

'Shadow:' a long, windy Eskimo epic

By JOHN MONAGHAN
Special Writer

A friend once confided that his idea of hell on earth would be sitting through a festival of Canadian films. "Shadow of the Wolf," Canada's most expensive film ever at \$31 million dollars, offers this particular brand of horror on an epic Eskimo scale.

Leu Diamond Phillips ("La Bamba," "Young Guns 1 and 2") plays a proud Inuit Eskimo who leaves the relative comfort of his village to set out on his own. It's 1935 and young Agaguk (pronounced "eggie-yook") doesn't appreciate the encroachment of the white man, who trades a bottle or two of liquor for the Eskimo's hard-earned animal skins.

Before he leaves, Agaguk gets into an argument with a white trader and kills him. The rest of the film finds Agaguk and his young bride (Jennifer Tilly) battling the elements, the supernatural and the white man who comes to investigate the murder.

There is potential in the Eskimo story. Few films are as exciting as the 1922 silent "Nanook of the North" and "Shadow" realizes it. Director Jacques Dorfmann even mimics "Nanook's" trademark image, where the Eskimo, poised majestically with harpoon in hand, prepares to skewer a seal swimming beneath a hole in the ice.

But where the pseudo-documentary approach to "Nanook" made that film as fascinating, "Shadow" is stuck with a lumbering literary source. Screenwriters Rudy Wurlitzer and Evan Jones seem dedicated to preserving Yves Theriault's well-intentioned novel "Agaguk" for the big screen.

The film is effective when it shows its young lovers in awe of their surroundings. The meticulous construction of an igloo, with ice blocks fashioned with knives, proves both fascinating and educational. I can even stand the hokey special effects when the polar waka to the display of the

MOVIES

Northern Lights.

There's too much silliness elsewhere, though. Jennifer Tilly wasn't the worst choice for the female lead (she looks vaguely Indian or Asian with her dark complexion and eyes), but her voice is all wrong. As written, her Igvyok (pronounced 'iggy-yook') hails from another village and is wondering if maybe it was somewhere in Southern California.

Toshiro Mifune, the star of countless Akira Kurosawa movies, is always a pleasure, but his Kroomak is only a fuzzy old Shaman, the kind usually played by Fat Morita. Only when he jumps up from a cross-legged sit and grunts with eyes and nostrils flaring do we get the idea that the Eskimo leader (or actor Mifune) is a powerful force to contend with.

Donald Sutherland has lent his name to a number of Canadian

productions and as usual he's a welcome addition here. He plays a red-headed police inspector with a nonchalance that evokes both realism and sympathy. He knows that the murdered white man was a scam, but still he has to do his job.

The movie ultimately possesses the best and worst elements about Canadian film production. There's an abiding love of nature, shown to great effect in the wide-screen cinematography. There's also a monotonous lack of originality that's only accentuated by Maurice Jarre's synthesized soundtrack.

"Shadow of the Wolf" would like to be seen as an Eskimo version of "Dances with Wolves" and has even listed at the comparison in television commercials. Panoramic shots of buffaloes thundering across the tundra and epic battles with white wolves attempt to hide the truth that "Shadow" with Polar Bears" is just a freezer-burned Eskimo pia.

Detroit legend Sales comes back for more laughs

By BOB SADLER
Special Writer

Soupy Sales is truly an original, and at 67, he is showing no signs of slowing down.

He blew into town over the weekend to help out WDIV-TV (Channel 4) with the annual Easter Seal Telethon, hosting two late-night and morning segments that featured video snippets from his old days in Detroit — which, ironically, were on rival WXYZ-TV (Channel 7). He also will hit the stage this weekend for five shows in Ann Arbor on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

"There's been a love affair between me and Michigan ever since I came there, and it continues to this day," the former Milton Burman (he legally changed his name in 1957) said in an interview from his New York home. "It was Detroit where I got my big break."

Soupy made his indelible mark in Detroit from 1963, when he moved from previous television jobs in Cincinnati and Cleveland, to 1960, when took his top-rated ABC-TV show (his daily children's show went national after only two years) to Los Angeles.

On the air a now-unheard-of 11 hours a day during that era of live, locally produced television, Sales actually hosted both a children's show, "Lunch with Soupy Sales," and an adult variety show in the evening that featured live musical performances by early rock standbys such as the Everly Brothers and jazz legends Miles Davis and Charlie Parker.

"Those were the glory days of live television, as well as the golden age of jazz in Detroit; there were more than 25 jazz clubs in Detroit then," said Sales, who actually started his career in radio as a disc jockey in his hometown of Huntington, W.Va.

The children's show featured Soupy's trademark shtick, which included wacky sketches, songs and, of course, cream pies. No one has done more to optimize the humor potential of a simple pie in the face than Soupy Sales. Major stars of the era, including Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr. and Tony Curtis, actually begged to be on the messy end of Soupy's shaving cream creations.

"It had to be shaving cream," Sales said of the cream pie recipe. "A real pie would glance off."

On a more serious note, Soupy bristled at the comparison of his children's show and others like it with '60s offerings for the plus-sized set.

"You've got 'Mister Rogers,' 'Sesame Street' and 'Barney,' those are for little kids," Sales said. "You've got nothing for kids past seven years old other than cartoons — and extremely violent ones at that."

"Back in those days, not only did we entertain the kids, but we got our message across. 'Don't talk to strangers. Don't get in anybody's car.' We were very creative."

Soupy Sales appears Thursday, Friday and Saturday, March 11-13, at the Main-Street Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Thursday's show is at 8 p.m., with two shows Friday and Saturday, at 7:45 and 9:45 p.m. Call 998-9080 for reservations.

at the mike
Comedy or 'Homickit'? ... The term "kit" in comedy terminology means you have really scored with the audience. Richard Belzer has killed audiences for years, and now has a role on the critically-acclaimed NBC drama "Homickit" — playing a cop of all things. He does a one-night stand at Main-Street Comedy Showcase in Ann Arbor on March 25. Call 998-9080 for reservations.

Holy Belly Laughs, Batman! ... It's the Riddler! Impressionist Frank Gorshin played the role in the old "Batman" television series, so nostalgia will fill the air as he appears at Joey's Comedy Club at Pilsner's Restaurant in Dearborn March 25-27. Call 584-8885 for reservations. Dinner and show packages are available.

The Prito of Minnesota State ... You know her as the women's basketball coach and Dabber's girlfriend on the hit ABC series "Coach." Catch Fran Stone as she brings her slam dunk brand of comedy to Mark Ridley's Comedy Center in Royal Oak April 1-3. Call 542-9900 for reservations.

SCREEN SCENE

A sampling of what's playing at alternative movie theaters across metro Detroit as reviewed by John Monaghan.

DETROIT FILM SOCIETY
Detroit Public Library, 6201 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 833-4048 for information. (\$25 series membership, \$4 individual admission)

Double feature — "Nightmare Alley" (USA — 1947) and "The

Hunchback of Notre Dame" (USA — 1939), starting at 7 p.m. (USA — 1939). The understated "Nightmare" stars Tyrone Power as a sideshow hustler who experiences both success and ironic tragedy, all as predicted in the cards of fortune-telling Jean Blondell. Followed by the sexiest film of Victor Hugo's tale of a deformed bell-ringer (see Charles Laughton) in love with gypsy Maureen O'Hara.

DETROIT FILM THEATRE
Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 833-2323 for information. (\$5; \$4 students and senior citizens)

"In the Soup" (USA — 1992), 7 and 9:30 p.m. March 12-13; 4 and 7 p.m. March 14. Would-be filmmaker Steve Buscemi (Mr. Flank from "Reservoir Dogs") tries to sell his 500-page screenplay to an exuberant gangster and the pair are surprised to find how much they have in common. Jennifer Beals and Jim Jarmusch also appear in this offbeat new American film, which won the best feature prize at this year's Sundance Festival.

NICHOLAN THEATRE
603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Call 668-8397 for information. (\$5; \$4 students and senior citizens).

"A Winter Light" (Sweden — 1962), 4:15 p.m. March 8; 7 p.m. Mar. 9. Director Ingmar Bergman focuses on a disillusioned priest in a tiny village. A continuation of a weekly Bergman retrospective, in conjunction with University Film classes.

MAPLE THEATRE
4135 W. Maple Road, Bloomfield Hills. Call 855-9090 for show times. (\$5.75 evenings; \$2.95 twilight)

"Indochine" (France — 1992). Catherine Deneuve stars as a plantation owner in 1930s Indochina who finds herself vying along with her daughter for the affections of the same man. The almost three-hour epic is a showcase for the beguiling Deneuve, here in her 70th film.

Daredevils from page 5B

University. "I've been slipping around with them ever since."

Cousino performs with the Bud Light Daredevils from training camp in September to the end of the season in April, then returns to his family's home near the Ohio border. During the season, the team performs at four to seven special events per week — mainly professional and college basket-

ball games — throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. Cousino, the team captain, has performed in front of as many as 38,000 people.

He finds his career more gratifying than traditional gymnastics. "Now I'm an entertainer. I guess you could say," he said. "We're out there to get the crowd pumped up. We do comedy, ball-hopping and gymnastics and basketball all in one. It's a lot more fun."

The Bud Light Daredevils will perform during halftime at the Detroit Pistons/Chicago Bulls game Sunday, March 14, at The Palace of Auburn Hills, 2 Championship Dr., Auburn Hills. Call 377-0100 for more information.

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