

Features

'Arthur 2' falsely glorifies alcoholic's life as 'a lark'

By Judith Trojan

New York (NC) — Alcoholism is no laughing matter, but once again we are given the opportunity to laugh at or with — the distinction is unclear — Dudley Moore as wastrel millionaire Arthur Bach in "Arthur 2: On the Rocks" (Warner Bros.).

This time around, Arthur has been married to former waitress-shoplifter Linda (Liza Minnelli) for five years, having dumped former fiancée Susan (now played by Cynthia Sikes) at the altar.

Arthur is still cackling away at his own adolescent drunk jokes, and the sad part is that Linda thinks he's funny too. His drunken interludes don't seem to bother her in the least, until the couple attempts to adopt a baby. Even their overly good-natured social worker quickly bypasses the extent of Arthur's drinking problem in an effort to come up with a perfect baby to remedy the couple's childless state. If childlessness were their only problem, how lucky we would all be.

Since Susan, now a successful art dealer, still unbelievably wants Arthur back, her father (Stephen Elliott) attempts to pressure Arthur into leaving Linda. His main pressure tactic, however, is to separate Arthur from his \$750 million trust fund.

What evolves is director Bud Yorkin's weak attempt at a comedy that sees Arthur homeless, jobless, penniless, Lindaless and finally reduced to cleaning automobile windshields on Park Avenue. Since it's Christmas and Arthur is alone and drunk on

the streets, what better time for his beloved, deceased manservant Hobson (Sir John Gielgud) to reappear in a hallucination to make everything right.

Both Moore and Minnelli outdo themselves trying to make their emotionally unbalanced characters likeable. Minnelli, whose own troubles with substance abuse are well-known, is just too intelligent and mature a screen presence to be believable as a woman who accepts Arthur's alcoholic behavior as a lark. When Linda briefly leaves Arthur, it is because she feels she is a stumbling block for him, not because he's a useless drunk.

Due to some vulgar language and the film's glorification of alcoholism as an acceptable, fun way of dealing with life's problems, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

'License to Drive'

Aside from its reputable cast, "License to Drive" (20th Century Fox), offers few surprises, catering to an audience for whom cars and driver's licenses are the stuff of which dreams are made.

As a rather baby-faced 16-year-old, Les (Corey Haim) approaches his driver's exam with all the fear and anticipation one might reserve for taking the bar. For Les and his slightly younger best friends, the license will allow them to become real men.

It should come as no surprise that Les fails



NC News

Dudley Moore and Liza Minelli star in 'Arthur 2: On the Rocks,' a film in which the stars outdo themselves trying to make their emotionally unbalanced characters likeable, says the U.S. Catholic Conference.

his driver's exam. Actually, he passes the road test admirably despite his sadistic tester. The written test is another story. So Les must face family and friends as a failed man. But before he spills the bad news, he is enticed by a luscious co-ed (Heather Graham) to borrow his grandfather's 1972 mint-condition Cadillac to take her for an evening spin.

What, you ask, could possibly go wrong? Everything, especially under the instigating eye of best friend Dean (Corey Feldman). The evening spin, of course, turns into

something right out of "Nightmare on Elm Street."

A weak clone of "Risky Business" and "Ferris Bueller's Day Off," "License to Drive" does have some virtues. It teaches some hard-worn lessons on the pros of driving with a license, the cons of driving drunk, and the emotional toll to be paid for borrowing and wrecking the family car.

Due to fleeting rough language and a brief but tasteless attempt by one boy to photograph a drunken girl's cleavage in the backseat of grandpa's car, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Trojan is on the staff of the U.S. Catholic Conference's Department of Communications.

TV, films depict selfish, superficial teens

By Michael Warren  
NC News Service

How do television and films portray the lives of teens?

If you lived in the Himalayas of Tibet and could see some U.S. television and films, you would get a certain impression of what young people in the United States are like.

The two questions I want to raise here are: How do television and films portray young people? And, are these portrayals accurate?

But first we have to look at the amount of television young people in the United States watch and what it is they see. By the time teens graduate from high school, on an average they will have watched 15,000 hours of television. By age 16, teens will have seen 18,000 TV murders. In prime time, six violent acts occur per hour, and 25 take place per hour in children's weekend, daytime programming.

Does any of that violence have any influence on us? Do you think any of this influences children, or do they see and forget?

What do teen girls, for instance, think about the following fact? In 1982, one in 20 movies commercially released in the United States depicted violent acts against women. In 1983, one in eight movies contain violence against women — marking a huge jump in numbers.

Coming of Age

Do these films have any influence on men who see them? Do they allow some men to "rehearse" violent acts against women?

Before you answer no, realize that studies have shown that men who repeatedly watched such movies found them to be progressively less upsetting. The next time a woman friend confides to you that she was slapped, punched or shoved violently by a so-called boyfriend, think about where he might have learned that behavior.

Before we deny the possibility that what we see on television or in movies influences us, we should consider that advertising companies pay millions for 30-second spots on television. Apparently they think the influence of visuals is so powerful that even seconds are worth a small fortune.

How do television and movies portray teens today? In TV drama, men outnumber women three to one, and young people make up a third of their true proportion in the population.

In TV drama, how often do we see teens who have just about everything they want or who want just about everything they see? A commentator who reviewed seven films about young people came to the conclusion that teens were depicted as being basically self-centered and preoccupied with money and with sexual "performance."

Another writer claimed that many, clearly not all, films about teens fail to take seriously the deeper concerns that young people have. The writer said that films look only at the surface and don't indicate that young people have the depth of humanity they in fact have.

Of course a key question is: How do any of us react to these presentations of our lives? When they are false, we do see the falsity?

When we see a supposedly amusing film about young people called "nerds," do we have as much right to get angry at the trivialization of our lives as blacks became about depictions of the "Stepin Fetchit" bumbling black?

The obvious answer is, "It depends." It depends on the portrayal, how it is done and so forth.

But, young people need to consider that someone is presenting a view of their lives, and teens have a right to sit in judgment of that view, to see if they are true or false, insightful or just stupid.

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HOUSE OF GUITARS Most New Album And Tape Releases Just \$5.98 CD's From \$8.98 - \$11.98 Each We received 11 correct entries identifying a jackknife as the kind of knife that Mack carried in the song "Mack the Knife." The winner was Cheryl Kellogg of Webster. MUSIC TRIVIA This week's question: Who recorded the 1959 hit "Get A Job?" Name: Address: City: State: Zip Code: School: Rules: Each week, the Courier-Journal, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon, and send it in to the Courier-Journal. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn. If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at the House of Guitars, 645 Tins Ave. All entries must be received within seven days of this paper's issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing. The Courier-Journal Music Trivia 1150 Buffalo Rd. Rochester, N.Y. 14624