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The pick of this season's film selections:
Your celluloid salad of comedy and thrillers

By Colin Smith

The World's Greatest Lover: — Wildly uneven comedy features Gene Wilder ego-tripping as its writer, producer, director and star. Some of the humour is surprisingly original and-or sophisticated parody, but much of it is tired gaggery and-or deadly dull vaudeville. Where the film succeeds is in preserving the magic surrounding the Valentino legend while sending it up, and in combining pathos and comedy in a manner that is reminiscent of the best of Chaplin. Recommended.

Suspria: — Horror film produced and shot in Italy is so overdone that it's ludicrous. The director, Dario Argento, has made previous films, but you'd never know it from this effort. The cast is generally hopeless, special effects uninspired. The two passages of music in the picture are dragged in anytime something scary might happen, thereby killing any suspense the material could've had.

The picture deals with witchcraft, but there is an aimless subplot involving spoiled food and little worms. Two effective bits: a gory double murder near the beginning, and the terrorization of a blind man by an unseen power.

The Gauntlet: — Clint Eastwood directs and stars in what is, for him, an atypical film. Discarding some of the character traits attached to his persona, he plays Ben Shockley, a drunken loser of a cop who's escorting a witness (Sondra Locke) for a syndicate trial from L.A. to Phoenix. Thing is, the woman is wanted dead by both the Mob and the police, she having evidence against both. The suicide assignment becomes a survival run, with the duo receiving all the bullets while returning none. The ending, which goes against the grain of several characters, forces a far-fetched conclusion to affect a tidy ending but along the way director Eastwood provides some near-impressionistic tones to his highly

atmospheric drama. Eastwood delivers a more earnest performance than usual.

The Choirboys: — Crazy film spends the better part of its 120 minutes being a raunchy slapstick send-up of the L.A. police force, then segues abruptly into full-scale drama. The transition is done smoothly and effectively, but the dramatic episode is so finely wrought that one inevitably has to question the comedic proceedings — in effect, questioning the premise of the entire movie. Still, the picture is watchable in a trashy sort of way.

Telefon: — Interesting premise of

this spy drama is sabotaged by a flat and faultily constructed script; the miscasting of Charles Bronson and Lee Remick as a KGB agent and an American spy, respectively; unbearably hammy performances from Donald Pleasance as the psychotic villain and Patrick Magee as the man in charge in Moscow; and awful score by Lalo Schifrin that is tepidly over-bearing and uselessly even as window-dressing; the list can run on. The film does manage to whip up a few convincing action sequences, but on the whole is so unintentionally moronic it doesn't make any difference.



The Happy Cooker

Soupe à l'oignon

By Denise Beattie

And now introducing an easy, an inexpensive and a delicious gourmet, French cuisine dish — Soupe à l'Oignon avec Croûtes. This particular version comes from a true French cookbook so hopefully your result will look, smell and taste authentic.

If you're only cooking for a small number of people and you don't want leftovers you can cut this recipe to a half or even a quarter but the amounts here should yield a good 8 bowls of soup.

Gather:

- 4 Tbsp. butter
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 lbs. onions, thinly sliced (about 7 cups)
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp. flour
- 2 quarts beef stock or combined beef and chicken stock.

Procedure:

In a large saucepan or soup kettle melt the butter in with the oil over a moderate heat. Stir in the onions and salt and cook uncovered, stirring occasionally for 20 to 30 minutes or until the onions are a rich golden brown.

Sprinkle the flour over the onions and cook, stirring for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from the heat.

In a separate saucepan bring your stock to a simmer. Now looking into my trusty crystal globe, I see many students out there who do not have a homemade beef or chicken stock in their refrigerator, therefore may I suggest that you try a canned consommé with equal parts of water (3 cans with equal parts of water will give you 2 ounces short of the needed 2 qts. I think you can safely add the extra 2 oz. in water without

over diluting your soup) or you can try bouillon cubes.

After the stock has come to a simmer (the closest thing to a boil without lots of bubbles), stir it into the onions. Return this pot to the heat and simmer, partially covered for 30 to 40 minutes, occasionally skimming off any fat that collects on the top. Taste for salt and pepper.

Croûtes: The croûtes and cheese are definitely the magic touch to French onion soup. You can make them while the soup is simmering or they could be made ahead of time and stored in a cool, dry place.

- Gather:** 12 to 16 one inch slices of French or Italian (small loaf) bread.
2 tsp. olive oil
1 garlic clove cut in half
1 cup grated Parmesan or Swiss cheese.

Procedure: Heat the oven to 325 degrees and spread the bread slices on a baking sheet or aluminum foil and bake for 15 minutes. With a pastry brush (or use initiative) brush both sides lightly with olive oil. Putting the slices back in the oven with the flipped side up and bake another 15 minutes until completely dry and light brown. Rub each slice with the cut garlic and set aside.

To serve the soup place the croûtes in a large tureen or in individual bowls and ladle the soup over top. Pass the grated cheese around separately. For a really fancy bowl of gruel put the cheese on top yourself, sprinkle with melted butter or olive oil and bake at 375 degrees for 10 to 20 minutes. Directly before serving slide it under the hot broiler until light golden.

This soup is ideal to serve to your lover if you're going to a party and you're the jealous type.

Cosmic encounter

By Colin Smith

Close Encounters Of The Third Kind is a celebration - a compassionate explosion of the many myths that we hold about extraterrestrial life. Expertly written and directed by Steven Spielberg [*Jaws*, *The Sugarland Express*] this is a labour of love that consumed \$20 million worth of Columbia Pictures' money and two years of Spielberg's life. The end result is a magnificent film that bests *Star Wars* intellectually and rivals *2001* in the purity of its images.

The screenplay, which has an unsettling way of hopping from place to place, deals primarily with Roy Neary (Richard Dreyfuss), a working man whose life is completely disrupted by a close encounter with a UFO. His wife (Teri Garr) and children don't understand the change this causes in him. His obsessive search to define the shape of an object he sees (in his mind's eye) drives them away from him. He's fired from his job, the family splits. Roy hooks up with a young widow (Melinda Dillon) in the area whose four-year-old son (Cary Guffey) was abducted by the aliens. These two meet at the conclusion with a group of scientists headed by Claude Lacombe (Francois Truffaut) at a secreted airfield at Devil's Tower, Wyoming, where the final close encounter takes place.

The first half of the film capitalizes on audience preconceptions to create suspense. The close encounters are seen as powerful, with an ominous sort of beauty. Midway the edginess disintegrates into expectation, as

human obsessions drive the film to a momentous and magical closing (not to be revealed here.) Spielberg has enough respect for his subject that he can even poke a little scurrilous fun at it, mostly in terms of Hitchcockian sight gags (only gentler.) He also has a talent for deriving terror and importance out of common household objects.



The cast is extremely efficient. Dreyfuss contributes a solid basis for the core of the film with his edgy, driven performance. Melinda Dillon also registers well, even more so the four-year-old Guffey, who steals everything else in the film that isn't nailed down. Teri Garr, as a pain of a wife, is appropriately a pain, and Truffaut's role is too small to lend any major support, but his sweetness does buoy the tone of the film somewhat.

Technically the film is outstanding. Besides a good score by John Williams (he also scored *Jaws*), there is Vilmos Zsigmond's atmospheric photography and Douglas Trumbull's stunning visual effects. Said effects are nowhere near as flamboyant or multitudinous as the ones in either *2001* or *Star Wars*, but they are wisely hedged until the ending to create an overpowering magic that has been achieved by few films.

MR. SUBMARINE

