MOVIES

Performances lighten burden of 'Iron Mask'



"All for one and one for all" It used to be the battle cry of The Three Muske-teers, Alexander Dumas' chivalrous creations keeping France whole during the tumultuous 17th century. It could also be the marketing cammarketing cam-paign for "The Man in the Iron Mask."

Man in the Iron Mask.

Romancel Intriguel Comedyl
Action! If the new movie doesn't
have all of its popular elements
spinning in orbit, it does have
something else going for it:
superb performances.
Gabriel Byrne as D'Artagnan.
John Malkovich, Jereny Irons,
and Gerard Depardieu as the
aging Musketeers. You'd have to
be a complete dunderhead to
botch a movie with this much



Spirited adventure: Athos (John Malkovich, rich) teaches Philippe (Leonardo DiCaprio) how to be king in "The Man in the Iron Mask."

talent. Yet writer/director Randall Wallace almost does. The to introduce the devout Aramis early scenes especially lack (Irons) and the earthy Porthes

(Depardicu) as they touch upon their key character concerns of forgiveness and farting. Leonardo DiCaprio plays the dual role of twin kings. His Louis

Leonardo DiCaprio plays the dual role of twin kings. His Louis is a horrible womanizer who lets his people starve in the "let them cat cake" tradition of French mobility. When he eyes a beautiful woman in the crowds, he immediately sends her fisned to the front lines and certain death. This is Louis big mistake. The dead boy is the son of Athos (Malkovich), the most hot-headed of the Musketeers, who now becomes a swern enemy of the King and anyone else who stands in his way.

When the Musketeers discover that the King's twin brother Phillippe is alive and locked in a tower, his face concealed by an iron mask, they hatch a plot to switch them. Of course, they'll need the help of old buddy D'Artagnan, who stubbornly heads the King's security force.

The conflict is a good one because you know deep down

as we do. But he alse made a pledge to protect, saying more than once, "I keep hoping that Louis will grow into the king we all wish him to be." Wallace, who also wrote "Braveheart," struggles with a sometimes unwieldy script. The revelations aren't all that revelatory. Even Porthes cries out less plotting.

But, as with his earlier work, Wallace has a nice way of infusing fact and fiction. He almost puts over Dumas' fanciful theory that The Man in the Iron Mask (a real-life French prisoner incarcerated from 1669-1703) was the brother of Louis XIV, the last of the great French kings. If you had asked me before which of the Musketter actors would impress me least, I would have said Gabriel Byrn. Yet he's the actor with the most presence

have said Gabriel Byrne. Yet he's the actor with the most presence in "The Man in the Iron Mask;" you can barely take your eyes off of him when he's on screen. There's also some clever acting in the role of Athos' son Raoul.

Young actor Peter Sarsgaard has picked up on many of Malkovich's mannerisms, from his world-weary eyes to his slightly nasal voice which bubbles with intensity even in whispers

slightly nasal voice which busbles with intensity even in whispers.

And Leonardo? Despite somutviewers' belief that the 22-yearold actor is too cute to be truly
evil, he certainly engages in
some nasty behavior. He also
does on admirable job in the
'Patty Duke' department where'
he must talk to himself during'
key scenes.

While the "Titanic" heartthrob
will deliver the female fans, the
movie has enough male bonding
and swashbuckling action, or at
least the promise of it, to make
'The Man in the Iron Mask' a
good old-fashioned date movie.

John Monaghan welcomes
your calls and comments. You
can listen to him on Dave Dixon's
Radio Show AM 1270, 8 p.m. to
midnight Saturdays. To leave
John a woice mail message, dial
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phone, mailbox 1866.

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SCREEN SCENE

A sampling of what's playing at alternative movic theaters across metro Detroit as reviewed by John Monaghan.

by John Monaghan.

The Birmingham Theatre,
211 S. Woodward (south of
Maple, downtown Birmingham.
Call (248) 644-FILM for informa-

Maple, downtown Birmingham.
Call (248) 644-FILM for information.

Second Annual Best of the
Academy Film Festival, Fridey, March 13 through Monday,
March 23. Ten day festival leading up to the Academy Awards
honors the best films of the year
as nominated by the Academy of
Motion Picture, Are and Sciences, The Full Monty, "LA
Confidential," Titanic, "As Good
As It Gets," and "Good Will
Hunting."

The festival will also honor
several Academy Award nominated documentaries including
The Long Way Home," and "Ayn
Rand: A Sense of Life."

Detroit Film Theatre Detroit
Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward,
Ave, Detroit, Call (313) 833-2323
for information. (\$5.50; \$4.50

Event Film Theatre Detroit
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for information. (\$5.50; \$4.50

Event Film Theatre Detroit
Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward
Frieworks" (Japan-1997)

Friday-Sunday, March 13-15
(call for showtimes). The Grand
Prize winner at last year's
Venice Film Festival focuses on a
former police detective who
embarks on a daring criminal
plan. Written, directed, and starring Takeshi Kitano.

"For Ever Mozart" (France1996), 7:30 p.m. Monday, March
16. French legend dean-Luc
Godard fashions a trio of shaggy
tog tales that evolve into
stream-of-consciousness poem
about art, politics, war, and the
nature of cinema itself.

Magle Bag 22918 Woodward,
Ferndale, Call (248) 544-3030 for
information. (\$2)

"Year of the Horse" (USA1991) e-20 m. Thursedy March

Pernais. Call (248) 644-3030 for information. (32)

"Year of the Horse" (USA-1997), 9:30 p.m. Thursday, March 12. Critic Roger Ebert called this the worst film of last year, and he may be right. When director Jim Jarmusch turns his leas on Neil Young's recent tour with Crazy Horse, it's like watching from the cheap seats with a pair of out-of-focus binoculars.

"The Commitments" (Britain/Ireland-1991), 10 p.m. Wodnesday, March 181, In celebration of the day after St. Patrick's Day, a concert with The Young Dubliners followed by this spirited story of some rag-tag



Oscar nominee: An acid-tongue romance novelist (Jack Nicholson) and a cafe server juggling the responsibili-ties of single parenthood (Helen Hunt) form an unlike-ly bond in TriStar Pictures "As Good as it Gets."

musicians who try to bring soul to Dublin. Directed by Alan Parker, based on the novel by Roddy Doyle.

Parker, based on the novel by Roddy Doyle.

Main Art Theatre 118 N. Main Street (at 11 Mile Road) Royal Oak. Flims play through at least Thursday, unleas note otherwise. Call (248) 542-0180 for information. (36.50; 54 studieth).

"Live Flesh" (Spain-1997). The latest from Pedro Almodown C'Women in the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown") is a well-drawn but surprisingly ordinary tale of murder, obsession, and unrequited love.

"The Apostle" (USA-1998). Robert Dudil served as writer, director, and star in this story of a proacher who finds his personal road to salvation, helped in part by his wife (Farrah Faweett).

"Afterglow" (USA-1997). Julie "Afterglow" (USA-1997).

Fawcett).

"Afterglow" (USA-1997). Julie Christie copped a Best Actress Oscar nomination for this tale of the complete of the two couples whose troubled mar-riages become intertwined. Nick Nolto co-stars. Directed by Alan Rudolph ("Choose Me," "The

Star Southfield 12 Mile Road (west of Telegraph), Southfield. Call (248) 372-2222. (\$6.50; \$4.50 before 6 p.m.)

"Goodwill Hunting" (USA-"Goodwill Hunting" (USA-1997). Matt Damon and Ben Affleck co-wrote and now star in this story of a young math prodi-gy who befriends his therapist (Robin Williams). Gus Van Sant ("To Die Fdr") directs. "The Apostle" (USA-1997). See Main Art Theatre listing above.

windsor Film Theatre 2135

Windsor Film Theatre 2135
Wyandote Street West, Windsor,
Canada, Call (519) 254-Fill M for
specific film information. (85.25
Canadian; 84 U.S.)
"Wings of the Dove".
(Britain: 1997). 7 pm. through;
Sunday, March 16. First it wan
Jane Austen. Now the novels of
Henry James seem ripe for thoretelling. Here a couple attempt
to manipulate love for purely
selfish reasons.

"Jackie Brown" (USA -1997). "Jackie Brown" (USA - 1997).

9:15 p.m. Thursday-Sunday.

March 12-15. Quentin Tarantino's latest, based on the Elmore
Leonard novel "Rum Punch," has
impressed as many viewers as
irritated for its relentlessly slow
pacing and intentional lack of
action. The cast is uniformly
great, but Osear was wise
enough to single out Robert.
Forster in his low-key performance as a bail bondsmen who
knows the ropes.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Scheduled to open Friday, March 13

"THE MAK OF THE WON MASK"
Based on Alexandre Dumas classic
novel, the story tells of the Four Muske
teers who try to bring down young King
Louis XIV and replace him with his twin
brother. Stars Leonardo DiCeprio, Jeremy Irons, John Malkovich. Scheduled to open Friday, March 20

Scheduled to open fulley, Malich 20
"PMED TREMS"
A talle of revenge, lust and murder
played out in the murty sew maps of the
Florida Everglades and the tony yeching encleve of the Blue Bey, Passion
lightles passion, mystery uncovers mysery, as the lives of four cunning characters twist end turn amid a bizarre
labyrinth of truth and illusion. Sters
Kevin Decon, Matt Dillon, Bill Murray,

Fevin Becon, Mett Onion, Bill Mutrey.

"PSIMARY COLORS"

Based on Joe Klain's best-seller about how a Presidential hopeful, with the help of enthusiastic young Democrats, lands himself in the White House. Stars John Travolta. Emma Thompson, Kathy Betes, Bilty Bob Thornton.

Action comedy about a TV reporter chased down after being discovered videotoping a crime ford's fillelt activities. Stars Jackie Chan. Scheduled to open Friday, March 27

"MY GUAT"
Comedy about a third rate talent agent who discovers a seven foot seven-incit giant that he thinks could be his ticket to the top. Together three set off on a road that leads them to the most unexpected of hoppy endings. Stars Billy Crystal, Kathleen Quintan. THE NEWTON BOYS" **TISE MEMYON BOYS**
The true life thromicle, set in the 1920s, of the four Newton Brothers who enguably were the most profile bank robbers in American history. Their 'mag-und goys' - the 33 million helss of a mail train, which was also their downfall. Stars Matthew MConaughey. Ethan Hawke,

A rags to riches comedy that chronicles the adventures of a group of inner city kids struggling to change their fate and find stardom, Stars Malik Yoba, Julie

"MDE AWAKE"
Story of a boy on a mission filled with
comedy, adventure, mystery and
ormance, asking the questions only a
child would be brave enough to ask, and
helping everyone he encounters what
it's like to resuly experience file. Stars
Denis Leary, Rosio O'Donnell.

Scheduled to open Friday, April 10

THE BID ONE

Michael Moore has returned to America's heartland to try to figure out why our corporations post even higher profile, yet continue to downsize. Stins Michael Moore, who also directed, Gartison Keillor, Studs Terkel.

CITY OF ANGELS
A rostless angel must choose between Eternal life and passionate love. Stars Nicholas Cage, Meg Ryan, Dennis Franz "3 NINJAS: HIGH NOON AT MEGA An action comedy about the unstop-pable ninja brothers. They're on vaca-tion to Mega Mountain.

"NO MORE MR. HICK GUY"