



the movies

Louise Snider

Students' energy highlights film on arts school

A lot of enthusiasm, a lot of flash and a lot of talent combine in the flamboyant musical "Fame" (R).

"Fame" follows, and we hope comes to, a group of students whom the movie chronicles from their auditions at New York's High School of the Performing Arts through graduation four years later.

The school is a melting pot where students of every minority — every racial, religious, ethnic and sexual persuasion (and even a few WASPs) — are brought together by their common striving for accomplishment and recognition in music, drama or dance.

It's also a place where students must grapple with the rigors of academic scholarship as well as their creative studies and the usual traumas of growing up.

The gifted young actors who populate this movie generate a Day-Glo exuberance which helps move things along but does not entirely overcome the script's more tedious moments.

THE STORY CONCENTRATES on about eight of the students, who are singled out in vignettes that reveal something about their ambitions and problems.

Unfortunately, trying to follow the fortunes of multiple characters and interweave this in a unified structure is a difficult dramatic form. "Fame" doesn't surmount this obstacle, although the film does attempt to overshadow it by sheer exuberance.

The two major dance numbers, in the cafeteria and on the street, are explosive outbursts of kinetic energy. While too slick to pass for the spontaneity they attempt to represent, they are too good not to capture an audience with their funky good cheer. If you never felt like dancing on tables or cars, "Fame" might make you want to try. It looks like such fun.

However, the fresh, bold humor of the first half of this film, especially the auditions with all their surprises and variety, is dampened in the second half with backneyed situations and maudlin drama.

A singer (Irene Cara) with a lot of smarts falls for the "you oughta be in pictures" line, even when the studio is a sleazy walk-up apartment.

THREE OF THE DRAMA students, a middle-class "nice" Jewish girl (Maureen Teedy), an angry Puerto Rican (Barry Miller) whose little sister has been molested, and a homosexual WASP (Paul McCrane), form a supportive friendship that develops into a ménage à trois.

A black dance student who can't read and who hates his English teacher (Anne Meara) gets through four years of a supposedly tough school and suddenly shows compassion for the teacher when her husband is dying.

Gene Anthony Ray, who plays the dancer, is a dynamic presence on the screen. He commands attention whether he's going through a muscular and sensual dance routine or just looking surly.

"Fame" is worth seeing for its musical highlights, comic episodes (during auditions) and people like Ray, as long as you don't mind one hour's entertainment wrapped in two hours of film.

what's at the movies

NEW RELEASES

BRONCO BILLY (PG). Clint Eastwood stars as rowdy, brawling owner of Wild West show.

BRUBAKER (R). Serious drama with Robert Redford as reform warden fighting corruption on state prison farm.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (PG). "Star Wars" sequel unites original cast in continuation of battle against the evil empire.

FAME (R). Lots of young talent in vibrant musical about students at New York's School of Performing Arts.

FRIDAY THE 13TH (R). A case of overkill as counselors reopen camp closed since a series of vicious murders.

THE HOLLYWOOD KNIGHTS (R). Comedy about young men fighting to save their hangout from the wrecker's ball.

THE ISLAND (R). Butchery galore as Michael Caine investigates ship disappearances and finds modern-day piracy in Caribbean.

ROUGH CUT (R). Diamond thief Burt Reynolds falls for Scotland Yard decoy Leslie-Anne Down.

THE SHINING (R). Stanley Kubrick fashions ultimate horror film where ordinary becomes ominous, and Jack Nicholson's psychotic evokes both fear and laughter.

TOM HORN (R). Steve McQueen in story about rugged men at the end of the Old West era.

URBAN COWBOY (PG). Replay of "Saturday Night Fever" with C & W music. John Travolta works in a Houston plant by day, two-steps at Gilley's honky-tonk by night.

WHOLLY MOSES (PG). Religious spoof set in Biblical times with Dudley Moore, Lorraine Newman and Richard Pryor.

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.

Something new added to yogurt

A prize-winning chili, chocolate yogurt, baked potato skins with special fillings, garden vegetables covered with melted cheese — these are just a few of the menu items getting attention at Alfred's.

Restaurateur Al Lowenstein, whose restaurant Alfred's is in Troy's Somerset Mall, finds that constantly perking up the menu also keeps the young staff enthusiastic.

Alfred's 23-year-old chef, Tony Palermo, won first place in the North Central Chili Cook-Off, competing against 34 contestants. This fall he will again cook the same kind of chili served at Alfred's at the National Cook-Off in California. Alfred's chili is hearty, with a good balance of ingredients.

THE CHOCOLATE yogurt is a new menu item served at the restaurant, which was the first in this area to serve vanilla Frosty Yogurt, the frozen yogurt that tastes much like ice cream.

Lowenstein said a lot of the chocolate yogurt has been sold both at the restaurant and at the Frosty Yogurt stand at Northland Center in Southfield.

The chocolate yogurt has a delicious chocolatey taste, which comes not from chocolate but from carob. Lowenstein said the chocolate flavor is more for people who say they hate yogurt.

"It's a step toward the other. We went from vanilla," he said.

Lowenstein reported that their yogurt business is up 25 percent over last year. People are eating yogurt "for health purposes and because it's an inexpensive lunch that gets them through the day."

THE BAKED potato skins are served at Little Alfred's, the cocktail lounge adjoining the main dining room. The skins, hollowed-out shells with a ridge of potato, are recommended to be eaten as an appetizer with cocktails, or ordered instead of a baked potato, for dinner.

The skins are served with sour cream for dipping, for \$2.50. Other cheese and vegetable fillings make them even more of a mealtime accompaniment.

Another dish new on the menu, finding popularity with weight-watchers, is the Diet Delight. Steamed fresh garden vegetables topped with melted Mozzarella make a tasty light entrée.

Whatever vegetables are in season may be included, such as onion, zucchini, summer squash, green pepper, broccoli, carrots and celery.

"We steal a lot," Lowenstein explained, saying he and his staff get ideas by attending a lot of restaurant trade shows. He and his wife Helga, who also works at Alfred's, travel frequently, dining at other restaurants for inspiration.

Gimmicks that have helped Alfred's are placing small Perrier bottles with



Ethel Simmons

fresh flowers on the table (Perrier sales have doubled) and serving the special Alfred's Bloody Mary along with a miniature souvenir bottle of tabasco that you can season your drink with, or take along.

In Little Alfred's, a popcorn machine has been added, but it's turned on only after lunchtime, to avoid disturbing the lunch business.

A peanut butter or chocolate chip cookie is a new dessert choice; a new sliced french fry is served with the skins on, and a Caesar salad is "on the drawing board."

Lowenstein said the restaurant tries to offer many specialties, for example, Belgian waffles with strawberries and yogurt, so that when someone says, "I have a craving for Belgian waffles," they'll come to Alfred's.

He said Alfred's is unusual because it has varying types of customers to please, businessmen from the area and mall shoppers, too.

Of the patrons, Lowenstein said, "People here are sophisticated. They travel. They know what they like. You

can't take any short cuts."

The restaurant has six different menus: for breakfast, lunch, dinner, Little Alfred's, the soda fountain and the dinner-theater buffet.

Current attraction at Alfred's Dinner Theatre downstairs in the mall auditorium is the Jimmy Launce Production of "Under the Yum-Yum Tree." Lowenstein is delighted that, after five years of effort, a liquor license has been obtained for the dinner theater. Patrons no longer have to go upstairs to the restaurant for a drink before the show or at intermission.

Cocktails are served to theatergoers at their tables.

"We sold a lot of drinks before, to people going to the show," he said. "But now it's done in better style. They can drink while they're eating a meal."

Lowenstein said Alfred's worked to get legislation passed in Lansing that allows an entertainment permit to be kept separate from a liquor license. If an operator violates the agreement with the community, the permit can be pulled.

Contest winner named

Tim Kelly, a playwright from Hollywood, is winner of the second national competition for the David Naderlander Playwriting Award, sponsored by the Wayne State University Theatre in Detroit and the Naderlander Producing Company of America.

Kelly's play "Bloody Jack" wins for him a \$5,000 cash award and a show-case production by the Hilbery Theatre Repertory Company, nationally known graduate repertory company in residence at Wayne State.

The second place award of \$1,000 goes to Thomas J. Taylor of Cincinnati, an assistant professor of English at the University of Cincinnati. Donald Howard of Kingston, Mich., a former Detroit and graduate of the University of Michigan (BA) and Wayne State University (MA) is recipient of the third prize award of \$500.

Final judging for the awards was by a panel of three: critic Richard L. Coe, formerly of the Washington Post, New York playwright Phillip Hayes Dean, and Broadway and regional theater director Alan Schneider.



Sharing an indoor picnic

John Powers and Barbara Lynn Bean, both of Farmington Hills, are co-starred in "6 Rms Riv Vu," a Broadway comedy hit by Bob Randall at the Paradise Dinner Theatre. The Nancy Gurwin

production runs Saturday nights through Aug. 16. Dinner is at 7 p.m. with the show at 8:30 p.m. For reservations, call 859-3988. The Paradise is at 17530 Woodward, north of Six Mile, Detroit.

Tryout dates announced for 'Annie Get Your Gun'

Audition dates for "Annie Get Your Gun" have been announced by Nancy Gurwin Productions of Southfield.

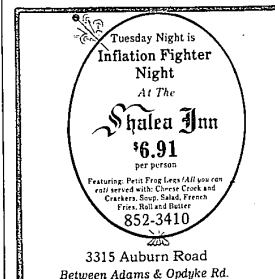
The Irving Berlin musical will open Sept. 27 at the Paradise Cafe Dinner Theatre in Detroit. Auditions will be held at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday at the Paradise, 17530 Woodward.

In addition to adult actors, singers

and dancers, "Annie Get Your Gun" also requires several children's roles. Youngsters, age 10 and older, are being asked to audition.

For further information call 354-0545.

Nancy Gurwin will star as Annie Oakley in the Western musical.

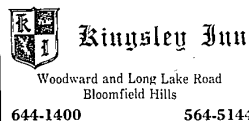


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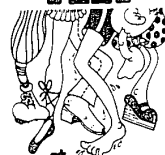
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Nau (David Warner) instructs young Justin (Jeffrey Frank) in the adventure film "The Island."