MOVIES

Hamtramck stars in disappointing 'Polish Wedding'



photographer.
And for the packed preview screening last week, seeing their hometown on the big screen was

enough to send metro Detroiters sweening. Spontanzous claps, laughs or "that's me" peppered the auditorium whonever a crowd scene with extras appeared.

As a Detroit movie, "Polish Wedding' earns four stars. The problem is: when the independent film, distributed by Fox Sourchlight, opens elsewhere on the planet, it will have most viewers scratching their heads. If I was reviewing this movie in Chicago, San Francisco, or even Grand Rapids, I'd probably give it a one.

Grand Rapids, 1d probably give it a one.

The movie doesn't lack talent — Gabriel Byrne, Lena Olin, and Claire Danes are members of the Pzoniak family. Papa Bolek is the stoic baker and chain smok-

er. Wife Jadzia's frequent be almost ethereal and sprite-woman's league meetings are like in her magical fascination actually excuses for remantic with men, but the idea is botched trystes with a bearded business-when reality rears its head.

tryste with a bearded business-man.

Daughter Hala, meanwhile, seems to take after the old lady, sneaking off into the night for rendozvous with a handsome young policeman, a friend of her prothers. Her resulting pregnan-cy compromises her role in her church's annual Parade of the 'Urigin, where she has been cho-sen to represent all that is good and virtuous.

Danes was only 17 when "Pol-ish Wedding" was shot here two summers ago, and you can see her searching for a way through this difficult role. Writer/director Connelly obviously wants her to

Connelly obviously wants her to

And this is where the movie really flounders. Never once did I believe that I was watching real people. No one has a handle on what is expected of them, especially Byrne, the Irish actor who gargles his lines and spends most of his performance looking resigned and world-weary.

As the family matriarch, Olin does what she does best: look sexy. No other actress can make the simplest task - from kneading pierogi dough to serubbing floors - look so sensual. Ultimately, these public displays grow embarrassing rather than charming and funny.

Connelly also misses the beat by making the family so insular. There are virtually no minor characters in the film – no prud-ish neighbors, no fellow workers at the bakery – to put the family in perspective. For all the world knows. Huntramek is this hotbed of unbridled passion and

Some grumblings have come SCREEN SCENE



Romantic comedy: Gabriel Byrne and Lena Olin star in "Polish Wedding."

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P1
A science-fiction thriller about the hounting journey into the mind of a renegade mathematicion. "BASKETBALL"
A sports comedy centering around a few friends who create a new sport. Scheduled to open Wednesday, Aug. 5

Scheduled to open Friday, Aug. 7

EVER AFTER: A CINDERFELLA STORY
Fresh spin on one of our most beloved tales. Stars Drow Barrymore, Anjolica Huston.

THE NEGOTIATOR*
Story of a moverick hostage negotilator who becomes the victim of a police frame up. He turns the tables by taking the chief of internal affeirs hostage and finds an ally in the negotiator assigned to the situation he's created. Stars Samuel L. Jackson and Keyin Spacey.

from the Polish American community about this skewed portrayal. But, mostly, 'Polish Wedding' is an inoffensive lark unless, of course, you care about little things like plot, character and sustained tone.

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

by John Monaghan.

Magic Bay — 22920 Woodward, Ferndale. Call (248) 544-3030 for information.

"Spike and Milke's Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation." Through Sunday, Aug. 2 (call for showtimes). An encore presentation of the festival, highlighted by the unafted "South Park" pilot episode, "The Spirit of Christmas." Also on the bill: "Smoking," "Fast Driver" (a gay take on "Speed Racer"), and "Slonches Fun House," which earns its title as "grossest cartoon ever made." (S6)

Main Art Theatre — 118 N. Main (at 11 Mile Road), Royal Oak. Call (248) 542-0180 for information. (\$6.50; \$4 students/seniors and matinees; \$5 twilight)

"The Opposite of Sex" (USA)

(\$6.50; \$4 before 6 p.m.)
"Polish Wedding" (USA -1998). Filmed in Hamtramck, a focus on infidelity, hardship, and humor in a dysfunctional family. The first film written and direct-

John Monaghan welcomes your calls and comments. You can listen to him on Dawe Dixon's Radio Show AM 1270, 8 p.m. to midnight Saturdays. To leave John a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047 on a touch-toug phone, mailbox 1866.

wrecks the lives of virtually everyone she encounters.

"The Hanging Garden" (USA - 1998). An offbeat drama hobut a 25-year-old gap man who returns home to his seriously dysfunctional family after a 10-year absence.

"Buffale 68" (USA - 1998). In this update of an old "screwball" premise, Vincent Galle plays an ex-con who hatches a preposterous plan o impress his uncaring parents. With the help of a kidnapped Christina Ricci, he assumes the role of upstanding husband and family man.

**Midnight moview-"Heavy Metal," "The Beyond" are the cult films playing at the witching hour Friday and Saturday nights.

**Maple Art Theatre - Maple at Telegraph, Bloomfield. Call
2489 855-9090 for information.
(\$248) 855-9090 for information.
(\$3.60; \$4 before 6 p.m." "The Grapes of Wrath" (USA - 1940), 8 p.m. Friday, July 24; 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, July 25 (organ overture begins a half hour before showtime). John Steinbeck's tale of the epic struggles of Okies moving from the dust bowl to California during the Depression. Henry Fondadelivers his first great performance as Tom Joad, an ex-conwhose climactic speech sums upthe frustration and determination of an entire generation of Americans.

dentissenors and mathrees, vetwilight) "The Opposite of Sex" (USA 1998, Christina Ricci ('Addams Family," "The Ice Storm") plays a teenaged girl who runs away from her home one summer and COMING ATTRACTIONS

Scheduled to open Friday, July 24

Scheduled to open Friday, July 24

- SAVIND PRIVATE RYAN

A story based on the true events of six
U.S. Army soldiers on assignment
behind enemy lines to save one private.
Stors Tom Hanks, Edward Burns, Tom
Sizemore, Matt Damon.

"MAFIAI"

Organized crime is the target of this spoof of mob movies. Stars Lloyd Bridges.

"PISTURBING BEHAVIOR"
A horror thriller of a small town's nefarious process of transforming its rebellious teens. Stars James Morsden.

Scheduled to open Wadnesday, July 29

Scheduled to open Weanssay, July 29
"THE NIGOTIATOR"
Story of a maverick hostage negotiator who becomes that wictim of a police frame up. He turns the tables by taking the chief of Internal affairs hostage and flads an ally in the negoliator assigned to the situation he's created. Stars Samuel L. Jackson and Kevin Spacey. **THE PARENT TRAP**
A remake of the Disney classic of two sisters separated at birth who finally meet and begin plotting to rounite their long-divorced parents.

Scheduled to open Friday, July 31

"HALLOWEEN: H20"
It's been twenty years aince the first pumpkin was carved by Michael Meyers...would you like to know what everyone else is up to now?



Wartime drama: Captain John Miller (Tom Hank right), and the Sarge (Tom Sizemore) lead a squad of soldiers behind enemy lines to find a retrieve one man, Private James Ryan, in "Saving Private Ryan."

Scheduled to open Wednesday, Aug. 12 Schoolupe to open recursoup: Aug. 12:

HOW STELL OOT HER GROUP SEACE

Brased on the best seller by Terry McMilin, the story of a 40-year-old African

American woman who takes a spur of
the moment tip to Jamalea and meets
the man of hor ureams, oucept he's only
holf her age. Stars Angela Bassett,
Whoopi Gedberg.

Scheduled to open Friday, Aug. 14 *AIR BUD: GOLDEN RECEIVER*
Buddy, the talented dog, continues his adventures when he becomes a kidnap target. Stars Kavin Zegers.

THE AVENGERS*
The unflappable due of John Steed and Errum Peel are united again. This time to stop a diabolical scientist with plans for world domination. Stars Raiph

Scheduled to open Friday, Aug. 21

DANCE WITH ME
A romance about a dance instructor who finds inspiration and eventually toys with the arrival of a young man who has a passion for life and a flair for Latin who has the conce. Stars Vanessa L. Williams, Krist Kristofferson.

WRONGFULLY ACCUSED
A violitals is wrongfully (and hiterious)
accused of mudering a prominent
patron of the arts. He takes flight to
evade capture and works to track down
the real killer, a one-armed and onelegged man. Stars Leslio Nielsen. "WRONGFULLY ACCUSED"

regged man. Stars Leavie reduction.

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