

DiCaprio's young career growing fast

By The Associated Press

Getting attention is not hard for Leonardo DiCaprio, blond, with a tousled, brooding look and a bad-boy image.

DiCaprio, who turns 23 on Nov. 11, received his first name after kicking his mother inside the womb as she studied a Leonardo da Vinci painting.

At age 5, he was booted from the set of the kiddie show "Romper Room" because of his uncontrollable behavior.

It would be 11 years until he landed a big-screen role. In the meantime, he had to settle for some 30 commercials and a handful of guest appearances on "The New Lassie," "Roseanne" and "Santa Barbara." One agent rejected him for having "the wrong haircut."

At age 16, DiCaprio finally landed a successful, regular role as a homeless boy in the sitcom "Growing Pains."

By 1992, DiCaprio had beaten out 400 other boys to grab the breakthrough part of Tobias Wolff in "This Boy's Life." One critic had the temerity to say the young upstart outshone the star, Robert De Niro.

DiCaprio continued to grab the attention of the critics with his next outing, "What's Eating Gilbert Grape," playing Johnny Depp's brother. Bang: Academy Award nomination.

Suddenly DiCaprio found himself hailed as the new rebel — the young half-man, half-boy Hollywood loves so much to devour. The successor to River Phoenix and Brad Pitt was on deck.

"I want to take my time with each role, and that's how you plan a long career rather than doing it all at once in a big explosion," DiCaprio says.

DiCaprio is already streaking: He acquitted himself well in the retelling of Romeo and Juliet, with Claire Danes, and in "Marvin's Room," with Meryl Streep and Diane Keaton.

Next up is "Titanic." Then there's "The Man in the Iron Mask." Woody Allen has already snagged him for his next movie.

"He has an innate ability to get under the skin of a character that I believe even he himself doesn't quite understand," says David Rubin, who cast DiCaprio in "William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet."

"He's one of the most instinctual young actors today." And he got to keep his haircut.

Old films scoring with moviegoers

By GERRY BELTZ
Assignment Reporter

Douglas Theatre Co. took a gamble, and it has paid off.

For the last three weeks, its Cinema Twin Theatre, 201 N. 13th St., has devoted a screen to playing older movies from the 1940s and '50s. Films such as "Casablanca," "Summer Stock," "Citizen Kane" and (opening Friday) "Meet Me In St. Louis" all have enjoyed weeklong runs on the big screen once again, much to the delight of both moviegoers and DTC personnel.

"Everyone has been really excited about it, especially those people who haven't been to the movies in quite a while," said Jennifer Speck, manager of the Cinema Twin. "We didn't sell out, but the people who have come to the movies have loved it, so it's been worth it."

Frank Rhodes, film booker for DTC, said he also was pleased with the films' attention.

"Personally, I think the response has been sensational, especially for this market, where there is no real classic art theater in the city of Lincoln," he said.

Rhodes said DTC tried to book several other films, such as "The Maltese Falcon," "Key Largo" and "North By Northwest," but to no avail.

"A lot of the films we wanted were already booked out," Rhodes said. "Some of the films did have prints available but were in too bad of condition to bring in."

"We're not going to bring in a film and have it break five or six times during a one-week run," Rhodes said. "We want to offer the best possible product to our customers."

Although the older films are done playing for this year, talks have already begun about the prospect of running the series sometime in early

1998.

"There's a possibility of it starting again in January, but it could be in February or even March when it begins," Rhodes said.

"It's hard in wintertime to get people to trudge through the snow to go to a movie," Speck said. "That's what killed us with 'Summer Stock,' but we're hoping to go out with a bang with 'Meet Me In St. Louis.'"

"I think if we do it again, we will be booking a group of films all at one time. This time, we started with two, then two turned into four. Next time, we will book more films ahead of time and have a set schedule."

Speck said organizing the project had been long and hard, but worth it.

"I would love to do this again," she said. "I've had a fabulous time. People have taken the time to write the office, and those letters really support me in my work."

"I've really benefited from these shows as a manager because I have gotten to talk a lot more to my customers," Speck said. "The people who are coming to these movies have something to say. They come out of these movies energized and want to share that energy with you."

Deby Brehm, vice president of DTC, said although phone calls and letters have been a medium of support for the classic films, most of the fanfare has come over the Internet — and from students.

"Our electronic mailbox has been very full," Brehm said. "People have been writing in, telling us how much they appreciate we are offering movie classics."

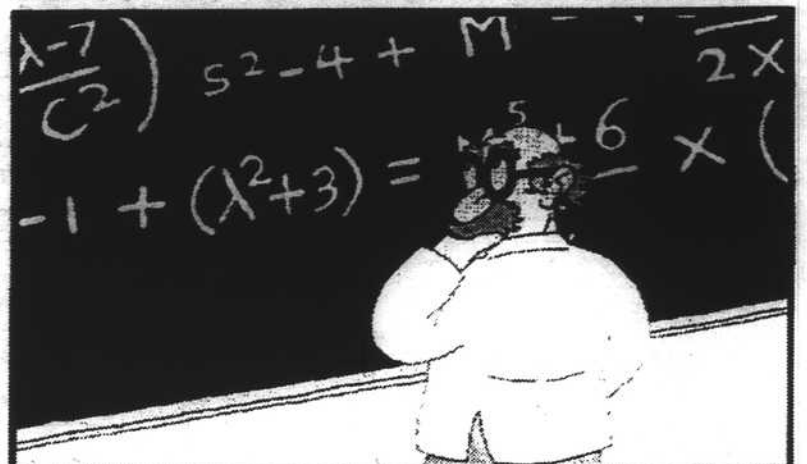
"The majority of the e-mail has been coming from students — an average of about four a day for the last three weeks. Most of them also name off movies they would like us to try to get, and I turn those lists over to our film booker."

"We will continue to try to respond to the public requests."

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