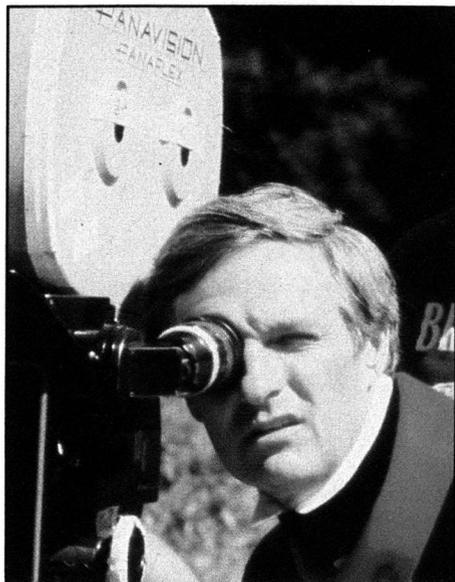




SWEET LIBERTY

Alan Alda With Michael Caine, Michelle Pfeiffer
And Lillian Gish



At age 50, Alan Alda is still one of the most popular men on television. He is also an exceptionally talented actor, writer and director of motion pictures. Benevolent, articulate and rapidly greying, he is widely respected as being a decent and honest man in a profession not noted for upholding these vanishing virtues.

On top of this, Alan Alda is a draw of the first magnitude in motion pictures, one of the rare stars of TV to make the difficult transition to movies. In the 1979 season, while *M*A*S*H* was still breaking records, Alda had no fewer than three highly successful films playing in the cinemas: *California Suite* (with Michael Caine), *Bernard Slade's Same Time, Next Year* and *The Seduction of Joe Tynan* with Meryl Streep.

At this point in his career, Alda was earning a reported \$5 million-a-year from *M*A*S*H*. But he decided his future was in the movies — and he hasn't looked back. His last picture *The Four Seasons* did record-breaking business for Universal Films and resulted in a three-picture deal over six years for Alda.

It also brought him into partnership with Martin Bregman, with whom he produces his films, and prepared him for his "new career" when *M*A*S*H* finally ended having run three times longer than the actual Korean War.

Alda's new film *Sweet Liberty* is immediately attractive because of the elements it contains. First, it's a comedy

about many things ranging from the War of Independence to the personal predicaments of a writer; secondly, it reunites Alda with Michael Caine; and thirdly, it brings the marvelous actress, Lillian Gish, back to the screen.

Gish plays Alda's mother, a humorous role which the 88-year-old actress said she had turned down four times "because I thought they had confused me with my sister, Dorothy — she's the comedian of our family. The fifth time they called," continued Miss Gish from her hotel in South Hampton, "I decided to meet them and they were so nice I just lost my heart to them and said yes."

Never one to forget the great days of the silent screen, Miss Gish added: "You know, they remind me of D.W. Griffith back in 1913. It was one for all and all for one. No unions and we worked 12 hours a day, 7 days a week and we liked it that way. There was no place we could go that was as happy as the shooting and this film is very similar."

Alda himself plays the part of a historian who is plunged into a summer of madness when a film company comes to his town to make a movie from a book he has had published. And he is not pleased about the manner in which it has been adapted to the screen.

The book being shot in this film-within-a-film is the story of Mary Slocum (Michelle Pfeiffer), a heroine of the revolution. Moviegoers who have followed the career of Bob Hoskins, the street-tough British actor from *Lassiter* and *The Cotton Club*,

Michelle Pfeiffer and Michael Caine.

will be surprised to find him playing the "nice guy" for a change. And finally, among the cast of *Sweet Liberty* is the talented Canadian actor, Saul Rubinek, playing the film director.

On location in the Hamptons, Alda keeps calm during interviews and his amiable disposition remains intact. A trace of irritability appears only when he speaks of the press and its propensity to harp on his good humor and pleasant nature, his happy family life and his interest in his children. "I'm really bored with it all," he says, "and why pick on me? Robert Redford is a nice guy and a family man...I'm working for the day when I get rid of this label."

For Alan Alda, *Sweet Liberty* represents the triumph of a long life of hard work in the theatre, television and movies, all of which have brought him so many awards they would fill this page.

He has worked mainly in comedy and is thought of as a comedian. But there is more to comedy than making people laugh. "The main thing is always the material. If it is good, it gives you life, it gives you energy. This kind of acting, and directing, is especially satisfying because, surprising to some, it's very difficult. The material has emotional content and at the same time there is reason for the audience to laugh in various places. It may be funny on the surface, but there is something serious happening underneath."