

MOVING PICTURES



Ted Danson (left) plays Larry Kozinski, Isabella Rossellini is Maria Hardy and William Peterson is Tom Hardy in "Cousins," a romantic comedy from Paramount about the changing lives and loves of two families.

'Cousins': great entertainment

Several readers have written regarding my review of "Torch Song Trilogy." My apologies if anyone took offense, although none was intended. Careful review of that column in no way indicates any question about my support for everyone's political, legal, social and cultural rights — provided only that they do not harm others.

The current cycle of American releases of French films provides another opportunity to do just that. ("PG-13" 115 minutes). This son of the 1975 "Cousin, Cousin" which won Best Foreign Film Oscar is sort of an outdoorsy "Moonstruck" — although "Cousins" doesn't have quite the ethnic family intensity, coherence and impact that "Moonstruck" did.

Larry Kozinski (Ted Danson) and his wife Tish (Sean Young) live with their teenage son, Mitch (Keith Coogan). Mitch's mother was Larry's first wife. At a family wedding, Larry meets — and becomes enamored of — a girl, Maria (Isabella Rossellini), while his husband, Tom (William Peterson), is slipping off in the bushes with Larry's wife, Tish. Those are only the main points of this happy, jumbled, multifaceted ethnic conglomeration, the Kozinskis and Costellos.

While there are characters everywhere, they are delightful, easy to keep track of and fun to watch. Characteristics are very well done, ranging from Maria's mom, Edi Costello (Norma Aleandro), and Larry's father, Vince (Lloyd Bridges), to Aunt Stacia (Gina DeAngelis) and a host of charming little children.

The photography by Ralf Bode ("Disturbance," "Thunder" and "The Accused") is excellent and Angelo Badalamenti's musical score is superb. Despite his fine performance, however, Ted Danson never quite makes it as an ethnic. Aside from that, "Cousins" is great entertainment.

Grading the movies

- A+ Top marks — sum to please
- A Close behind — excellent
- A- Still in running for top honors
- B+ Pretty good stuff, not perfect
- B Good
- B- Good but notable deficiencies
- C Just a cut above average
- C- Mediocre
- C- Not so hot and slipping fast
- D+ The very best of the poor stuff
- D Poor
- D- It doesn't get much worse
- F Truly awful
- Z Reserved for the colossally bad
- * No advanced screening

"Tap" (C±) (PG-13) 105 minutes, on the other hand, is entertaining but not great. It's refreshing that Black film production finally has hit the mainstream with movies like "I'm Gonna Get You Sucka" and "Tap." That doesn't mean, however, that "Tap" can sell all the old, 1934 white movie-musical clichés.

There are excellent dance sequences with Gregory Hines, Suzanne Douglas and Sammy Davis, Jr. that make a trip to your local Bijou worthwhile but the story of Hines as an ex-con torn between tap dancing and safe-cracking is just too much.

Savion Glover turns in a neat performance as Douglas's son and Hines's young admirer. Ms. Douglas is a dance teacher who maintains Hines's father's studio.

The dancing of Davis, Douglas and Hines — Glover does a neat turn as



the movies
Dan Greenberg

well — come close to saving this film as the tap routines of Sammy Davis Jr.'s cronies, a terrific bunch of crochety old men who hang around the studio.

But all that fine show — tap, soft and otherwise — can't save a film with lines like, "Dancing is what I do." I want to die with my tap shoes on." They couldn't take away his pride," and a herb with electronic taps.

STILL PLAYING: "The Accidental Tourist" (C+) (PG) 120 minutes.

"The Beaches" (A+) (PG-13) 120 minutes.

Bette Midler and Barbara Hershey in fine show of friendship.

"Child's Play" (B) (R). Horror story about possessed doll given as a birthday present.

"Crossing Delancy" (A) (PG) 95 minutes. A liberated, young New York gal, but grandma has Old World ideas.

"Dangerous Liaisons" (C±) (R) 115 minutes.

Even lush images and good acting can't overcome the non-narrative quality of this boring story of pre-Revolutionary French decadence.

"Dirty Rotten Scoundrels" (B+) (PG) 100 minutes. Super-slick con men on the Riviera are lots of fun.

"Her Alibi" (B-) (PG) 90 minutes. This murder-mystery-spy-defector-detective-story is well-done but too much.

"I'm Gonna Get You Sucka" (C+) (R) 85 minutes. Slow-paced satire of B-movies from the black point of view.

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