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DAVID AND BEAN (from left, Peter MacNicol and Rowan Atkinson) react to their over-amped interactive theater seats in "Bean."

PHOTO COURTESY OF GRAMERCY PICTURES

New character will 'bean' audiences with laughter

Ace Ventura may have some competition

BY GERRY BELTZ
Film Critic

Mr. Bean makes Ace Ventura look like a Tibetan monk.

While American audiences have been laughing at Ace's antics for the last few years, British audiences have been laughing at Rowan Atkinson's hapless, bumbling Bean character on TV and at his live show since the early 1990s.

And now, Mr. Bean is in his own movie, "Bean."

(OK, no points for originality.)

Mr. Bean is a bumbling security guard at the London National Art Gallery, and the only reason he hasn't been fired up to this point is his being in the good graces of the chairman of the gallery's board. However, the rest of the board hatches a plot to unleash Bean on an unsuspecting United States by sending him as an art expert to unveil the masterpiece "Whistler's Mother" at a Los Angeles museum.

Bean, of course, knows about as much about fine art as the Academic Senate seems to know about racial sensitivity. This guy is a bumbling idiot who could stand motionless on a street corner and still manage to find chaos and mayhem.

The museum's curator, David (Peter MacNicol), has agreed to take Bean into his home during his stay, much to the chagrin of David's family, who moves out almost immediately because of Bean's outrageous antics.

David just dismisses this behavior as eccentricity and cultural differences, and as Bean is a man of very few words and doesn't speak up about his lack of art knowledge, the craziness continues ...

Bean doesn't just have a gift for finding disaster wherever he goes, but he also manages to create disaster from just a few simple gestures or actions, such as eating an M&M or washing his hands.

"Bean" basically is a series of TV episodes all strung together

The Facts

Title: "Bean"
Stars: Rowan Atkinson, Peter MacNicol, Pamela Reed
Director: Mel Smith
Rating: PG-13 (a little bit of mature humor and profanity)
Grade: B
Five Words: Weird, wild and wacky humor.

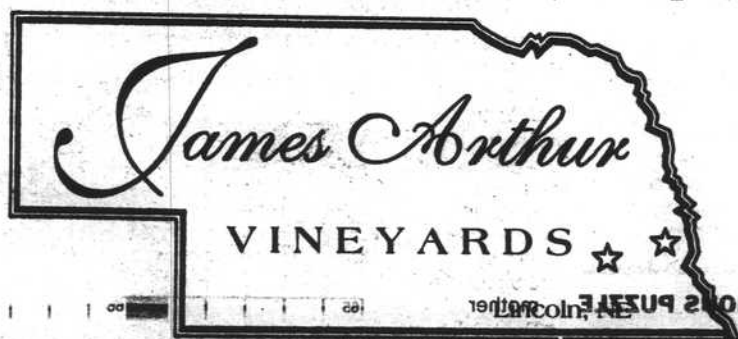
with a common theme, but that doesn't stop the film from being a scream. Bean has the luck of a dead man, running into one bad situation after another, and still comes out smelling like a rose.

Will "Bean" meet with the same success Ace had? Probably not; American audiences need to be spoon-fed their humor a lot more than the British.

Is the movie worth seeing? Definitely, if not just for watching a grown man stumble around with his head stuck inside of a raw chicken.

Like Ace? Check out "Bean."

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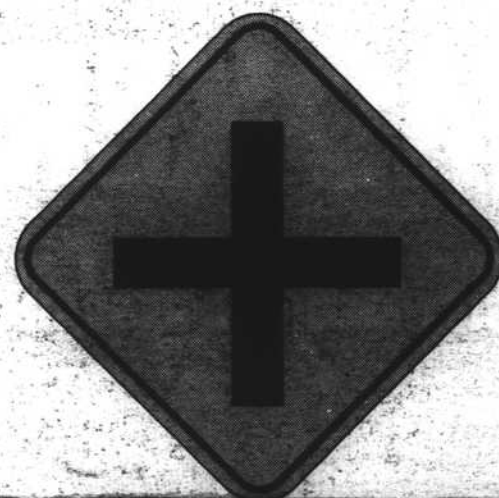
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