

The Movies



LOUISE SNIDER

Elegant film about Sherlock

"The Seven-Per-Cent Solution" (PG) is an elegant movie scripted from Nicholas Meyer's novel about the confrontation of Sherlock Holmes and Sigmund Freud. The result is not as mind-boggling as anticipated, but it is stylish.

The attention to detail in settings, costumes and locations makes this an impeccable production. Even the title art has been thoughtfully chosen, consisting of original drawings from Strand Magazine in which the Holmes stories appeared.

Purists, however, might be dismayed to see Holmes (Nicol Williamson) portrayed as edgy and distraught, not the usual suave, keen detective that Basil Rathbone made familiar to movie audiences.

The characterization of Dr. Watson (Robert Duvall) is also unique. He is not the nervous, bumbling fellow associated with Nigel Bruce. Duvall's Dr. Watson is very strong and persuasive.

THE NOVELTY of these interpretations is partly choice and partly the demands of the script. Holmes, as every Baker Street buff knows, has two weaknesses: Cocaine and violin playing. While the latter sorely afflicts the listener, the former sorely afflicts Holmes.

In the opening scenes, Holmes is shown mentally and physically ravaged by his addiction. He becomes paranoid. He hounds Professor Moriarty (an unpleasant, humble-pie pedagogue admirably acted by Laurence Olivier) because he believes him to be his arch enemy, a master criminal directing nefarious activities all over the world.

Fortunately, the lapse in Holmes' mental faculties is only temporary, thanks to the efforts of his good friend, Dr. Watson. Watson contrives to get Holmes to Vienna for treatment by Dr. Sigmund Freud, the only man capable of curing him.

Watson leaves his lovely wife (Samantha Egger) and accompanies Holmes as he follows Moriarty's trail right into Sigmund Freud's office.

These two giant intellects of fiction and fact immediately impress each other. Holmes, with one perceptive look around the room, quickly deduces the circumstances of Freud's life and practice. Freud (Alan Arkin), for his part, deals forthrightly with Holmes, confronting him with the facts of his addiction which he has been unwilling to admit.

ARKIN'S INTERPRETATION of Freud is much too restrained, and the episodes depicting Holmes' withdrawal symptoms (visions of snakes and monsters) are much too heavy handed. But balance and a classy tone are restored in colorful vignettes of life in 19th century Vienna.

In one sequence, Watson accompanies Freud to his club, where an insulting bully forces Freud into a duel. As the aggrieved party, he has the choice of weapons. He selects tennis racquets. The antagonists then play a vintage version of the game on an indoor court where the ball is bounced against the sidewalls as well as over the net. Freud is the underdog, but he analyzes his opponent's game, discovers his weakness (his backhand) and eventually wins the match.

Once Holmes is cured, the fun starts as he and Watson collaborate with Freud to solve a case involving an abducted patient (Vanessa Redgrave).

The case is elementary. However, the repartee among the threesome and their picturesque adventures provide delightful entertainment. They escape from an attack by Lipizzian stallions, enjoy the entertainment in a high-class brothel—where the French singer Regine belts out a smart Stephen Sondheim song, and deal with a moving train.

"The Seven-Per-Cent Solution" is a rewarding visual experience. The atmospheric lighting of London, the baroque facades of Vienna, the views of the English countryside and the little steamboat plying the Danube are memorable images.

One might have hoped for a more puzzling mystery and a stronger characterization of Holmes and Freud. Nevertheless, this is a charming period piece graced with wit and intelligence. Two rare and welcome qualities.

G LIMPSES

NEW RELEASES

THE ENFORCER (R). Violence and gun play in the "Dirty Harry" manner as Clint Eastwood shoots it out with a terrorist gang in San Francisco in this third film in the series.

KING KONG (PG). The big ape is back again with his same old destructive but sensitive personality. Lance plays the love in his life. Revised version with some tongue-in-cheek dialogue.

NETWORK (R). Fierce satire attacking the television industry and mass media generally. Top performances by Peter Finch, Faye Duraaway and William Holden in fast-paced, grimly humorous film.

NICKELODEON (PG). Director Bogdanovich recalls the mad-cap early days of movie making. Ryan and Tatum O'Neal, Burt Reynolds, Stella Stevens and Jane Hitchcock survive the perils and have some fun.

THE PINK PANTHER STRIKES AGAIN (PG). More clowning with Inspector Clouseau (Peter Sellers) who fumbles his way to victory. This time against the demented ex-chief inspector who would destroy the world unless he's given Clouseau, dead or alive.

THE SHAGGY D.A. (G). If you're looking for a "G" film, this is about the only one in town. A Disney movie about a politician with an unusual affliction.

SILVER STREAK (PG). Gene Wilder, Richard Pryor, Patrick McGeehan and Jill Clayburgh make tracks in this comedy-thriller about murder and mayhem on a train, and sometimes off.

A STAR IS BORN (R). Long-awaited and superlative remake with Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson as rock stars rather than movie stars whose careers head in different directions.

MOVIE RATING GUIDE

- G General audiences admitted.
- PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.
- R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.
- X No one under 18 admitted.



Beach Boys are back

The Beach Boys will return to Detroit's Olympia at 7:30 p.m. Saturday. The year 1976 marked the 15th anniversary of perhaps as long-lived a band that exists in rock and roll. Almost everybody knows what The Beach Boys sound like: that high tight wall of harmony, counterpoint and background, with rich vocals and orchestration leaning in and out of rising balanced music. Their sound came out of the beach and sunshine culture of Southern California in the '50s and '60s. Tickets for the concert are available at Olympia, Olympia Travel in Birmingham or by mail order. For further information telephone Olympia at 895-7000.

Film critic to lecture

"Meet at the Movies," a new program at the Farmington Community Center, debuts this winter with a series of four outstanding feature films. The movies will be shown on alternate Saturdays in February and March, 8 p.m., at the center.

Post-film, discussions will be led by Louise Snider, movie critic for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, and coffee will be available to round out the social evening. The following movies will be shown:

Feb. 12, "The Black Windmill" — An action thriller with Michael Caine as a British espionage agent who undertakes a globe-trotting vendetta to retrieve his kidnapped

son. It was directed by Don Siegel, known for his hard-hitting style in such Clint Eastwood movies as "Dirty Harry" and "Coogan's Bluff."

Feb. 26, "Southern Star" — A fun-filled spoof of jungle adventure films based on a Jules Verne novel. George Segal, Ursula Andress, and Orson Welles are the leads in this adventure about a race against time to recover an incredibly huge gem.

March 12, "Silent Running" — Directed by Douglas Trumbull, the special effects director for "2001: A Space Odyssey," this science-fiction tale has become a cult picture for today's ecology-minded generation. Bruce Dern stars in

this fascinating story about a scientist's attempts to save Earth's vegetation.

March 26, "Summer Wishes, Winter Dreams" — A virtuoso performance by Joanne Woodward won her the Best Actress award of the New York Film Critics. This is an intense, sensitive story about a woman trying to regain her lost youth, and the conflict between a mother (Sylvia Sydney) and her daughter.

Registration for the series is \$20 per couple or \$11 per person, by mail or in person, at the Farmington Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road, Farmington 48018. For further information call 477-8401.

Dining And Entertainment Guide

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Loving Cup opens date

The Loving Cup is appearing at the Perfect Blend in Southfield for a six-week engagement.

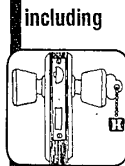
The group—Danny, Marlene, Roger and Virginia—will play through Feb. 12 at the club, in the Fidelity Bank Building (first floor) at 24901 Northwestern near Evergreen (south of Ten Mile).

The Loving Cup performs from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. The room features dancing and also a hot sandwich menu.

WEEKEND

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