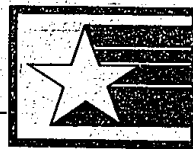


Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



Thursday, May 29, 1988 O&E

(Re-1C)(070)

He's lovable

On film or in person, Alan Alda remains a good guy

By Dan Greenberg
special writer

WHAT IS SO APPEALING about Alan Alda and the roles he plays?

His characters are invariably real human beings drawn from Alda's essential spirit, that of a warm, unaffected family man who has nicely avoided the pitfalls of stardom. He remains a good guy whom everyone can love.

Alda blitted the metropolitan Detroit area last week in what must have been a tremendously tiring day with back-to-back press interviews from dawn to dusk promoting his latest film, "Sweet Liberty" (to be reviewed in Monday's paper). It is testimony to one of the country's favorite actors that he maintained his good humor and affability throughout that taxing day.

After a 6:45 a.m. arrival from Toronto, Alda made the rounds, among others, of "Kelly & Company" and J.P. McCarthy's "Focus" show and arrived at Macaulay's Fox in Birmingham at 12:30 p.m. After a 10-minute interview with this reporter for OOC-TV's "Arts in Review" (broadcast weekly throughout Oakland County by Oakland Community College), Alda answered a wide range of questions for an hour-and-a-half press luncheon.

IN SPITE OF the day's rigorous schedule, Alda said "... it was easier than making a movie ..." and he was happy to have the opportunity to travel widely talking about "Sweet Liberty," which he wrote and directed and in which he stars.

He "compartmentalizes" the three functions and I overprepare at each stage, so when I'm directing I don't have problems with the script — I did a dozen drafts before we started."

In spite of all the pre-production preparation, changes occurred. One of the film's funniest lines, "It's a musket, moron," was improvised because Alda kept calling them "rifles," much to the chagrin of the 300 amateur historians, members of the Brigade of the American Revolution, a group that re-enacts Revolutionary War battles.

Alda had hired them for their historical knowledge and to stage an authentic battle in the movie within "Sweet Liberty."

Alda described the rewards of working with an all-star, talented and very professional cast including Michael Caine, Michelle Pfeiffer and Lillian Gish. Gish, who will be 90 in October but only admits to 88, was marvelous to work with. "She was like a kid, trying to do her very best at every step."

ABOUT PFEIFFER, "People



Actor Alan Alda made a recent swing through metro Detroit to promote his new movie, "Sweet Liberty." Alda not only stars in the comedy, he also wrote and directed it.

don't realize what a handicap being pretty is to an actress because it's hard to see her talent."

Alda said, "Michael Caine is so good, he comes in with so much that I didn't direct him at first and I'm so relentless with everybody else. But he wouldn't practice fencing for those difficult sword-fighting scenes."

and about 1,000 shots, each one of which was described in written detail and storyboarded before production began.

"That kind of preparation left me time to act."

"I've had the great pleasure of screening the film in about 20 cities where the audience didn't know I was in the back of the theater. It was very satisfying to hear their laughter. The film is not for people with pencil in hand (critics) but for people ... to laugh."

"SWEET LIBERTY" is about the interactions between a Hollywood movie company on location in a small college town and the town's inhabitants.

"I really wasn't trying to satirize Hollywood," he said. "If I wanted to put them down, I could have been vicious. 'Sweet Liberty' is about people. It seemed interesting to combine two diverse worlds."

Queried about his high level of public recognition and having been voted the man with whom most women would like to lunch, Alda responded with a family-oriented story. Upon learning that he had been voted as recognizable by 95 percent of the population and liked by 65 percent, he said he told his wife, Arlene, "That means they only like me two-thirds of the time."

Her response: "That's about right."

Alda spoke affectionately about his father, Robert Alda, who starred at Warner Brothers. During World War II, when Alan Alda was 9, his father took him to the Hollywood Canteen where they did Abbott and Costello routines to entertain the servicemen.

"I was short and fat so I played Costello."

As for his own children in show business, "I'm a typical father. I warned them against it and then wrote parts for them in my films."

ALTHOUGH HE IS politically active, he doesn't want to run for office.

"I go to a lot of trouble to keep political beliefs out of my films," he said. "I want to have a theatrical, not a political, experience."

That is not to say that films should not be political. Two of the best current films, according to Alda, are "The Official Story" and "When Father Was Away on Business."

"They ought to be on a double bill. They show how the power balance filters into daily life, on the political right and left — and people's lives reflect the power structure. Everyone suffers in intimate ways and that's what's wrong with power."

upcoming things to do



Hot Rize, a Colorado bluesgrass band, will be one of the groups highlighting WDET's seventh annual Motor City Bluegrass Festival on Sunday, June 1, at the Meadow Brook Music Festival site.

● MEADOW BROOK

Blues, folk, pop, a wide spectrum of jazz and a Christian rock concert are some of Meadow Brook Music Festival's non-series offerings this summer on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. Prior to the official opening Wednesday, June 18, the outdoor festival will host WDET's Motor City Bluegrass Festival on Sunday, June 1; jazz pianist Michael Franks with jazz saxophonist George Howard on Friday, June 6, and Earl Klugh & Friends, Saturday, June 14.

Other attractions this summer include Tangerine Dream, Monday, June 23; guitarist-singer B.B. King and harmonica performer James Cotton, Wednesday, June 25; Spro Gyra, with special guests the Yellow Jackets, Tuesday, July 1; Joan Baez, Don McLean and Livingston Taylor

in a folk fest Wednesday, July 9; Roger Whittaker, Tuesday, July 15 (following his Monday, July 14, series concert); Oregon, Wednesday, July 16; Emmylou Harris, Wednesday, July 23; the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Tuesday, July 29; Joan Luc Pooty, Wednesday, July 30; saxophonist David Sanborn, Thursday, Aug. 21; Manhattan Transfer, Friday, Aug. 22; "General Hospital" star Jack Wagner, Saturday, Aug. 23, and Petra's Christian rock concert, Monday, Aug. 25.

All concerts are at 8 p.m. in the Baldwin Pavilion. For more information, call the box office at 377-2010.

● BROADWAY REVUE

The Myth-Begotten Players of Southeast Oakland County will present the musical and dramatic

revue "Back to Broadway" at 8 p.m. Thursday-Friday, May 29-30, and 2 p.m. Saturday, May 31, at Butcher Community Education Center in Warren. The performing troupe is comprised of seniors aged 59 to 74. Tickets at \$5 for adults, \$3 for children and seniors, are available by calling 673-1346, or at the door.

● BRASS QUINTET

The Renaissance Brass Quintet will kick a summer schedule of monthly Friday concerts at 8:30 p.m. Friday, June 6, at Hunters Square/Tally Hall Shopping Center in Farmington Hills. The free concert features selections ranging from classical to jazz, played by the chamber music ensemble.

● COMEDY KITCHEN

Joe Nipote from WRIF's "Morning

Show" will be special guest host when Sam Kinison stars at 8 and 10 p.m. Monday, June 2, at Best's Comedy Kitchen in Detroit. In addition to his David Letterman spots, Kinison is featured monthly on "Saturday Night Live" and has snagged a part in John Landis' upcoming comedy western, "Three Amigos." Tickets at \$3 are on sale at all Hudson's and Ticket World outlets. For more information call 423-6666.

● AT PROCK'S

Dick Haynes performs jazz and pop music from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. Wednesdays-Thursdays and 8:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. Fridays-Saturdays through May 31 at Prock's in Clawson. Prock's will be closed May 30 for Memorial Day.

Beautiful beginnings.
Happy endings.



Elegant dining
inside the world of
The Somerset Inn

Big Beaver & Coolidge, Troy
Reservations suggested 643-6992

the
Benchmark

Experience
excellence
with style at
the Benchmark.

Our new, elegant
dinner service is a
dramatic setting for
superb continental cuisine,
fine wines and impeccable
service. The result is an
exceptional dining experience.

The piano
music is
soft. The china,
crystal and silver
so beautiful.

Cocktail and dinner
service available Monday
through Saturday beginning at 6 p.m.
For reservations call 539-6500.

It is a special place for very
special people.

16400 J.L. Hudson Drive Southfield, Michigan 313/559-6500

THE BROADWAY BRUNCH

The All New Troy Hilton Sunday Brunch Buffet

A star is born...The Troy Hilton's all new Sunday Broadway Brunch Buffet starring live Broadway piano music, an exciting chance to win two theater tickets plus an appetizing chef's carving, creative omelettes and international specialties made to order, chafing dish selections, fried shrimp, smoked salmon and bagels, endless pastries plus much more!

The All New Troy Hilton
Sunday Broadway Brunch
Buffet...You'll come back
for an encore!

Every Sunday
10am-3pm
Adults \$12.95
Senior Citizens \$11.95
Children under 10
\$7.95 + tax.

Troy Hilton Inn
1455 Stephenson Highway
Troy, Michigan 48064
(313) 583-9000

