

ARTS

Home alone — this movie ain't no Grinch

by Bruce Gilchrist

REMEMBER those Looney Tunes you used to watch when you were a kid? (or still do!) Well, Home Alone is the movie that encapsulates all the fun of a Bugs Bunny cartoon, adds a little sugar to sweeten your heart, and wraps up in a neat Christmas package.

The movie's plot is quite sim-

ple. A very yuppie family is going to France for Christmas, and somehow along the way, their eight-year old son (played wonderfully by Macaulay Culkin) gets left behind in their expansive and lushly decorated house to fend for himself.

The kid doesn't seem to have too much trouble staying home alone. In fact, he sort of relishes

his freedom as he does some things that his mother (played by Catherine O'Hara) would certainly have a cow over. That is until the movie's villains, "The Wet Bandits", decide to peg the house with the kid who's home alone for a little B&E.

But this is one kid who's ready to defend his house, and the physical comedy resulting from the collision of wills between the crooks and the kid would make even the Stooges impressed. The crooks are Dickensian characters resplendent with the honor of theivry, if only because they can't think of anything brighter to do.

The other sources of Christmas

mirth in this comedy are delivered more subtly, but just as funny, by all the members of the supporting cast. On top of the comedy, a sugar-coated layer on the importance of Christmas is added in just the right proportion so as to please the kids in the audience, no matter what the age.

The real strengths of this movie are the casting, the script, and the execution. Catherine O'Hara delivers an excellent understated performance in a role that would have been ruined had it been played over the top. She leads the perfect example to the entire cast, with which I found no faults, and I especially thought the French

travel agent was hilarious. The script is truly alive and allows for the players to shine on the screen.

The force behind this movie is John Hughes, the director. The famous 'teenage' movie maker has made the elementary school set a successful venture as well. Sharply directing a constantly moving camera, Hughes dashes around the players in an almost effortless way.

When all is said and done, the movie is a winner because of the care of all involved. I found very little to fault in the movie and would heartily recommend this as a Christmas movie outing for the whole family, as long as they're over age eight.

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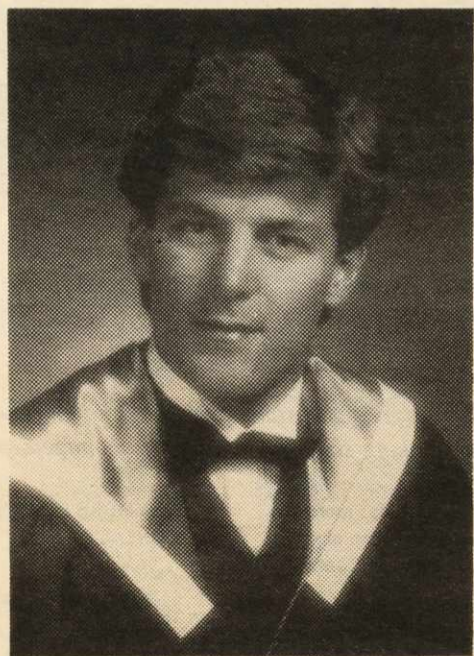
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