of the year (Maximilian Schell, excepted), some pitiful special effects — there is never any convincing suggestion of outer space or space flight — and some laughable science.

For \$20 million, couldn't they have budgeted money for a scientific advisor? In one episode, an asteroid crashes through the spacecraft and rolls along as if it is nothing more than an overheated bowling ball.

The action begins when the spaceship USS Palomino, on some mission or other, spots a derelict craft, the Cygnus, which has been missing for 20 years. The Palomino heads for the vessel, even though the Cygnus is at a position dangerously close to a black hole. A black hole is a region of space from which nothing, not even light, escapes because of the presence of a superdense collapsed star.

THE CREW boards the ship and ends up fighting among itself and against the mad scientist (Maximilian Schell) who controls the Cygnus with a crew of robots and humanoids. Asteroids pelt the ship, and the action peaks in a climax that seems like a throwback to "Fantasia" and the "Night on Bald Mountain" sequences.

Somehow, the Disney studio just doesn't seem to have the hang of space-age effects.

Food and drink in Rad (AI)

Workers and visitors in downtown Detroit are finding food and drink menus at the Haberdashery in the Radisson Cadillac.

In contrast to the contemporary restoration of the hotel, the former site of the Motor Bar has been transformed into a turn-of-the-century restaurant. It serves as a fitting complement to the Gay 90s-clad policemen and restored trolleys passing by its Washington Boulevard windows.

In operation since the hotel's formal reopening in June, the Haberdashery has now moved into full service with its own kitchen.

Its new menu is being used as a model for 10 other Haberdasheries in Radisson's national collection of hotels. Offerings extend from soup, sandwiches and salads to steak dinners, with plenty of stops along the way. Among the unusual are the "pocket corner" sandwiches in which whole wheat pita bread is stuffed with a variety of fillings. Depending on the choice, ingredients might include combinations of alfalfa sprouts, chili, cheese, guacamole, lettuce, spicy gar-

banza beans, falafel balls, crab and shrimp croquettes.

GARDEN DELIGHTS can include ground nuts and sunflower seeds, steamed, sautéed or fresh vegetables, sprouts, and cheeses served on a variety of breads. Other popular items include Tabouli salads of cold bulgar wheat, lemon, mint and tamarai seasonings, chopped scallions, cucumber, celery and cherry tomatoes. French fries are served with skins on and patrons are invited to pick their own ingredients for a "Name Your Own" burger or omelet.

Under the banner, "Renew the Spirit. Refresh the Palate. Reorganize the Mind," the drink menu adds a humorous twist to a listing of ingredients. These ordering a Pina Colada are cautioned to cancel rumba lessons and relax, and the Chee Chee is translated as "suntan for the soul."

In addition to full bar service including beer on draft, the Haberdashery provides a twist for aperitifs and dessert drinks with ice cream and fresh fruits including blue raspberries.



THERE'S ROOM AT THE INN

A thoughtful way to welcome visitors or clients is a reservation at the Kingsley Inn. We are near all business, sports, and educational centers in Oakland County.



Kingsley Inn

Woodward and Long Lake Road
Bloomfield Hills

644-1400

564-5144

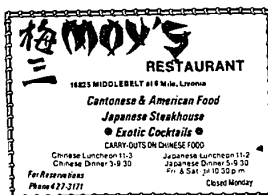
Pearl's Garden

The Finest in Chinese & American Cuisine

469 S. Woodward, B'ham.

644-2913

Mon-Thurs 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Sat. 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.



1825 MIDDLERLY AVE. N.E., ALBANY

Cantonese & American Food

Japanese Steakhouse

Exotic Cocktails

CARRY-OUTS ON CHINESE FOOD

Chinese Lunch 11-2
Japanese Dinner 5-10
Chinese Dinner 5-10
Sat. & Sun. 10-10:30
Closed Monday

Tuesday Night is
Inflation Fighter
Night
At The
Shalea Inn
\$6.64
per person
Featuring: Best Frog Legs All year long
also served with: Cheese Crisps and
Cocktails, Soup, Salad, French
Fries, Roll and Butter
852-3410
3315 Auburn Road
Between Adams & Opdyke Rd.

the exciting
1980's
auto show
our special section is
coming soon
and it's bound to
excite you!

UA theatres
L.A. CARD REQUIRED WHEN APPLICABLE
MOVIES PRUDENTIAL TOWN CENTER
BOX OFFICE OPENS 30 MIN. PRIOR TO SHOWTIME

1	2
EUROPEAN (PG) 7:30 & 9:30 MON. THRU FRI. 1:30, 3:30 5:30, 7:30 9:30 SAT. & SUN. WED. MAT. 2:15	The MUPPET MOVIE (PG) 7:05 & 9:00 MON. THRU FRI. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 SAT. & SUN. WED. MAT. 2:05 "LORD OF THE RINGS" FRI & SAT 11:30