OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC GUIDE TO THE MOVIES

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SHOWTIMES & MOVIES CHANGE OFTEN, PLEASE CALL YOUR FAVORITE THEATER FOR CURRENT PERFORMANCES & TIMES.

FILM RATINGS

G-GENERAL AUDIENCES

PG - PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED
Some material may not be suitable for Pre-Teenagers

PG 13 - PARENTS ARE STRONGLY CAUTIONED TO GIVE SPECIAL GUIDANCE FOR ATTENDANCE OF CHILDREN UNDER 13
Some material may be inappropriate for young children.

R - RESTRICTED - UNDER 18 REQUIRES AN ACCOMPANYING PARENT OR GUARDIAN

X- NO ONE UNDER 18 ADMITTED

MOVIES

Don't miss 'Theremin'

TICKETS PLEASE

JOHN MONAGHAN

The late, late show is still the best place to hear the mysterious sounds of the Theremin. "The Lost Weekend," "Spellbound" and especially "The Day the Earth Stood Still" all employed its electronic woo woos when they wanted to convey something strange and otherworldly.

That this granddaddy of electronic music was originally conceived as a classical instrument is just one of many surprises in "Theremin: An Electronic Odyssey," a captivating new documentary which opens the Detroit Film Theatre schedule this weekend.

The Theremin is essentially a cabinet full of radio tubes, flanked by a pair of metal antennae, whose musical hum grows louder and softer when hands move near it. Inventor Leon Theremin premiered his magical device in the 1920s, including a sold-out concert of 10 Theremins at New York's Carnegie Hall.

When Theremin began to employ the basic principle to other inventions, he caught the attention of his native Russia. One day in 1938 he disappeared without a trace.

Documentary director Steven M. Martin finds the 94-year-old inventor living in a cluttered flat in the former Soviet Union. It turns out that Theremin spent several years in a notorious Gulag, where he was "rehabilitated" enough to work on inventions for Stalin, including the "Bug," the premiere electronic eavesdropping device of the Cold War.

REVIEW

The filmmakers chart Theremin's successful and melancholy trip back to America in 1991, where the inventor received awards and also got reacquainted with the city he left 50 years ago. You can see the mixed emotions on his face as he shuffles beneath the neon lights of Times Square, marveling while also realizing *how quickly things have passed* him by.

Among those interviewed are Robert Moog, whose gee-whiz experimentation with the Theremin as a kid in the 1940s led to his creation of the modern synthesizer. Clara Rockmore, who has been performing classical Theremin since she was the professor's 18-year-old protege and love interest, is also captured live in performance.

While paying tribute to Theremin's genius, the movie also has a sense of humor. There are clips from "The Mickey Mouse Club" and Jerry Lewis' "The Delicate Delinquent" and interviews with the Beach Boys' Brian Wilson, who used the Theremin to legendary effect on "Good Vibrations" in 1966.

In one of the film's funniest moments, the filmmakers con rocker Todd Rundgren into playing a Theremin version of "air guitar." The interviewers promise that he is not the only one to do so on camera — but he is.

Playing Friday through Sunday, "Theremin" kicks off what may be the best Detroit Film Theatre schedule in years, one that gives equal attention to both old and new international films.

A weekend-long marathon of classic films in mid-April showcases brand new prints from the National Film Registry. Among the familiar titles: "2001: A Space Odyssey," "Out of the Past," "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre," "Duck Soup," "Raging Bull," and "Touch of Evil" along with an early work from pioneering black filmmaker Oscar Micheaux.

The *ambitious Monday night* series will continue to present single screenings, starting next week with the modern-day vampire story "Nadja." Word of mouth was so strong after last season's 1964 marvel "I Am Cuba" that the DFT will bring it back for two performances on Sunday, March 10.

If you miss this weekend's opener and still want a taste of Theremin, there's probably plenty of it in the season's final offering: Zsa Zsa Gabor as "Queen of Outer Space," a 1958 camp classic whose May 20 screening (in CinemaScope) serves as a brilliant bookend to an inspired season.

To leave a message for John Monaghan, dial 953-2047, mailbox number 1866, on a touch-tone phone, fax him a note at 591-7279, or write him in care of Entertainment, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

SCHEDULED TO OPEN FRIDAY, JAN. 19

"MR. HOLLAND'S OPUS"
Drama about a talented musician whose dream of making his mark on the world by composing a symphony takes an unexpected turn when he becomes a high school music teacher and transfers his love of music to his students. Stars Richard Dreyfuss, Glenne Headly, Olympia Dukakis.

"FROM DUSK TILL DAWN"
At selected theaters. A thriller about a showdown between bank robbers and vampires in a seedy Mexican strip joint. Stars Harvy Keitel, George Clooney, Quentin Tarantino and Juliette Lewis.

"OTHELLO"
Holds over at the Main Art Theatre and opens at United Artists Fairlane and Oakland. The classic Shakespeare tragedy starring Laurence Fishburne, Kenneth Branagh, Irene Jacob, Nathaniel Parker and Michael Maloney.

OPENING FRIDAY, JAN. 26

"BIG BULLY"
Comedy about onetime schoolyard rivals who meet again as adults to discover that nothing has changed. Stars Rick Moranis, Tom Arnold, Julianne Phillips, Carol Kane, and Don Knotts.

"KICKING AND SCREAMING"
Exclusively at the Main Art Theatre. The story of four recent college grads who are not quite ready to take the next step as they continue to hand out at the local college bar and dorms. Stars Olivia D'Abo, Eric Stoltz, Parkey Posey, Josh Hamilton and Elliott Gould.

"BED OF ROSES"
A storybook romance about a workaholic financier who is swept off her feet by a love-struck florist. Stars Christian Slater, Mary Stuart Masterson.

"RESTORATION"
The moving story of the irrepressible Robert Merivel, who eagerly embraces the high living and low moral standards of the court of Charles II. When Merivel falls from grace, he must create his own spiritual and social restoration. Stars Robert Downey, Jr., Meg Ryan.

"SCREAMERS"
A science fiction thriller about a self replicating race of killing devices known as Screamers designed as a military weapon, but now evolved to a menace to all life forms. Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick. Stars Harvey Keitel, George Clooney, Quentin Tarantino and Juliette Lewis.

SCHEDULED TO OPEN FRIDAY, Feb. 2

"THE JUROR"
A psychological thriller about a single mother who becomes embroiled in a dangerous game when she is chosen to serve on the jury in the trial of a powerful mobster. A vote to acquit is the only thing that can ensure her safety and that of her son. Stars Demi Moore and Alec Baldwin.

"TWO GITS"
Warm hearted coming-of-age story that revolves around a lovable but feisty grandfather and his grandson. Stars Al Pacino.

SCHEDULED TO OPEN FRIDAY, Feb. 9

"THE JOURNEY OF AUGUST KING"
In North Carolina 1810, a man on his annual trip to town crosses paths with a runaway slave, and in his decision to help begins a journey with himself that will transform his life. Stars Jason Patric.

"AN EXPLOSIVE THRILL RIDE that is absolutely sizzling!! A superior thriller, unbelievably powerful!!"
"A very powerful movie. Fine performances."
"It really grips you. Sally Field is outstanding."
"A first-rate thriller. Provocative."
Sally Field
Kiefer Sutherland
Ed Harris

Eye For An Eye
R

NOW PLAYING	AMC BEL AIR 10	AMC LAKELAND 5	AMC SOUTHFIELD CITY
GENERAL CINEMAS CANTON	SHOWCASE AUBURN HILLS	SHOWCASE BRIGHTON	SHOWCASE STERLING HEIGHTS
SHOWCASE WESTLAND	STAR GRATIOT AT 15 MILE	STAR JOHN R AT 14 MILE	STAR LINCOLN PARK 8
STAR ROCHESTER HILLS	STAR TAYLOR	UNITED ARTISTS FAIRLANE	UNITED ARTISTS LAKESIDE
UNITED ARTISTS 12 OAKS	UNITED ARTISTS WEST RIVER	FORD WYOMING DRIVE IN	NO PASSES OR COUPONS ACCEPTED