

# arts

## Harry and Walter palls flat

by Eve Rose

*Harry and Walter go to New York* directed by Mark Rydell.

A formidable cast and a script full of comedic techniques that have made audiences laugh for generations should be enough to ensure an entertaining movie, right? Wrong. Good farcical comedy needs more than form. It needs rhythm and timing. *Harry and Walter go to New York* has neither.

It is a farce, an over-exaggerated tale of the adventures of two, fifth rate song and dance men who want to make the big time. It is not the stages of Broadway, which Walter Hill (Elliott Gould) considers the big time. It is the aristocracy of thieves to which Adam Worth (Michael Caine) belongs and into which Harry Digby (James Caan) wants to be accepted.

Their opportunity comes after a madcap escape from the Massachusetts Penitentiary in Concord. The two vaudevillians travel to New York where they seek out crusading journalist, Lissa Chestnut (Diane Keaton) at the offices of her back-alley radical newspaper, *The Advocate*. She likes Worth, but despises his way of life. Eventually she and her staff join forces with Harry and Walter to beat Worth at his own game. "If that bank has to be robbed," shouts a passionate Lissa Chestnut to her staff, "Let it be robbed in the name of decency!" The balance of the film is concerned with that effort, an effort that eventually succeeds after a series of wild, wacky misadventures. The money's decent use: a milk fund for New York City, the largest in history. And what of Harry and Walter? They are accepted by the aristocracy of thieves.

The movie is replete with old and tried comedic gimmicks. The relationship that Gould and Caan portray remind the audience of Laurel and Hardy. The mayhem they cause while escaping from prison is reminiscent of the famous Keystone Cops episodes of the silent films.

There are some priceless moments in this movie, like Harry and Walter's inexperience with the niceties of wine tasting and finger bowls. On the whole,

however, the film is somewhat less than perfect. Some scenes are dragged out too long. When the amateur bank robbers begin to run out of time, Harry and Walter attempt to lengthen the opera in the theatre across the street. Because it masks the noise they are making and more importantly, because it stalls Worth and his gang, the two men do extraordinary things on stage to prevent the show from ending. At first their antics are hilarious, but after awhile it palls. It simply goes on too long.

If you want to see good farcical comedy, do not go and see *Harry and Walter go to New York*. Although it is frequently funny and its cast performs marvelously, the script is sorely lacking. One often has the feeling that it was forcibly stretched to one and three quarter hours.

The movie makes you laugh, but not hard enough, long enough or deeply enough. Much more could have been done with this film. The material is there, in words and in talent. It simply has not been used effectively.

## Photographs trace history

"Into the Silent Land," an exhibition of over 100 rare photographic prints has been assembled by the Public Archives of Canada as a major travelling display.

"Into the Silent Land" is shown at the Provincial Museum of Alberta between September and October 10. From the mid-1800's, the attraction of the new process called photography was its reality, its detail and objectivity. Gradually the painters who accompanied official surveying

and exploration parties were replaced by photographers hauling bulky cameras, portable darkrooms, glass plates and chemicals for processing. The photographs in this exhibition trace the first tentative and experimental uses of photography in the 1850's to the point where it became the indispensable tool in surveying.

Galleries and facilities at the Provincial Museum are open daily located at 12845-102 Avenue, Edmonton, and admission is free.

## Not tonight; I have a pulled muscle

Aretha Franklin gave a low key concert last Saturday as the result of a pulled chest muscle, at the ITV In Concert performance in the Jubilee Auditorium.

Franklin mustered up just enough energy to perform for a total of 30 minutes. The concert had been originally designated for Wednesday, but because of Franklin's acute pain, the show was postponed till Saturday.

Apparently this did not give Aretha Franklin enough time to recuperate, for on Saturday she was still in enough pain to walk off the stage after singing for 10 minutes. All the songs she played were slow, restrained numbers

which required little expenditure of effort on her part. She returned after 45 minutes and played a handful of songs, after which she left again. Coming back again she apologized to the audience: "I'm sure you all know that this is a very subdued show for me. I pulled a muscle while doing a show in Detroit which is making it very hard for me to perform tonight." She wound up the concert with one more number.

The ticket money will be refunded at the Hudson's Bay ticket sales. Northwest Video, the producers of the ITV In Concert series will absorb the loss of an estimated \$150,000.

## Celestial Visitor attends festival

The Film Arts Cabaret, featuring Alberta's own "academy awards" for the province's best motion picture productions, will be held September 20-22, with the Awards Banquet on Wednesday evening, the 22nd.

Film awards will be presented in a variety of categories and crafts with certificates provided by the Department of Business Development and Tourism. The award for Best Film of the Festival is a sculpture entitled *The Celestial Visitor*.

Producers who are entering films and videotape productions in the competition include Filmwest Associates Limited, Century II Motion Pictures Ltd., and Verite Film Productions Limited, of Edmonton; Muskeg Productions Limited, Calgary; and Cinetel Nine Productions

Ltd., Lethbridge.

ACCESS Television North has entered four videotape productions, ITV Television plans to enter as many as ten, and the CBC will participate in the competition as well. The Workers' Compensation Board has entered a safety film. Among advertising agencies, Advision Communications is entering a television commercial.

The number of productions which are already entered could double or triple by the deadline for entries, says Co-Chairman Josh Zubko.

Tickets for the Banquet are priced at \$35.00 single or \$50 per couple. They are available from Don Reed (Film D.R. Productions Ltd., phone 482-5861), Josh Zubko (Cine Audio Ltd., phone 423-5081), or the AMPA office.

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## Simon Sez

COME BLOW YOUR HORN  
by Neil Simon  
Stage West Theater

by Linda McCoy

Neil Simon is known for his light, almost farcical comedies which, nevertheless, do make very real statements about life as lived by the American middle class. *Come Blow Your Horn* is no exception.

Light it is, funny it is, even farcical in the seemingly endless parade of beautiful girls through the life and bedroom of elder brother, Alan Baker. But the story is really about the decisions, adjustments, and anguish of a child moving away from home. In this case the child is 21 years old but to Mama he is still a baby.

The 'star' of this production is Dean Stockwell, a one-time child actor who hasn't quite made it as an adult actor. He seems to rely too heavily on the gimmickry of being the madcap, playboy, and when in the third act he is required to become a more sober young man contemplating marriage, the gimmickry falls away to reveal a shallow performance.

The play is saved, however, by James Forsythe who plays the kid brother, Buddy, long under his parent's thumbs and at last making the big break away from home. Forsythe uses good vocal modulations, a far cry from the near-monotone of Stockwell's


performance; Forsythe's physical presence accurately suggests the unsure, almost stumbling young man. His transition in the third act to a man-about-town is much more believable, with a sense of firmness and apparent control in his acting.

Vernis McCuaid and Hy Lieberman as the worried, sometimes angry, always confused parents are good. Ms. McCuaid had one of the funniest scenes all to herself as the harried mother trying to answer all of her son's phones, take messages, and all without a pencil!

The two young ladies who keep flitting in and out of the apartment are played by Darlene Bradley as the sophisticated, good-girl, Connie; and Jana Lapel, the cute but dumb, sexy broad Peggy. The one thing that bothered me about Ms. Bradley's performance was the way in which she bounced up and down on her toes whenever she wished to emphasize a line.

Just a brief word in closing about the play in general. It is a good choice for dinner-theatre with subject matter to offend no-one. The set was very workable with all sorts of gadgets such as sliding doors to surprise and titillate and best of all, the cast really worked together. There was a comfortable sense of unity.


As an evening or Sunday afternoon out, I highly recommend Stage West. I don't think you'll find better entertainment anywhere.



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