

Another dinner theater added

Theatre of the Arts Productions has taken over dinner theater operations at the Book-Cadillac Hotel in downtown Detroit.

The production company is operating as business manager for two shows arranged by another dinner theater company that has been working there.

The shows are "Mack and Mable," playing Fridays-Saturdays through Feb. 14, and "Hay Fever," Feb. 20 through March 28.

The first total Theatre of the Arts Production at

the Book-Cadillac will be "Side by Side by Son-drum," opening April 3.

Changes in the dinner theater operation include performance nights of just Fridays-Saturdays, one price for dinner and show, a new dinner theater menu (soup du jour; salad with house dressing; choice of prime rib au jus, fresh lake whitefish or almondine chicken supreme; vegetable of the day; baked potato, and fruit pie) and a new number for reservations, 288-0450.

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In Akira Kurosawa's drama of feudal conflict in 16th century Japan, Tatsuya Nakadai stars as a petty thief who impersonates a powerful warlord.

the movies
Louise Snider

Stunning images arrest the eye in 'Kagemusha'

"Kagemusha" (PG), directed by Akira Kurosawa, is one of the most impressively beautiful motion pictures ever made.

There are times, especially at the beginning before the viewer is drawn into the story, when the images are so arresting that the significance of an event is overshadowed by its appearance, a quality reinforced by the viewer's dependence on English subtitles for the Japanese dialogue.

In any language, this movie is a visual feast of colors, lines and shapes combined in dynamic arrangements. One setting may demand attention by its skillful simplicity, as when an elaborately clothed figure is seated on a mat in a nearly empty room against the background of a shoji screen.

In other scenes, human figures are seen as flat silhouettes against a sky of psychedelic colors.

The story possesses this same sense of dramatic contrast and rhythmic variety. It swings from the personal to the historical, and from individual action to the pageantry of armies on the march.

As a historical chronicle, "Kagemusha" (translated as the shadow warrior) depicts the struggle for power among rival clans in feudal, 16th century Japan.

As a drama, it tells the story of a common thief who is saved from execution by the resemblance to the powerful head of the Takeda clan. When the warlord dies, the thief is called upon to take his place and serve as an imposter for three years. During that time, we see his emotional suffering at the loss of his own identity.

As a contemporary interpretation of the past, the movie presents the samurai in a less heroic light than seen in the director's earlier films. In "Seven Samurai," for example, the warrior who preserves and upholds traditional principles is important as an individual.

In "Kagemusha," the individuality is lost, and he is one of thousands of soldiers serving one or another warlord. There is nothing to suggest that the country will be ruled better whichever one wins or loses.

Although Kurosawa does not dwell on social issues, the movie is filled with ironies, not the least of which is that the greatest warlord is impersonated by a common criminal.

In one succinct exchange between the two men, the thief admits his wrongdoings but charges the warlord with killing thousands, and the thief asks who is the greater sinner.

Tatsuya Nakadai, who plays the warlord and his double, does a masterful job. He has very little dialogue in this three-hour movie. Yet, with expressions, gestures, body movement he conveys the feelings of the angry thief, the dignified lord, the tormented imposter and even the happy (surrogate) grandfather playing with his grandson.

In the spectacular ending, Kurosawa brings all the elements together as the feudal armies clash in a decisive battle. The camera makes a final panoramic sweep of the battlefield and captures the individual anecdote and the historical record.



Nakadai develops an affectionate relationship with Kota Yui, his predecessor's grandson.

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