

'The Babe' goes down swinging

tickets please
John Monaghan

After all these years, Hollywood still hasn't learned how to make movies about America's favorite pastime. "The Babe," the new biography of slugger George Herman Ruth, strikes out despite the best efforts of star John Goodman. The amazingly versatile actor has the size, good nature, and depth to play a convincing Bambino. Unfortunately, he is saddled with a script so full of standard baseball clichés that "The Babe" never makes good on its promise. The movie opens with sweeping aerial shots of Yankee Stadium, often called "the house that Ruth built." Cinematographer Haskell Wexler lovingly carens over the seats and around the bases. We are then thrust into grainy, sooty images of Ruth's early years at a Baltimore correctional facility for boys. The other kids mercilessly tease the ox-like Ruth until he picks up a bat and slugs a ball squarely through a church window. THE REST of the film covers the basic periods of Ruth's up-and-down career, from record-breaking seasons with the Red Sox and Yankees to his waning years with the Braves. When he applies to be manager, his reputation as "incurable" catches up with him. The movie has all the psychological answers: Rejection as a child, especially from his mother, fuels the problems that make Ruth nothing more than a grown-up baby. He wants to give children the love he missed. Dressed in a long fur coat, he piles kids into his expensive car and buys them new shoes. One little girl asks if he's Santa Claus. And of course, there's the legendary story where Babe hits two homers for a dying boy, handled here in the schmaltziest manner possible. At home, Babe's taste for the high life in the city costs him his country-loving first wife (Trini Alvarado). He finds a more understanding mate in a former Ziegfeld showgirl (Kelly McGillis). Aside from the superb "Eight Men Out," baseball movies rarely let the sport speak for itself. Much of Ruth's time on the field is depicted in faded newsreel clips, slightly sped up, showing his lumbering skip around the bases. It would have been more interesting to run actual footage of Ruth, since we're seeing him basically from the stands anyway. DIRECTOR ARTHUR HILLER delivers more corny scenes at the plate. We watch Babe swing in slow motion, hear the crack of the bat, then take in the awed expression of the fans, including fresh-faced rookie Lou Gehrig who says, "he really is a God." Give us a break. "The Babe" didn't necessarily have to rewrite the book on baseball movies, but it should give us a brighter picture of the golden days of the game. This image of the Babe is no different than that found on any baseball card — two-dimensional and very flat.



John Goodman has all the right swings as the legendary Babe Ruth in "The Babe." And although Goodman's great in the starring role, the movie strikes out.

Looking the image helps make a band

By Joseph Hoffmann
special writer

Lucy's Alibi dreams itself an alternative band, but a lot of their material comes across in the spirit and style of the late '60s. They are a band that is just beginning to make its way onto Detroit and Canada's alternative sector. There are so many variables that go into choosing for your band members. It's not how well that they play. That is a real small factor, even though they should play well," said Keith Walsh, bassist and vocalist and founder of the local band. They have to look the image, have their own resources and be dependable. That is a real hard trait to find among musicians. The look Walsh speaks of is visible in Lucy's Alibi's latest video, which is running on the Livonia Access Channel 13's "Half Hour Bower Hour." The video show features four of the band's songs: "Looking for Lucy," "A 100,000 Volts of Donna's Love," "Carol Ann" and "To the Bone." All four songs are from the band's demo tape, "Where Were You When," which has led to some local gigs at places like Jam's on 7, Walsh said. THEIR SOUND is an exotic conglomerate of the new and old. At times, they sound like the Kinks, the Knack, the Smiths and the Clash all loosely rolled into one. This comes out, in part, because of the multiple talents of each member. Ken Talbot, lead guitarist, believes in a direct approach to the instrument, citing Adrian Belew, Robert Fripp and Joe Satriani as influences. Robbie Vince, keyboardist, has a background playing Top-40 music and started out in the band playing guitar. Tony Mitchell, who handles drums and back-up vocals, is the most seasoned musician in Lucy's Alibi having performed in a number of blues bands including Code Blue and Alibi and Alibi. Although they concentrate a considerable amount of their efforts on original material, they also rework their cover repertoire to give it their own trademark. For instance, they do a reggae version of Jimi Hendrix's song "Fire," also a New York Dolls' version of the Beatles' "Saw Her Standing There." Considering the divergent nature of these remakes they come across — for the most part — with a new enhanced flair. Whether it's the hard driving "Jungle Beat" derived from Mitchell's syncretized drumming, the direct and permeating guitar of Talbot, the lambent keyboards of Vince, or the structural bass of Walsh, Lucy's Alibi has put together a broad approach to alternative music. Lucy's Alibi performs Tuesday, May 5, at the Studio Lounge, 6921 Wayne, south of Warren Avenue, Westland. For information, call 729-5440.



Creating a whirlwind, alternative sound in Lucy's Alibi is Keith Walsh (left), vocalist and bassist; Ken Talbot, lead guitarist; Robbie Vince, keyboards and guitar; and Tony Mitchell, drummer and back-up vocalist.

SCREEN SCENE

DETROIT FILM THEATRE. Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward, Detroit. Call 832-2730 for information. (\$5)
"Proof" (Australia - 1991). 7, 9:30 p.m. April 24-25. 4, 7 p.m. April 26. A slightly sinister story of a cynical photographer — blind since birth — and his housekeeper. A debut from Australian director Jocelyn Morehouse.
HENRY FORD CENTENNIAL LIBRARY. 16301 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. Call 943-2037 for information. (Free)
"Operation Snatch" (Britain - 1962). 7 p.m. April 20. In this British satire about military life, an English lieutenant during World War II is placed in charge of an ape colony. Terry Thomas and George Sanders keep a stiff upper lip.
MAGIC BAG THEATRE CAPE. 22918 Woodward, Ferndale. Call 544-3030 for information. (\$4; \$3 students/seniors)
"Lunatics: A Love Story" (USA - 1991). 8 p.m. April 20-22. Filmed in Pontiac and other Detroit-area locales, "Lunatics" was produced by Renaissance Pictures, the film company that once called Ferndale home. In it, a struggling poet and ex-penal patient (Ted Raimi), experiences a series of wild hallucinations.
"Spike and Mike's Festival of Animation." April 23-May 2 (call for showtimes). From the crazed California team of Spike and Mike, a collection of offbeat contemporary animation. Highlights include "Street Sweepers," "Mona Lisa Descending a Staircase," and this year's Academy Award winner "Manipulation." (\$6 admission for this film)
"Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation." 9:30, 11:30 p.m. April 24-25. A wicked collection of some of the sickest cartoon shorts ever created. Along the way, you'll meet such off-color creations as "In-Bred Jell" and "Dog Pile." No one under 17 will be admitted. (\$6 admission for this film)
MAPLE THEATRE. 4155 W. Maple, Bloomfield. Call 855-9091 for information. (\$5.75; \$2.95 twilight show)
"Antonia and Jane" (Britain - 1991). A British comedy about two women — one a cool beauty, the other a lost soul — who spend each year preparing for their annual reunion lunch. Directed by Debrah Kidron.
MICHIGAN THEATRE. 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Call 668-8397 for information. (\$5; \$4 students/seniors)
"Ginger and Fred" (Italy - 1988). 7 p.m. April 20-21. Giulietta Masina and Marcello Mastroianni play Ginger and Fred, a pair of Italian entertainers who used to imitate the great Astaire and Rogers. Now they are reunited for a TV talk show in this biting satire from Federico Fellini.
"The Player" (USA - 1992). 7:30 p.m. April 22. The Michigan presents a pre-release benefit screening of Robert Altman's latest. In this send-up of Hollywood, based on a novel by Michael Tolkin, a power-hungry young executive murders a frustrated screenwriter, steals the writer's girlfriend, treats his assistants like dirt, and feels no remorse. (Tickets to benefit the Michigan Theater and the U-M Museum of Art are \$12.50.)
"The Double Life of Veronique" (Poland - 1991). 9:35 p.m. April 20-21; 10:15 p.m. April 22. The idea that every person has an exact and perfect double somewhere in the world is the subject of this clever Polish film: Veronique lives in Poland, Veronique in Paris, and they have some unusual similarities that go beyond mere looks.
STATE WAYNE THEATRE. 35310 Michigan Ave., Wayne. Call 325-4600 for information. (\$2; \$1 students/seniors)
"Giant" (USA - 1956). April 22-26 (call for showtimes). The story of Texas oil tycoons is as big as the Lone Star State and about as subtle as a Cadillac with a pair of horns on the front. Rock Hudson and Elizabeth Taylor star, but the film is best remembered for James Dean's final performance as rags-to-riches Jett Rink.
"The Road to Rio" (USA - 1947). April 22-26 (call for showtimes). Perhaps the best-loved of the Bob Hope-Bing Crosby "road movies," with Dorothy Lamour and a special appearance by the Andrews Sisters. — John Monaghan

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