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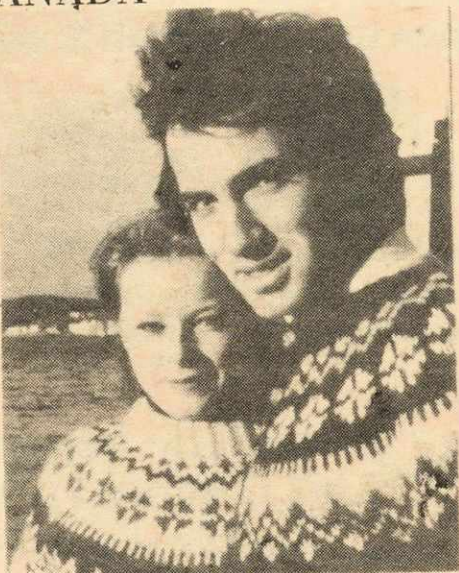
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Dynamic Duo

by Ken Burke

Explaining the title of this article to anyone that ever felt the theme from Batman racing along on the T.V. is needless, of course. For a lot of us, Batman provided a satisfying chunk of the magic that went with being a kid. The good news is that you need not turn your back on all that if you were a dedicated bat-fan because the movie **BATMAN**, made at the series' peak, is playing at the Halifax City Regional Library on Saturday the 17th at 12:00, free of charge. And the movie itself is a joy - never has a film more deserved cult status than this one, with its wild sense of self-parody and genuine affection for the whole idea of Batman itself. I saw it six months ago at a children's matinee and was knocked out by the unbelievable volume of fun in it. It hadn't dated, it had gotten better with the distance of years and memories behind it.

What's important is that if you do have fond memories of the television series, you won't be let down by this film. Adam West and Burt Ward will be just as you remembered them as the Dynamic Duo, Batman and Robin, along with the Batmobile, the Bat-pole, the Bat-cave, Bat-copter, -boat, -utility belt, -go-cart, etc. But always when the show is remembered, one of the first things to swim into your memory gland is a vision of the super villains that old B & R faced weekly. And they're here too. The movie's plot (or something like that) brings together the Penguin, the Joker, the

Riddler, and the Catwoman to team up and attempt yet another world take-over with only the caped crusaders in their way.

Should it be possible that you could forget these gloriously ridiculous figures of supreme evil? Maybe not, but just in case, I'll recap a few important details for you. As the Penguin, Burgess Meredith is at his waddling peak, cigarette holder at its usual 45 degree angle and emitting sinister "Mwaak! Mwaak! Mwaak!" at every opportunity. Frank Gorshin's Riddler is as maniacal as ever, and his riddles improbable as ever (except to the Dynamic Duo). By the way, if anyone knows where to find a green suit and tie with yellow question marks that matches the Riddler's, I'm interested. The Joker (Cesar Romero) is a bit limited here, but he still gets to play a few of his usual bad jokes on everyone. The one revelation of the lot is Catwoman, though. As played by Lee Merriweather (??) in black naugahyde skintights and cat'o'nine tails, it's obvious that she wasn't created for the kiddies in the audience. But then again, this movie worked so well for me because so much of it was targeted at adults.

That's due to the influence of writer Lorenzo Semple Jr. and Director Leslie H. Martinson. It's clear that when they organized the movie, they had a ball, throwing in stuff left and right over the kids' heads while not taking away from the fun of the thing. Sure, Batman was always

a camp extravaganza, but this film takes everything to its logical extremity - a theatre of the absurd, pop-art, high camp children's movie. As adults, we can see what's going on, but it's so FUN that it fits in perfectly with the "neat-o" clutter of the television series. You have to keep pinching yourself to realize that it's a 1966 movie, as reality is quickly shredded and the absurdities fly thickly around you.

Examples? Well, the movie features exploding sharks and squid, freeze-dried villains, enormous bombs that just can't be got rid of, the Riddler's bizarre riddles, Bruce Wayne (Batman's alter-ego) being seduced by the Catwoman as Robin watches on the bat-remote T.V. and gets insanely jealous (I've often wondered about Robin) and so on. Batman and Robin also pause throughout the film to give ridiculous anti-drug, alcohol, and smoking speeches that writer Semple was obviously having a fit laughing over when he wrote them. There are plenty of knowingly ironic holes in the script when the audience could fill in an appropriate answer for themselves - hell, it almost drags a response out of you. If people ever pay enough attention to this, it should be the ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW of the 1980's.

Moreover, it's the kind of film that creates a euphoric high that lasts for a couple of days after viewing it. The best way to sum

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