



the movies

Louise Snider

'Dressed to Kill' copies Hitchcock without humor

Brian De Palma makes no bones about his indebtedness to Alfred Hitchcock, but his work does raise the question, where does homage end and larceny begin?

De Palma's reputation soared with "Carrie," an original horror flick that demonstrated the writer-director's inventiveness. In spite of that personal success, he seems to rely more and more on the achievements of the late master of suspense.

De Palma's most recent film, "Dressed to Kill" (R), borrows heavily from Hitchcock's "Psycho," even to a shower scene and a transsexual murderer. It also uses a favorite Hitchcock theme, the innocent (but not entirely innocent) bystander who becomes involved because he or she has the misfortune to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Nancy Allen, playing a high-priced call girl, is the beset bystander who witnesses a grisly murder, becomes suspected by the police and hunted by the razor-wielding killer.

ALLEN SHOWS a lot of poise in this role. She puts on an air of bravado for the police, is seductive with clients and warm and friendly with the distraught teenage son (Keith Gordon) of the victim.

In contrast, Angie Dickinson's flat performance as a dissatisfied, sex-hungry wife reinforces one's conviction that her talents are better suited to the small screen.

In the middle of the situation is Michael Caine as a psychiatrist with a dangerous patient and a missing razor.

De Palma keeps the pulse-pumping suspense level high through a series of jolts that alternate between steamy, erotic passages and blood-spurring violence.

In spite of major lapses in logic, the director is able to hold everything together by manipulating the viewer's emotions through purely visual devices — clever camera angles, multiple images and mirror shots. Even when the murderer is uncovered (and you can guess the identity long before that), the spine tingling continues with an ending De Palma borrows from himself ("Carrie").

The director's cinematic resourcefulness and inventiveness are impressive. What he lacks, and what Hitchcock employed so effectively, is an urbane sense of humor.

THERE IS VERY little comic relief in De Palma's work, no lightness to balance the bloodshed. And the sex is graphic and mean, where Hitchcock would have used innuendo and suggestion. Beginning with masturbation and sexual fantasy in the shower, "Dressed to Kill" pushes the R rating to the edge of the X rating, not only because of the sex but because of the language, violence and theme. This is not a film for the delicate minded.

what's at the movies

NEW RELEASES

AIRPLANE (PG). A picture that takes off. This spoof of all those "Airport" movies is one of the zaniest films around.

THE BIG RED ONE (PG). World War II from the North African campaign through Normandy and Europe as told through the eyes of a combat veteran and four young soldiers.

THE BLUE LAGOON (R). Lush photography but silly story of two shipwrecked youngsters who grow up uninhibited on a tropical island.

THE BLUES BROTHERS (R). A film that's as unoriginal and dreary as it is expensive (very) with one meatball scene after another and enough car crashes to make AAA go belly up.

DRESSED TO KILL (R). Horny murder mystery with more than a passing resemblance to Hitchcock's "Psycho."

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.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN (PG). Kirk Douglas in action drama of a warship that goes through a time warp to the hour before Pearl Harbor.

HONEYMOON ROSE (PG). Willie Nelson is the center of attention in story about a country-western star who forgets he's married whenever he's on tour, which is most of the time.

THE HUNTER (PG). Steve McQueen returns to the screen again as a modern-day bounty hunter in pursuit of fugitives.

RAISE THE TITANIC (PG). Adventure as American special operations team tries to recover vital mineral from the ship while interested Russians have their own plan.

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.

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.



Katharine Ross is the secretary-aide, and probable mistress, of a United States senator who is rescued at sea in "Final Countdown."

Meadow Brook actors win national acclaim

Nationally known actors have appeared through the seasons at Meadow Brook Theatre, which opens its 15th anniversary season Oct. 9 with the hit comedy-romance "Thieves' Carnival."

William Le Massena, who has a featured role in the long-running Broadway hit "Deathtrap," has played 17 roles at Meadow Brook in the last 10

years. Fran Brill, currently in the off-Broadway revival of "Look Back in Anger," played Portia in Meadow Brook's 1977 production of "The Merchant of Venice."

Roma's hosts MDA benefit

Swing and Sway for MDA, to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association, will be held from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Aug. 23 at Roma's of Bloomfield.

The event is presented by Roma's in cooperation with 7-Eleven Food Stores. The Hal James Band will play for dancing. A donation of \$5 per person will be given to the MDA.

Roma's of Bloomfield has been holding big band dance parties every Saturday night since May, with weekly crowds ranging from 250-350 people. Regular dance dates in August include the Executives, Aug. 9; the Bob Bowden Orchestra, Aug. 16, and the Executives, Aug. 30.

For further information about the MDA benefit, contact Roma's, 2101 S. Telegraph, north of Square Lake Road, phone 352-9237.



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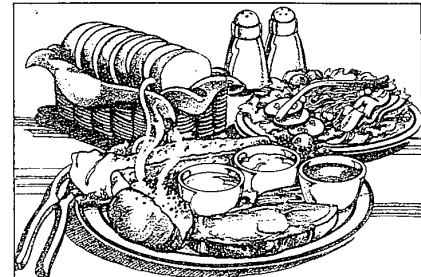
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