

MOVING PICTURES

No more
sequels,
please!!!

Last month, they threatened to release "Signs of Life" (D, PG-13, 85 minutes), a choppy, episodic soap opera which jumps from subplot to subplot abruptly — and with maddening regularity. But they caught me writing stuff like that and kept it in the can.

Too bad that they're not doing for June what they did for May, so you may want to avoid the Maple until this sad little story about Owen Coughlin (Arthur Kennedy) goes away.

Coughlin is in the process of closing down his New England boat-building company and his workers have obvious problems with that move. The screenwriters had some problems, too.

The film is self-consciously arty with acute camera angles, intentional obscurity early on and a slow-paced blandness in acting and editing that you won't believe — if you stay awake.

Another recent distribution threat rescheduled for this week is "Miracle Mile" (R), a film whose moral appears to be: "Don't fall in love just before a nuclear holocaust."

The summer sequel sickness is upon us. "Indiana Jones III," "Star Trek V," and now "Ghostbusters II" (C, PG, 102 minutes). And frankly, Scarlet, I didn't care for "GBI" and "II" doesn't do it for me either.

With a basic premise, a bunch of odd characters — Dr. Peter Venkman (Bill Murray), Dr. Raymond Stantz (Dan Aykroyd), Dr. Egon Spengler (Harold Ramis) and Winston Zeddemore (Ernie Hudson) — along with their attorney/accountant (Rick Moranis) — dress up in combat fatigues and go ghosts with their electronic backpacks.

So what? It's all rather simple-minded fun with little character development or clever repartee except for Bill Murray. Every time he begins to energize the proceedings, sardonic Ramis and Aykroyd lay down a truly deadly and dumb joke. A dock worker observes a ghost disembarking from the Titanic and notes, "Better late than never."

The real problem is there's no point to be sustained for 1½ hours, so they mixed in a moral about modern urban living, a positive aura of the Statue of Liberty, a ghost story, two romances and some rock music sequences. Quite naturally, all that stuff is jumbled together and surprisingly slow-paced, as if the screenwriters had trouble shifting from one element to another.

But "Ghostbusters" has mythical popularity and the film will be successful. Many people will giggle uncontrollably at the mention of slime despite the fact that the slime sequence under Manhattan looks suspiciously like an "Indiana Jones" reject.

No more "Ghostbusters," please. How about some sequel busters instead?

STILL PLAYING:
"Dead Poets Society" (A+) (PG) 124 minutes.



Ghosts from the judge's (Harris Yulin) past destroy the courtroom where the boys (Bill Murray, Harold Ramis and Dan Aykroyd) and their new lawyer (Rick Moranis) have been fighting for their right to continue battling ghosts in Columbia Pictures' "Ghostbusters II."



the movies
Dan Greenberg

Robin Williams' sensitive portrait of a fine teacher is complemented by excellent young actors as his students.

"The Dream Team" (B+) (PG-13) 105 minutes.

Psychiatric patients have quite a trip trying to see a ballgame at Yankee Stadium.

"Earth Girls Are Easy" (PG).

Gena Davis and Jeff Goldblum in sci-fi comedy.

"Field of Dreams" (B+) (PG) 111 minutes.

Fanciful baseball story as Iowa farmer builds diamond so Shoelace Joe Jackson can play again.

"Fright Night II" (C) (R).

Roddy McDowall in another vampire movie.

"Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (B+) (PG-13) 120 minutes.

Good entertainment, but enough already.

"K-9" (C+) (PG-13) 100 minutes.

James Belushi in weak comedy about narcotics dog and detective.

"Major League" (A) (R) 110 minutes.

The American sports dream, live, before your very eyes.

"No Holds Barred" (R) (PG-13).

Hulk Hogan grunts and groans.

"Parents" (F) (R) 90 minutes.

Grading the movies

A+	Top marks - sure 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 colossal bad
*	No advanced screening

Weird kid discovers his parents are cannibals.

"Pet Sematary" (B) (R) 105 minutes.

More gore for Stephen King fans.

"Pink Cadillac" (B+) (PG-13) 90 minutes.

Clint Eastwood is unexpectedly humorous in comedy about bounty-hunters, gangland treasure and a girl with a baby.

"Raiders" (A+) (R) 130 minutes.

Tom Cruise and Dustin Hoffman star as brothers in every sense.

ALTERNATIVE VIEWING

Edward Wood: Confessions
of a cross-dressing director

By John Monaghan
special writer

At home or on the set, his favorite outfit consisted of a brightly colored pantsuit, nylon stockings and raised heels. A decorated war veteran, he wore a bra and panties underneath his uniform during the Allied landing on Iwo Jima.

No one really knows how he got to Hollywood, but Edward D. Wood Jr. somehow scraped together enough money to write, direct and star in "Glen or Glenda?" in 1953. Wood's fascinating plea for transvestite tolerance screens with "The Amazing Colossal Man" (1958) this week at the Detroit Institute of Arts' Afternoon Film Theatre.

"Glen or Glenda?" (also known as "I Led Two Lives") presents two roles narrated by a psychologist. The first involves Alan/Ann, a mama's boy who faces new life after a sex change operation. Walking down a city street in a light skirt and blouse, checked out by men, Alan/Ann couldn't be happier if he/she was Mary Tyler Moore.

The director himself (under the name of Daniel Davis) plays transvestite Glen/Glenda, a man

whose only weakness is "wanting to feel comfortable after a hard day at work." His main problem revolves around whether or not to tell his fiancée, Barbara, that he longs to wear his angora sweater.

WE EXPERIENCE Glen's tormented dreams. Women scorn him at a surreal beauty pageant, but accept him when the devil presents the prize. A disapproving society, made up of pointing fingers and bodiless heads, close in to smother him. As Glenda, he can't budge a huge tree limb that traps Barbara; as Glen, he lifts it with ease.

Woods pads the 61-minute film with a staggering amount of stock footage — battle scenes, cargo planes dropping their load and endless shots of cars on the highway. "All those cars. All going someplace," says the narrator, desperately trying to tie it all together. "All carrying human beings which are carrying out their lives. . . . But life — even though its changes are slow — moves on."

Bela Lugosi (billed as "The Spirit") sports more garbled nonsense, his face superimposed over shots of a buffalo stampede. "Beware! Be-

vare! Be!" he warns. "Beware the green dragon that sits on your doorstep. He eats little boys, puppy dog tails and big fat snails."

According to Hollywood legend, Lugosi was so addicted to booze and drugs near the end of his life that only the alcoholic content of formaldehyde gave him a substantial buzz. He died shortly after filming began on Wood's "Plan Nine from Outer Space," generally considered the worst film ever made.

"GLEN OR Glenda?" meanwhile, despite its cheesy symbolism and ludicrous dialogue, is delivered with such straight-faced sincerity and strong personal conviction that it sometimes works. At the very least, you feel embarrassed for Wood, who so openly wears his heart on his poofy sleeve.

The underground popularity of the film and director (who died in 1978) continues to flourish. Paramount actually tried re-releasing "Glen or Glenda?" during the popularity of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" in 1981, but it hasn't enjoyed a Detroit screening in well over a decade.

SCREEN SCENE

AFTERNOON FILM THEATRE, Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 652-2739 for information. (R)

"The Amazing Colossal Man" (USA — 1957), 1 p.m. June 22-23. A man grows to new heights after exposure to an atom bomb blast. With "Glen or Glenda?" (USA — 1953), cult director Ed Wood Jr.'s film debut — an intensely personal plea for transvestite tolerance, featuring a drugged-out Bela Lugosi.

ANN ARBOR SILENT FILM SOCIETY, Berks-Hilton, 194 at State, Ann Arbor. Call 761-8284 for information. (R)

"Beau Geste" (USA — 1926), 3 p.m. June 25. The rarely screened original version of the Foreign Legion story has Ronald Colman leading the trio of stalwarts and Noah Berry as a sadistic commander. With Laurel and Hardy's short spoof, "Beau Geste" (1931).

HENRY FORD CENTENNIAL, LIBRARY, 15301 Michigan, Dearborn. Call 945-2319 for information. (Free)

"To Paris, With Love" (Britain — 1955). Alec Guinness at his peak as a fun-loving rich father who takes his son to Paris to learn the facts of life.

LIVONIA MALL CINEMA, 29415 Seven Mile, Livonia. Call 476-1166 for information. (Free)

The best title in the mall's monthlong tribute to Clark Gable is "The Misfit"

(USA — 1941), 10 a.m. June 20. Marilyn Monroe and Montgomery Clift co-star in this moody western about lonely ranchers. John Huston directed from a screenplay by Monroe's then-husband Arthur Miller.

MICHIGAN THEATRE, 16301 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. For information, call 669-8397. (\$4 regular and \$3.25 students and senior citizens)

"Let's Get Lost" (USA — 1989), June 19-30 (call for time). The Oscar-nominated documentary portrait of the late jazzman Chet Baker.

"The Adventures of Robin Hood" (USA — 1938), 7:15 p.m. June 20-21. The ever-dashing Errol Flynn battles princely tyranny while wooing the fair Olivia de Havilland. Another must-see on the big screen.

"Romeo and Juliet" (Britain/Italy — 1968) 7 p.m. June 23. Franco Zeffirelli does justice to the Bard's star-crossed lovers.

"Excalibur" (USA — 1981), 5 p.m. June 25. John Boorman's bold and bloody ver-

sion of the King Arthur legend.

PARK THEATRE, 804 Erie St. E., Windsor. Call (519) 971-9983 for times. (\$4 regular and \$2.50 seniors)

"Padre Nostro" (Spain — 1989), June 21-25. Fernando Rey as a respected cardinal who returns home to care for his small Spanish village to come to terms with a former lover and illegitimate daughter.

"The Adventures of Baron Munchausen" (USA — 1988), June 21-25. Terry Gilliam's tall tale finds the legendary Baron soaring through the sky on a cannonball, outsmarting the man on the moon, dancing with Venus and gobbling up by a giant fish. Exhausting fun.

POWER CENTER, free outdoor screenings atop the parking structure at 121 Fletcher, Ann Arbor. Films begin at approximately 9:30 p.m.

"Dr. Seuss' Cat in the Hat" (1971). "The Cat in the Hat" and "Green Eggs and Ham."

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