



Mel Brooks is King Louis XVI, one of the five roles he plays in his "History of the World — Part I."

what's at the movies

ATLANTIC CITY (R). Louis Malle's wonderfully vibrant, superbly acted, romantic film about old and young dreamers in Atlantic City.

BUSTIN' LOOSE (R). Richard Pryor and Cicely Tyson in romantic comedy about ex-con helping a schoolteacher transport children from a Philadelphia ghetto to a Washington farm.

THE CANNONBALL RUN (PG). Burt Reynolds is on the road again, challenging the speed limits. With him are Roger Moore, Dom DeLuise and Farrah Fawcett.

CHEECH AND CHONG'S NICE DREAMS (R). What else, man, but dope? That's what Cheech and Chong are all about.

CLASH OF THE TITANS (PG). Animation and live action combine in the adventures of the Greek hero Perseus, son of Zeus, who must overcome many powerful monsters in order to win the hand of the beautiful Andromeda.

EXCALIBUR (R). Sweeping adventure of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table with Nicol Williamson as the wizard, Merlin.

FOUR SEASONS (PG). Alan Alda and Carol Burnett in comedy about the up-and-down relationships of three married couples during the course of a year.

HISTORY OF THE WORLD, PART I (R). An irreverent look at human history from the gross perspective of Mel Brooks.

LEGEND OF THE LONE RANGER (PG). Western adventure with the Lone Ranger and Tonto recounts the beginning of the legend.

MELVIN AND HOWARD (R). Offbeat comedy about an unlikely folk hero, Melvin Dummar, the gas station attendant who claimed he picked up Howard Hughes in the Nevada desert and then became heir to a fortune.

OUTLAND (R). Sci-fi thriller with Sean Connery enforcing the law at a colony on one of Jupiter's moons.

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK (PG). Produced by George Lucas and directed by Steven Spielberg, this action-packed adventure pits Americans against Hitler's agents in a race to acquire a sacred artifact that gives its possessor invincible power.

SUPERMAN II (PG). The story continues as Superman struggles to save the earth from criminals who survived Krypton's extinction.

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.

Women barbershoppers plan another guest night

The Great Lakes Chapter of Sweet Adelines, Inc., will hold another guest night at 8 p.m. June 30 in the choral room of Ford II High School, 11911 Clinton River Road between Kleino and 19 Mile Road, Sterling Heights. The women barbershoppers will present a night of information about

the Sweet Adelines organization. Guests are not required to audition. Women who wish to perform with the championship chorus when it goes to Phoenix are being asked to join now, to gain experience for the contest stage by singing in local performances. All

members are not required to go to Phoenix, however.

Reading music is not a requirement for the four-voice parts which are: tenor, the high harmony part; lead, the middle range melody part; baritone, the middle range harmony part; and

bass, the low harmony part. The only requirements are the ability to sing in tune and hold a part against three others. For more information call Fay West at 979-8563, Linda Shaffer at 791-6106 or Julene Fabrizio at 626-5657.

the movies

Louise Snider

Brooks cops out with heavy-handed history of world

"History of the World, Part I" (R) demonstrates one thing, Mel Brooks' ambition has far outstripped his talent. The movie is an audacious undertaking and a colossal comedic flop.

One is hard pressed to find a few shreds of originality in it. From the opening scene of the dawn of man, presented as a spoof of "2001, A Space Odyssey," to one of the final scenes showing Hitler ice skating, a scene which brings to mind the "Springtime for Hitler" number in Brooks' first big hit, "The Producers," almost everything is derivative. Brooks is dependent creatively on a previous body of work, whether created by others or by himself.

"History of the World" burlesques the Stone Age, Nero's Rome, the French Revolution and the Spanish Inquisition. Since there always is an audience for low comedy, many people are bound to find this movie entertaining.

Nevertheless, it seems a shame that Brooks' attempts at humor have become so heavy-handed. This movie doesn't come close in wit, style or innovation to his earlier hits, "The Producers," "Blazing Saddles" and "Young Frankenstein."

FOR ONE THING, there is too much of Mel Brooks in this. He not only is the producer, director and writer, he also is the principal character in almost all the episodes. For another thing, Brooks has nothing to offer once you get past the humor of irreverence.

Moreover, even if you stick with irreverence as the basis for comedy, Brooks doesn't have the persistence, or maybe it's nerve (qualities which the Monty Python group has), to follow through with a concept wherever it leads him.

Instead, we get a lowly look at the lofty. In scene after scene, era after era, there is a continuing barrage of the same kinds of jokes. These are jokes about sex, homosexual and heterosexual, and jokes about bodily digestive and elimination functions.

The women in this movie, as you might imagine, are all sex objects. The exception is Madeline Kahn who once again, rather than being the object, is the caricature of a panting, sexually aggressive female.

Kahn handles the role with her usual aplomb. Others in the large cast are equally competent. Gregory Hines stands out for his deft portrayal of a runaway slave with a lot of style.

SID CAESAR is the leader of a Stone Age tribe of cavernmen. There is nothing to fault about the way he handles the role, yet, you feel a sense of embarrassment for him. What is he doing in that ridiculous get-up in this vulgar movie?

In fact, that is the main problem with "History of the World, Part I." It is just plain vulgar. Sometimes an imaginative bit of business breaks up the grossness, but not often enough.

Admittedly, the history of the world is not a glorious succession of brilliant minds, great inventions and noble deeds. These stand out as precious metals amid the dross. But do we really need a movie that chronicles the dross?

When a writer has to mine Roman decadence, French royal excess and unspeakable persecution as subjects for comedy, doesn't that tell us something about his desperation to create humor?

"History of the World, Part I" is an offensive movie. There was a suggestion at the end that there might be a Part II. Let's hope not. Part I is more than any audience deserves.



Dom DeLuise is the decadent Emperor Nero in Mel Brooks' new epic comedy.

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