

Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



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He's recognizable

Star of movie comedies has face people remember

By Ethel Simmons
staff writer

WHEN ACTOR CURTIS ARMSTRONG and his actress-wife, Cynthia Carle, are out in public, almost no one recognizes her but, she said, "He's recognized all the time. A

mechanic said, 'You were on every cable station I tried to watch last night.'"

The couple is appearing in the Meadow Brook Theatre production of the Noel Coward comedy "Present Laughter," which begins a four-week run tonight at the Oakland University campus near Rochester.

Armstrong has an unruly crop of reddish-brown curly hair. Carle has long, blonde permed hair. She's a petite 5-foot-4, and he's a couple of inches taller. Asked how tall he is, Armstrong said, "Five feet five, or six." Asked, "Does your height bother you?" he said, "No. Does it bother you?" Not all of Hollywood's leading men

are tall, he noted, and besides, "If anything, it's helped (being short). There's all sorts of weird, short character parts."

BOTH ARMSTRONG and his wife declined to give their ages, but the rough-baby-faced actor "still gets carded (asked for ID)," his wife said. Moviegoers and television viewers instantly recognize Armstrong, who has played such off-the-wall characters as the slightly scruffy high school body of the innocent young hero in "Risky Business," and Booger, one of the inept college freshmen rejected by all the campus fraternities in "Revenge of the Nerds."

Armstrong's third movie, "Better Off Dead," is currently playing. It's also a comedy, in which he plays a wild character, who wears a top hat and sports Jello and real, winter snow. A fourth film, "Bad Medicine," about students at a cut-rate medical college in Central America, is scheduled to be released Friday.

"So far, the films I've done, I've enjoyed doing all of them," Armstrong said.

The actor recently completed his fifth film role in "Glen of the Cave Bear," set in the Mediterranean but shot on location in Canada.

"It's about a group of Neanderthal people in search of a new cave, who come across a baby Cro-Magnon. They bring her up within their clan. She (Daryl Hannah of "Splash") grows up in a clan of little, short, hairy dark people. She grows up bigger and taller," Armstrong said.

"WE WORKED on it six months, mainly in Vancouver and British Columbia, and the Yukon where we lived in tents. It was quite an experience."

"It's the only film I've made that is not a comedy."

Armstrong said a bond was created among the 20 actors who appeared in the film. Of big, blonde, beautiful Daryl Hannah, he said, "She's great." He praised her comedic talents and her range of performing skills.

"Cynthia took a comedy class with Daryl in Los Angeles," he said. Carle described Hannah, "She's hysterically funny."

Talking about his movie-comedy roles, Armstrong said, "None of them are any parent's dream date. They're not identical either. They're all a little odd."

He continued, "If you think they're off the wall, the character I play in this ('Present Laughter') is even weirder."

Carl Schurr plays the leading role of the self-centered hero, a famous actor.

"We're sort of playing bookend characters in this," Armstrong said. "We're sort of the main thorns in his (Schurr's) side," Carle said. Armstrong added, "Cynthia's character loves him and so does mine." Armstrong plays an aspiring playwright, and Carle is a hero-worshipping actress.

APPEARING IN the play together is a real treat for Armstrong and Carle. "It's very nice," she said, "We haven't done anything in five years." The couple has been married five years and met during a bus-and-truck tour of the play "Da."

Armstrong had the role of the Charlie, the lead character as a young boy, and she was Mary Tate, the Young Peril. The show toured for three months in 1979 and three months during 1980.

The couple knew they were seriously interested in each other after a couple of months, she said. "It's funny, you're

thrown together in the bus. It's inescapable. Back in New York we know it wasn't just the tour, trapped on the bus."

They were married in 1980, between the two tours of the show. Said Armstrong, "The second one was by way of being a working honeymoon. In between, we went out on regional tours. She did one in Milwaukee and I did one in New York."

Armstrong began his movie career in 1982 with "Risky Business." Carle's movies have included Louis Malle's "Alamo Bay" with Ed Harris, in which she played Harris' wife, "a sort of redneck Texas trailer-park" type, she said. In "Warning Sign," with Sam Waterston and Kathleen Quinlan, "I played a girl in a baggie. The film is about germ warfare and I spent the whole movie in a decontamination bubble."

BECAUSE OF their acting careers, Carle and Armstrong don't get to spend very much time together. "We're separated mostly," she said. "In five years, we've been together about two and a half," he said. "It's trying," she responded.

Armstrong was raised in metropolitan Detroit, where he attended Berkley High School and then went on to study at the Academy of Dramatic Art at Oakland University.

He was a student at Will-O-Way Apprentice Theatre in the late 1960s. "I did several plays there and did some summer stock in South Bend, Ind.," he said.

After graduating from the Academy of Dramatic Art in the spring of 1974, Armstrong went to Ann Arbor where he co-founded Roadside Attractions. "I was there one and one-half years. In

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Curtis Armstrong and Cynthia Carle, husband and wife, who are both cast in "Present Laughter," take a break during rehearsals for the Noel Coward comedy at Meadow Brook Theatre. This

is just their second appearance on stage together since they met during a tour of the play "Da" in 1979.



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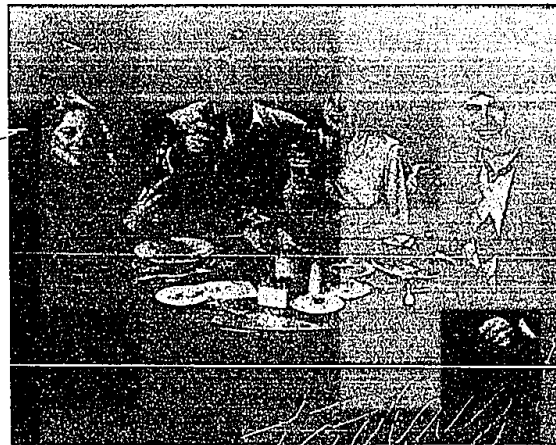
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