



Alan Arkin hangs onto a speeding taxi, in which Peter Falk is held captive, in Warner Bros. "The In-Laws."



LOUISE SNIDER

Hold your sides when you laugh at 'The In-Laws'

Don't buy popcorn or goodies before taking your seat to see "The In-Laws" (PG). You'll want to have your hands free for holding your sides. "The In-Laws" is a rare, hilarious creation, a paradox, because it manages to be both antic and restrained at the same time.

Peter Falk and Alan Arkin, the principals of the title, are a marvelously matched comic pair. They are individually funny and doubly funny together.

Arthur Hiller, the director, has fit it all together to show them off to best advantage. Arkin is a conservative, successful dentist about to marry off his only daughter, but he is filled with doubts because the groom's father has never made an in-the-flesh appearance. He seems to be involved in some vague sort of international enterprise which limits his social engagements.

WHEN THE FATHER-IN-LAWS meet for the first time at a dinner only a few days before the wedding, Arkin's worst fears are confirmed. Falk's a crazy person who astounds the dinner party with his eyewitness account of giant tentacles flying carrying off children, bursts into tears after toasting the engaged couple, then calmly insists on using the basement telephone for a business call.

That's for starters. Arkin gets fussed into aiding Falk in his zany schemes and the comedy broadens but remains punctuated with considerable wit.

The pair's behavior and absurd adventures bear some resemblance to the early Woody Allen comedies. Falk is the smooth-talking, though irrational leader; Arkin is your everyday, ethically-wavering coward who somehow gets drawn into situations he can't handle and manages to survive by the skin of his teeth (well, he is a dentist).

Trying to terminate their activities — just because they stole a few engravings from the U.S. Mint — are gangland hit men, federal agents and a crazy Central American dictator.

The dictator-general, whose palace is off United Fruit Boulevard, is a singularly manic character colorfully defined by Richard Libertini. While the general and his guests dine, a chorus of armed troops entertains them with a rendition of Joyce Kilmer's "Trees." That gives you some idea of the wacky scope of this comedy and why it brings to mind Woody Allen.

AS TO FALK'S BUSINESS pursuits, he might be a crook or a CIA agent or a looney who thinks he's one or the other, or he might be all of these.

There is still some question about him at the end, but there is no doubt about "The In-Laws." Relatively very funny.

Glimpses

NEW RELEASES

ALIEN (R). Hair-raising, sci-fi horror film about alien life form that terrorizes the crew of a space ship.

BUTCH AND SUNDANCE: THE EARLY DAYS (PG). "Prequel" to the successful hit. Tom Berger and William Katt are paired off as the rascally robbers in their salad days.

THE DEER HUNTER (R). An emotionally gripping and violent film about the lives of three friends from a small steel town as they are affected by the Vietnam war.

THE FIFTH MUSKETEER (PG). Your average swashbuckling tale with heroes, villains and court intrigue. Beau Bridges deftly handles dual role as nasty king and his noble twin.

HAIR (G). The counter culture musical of the '60s, directed by Milos Forman, comes to the screen with amazing vitality and musical energy — if a decade late.

THE IN-LAWS (PG). Hilarious comedy with Peter Falk and Alan Arkin as near-relatives who not only plan a wedding but ripoff the U.S. Mint.

THE LAST EMBRACE (R). Bizarre, tension-filled mystery is stylishly filmed, but burdened with hopelessly complicated plot.

THE LAST WAVE (PG). Offbeat mystery from Australia when lawyer (Richard Chamberlain) encounters the occult as he delves into aboriginal culture.

LOST AND FOUND (PG). George Segal and Glenda Jackson are paired again in romantic comedy about a "fractured" couple who meet in the Swiss Alps and decide to yodel on through life together.

LOVE AT FIRST BITE (PG). Dracula goes disco dancing in funny, contemporary version with George Hamilton.

THE MAIN EVENT (PG). Barbra Streisand is a perfume manufacturer who manages a retired boxer, Ryan O'Neal, in comedy about the fight game.

MANHATTAN (R). The inhabitants are somewhat frayed, but the Big Apple looks glorious in Woody Allen's witty peek at the pairings and partings among New York literati.

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.

Former Miss America co-starring in 'Oklahoma!'

Laurie Lea Schaeffer, Miss America 1972, is co-starring with Dirk Benedict in "Oklahoma!" at the Star Theatre of Flint.

Ms. Schaeffer made her theatrical debut with John Davidson in the Kenley Players production of "The Music Man." This Ohio University Theatre Arts graduate has performed in numerous productions including "The King and I," "I Do! I Do!" "Tunnel of Love" and "Any Wednesday."

Well known for her TV performances in "Get Christy, Love," and "The San Pedro Beach Bums," she will be seen shortly in a made-for-TV movie, "The Rivals."

In a return visit, funnyman Russ Thacker is featured in "Oklahoma!" as Will Parker. Flint audiences will remember Russ for his performance in "Never Too Late" with Nanette Fabray.

Mann's jazz style remains special

At his best, Herbie Mann is a superb jazz musician. From the standpoint of jazz, his recording career in recent years has been devoted to an exploration of overly commercial dance music often in the disco vein.

Playing fusion and disco for fun and profit has not, however, destroyed his ability to be a top-notch improvisationalist who can be traditionally swinging.

As the warm-up act for Bill Cosby Wednesday night at the first of several Variety Nights of the Meadow Brook Music Festival, Mann led a quintet through a mixture of familiar Herbie Mann numbers.

There were some surprises, as Mann had indicated there would be prior to this concert. Last year he brought out his tenor sax, the instrument he originally played, promising some evidence that he was still a sax man on record. That hasn't happened yet, but there is a record on the way.

He cut an album recently with some outstanding jazz musicians such as Gerry Mulligan, Dicky Wells, Connie Kay and Milt Hinton. With Jay McShann on piano and Mann on tenor throughout, the jazz is uncompromising.

An original composition by Mann, being heard for the first time, seemed to need a somewhat more intimate setting. But "Sir Charles Duke," written in loving and reverent tribute to Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus, two recently deceased jazz giants, proved to be an interesting showcase for the muted trumpet of the excellent Claudio Roditi.

Group playing at P'Jazz

Brookside Jazz Ensemble, a 21-piece group, and guest vocalist Ursula Walker will open at Chuck Mue's P'Jazz at the Pontch Monday, July 2. The ensemble also will appear on Wednesday, Aug. 22.

There will be no concert Wednesday, July 4.

Known to Brookside band members as their "22nd member," Ursula Walker is probably the best-known jazz singer in Detroit. She often brings an audience to its feet with her interpretation of ballads, rock and roaring swing tunes.

The band specializes in the sounds of Maynard Ferguson, Stan Kenton, Buddy Rich, Woody Herman and Thad Jones, as well as original material. The concert begins at 6 p.m. on the poolside terrace, with sandwiches and drinks available. Doors open at 5 p.m. General admission and reserved seats are available.

For reservations or information telephone the P'Jazz ticket office, 965-0200.

THE MEL LEWIS Orchestra will replace, the originally scheduled Gerry Mulligan P'Jazz concert at 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 11 at Hotel Pontchartrain.

How to submit news items on entertainment

News releases, photographs or other information for the entertainment pages can be sent to Ethel Simmons, entertainment editor, at 1225 Bowers, Birmingham 48012.

The entertainment pages include news, features and reviews on movies, music (pop, rock, jazz, country), night life, restaurants, special attractions, theater, TV and radio.

The phone number of the Birmingham office is 644-1100.



Laurie Lea Schaeffer plays "Oklahoma!" lead.

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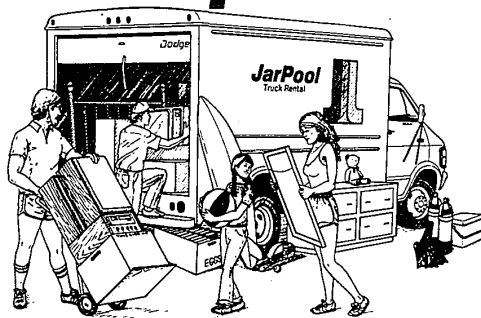
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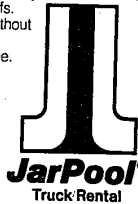
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