

GOING TO THE MOVIES



'The Three Musketeers' has considerable kid appeal



JOHN MONAGHAN
Tracey Dardanelli of Bloomfield Hills claims to have seen nearly every screen incarnation of D'Artagnan, from Gene Kelly in 1948 to Oliver Reed in 1974. And as far as she's concerned, the current Disney retelling of Alexandre Dumas' "The Three Musketeers" just doesn't compare.

Of course, the new version has the considerable kid appeal of young guns Charlie Sheen and Kiefer Sutherland bucking their swash and dispatching villains. And if you can see beyond them as pale copies of their respected actor fathers, you may have a great time.

D'Artagnan (Chris O'Donnell) gallops into Paris, he hopes to join in his father's footsteps and join the Musketeers, the elite band of soldiers dedicated to protecting the king. Instead he finds them disbanded and the kingdom in upheaval.

He quickly discovers that behind the scenes lurks evil Cardinal Richelieu (Tim Curry), who has plans of offing young King Louis and ascending the throne himself. It's up to D'Artagnan and three renegade Musketeers to stop him.

Among the young actors, Sutherland comes off best as the

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moody, profoundly noble Athos. Sheen brings a twist of the theologian to Aramis. Oliver Platt plays the slightly slobby Porthos, a former pirate we're told, who usually proves the most resourceful in battle.

O'Donnell made a respectable traveling companion for Al Pacino in "Scent of a Woman." But here, as D'Artagnan, fresh-faced O'Donnell simply doesn't have the flair required to make girls swoon and boys dream of life as a Musketeer.

Curry, meanwhile, isn't as evil as he is quirky and affected. Despite threats of the torture chamber and lecherous glances at the queen, you get the sneaking feeling that the former "Rocky Horror Picture Show" star is just itching to whip off that scarlet cardinal's robe and reveal garter belts and a corset underneath.

"The Three Musketeers" is typical live-action Disney fare, the same engagingly silly family entertainment they produced 30 years ago. The only change here is the body count, which mounts considerably after the frequently bloody swordfights.

I'd be surprised if director Stephen Herek ("Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure") didn't borrow from old Errol Flynn movies. Here he even pirated the climactic scene from Hitchcock's "The Man

FILM CLIPS

"THE THREE MUSKETEERS"

Released by: Walt Disney Pictures
Starring: Chris O'Donnell, Kiefer Sutherland, Charlie Sheen, Oliver Platt, Tim Curry and Rebecca DeMornay
Directed by: Stephen Herek
Produced by: Joe Roth

Written by: David Loughery, based on the novel by Alexandre Dumas
Rated: PG (Some material may not be appropriate for pre-teens)
Running time: 1 hour, 55 minutes
Rating (out of a possible four):

Key: Don't miss it

Strongly recommended

Worth a look

Wait for video

Who Knew Too Much" when D'Artagnan races against time to stop a sniper from picking off the king.

Sure, "Musketeers" has a few unique flourishes of its own.

A galloping D'Artagnan, in an attempt to avoid a low-hanging log that would surely dismount him, leaps from horse to log and then back on horseback. He also has a clever sword fight near the end while dangling from a French flag.

And of course, there's the requisite love interest between D'Artagnan and a stary-eyed lady in waiting, though it stays mercifully in the background. Instead we're treated to Rebecca DeMornay as a sultry spy who tries to seduce young D'Artagnan and also has some painful history with Sutherland's Athos.

Add to this a much-creepy dungeon, where the Count, upon capturing D'Artagnan, orders his men to "take the prisoner below." You have to wonder how much farther down you can go than the dungeon!

The best thing about "The Three Musketeers" is that it doesn't take itself too seriously. Movie-goer Dardanelli agrees. "It wasn't the kind of movie where I was on the edge of my seat," she added. "But I think the audience liked it. Like me, they go to movies like this to escape into that chivalrous time."

To leave a message for John Monaghan, dial 953-2047, mailbox number 1866, on a touch-tone phone, fax him a note at 591-7279, or write him in care of Entertainment, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.



FRANK CONROW

Family entertainment: In the tradition of classic Disney family entertainment comes the swashbuckling saga of the Musketeers, a valiant band of swordsmen who serve as the king's protectors.

Love abounds in 'Addams Family Values'



When love and dementia come together, it can only mean the return of Gomez and Morticia Addams.

The passionate couple of the big screen and their devoted family return with "Addams Family Values," a Paramount Pictures presentation opening Friday at metro Detroit movie theaters.

Morticia and Gomez are delighted by their new arrival, baby Pubert, complete with sweet smile, that familiar pallor and that cute little moustache. Uncle Fester has been targeted by cupid as he yearns for Debbie Delinney, the new nanny with her own ideas for Fester's future. Even young Wednesday finds a friend to call her own in — of all places — summer camp.

Charles Addams' macabre characters return for this second dose of Addams family madness following their film debut in 1991.

Starring once again are Anjelica Huston as Morticia, Raul Julia as Gomez and Christopher Lloyd as Uncle Fester. Christina Ricci and Jimmy Workman also return as Wednesday and Pugsley.

Joining the madly happy family this time around are Carol Kane as Granny and Joan Cusack as Debbie.

Barry Sonnenfeld once again directs, and the film is produced by Scott Ruddin, considered one



PHOTOS ZAHEDI

Addams Family: The family assembles for the marriage of Fester and Debbie in "Addams Family Values."

of Hollywood's most prolific producers with hits like "The Firm" and "Sister Act."

Sonnenfeld calls the Addams family the ultimate functional family. The parents love the children. The mother and father love each other. They don't change their values based on "what we do."

"One of the things we've done with 'Addams Family Values' is to have more of a story than in 'Addams Family' and introduce new characters. So we have an opportunistic nanny, baby Pubert,

and Joel Glicker, Wednesday's first boyfriend," Sonnenfeld said. Huston describes the relationship between Gomez and Morticia as "extremely loving and very passionate. If anything, I think their passion deepens with the years."

"The goal of the filmmakers was to remain true to the Addams family characters and settings that were first brought to life on the comic pages in 1932. Charles Addams began the cartoon series in the New Yorker magazine in-

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spired by the Victorian mansions and archaic graveyards the artist remembered from his youth. Friends and family say Addams' imagination leaned to the bizarre at a very early age.

The Addams Family cartoons caught on, however, and were published for more than 50 years in the New Yorker. When the television series made its debut in 1964, editors asked that the characters not appear in the magazine, but in 1988 they were resurrected, shortly before Addams died.

Huston received a Golden Globe nomination as best actress in comedy for her first portrayal of Morticia. She won an Academy Award for her performance in "Prizzi's Honor," which was directed by her father, the late John Huston.

Julia boasts a busy career on the screen and in the theater with roles in "Kiss of the Spider Woman," "Havana" and "Presumed Innocent."

Lloyd is perhaps best known for his portrayal of Jim Ignatowski on the hit television series "Taxi," but he also played Dr. Emmett Brown in the "Back to the Future" trilogy.

"Addams Family Values" marks the debut of twin girls Kaitlyn and Kristin Hooper as baby Pubert.

Revisit movie palace music

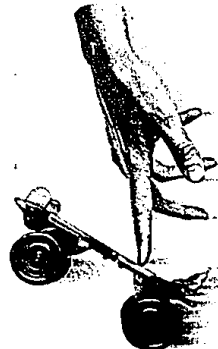
Clark Wilson, organist at Organ Stop Pizza in Mesa, Ariz. and the Ohio Theatre in Columbus, Ohio, will re-create the movie palace music of the 1920s and 1930s 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 20 in a pops concert at the Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ at the Senate Theatre.

6424 Michigan Avenue, Detroit.

Tickets are \$10 at the door. For information, call 894-4100.

The concert is presented by the Detroit Theatre Organ Society which features monthly programs on the former Fisher Theatre pipe organ.

THE FAMILY JUST GOT A LITTLE STRANGER.



PARAMOUNT PICTURES PRESENTS A SCOTT RUDIN PRODUCTION
A BARRY SONNENFELD FILM ANJELICA HUSTON RAUL JULIA CHRISTOPHER LLOYD
ADDAMS FAMILY VALUES JOAN CUSACK CHRISTINA RICCI CAROL KANE MARC SHAFMAN
WITH DAVID NICKES AND GUEST STARS CHARLES ADDAMS AND PAUL RUDIN
CASTING BY SCOTT RUDIN COSTUME DESIGNER BARBARA SONNENFELD
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS SCOTT RUDIN AND GARY BARBER
PRODUCED BY SCOTT RUDIN AND GARY BARBER
SCREENPLAY BY SCOTT RUDIN AND GARY BARBER
DIRECTED BY BARRY SONNENFELD

UPCOMING MOVIES

Action, drama, romance — there's something for everyone at the movies. Here's a list of what's in the wings:

■ Opening Friday, Nov. 19, "Ruby In Paradise" — At the Main Art Theatre. The story of a young woman who flees the mountains of East Tennessee in search of a better life.

■ "Man's Best Friend" — After scientists create man's best friend, a canine machine with bionic capabilities, their experiment in genetics goes awry.

■ Now showing: "Carillo's Way" — A once notorious gangster dreams of settling down with his wife, but plans are thwarted by old friends and rivals.

■ "Equinox" — The story of identical twins, separated at birth 30 years later, and their individual struggles to survive in the city of Empire.

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