

'Godfather' to headline at Lincoln bar



By Jill O'Brien
Senior Reporter

Of all the Mitch Ryder tunes that could cause you to break out in a midnight sweat, there's one in particular guaranteed to start your foot tapping and shoulders shaking when you sing, "Devil with a blue dress, blue dress, blue dress, devil with a blue dress on. OW!"

These legendary lyrics can stick in your mind for days just like bubble gum sticks to your face. But that's OK. In fact, it's perfect. Now you'll be prepared to see Ryder: The man who paved the way to sonic insanity, and the man responsible for the hits, "Little Latin Lupe Lu," "Sock It to Me," "Shake a Tailfeather" and the medleys, "Devil with a Blue Dress/Good Golly Miss Molly" and "Jenny, Jenny/C.C. Rider."

In an interview from his suburban Detroit home, Ryder, soft-spoken except when he sings, talked about his career, which has spanned global touring for three decades.

Although he prefers to be billed simply and singularly as Mitch Ryder, promoters still have a tendency to mention the Detroit Wheels because of Ryder's longtime, on-again, off-again association with the band.

"Currently, no one in the group is a Detroit Wheel," Ryder said, "except

maybe Ray Goodman on guitar. He's sort of re-run. He was hired as a replacement for one of the original members."

Occasionally, famed drummer Johnny "Bee" Badanjek reunites with Ryder for a tour or two.

"We've been in and out of this marriage five or six times," Ryder said. "Bee goes off, then comes back."

The other Detroit Wheels have gone their own ways and rhythm player Joe Cougar died of cancer last year, Ryder said.

Actually, Ryder isn't really Ryder, but Billy Levis Jr. who grew up in Centerline, Mich., cut his teeth on Detroit doo-wop, rhythm and blues and a lot of harmonizing.

"Whatever's in the air, you breathe it in and it becomes a part of you," he said.

Ryder, who breathed in the factory air of Detroit, also managed to inhale enough fumes of R&B harmonizing to be dubbed "The Godfather of Motor City Rock 'n' Roll" in a 1989 Rolling Stone article.

This February, on Ryder's 48th birthday, "The Godfather" also celebrates his fifth year of "not taking a slurp." Along with sobriety came the realization that he needed to downscale his life, he said.

"What I needed is just what the president needs to do." He laughed. "And that's to cut back on our lifestyle."

For instance, if the band is count-

ing on X-amount of dollars and some-one reneges on a gig, the group has to downscale immediately, he said.

Sometimes scaling down means taking a dingy dressing room or sleeping in a sour motel, but never does it mean cutting back on the quality of his songs.

"I want to write songs to catalogue my feelings as a person and continue to grow." His latest release, "La Gash" catalogues women, relationships and attitudes, he said.

Backed by a German record company, Ryder's albums are available only as imports, he said. Prior to "La Gash," Ryder's "Never Kick a Sleeping Dog" in 1983, produced by John Cougar Mellencamp, was released in the states.

Ryder has tried but is having a difficult time getting back in the American market, he said, adding he doesn't let it bother him.

"I got tired of all the popularity contests. I'm playing from my heart now," he said.

He plays his heart out in Europe and the states. His gigs land him in cities like Lincoln.

"I've got connections in Lincoln," he said. "My father was stationed right outside of Lincoln during World War II and my older sister was born here."

Sunday, Ryder appears at the Rockin' Robin, 1435 O St.

Rare Earth, scheduled to headline with Ryder, canceled for unknown reasons, but don't let that stop you from seeing Ryder.

"Ah-h, C.C. Rider. See-ee what you have done now. . . Ah-h, C.C., C.C. Rider. . ."



Courtesy of Entertainment Services International

Mitch Ryder comes to Lincoln this Sunday.

Camera work makes action film worthwhile



Even with some terrific camera work, "Sniper" (Cinema Twin, 13th and P streets) fails to find its mark.

It isn't just a "bang-and-they're-dead" type of film: The viewer frequently rides the bullet from the tip of the barrel to the back of the victim's head.

Tom Berenger ("At Play in the Fields of the Lord") plays Gunnery Sgt. Thomas Beckett, one of the best shooters in the military. He takes days to set up his "one shot-one kill" philosophy, after which he just melts into the scenery.

His latest assignment throws him together with Richard Miller ("Memphis Belle"), a government agent assigned to accompany Beckett on this mission. He is told if Beckett becomes a liability to the mission, Beckett should be eliminated.

However, while Miller may do well on the firing range, he cannot bring

himself to fire on a real human being in his cross hairs.

Miller's performance as the straight-laced putz is great, and the audience (at the beginning) doesn't have any sympathy for his character. He has planned everything for this mission from a desk and a computer screen, not by actually being there, as Beckett has.

Berenger is also good as Beckett, a man close to the edge. Killing is the only thing that is left for him; that is, the only thing at which he is good. He has been driven to the edge and doesn't feel anything when he pulls the trigger.

Unfortunately, the film meanders on the way to the assignment. Not enough time is spent on the actual task, and the film begins to fall.

Even with a wandering plot line, the suspense and camera work still makes "Sniper" a movie worth seeing.

— Gerry Beltz

Ross Theater to show flicks as part of film studies program

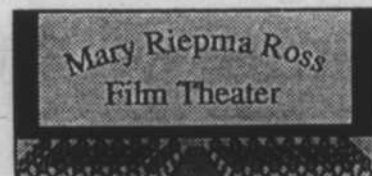
The film studies program offers the following films this week:

"First Comes Courage" is a Dorothy Arzner spy flick about a wartime resistance worker who uses her feminine wiles to gain secrets from the Nazis, but is then accused of being a Nazi sympathizer. Showing 1 p.m. Tuesday and 3:15 p.m. Wednesday at the Ross, and 7 p.m. Tuesday at Bessey Hall, room 117.

"The Last Laugh" is a silent film about a doorman who is callously demoted. It is the first film to employ a moving camera and experimental in its lack of title cards. Showing 3:15 p.m. Tuesday and 1 p.m. Wednesday at the Ross.

All film studies films are free and open to the public.

Rock Hudson's life, sexuality chronicled in touching movie



there on the screen all along."

Scenes from movies co-starring Tony Randall, Burl Ives, Kirk Douglas and others, are grouped to demonstrate the '50s codes for men picking up men.

When Hudson floors John Wayne in a Civil War flick, narrator Rock claims it as a shining moment, a "triumph of my people over his people."

The "feminization" of Hudson by Hollywood writers and casting directors is also addressed. Thus his role as a sensitive man who doesn't want to go fishing ("fear of fishing and heterosexual panic are closely intertwined") or as a straight man who pretends to be gay to persuade Doris Day to seduce him.

"Rock Hudson's Home Movies" is showing along with "Postcards," another film by Rappaport, at the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater for one weekend only. Showtimes are Thursday through Sunday at 7 & 9 p.m. Matinees are Saturday at 1 and 3 p.m. and Sunday at 3 and 5 p.m.

— Calvin Clinchard

"Rock Hudson's Home Movies" presents a humorous and ultimately touching vision of Hudson's life on the silver screen.

Eric Farr gives an amateurish performance as Rock, but his delightfully camp narration holds together this collage of clips from Hudson's films.

Farr's Hudson begins with his earliest interest in acting and ends with his death from AIDS in 1985.

Amazed that no one figured out he was gay before his death, he quips, "Being gay isn't quite as horrible as being dead, even by the most conservative standards."

Writer/director Mark Rappaport intends his arrangement of film clips to show that Rock's sexuality "was up

New Goodman flick comical



"Matinee" (The Lincoln, 12th and P streets) is a silly period comedy set during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

It follows Doogie Howser look-alike Gene Loomis (Simon Fenton), a lonely 14-year-old boy whose sailor father is away in the thick of things off the coast of Cuba.

New to Key West, Florida ("the make-out capital of the world"), Gene struggles to make friends off the base while he submerges himself in the world of horror flicks.

His hero of sorts is schlock film producer Lawrence Woolsey (John Goodman). Woolsey's got a penchant for foot-long stogies and horror films about humans mutated by nuclear power leaks. His specialty: interactive theater, complete with Tunnelvision, Rumble Rama and shock-inducing theater seats.

Woolsey makes an appearance in Key West to promote his newest masterpiece, "Mant," in a last ditch effort to save his career. There he and Gene meet, strike up a friendship and a deal, and find themselves saving the day.

With "Matinee," "Gremlins" director Joe Dante has created a tribute to "B" horror films like no other — the influence of horror hero Roger Corman is obvious throughout.

Screenwriter Charlie Haas captured the pressing matters of a 14-year-old boy perfectly, especially the preoccupation with the opposite sex and the escapism to the Saturday afternoon matinee.

The script falters a bit with its attention to the many subplots: Gene is befriended by Stan (Omri Katz) who is desperately in lust with Sherry (Kellie Martin) who's fighting off the attention of old boyfriend-turned-thief and reform-school dropout, Harvey.

The acting is solid throughout. Goodman is always funny and always worth watching. Cathy Moriarty plays Woolsey's star, on screen and off, to dry perfection. The young actors are good, too.

"Matinee" is not going to appeal to everyone. But for anyone who loves the nostalgia of the early '60s or who loves bad horror flicks, "Matinee" is a must-see.

— Anne Steyer



This Week's Video Releases

It's not a bad week for video. There's a little something for everyone: comedy, suspense and drama.

"Mo' Money" Damon Wayans (Fox's "In Living Color") wrote, produced and starred in this raucous comedy/slight thriller.

Wayans is a petty con artist whose head is turned by sexy Stacey Dash. He cons his way into a job in order to meet her. His path of least resistance gets him in a bit of trouble when he gets sidetracked by a Gordon Gekko wannabe.

"Unlawful Entry" From the director of "The Accused" comes this sometimes tasteless, often bloody, thriller about a nice suburban couple and their friendly, obsessive neighborhood cop.

Kurt Russell is the real-estate developer trying to close a big deal. Madeleine Stowe is his beautiful teacher wife who hates being kept in the dark about business details. Their communication problem is just the beginning.

When their home is burglarized and Stowe is assaulted, in waltzes detective Ray Liotta. Under the guise of being helpful, he infiltrates their home and their lives, wreaking havoc every step of the way.

The mediocrity of the film is saved by solid acting and there are some truly startling moments. Overall, "Unlawful Entry" is a very disturbing film.

"Where Angels Fear to Tread" The latest adaptation of an E.M. Forster novel boasts an all-star British cast and fine production values.

The story follows the life of a newly widowed woman in England who travels to rural Italy to find comfort from her loss. There, she becomes involved in a whirlwind courtship with a younger man, marries again and has a child, much to the dismay of her family back in England.

All releases available tomorrow.

— Anne Steyer