

MOVING PICTURES



Danny Muldoon (John Candy) is in love with shy Theresa Luna (Ally Sheedy) but can't break the ties that bind him to his domineering mother, Rose (Maureen O'Hara), in "Only the Lonely."

'Thelma and Louise:' Buddy of a good film

It's "Bonnie and Bonnie" for the '90s as "Thelma and Louise" (A, R, 130 minutes) hit the road with a sensational new twist in buddy movies. Louise (Susan Sarandon) waits tables at a local (Arkansas) restaurant. Her strained relationship with Jimmy (Michael Madsen) calls for a weekend flubbing with her girlfriend, Thelma (Geena Davis).

Thelma's husband, Darryl (Christopher McDonald), manager of the local carpet emporium, browbeats Thelma when he's not running around, but Thelma's pretty naive. In fact, she's the ultimate ditz. In the very best comic sense of the term, she is the dizziest of modern women. Thelma and Darryl have been a thing since high school, and she doesn't have the courage to ask permission to spend a weekend with Louise. She finally summons the strength to travel without his approval.

Drinks and dancing in a roadhouse — one thing leads to another and their lives change, drastically and permanently. The events are less important than the style with which they occur as the girls run across southwest America. Thelma and Louise are in the great tradition of buddies on the road experiencing middle America at its crassest, funniest, best, worst, violent and most loving moments.

The great glee with which these two actresses attack their roles and the finesse with which they perform is to their credit and to that of director Ridley Scott ("Alien," "Black Rain," "Someone to Watch Over Me").

THERE AREN'T too many films around dealing successfully with serious subjects in a lighthearted, comic and entertaining way but "Thelma and Louise" which has a lot to say about America, about men and women, and about life — and it says it very well.

For an engaging comic fantasy which tests the limits of human imagination try "Drop Dead Fred" (B+, PG-13, 100 minutes), a comic look at a young girl's (Phoebe Cates) imaginary childhood companion. Rick Mayall is terrific in the title role as an antagonistic character who represents all the young girl's fear and distrust of her mother (Marsha Mason) and, as well, the force and strength she wishes her father had. Fred also reflects the anti-social urges children learn to suppress as they mature.

How powerful are these childhood fantasies? Are they real? Only when believed, or always? How large do parental figures loom?

These are the questions effectively and comically poised by "Drop Dead Fred" whose comic and entertaining surface hides a lot of pretty sophisticated human psychology.

One complaint, the film's tone changes gears excessively with its obviously broad farcical opening turning to fairly serious drama before ending with broad comic strokes. Despite that problem, "Drop Dead Fred" is very enjoyable and most entertaining.

ONCE AGAIN, Disney proves that with guts and determination "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (A-, G, 85 minutes). Everyone appreciates her heroines (and heroes) who stick to the job and, according to this film, that's all it takes to achieve goals.

This entertaining lesson is delivered by Sonora Webster (Gabrielle Anwar), an orphan who runs away from her aunt to escape the despair and desolation of rural Georgia during the Depression. She joins Dr. F.W. Carver's (Cliff Robertson) Travelling Stunt Show to be part of a diving horse act. While Dr. Carver is impressed with her steadfastness, she doesn't match his image of a diving horse girl but he does give her a job carting manure.

Although there's a few snags, which Sonora artfully overcomes, "Wild Hearts" is as predictable as a Horatio Alger novel — predictable.

Rose (Maureen O'Hara), thinks his only mission in life is to be there whenever she needs him.

IT'S APPARENT to everyone but Danny that Rose doesn't need any care. She's a strong, opinionated woman with a mouth that won't quit. She firmly believes that no girl is good enough for her son so when Danny meets Theresa Luna (Ally Sheedy) the plot thickens.

Theresa works at her father's mortuary but has ambitions as a make-up artist. The comic potential of that and other situations are exploited well in a pretty funny script. Danny and Theresa's love affair is mirrored by Nick's (Anthony Quinn) love of Rose while Jim Belushi gives a weak performance as Sal, Danny's cop pal who is bored with his marriage and tries to convince Danny that matrimony is not the answer.

Although the lines are pretty funny, the performances don't rise as high as they might. Still and all, "Only the Lonely" is a pleasant entertainment which proves there's hope for everyone.

Witty dialogue and slapstick comedy are forged into box office gold in "Hudson Hawk" (A, PG-13, 87 minutes). As Hawke, Bruce Willis perfects the caustic humor he began to explore during his days on "Moonlighting."

Willis' charismatic presence adds richness to a better-than-average script which is made great by director Michael Lehmann. Danny Aiello and Andie MacDowell head a stellar supporting cast.

There's a delightfully whacky gang of bad guys determined to steal the missing pieces to DaVinci's legendary and, one presumes, imaginary alchemy machine. Put "Hudson Hawk" on your must-see list, you won't be disappointed. (Reviewed by Susan Finchem.)

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ALTERNATIVE VIEWING

'Silk' refreshes, irritates

By John Monaghan
special writer

Mark Salzman didn't want to be just another tourist. When the fresh-faced Harvard grad was assigned to teach English in China in the early 1980s, his fascination with the culture led to his falling in love with a Chinese woman and learning the ancient martial arts.

The communist Chinese government, however, didn't appreciate his interest. Threatened by the "bourgeois liberalism" sweeping through the country and infecting its young people, they put lighter and tighter restrictions on where Salzman could travel.

Salzman relives his experience by starring as himself in the new film "Iron and Silk" at the Star John R Theatre in Madison Heights. The film's naive and wholesome

are both refreshing and irritating at the same time.

Salzman harbored an interest in the martial arts when he lived in America. Now, seeing five-year-old Chinese students performing the ancient "wushu" moves, he is inspired to learn for himself.

IT TAKES considerable effort to get Teacher Pan (a famous martial arts instructor who also stars as himself), to take him on as a student. What makes this scenario different from a "Karate Kid" movie is that Salzman isn't training for a climactic fight. He's simply here to learn for learning's sake.

That's the refreshing spot. There's also a love story tossed in as Salzman falls for a young doctor whose hobby is reading English literature. She's afraid to be seen with him. He finds better success with his

students. Chinese adults all studying to become English teachers themselves.

The episodic nature works only part of the time. There are mildly moving scenes in the classroom where the students relate their happiest moments, but we don't really need the diary-like voice-over narration that tells us what this all means. Salzman's adult students are also played by toothy Chinese locals. But the "cinema verite" quality also works against the film, especially when its main character, Salzman as Salzman, can perform "wushu" a lot better than he can act.

ULTIMATELY, THIS is the kind of wholesome, literary movie that high school English teachers feel comfortable recommending but kids

SCREEN SCENE

LIVONIA MALL, Seven Mile and Middlebelt roads, Livonia. Call 478-1166 for information. (free)

"The Roaring Twenties" (USA — 1939), 10 a.m. May 28. James Cagney plays a World War I veteran who returns home to find no job and no future waiting for him. He turns to a life of a Prohibition-era crime along with buddies Humphrey Bogart and Frank McHugh at his side. Action-packed direction by Raoul Walsh. Concluding a monthlong tribute to Cagney.

MAPLE THEATRE, 4135 W. Maple, Birmingham. Call 855-9090 for information. (\$6, \$3.50 twilight, call for show times)

"Impromptu" (Britain — 1990). The relationship between George Sand and Frederic Chopin is given a delightful treatment in this new film directed by James Lapine. Judy Davis is perfect as Sand, the French female writer who insisted on wearing men's clothing. Her pursuit of the frail, feminine Chopin bends the rules on romantic relationships in the movies.

"Truly, Madly, Deeply" (Britain — 1991). A widow, still mourning her dead husband, is shocked to see him appear again as a ghost. Starring Alan Rickman and Juliet Stevenson.

MICHIGAN THEATRE, 16301 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Call 669-8397 for information. (\$4.50, \$3.50 students and senior citizens)

"My 20th Century" (Hungary — 1989), through May 30 (call for showtimes). It begins with Thomas Edison's invention of electricity. But the real story involves twin girls, separated at birth, who embark on very different lives. One becomes a bomb-toting anarchist; the other a femme fatale. Winner of the best first feature award at the 1989 Cannes festival.

time lover Marcello Mastroianni not only to marry her, but also to stay that way in this spicy comedy from Vittorio De Sica. Concluding a monthlong tribute to Loren.

REDFORD THEATRE, 17630 Laber, Detroit. Call 537-2560 for information. (\$2.50)

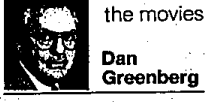
"The King and I" (USA — 1956), 8 p.m. May 31-June 1. After years on Broadway as the King of Siam, Yul Brynner honed his role to perfection for the film version. Deborah Kerr plays Anna, the widowed school teacher who can't get used to his stubborn ways. The famous Rodgers and Hammerstein score includes "Getting to Know You" and "Shall

We Dance."

STAR JOHN R, 32289 John R. at 14 Mile, Madison Heights. Call 585-2070 for information. (\$6 evening; \$3.75 bargain shows) Call for showtimes.

"Iron and Silk" (USA — 1990). In this true story, a young English teacher in China in the mid-1980s finds government roadblocks when he wants to experience the country as something more than a tourist. A well-intentioned, occasionally moving, but mostly uninspiring account is given a dose of realism by having key characters in the story played by the actual people who inspired them.

— John Monaghan



the movies
Dan Greenberg

Grading the movies

A+	Top marks - sure to please
A	Close behind - excellent
A-	Still in running for top honors
B+	Pretty good stuff, not perfect
B	Good
B-	Good but notable deficiencies
C+	Just a cut above average
C	Mediocre
C-	Not so hot and slipping fast
D	The very best of the poor stuff
D	Poor
D-	It doesn't get much worse
F	Truly awful
Z	Reserved for the colossally bad
*	No advanced screening

In "Only the Lonely" (B, 105 minutes), Chicago cop Danny Muldoon (John Candy), a warm, friendly 38-year-old who lives with his mother,

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