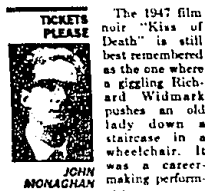


LET'S GO! MOVIES

Thrilling 'Kiss of Death' makes Caruso a star



TICKETS PLEASE
The 1947 film noir "Kiss of Death" is still best remembered as the one where a giggling Richard Widmark pushes an old lady down a staircase in a wheelchair. It was a career-making performance.

The same might be said for David Caruso in the current remake. Fans of "NYPD Blue," the TV series Caruso walked out on last season, wanted to see the red-headed actor flop in his first major film role, but he's by far the best thing going in this often disappointing thriller.

He plays a two-time loser and family man named Jimmy who serves a four-year prison term by not ratting on his partners in crime. Caruso plays him tough and completely convincing, like James Cagney without all the nervous energy and hunching shoulders.

As in the original, he makes a

REVIEW

deal with the district attorney; give me a day with my kid and I'll dish up some names. In the process, he's also framing the two-faced cousin who has done his wife wrong on the outside.

The scheme works and soon Little Junior (Nicolas Cage), an underworld heir with a breathing problem, shows up at Charlie's place and literally beats the guy to a pulp. Once out of prison, Jimmy reluctantly agrees to join Junior's gang of car thieves and deliver information to the feds.

Watching Cage's performance in "Kiss of Death," it finally occurred to me that he is much better playing the guy who things happen to (like in "Raising Arizona" and "Red Rock West") rather than a guy who makes things happen.

Pumped full of steroids, his Little Junior is a poor excuse for a bad guy. He's given little ticks — asthma, an almost doglike loyalty to his ailing father, an obvious affection for Jimmy — that self-

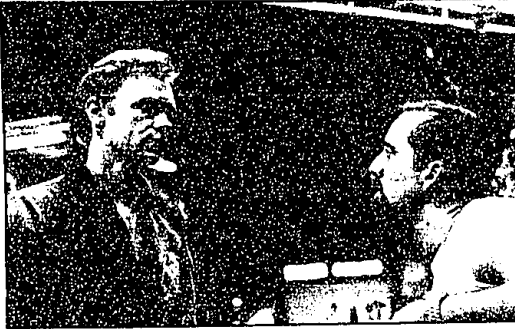
consciously make him both evil and endearing, yet the movie surprisingly downplays the homosexual overtones of the original film.

As in the original, director Barbet Schroeder keeps the visual style unflashy and tough. There are vivid scenes of the underworld, including the organized cruising for cars to steal and their transformation in Charlie's chop shop.

I'm still having trouble appreciating the so-called brilliance of screenwriter Richard Price, who has done little but monkey around with old screenplays, this time by the great Ben Hecht and Charles Lederer.

He has kept some of the spicier aspects of the original, including the relationship between Jimmy and his kid's babysitter, which could definitely use some fleshing out this time around. His self-conscious update of film noir could definitely give female characters something to do.

Meanwhile, he has tossed out



Thriller: David Caruso (left) is Jimmy Kilmartin and Nicolas Cage is Little Junior in "Kiss of Death."

the best part of the climax, namely Jimmy's long wait in a dark apartment for his enemy to come at him. He opts instead for a much more conventional showdown which makes you forget some of the surprises that came before it.

This new "Kiss of Death" is not a bad movie, but every studio comparison to "Pulp Fiction" are premature. While Quentin Tarantino takes the style of film noir and makes it his own, movies like this only make you long for the original article.

To leave a message for John Monaghan, dial 953-2047, mailbox number 1856, on a touch-tone phone, fax him a note at 691-7279, or write him in care of Entertainment, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48160.

Screen Scene

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

DETROIT FILM THEATRE
Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward, Detroit. Call (313) 833-2323 for information. (\$5, \$4 students)

"Farinelli" (Belgium — 1995). 7, 9:30 p.m. April 28-29; 4, 7 p.m. April 30. In 1739, legendary singer Farinelli (aka Carlo Broschi) is summoned to perform nightly for the King of Spain. In the meantime, the star with the castrato voice (male, female, and child combined) recalls his meteoric rise of fame and rock star-like adulation from fans.

"Cachao Como Su Ritmo No Hay Dos (Like His Rhythm There is no Other)" (USA — 1994). 7 p.m. May 1. Actor Andy Garcia makes his directorial debut in this documentary account of Israel Lopez "Cachao," the legendary Latin music performer. Now 76, the musician recalls the creation of the music we now know as mambo.

MAGIC DAG THEATRE
22918 Woodward, Ferndale. Call (810) 544-3030 for information. (\$4)

"Red" (France/Poland — 1994). 8 p.m. May 2-3. The final of Krzysztof Kieslowski's Colors Trilogy, this one topped him an Oscar nomination for Best Director. Here, a young model meets a retiring judge and notes some remarkable similarities in their lives.

MAIN ART THEATRE

118 N. Main Street at 11 Mile, Royal Oak. Films play through at least Thursday, unless noted otherwise. Call (810) 542-0180 for information and showtimes. (\$6.50; \$4 students and matinee; \$3 twilight)

"Doctor Zhivago" (Britain — 1965). A 30th anniversary rere-



Classic: Omar Sharif portrays Yuri Zhivago (left) and Julie Christie stars as Lara in David Lean's epic motion picture "Doctor Zhivago." The 30th anniversary rerelease of this classic is now playing at the Main Art Theatre.

lease of David Lean's romantic epic about a Russian doctor (Omar Sharif) caught up in love and politics around the time of the Russian Revolution. Julie

Christie is Lara, whose theme became one of the most-hummed songs of the '60s. Starred Friday.

"Jefferson in Paris" (USA — 1993). Nick Nolte plays Thomas Jefferson, ambassador to France in the days shortly before that country's revolution. Though historians are having some trouble



with it, expect loyal audiences to flock to this latest Merchant/Ivory production.

"Muriel's Wedding" (Australia — 1995). In this bit comedy from

Australia, a young woman dreams of marriage but can't seem to get her life together.

MAPLE THEATRE
4135 W. Maple, Bloomfield. All titles play through at least Thursday, unless noted otherwise. Call (810) 855-9090 for information. (\$5.75; \$3.75 students and matinee; \$2.95 twilight)

"Circle of Friends" (USA — 1995). An engaging (if utterly predictable) romantic comedy about three college girls in 1950s Ireland, their relationships with each other and various boy-friends. Chris O'Donnell co-stars.

"Don Juan DeMarco" (USA — 1995). Johnny Depp plays the legendary lover, or maybe who just thinks he is. It's up to Marlon Brando to figure it out in this offbeat new comedy.

"The Pebble and the Penguin" (USA — 1995). An animated musical from Don Bluth about a hopelessly romantic penguin who goes through fire and water to win the love of the girl of his dreams. Featuring the voices of James Belushi, Tim Curry, and Martin Short.

"The African Queen" (USA — 1951). 8 p.m. April 29; 2, 5 p.m. April 29 (organ overture begins a half hour before showtime). Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hep-

burn team in this classic adventure directed by John Huston. She's a spinster, a missionary's sister; he's a hard-drinking supply boat captain.

THE MOST ORIGINAL, BREATHTAKINGLY QUIRKY COMEDY IN SOME TIME

"Two Thumbs up!"

"FUNNY BONES" is a winningly eccentric flight of fancy.

STARTS FRIDAY, APRIL 28 EXCLUSIVELY

AMC MAPLE 3

Coming Attractions

There's something for everyone at the movies. Here's a list of what's in the wings:

Opening Friday, April 28
"Top Dog" — One's tough, one's smart — both are cops, but one's a dog. Together they're a team that must prevent an international terrorist threat.

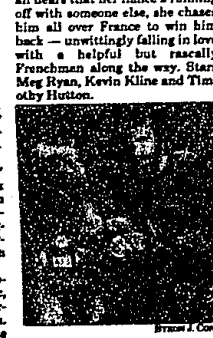
"Funny Bones" — AMC Exclusive. Two comedians who are half-brothers but unaware of each other's existence discover one another during their school-bus ride.

"Dustily Turns on the Radio" — Offbeat saga about a bank robber who escapes from prison and returns to Las Vegas to reclaim his stolen fortune and single-girlfriend. Stars Dylan McDermott, Nancy Travis, Quentin Tarantino. Rated R.

"Village of the Damned" — Remake of the 1960 British classic, depicts the terrifying consequences of an alien threat to Earth. Stars Christopher Reeve, Kirstie Alley and Linda Koslowksi.

Opening Wednesday, May 3
"Punisher" — Story of the Black Panthers for Self Defense, a short-lived armed political movement formed in the black ghetto of Oakland, Calif. in 1966. Rated

R. Opening Friday, May 5
"French Kiss" — When a woman hears that her fiance's running off with someone else, she chases him all over France to win him back — unwittingly falling in love with a helpful but racially Frenchman along the way. Stars Meg Ryan, Kevin Kline and Timothy Hutton.



Team: Reno, a French Briard, and Chuck Norris star in "Top Dog." Both are cops who must prevent an international terrorist threat.

Talented duo plays at historic Senate

Piano and organ duo, Tony Fenelon and John Atwell of Australia will make their first Detroit appearance together in "Piped in from Down Under," 7 p.m. Sat., April 29 at the historic Senate Theatre, 6424 Michigan Ave., 1 1/4 blocks west of Livernois, Detroit. Free lighted and supervised parking.

Tickets are \$12 or \$10 in advance. Seniors 62 and older, \$8. Call (313) 691-1806 or (313) 894-4100. Advance tickets are also available at Hammett Music in Livonia. Extra tickets in Bloomfield Hills in Plymouth, and Little Professor Book Center in Dearborn.

A portion of ticket proceeds will go toward the preservation and restoration of the theater's historic Wurliizer pipe organ, one of only five to have been built with a grand piano.

The concert will feature music of the 1920s and Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto.

Fenelon and Atwell will play a pops concert at the 32-ton Mighty Wurliizer pipe organ and grand piano originally installed in Detroit's Fisher The-



Organ concert: John Atwell (left) and Tony Fenelon perform at the Senate Theatre on April 29.

"THE FIRST HIT OF THE SUMMER IS HERE!"

"A COMPLETE WINNER!"

"While You Were Sleeping" takes its place next to "Pretty Woman" and "Sleepless in Seattle". - Fox Cities WOOD-TV

"WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING IS A CHARMER!"

"JUST SEE IT!"

Bullock and Pullman light up the screen.

SANDRA BULLOCK BILL PULLMAN

While You Were Sleeping

A story about love at first sight.

NOW PLAYING

AMC OLD FORD	AMC SOUTH FORD	AMC TAYLOR
AMC WOODS	SHOWCAST CANTON	SHOWCAST CANTON
SHOWCAST AGATE	SHOWCAST AGATE	SHOWCAST AGATE
SHOWCAST AGATE	STAR CANTON	STAR CANTON
STAR CANTON	STAR CANTON	STAR CANTON

NO PASSEES ON COUPONS ACCEPTED