

Chemistry works for Malone and Nootcheez duo

By Bob Sadler
Special Writer

Burns and Allen. Abbott and Costello. Laurel and Hardy. Foye and Crosby. Rowan and Martin. The Smothers Brothers.

History is full of great comedy duos. However, with the advent of one-mike comedy and countless cable stand-up shows, the comedy duo has become something of a vanishing breed.

Enter Malone and Nootcheez. At the risk of sounding overly cliched, these guys are just plain funny. They've been in the comedy biz for more than 20 years, and their brand of musical mayhem and strange chemistry works.

To give you an idea of this strange chemistry, take a picture of this. In this corner Dennis "D.C." Malone is 6 feet, 6 inches tall and weighs in at 250 pounds. He looks like a cross between Metallica and the World Wrestling Federation. In fact, his original nickname was a play on the whole wrestling thing — "Pecyclone" Malone. Nootcheez (surprisingly not his real name), who

at the mike...
Welcome Back Cotto...
King of the Duet-ties...
The Cure for Your Tax Time Blues...
She's back again, piglet!

COMEDY

comes in and is immediately dwarfed by his much larger partner. His name was conceived in a bar after a few Bloody Marys and a couple rounds of breadsticks immersed in a unique cheese dip — so fresh it was dubbed "new cheese" the Hampton part was inspired by jazz luminary Lionel Hampton.

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"Ridley had this great idea: He started this club, but he had no comedians," Malone recalled. "He inspired me to go out and write some songs. He told us to throw out all the stuff that wasn't funny and do everything else. He was a genius."

This changeover in the act led to a weekly show in Ridley's comedy lineup, along with the others who have since gone on to comic stardom (Tim Allen, Dave Coulier, etc.).

"They used to open for us; now they won't take our calls," Malone said, laughing. "We like to start an actual song, intending to do it. We try to make it look natural like we're just goofing around."

"Peeps have asked what kind of music we play," Malone added. "Basically, it boils down to folk slop, bebop, rock, pop and jazz."

It's been a long time coming, but the duo makes a homecoming of sorts this week. Malone, in particular, is happy to be back.

"We're returning to our roots and origins in Detroit at Mark Ridley's," he said.

Malone and Nootcheez appear Tuesday through Sunday, April 6-10, at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle, 269 E. Fourth, Royal Oak. Call 542-9900 for reservations.

'Falling' without political correctness

By JOHN MONAGHAN
Special Writer

MOVIES

In 1968, Burt Lancaster starred in "The Swimmer." He played a disillusioned ad exec who decides it's time to walk home even though his home and family no longer exist. He stops for dips in various private and public pools along the way, all with their own memories.

Michael Douglas' character in "Falling Down," en route to his daughter's birthday party through a labyrinth of urban obstacles, is a "Swimmer" for the '90s. While the ethnic stereotypes he encounters and questionable politics he espouses have many critics, you'll be hard pressed to find a bolder statement coming from Hollywood this year.

It begins with Michael Douglas as a white-shirted Everyman stuck in a steamy L.A. traffic jam. It's bad enough that his air conditioner and window handle don't work. He also has to look at suction cup-footed Garfields, insane bumper stickers and cellular phone callers through his dirty windshield.

Mad as hell and unable to take it anymore, he ditches his car and begins walking. When someone asks where he's going, he simply replies, "I'm going home."

Armed only with a suitcase and the pens poking up from his pocket protector, the man (known only by his personal initials) named Faller D-FENS enters a small Korean grocery to get change for the phone. In a spontaneous act of vigilantism, D-FENS objects to the store owner's refusal to make change and the inflated price of a can of Classic Coks by smashing up the place with a baseball bat.

This early scene, which has offended many Korean-Americans, just begins a list of the nation's perceived ills that D-FENS encounters and often violently solves. The homeless, savings and loans, fast-food, street gangs, needless government spending, neo-Nazis, plastic surgery and private golf courses all meet with D-FENS' wrath.

And agree with him or not, this

is what makes "Falling Down" so utterly fascinating. If 20 years from now you had to research a movie that sums up rabid white urban paranoia in post-Rodney King L.A., look no further.

I originally steered clear of this movie (which opened almost a month ago) because of Michael Douglas, who I've long considered a pale shadow of his great actor father Kirk. Here, kicking away beneath the nerdy engineer's facade, he comes as close as he ever will to matching the old man's intensity. At times he's simply astounding.

The movie is full of talented people, both in front of and behind the camera. Barbara Hershey plays D-FENS' frightened ex-wife, who realizes that she is at the end of his cross-town trek. Frederic Forrest supplies a bizarre, Dennis Hopper-style ranting of a neo-Nazi army surplus store owner.

Robert Duvall, as the policeman Prendergast on his last day on the force, and Tuesday Weld, as his nagging wife, seem almost superfluous, but provide a breath-

er from D-FENS' intense odyssey. It becomes a matter of pride that Prendergast crack this final case.

Director Joel Schumacher uses wide screen images to clever effect. He shifts from D-FENS' dwarfed at the edge of his often dangerous surroundings to painful closeups of desperation and perspiration. The script by Ebbe Roe Smith keeps you consistently on edge.

Whether audiences view D-FENS as a hero or a nut case (or a little of both) should be discussed after seeing this movie, the same way it was after "Unforgiven." It's important to note that despite its perceived political incorrectness, "Falling Down," unlike Clint's Oscar-winning western, does end with old-time Hollywood morality.

If you have a comment for John Monaghan, call him at 953-2047, mailbox number 1866, on a touch tone phone, or write him care of Street Scene, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

SCREEN SCENE

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

AMC ABBEY THEATRE
1-75 at 14 Mile, Madison Heights. Call 538-0881 for show times.

"Indochina" (France — 1992). Catherine Deneuve, in her 70th film, plays a plantation owner in 1930s Indochina who gets caught in an emotional maze when she and her daughter fall in love with the same man.

DETROIT FILM SOCIETY
Detroit Public Library, 6201 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 833-4048 for information. (\$25 series membership; \$4 individual admission)
Double feature — "Ship of

Fools" (USA — 1965) and "Strike up the Band" (USA — 1940), starting at 7 p.m. April 9-10. Stanley Kramer produced and directed "Ship," adapted from the Katherine Anne Porter novel and featuring an all-star cast: Vivien Leigh, Jose Ferrer, Lee Marvin, and Oskar Werner in this soap opera set before World War II.

"Band" stars Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland competing on Paul Whiteman's radio show. Directed by Walter Berkeley.

DETROIT FILM THEATRE
Detroit Institute of Arts, 6200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 833-2233 for information. (\$5; \$4 students and senior citizens)
"Danzon" (Mexico — 1991), 7 and 9:30 p.m. April 9-10, 4 and 7 p.m. April 11. A 40-something

single mother juggles her job as a telephone operator with her love of a traditional Caribbean dance called the danzon.

MAPLE THEATRE
4335 W. Maple Road, Bloomfield Hills. Call 855-9090 for show times. (\$5-75 evenings; \$2.85 twilight)

"Strictly Ballroom" (Australia — 1992). A rebel dance champion is being stifled by the "strictly ballroom" rules imposed at a local dance competition. Not surprisingly, he falls in love with his dance partner in this colorful and music-filled Aussie hit.

"Mac" (USA — 1993). John Turturro makes his directorial debut in this moving story of three Italian brothers who try to cash in on the residential con-

struction boom in the 1950s. A heartfelt tribute to Turturro's father handled with charm and insight.

STAR JOHN R
32283 John R (at 14 Mile), Madison Heights. Call 585-2070 for show times. (\$6 evenings; \$3.75 twilight)

"Let's Kill all the Lawyers" (USA — 1993). Local filmmaker Ron Senkowski takes on the legal profession in this one-joke comedy filmed on location in Detroit and Ann Arbor. Talented stage actors James Vezina and Rick Frederick play a shameless shyster and his apprentice who watch their colleagues bite the dust. Occasionally clever but mostly a trial.

Glass from page 6A

Nudell's come a long way from that first stained-glass class in East Lansing. After graduating with a bachelor of fine arts degree from Center for Creative Studies next April, Nudell plans to earn a master's degree at Rhode Island School of Design.

In the past Nudell has shown her glass work at Nelson's Gallery in Livonia and Center for Creative Studies. Her work is currently on display at the Michigan Design Center in Troy and Sherwood Studios in West Bloomfield.

April is Michigan Glass Month, so Nudell will exhibit work in a group show at the Woods Gallery of the Huntington Woods Library.

Former Gov. William Milliken first proclaimed April as Michigan Glass Month 13 years ago to promote glass as an art medium. As a result, the contemporary studio glass movement — individual artists creating glass artworks in studios outside of a factory setting — is a relatively young phenomenon.

On the Town

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