

Entertainment

'Red Hot Lover' flared on screen

ASK DICK KLEINER



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By Dick Kleiner

Q. I recently saw Don Knotts in the play "The Last of the Red Hot Lovers." Was that ever made into a movie? — J.L.T., Plainwell, Mich.

A. Yes, it was filmed in '72, with Alan Arkin, Sally Kellerman and Paula Prentiss. It's probably available at your neighborhood video market.

Q. What does Rocky J. Squirrel's ("The Bullwinkle Show") middle initial mean? — J.B., Santa Fe, Texas.
A. Nothing. Rocky is a fictional character, of course, so his middle name is fictional, too. Make one up to suit yourself.

Q. Brian Keith starred in a TV show in the 1970s. Sebastian Cabot was his butler. What was the name of the show? What were the names of the three kids in it? Didn't one of them die? — K.M., Point of Rocks, Md.

A. That was "Family Affair," with Keith, Cabot, Anissa Jones, Johnnie Whitaker and Kathy Garver. Jones has passed away.

Q. Years ago, I saw the movie "Pandora and the Flying Dutchman." I loved it and Ava Gardner was so good in it. I've watched many old movies, but never see this one. Why not? — G.B., Whitefish, Mt.

A. That '50 release, starring James Mason and Gardner, was poorly received, despite your praise. But it has been on TV from time to time. It may show up again.

Q. Are Ralph Macchio ("Karate Kid") and Tony Danza ("Who's the Boss?") brothers? And why do they



Don Knotts Brian Keith

Q. Please settle an argument between my daughter and myself. She said Mark Harmon played on "Flamingo Road" as the guy who married Morgan Fairchild and was in love with Cristina Raines. She said he also played on "Falcon Crest" as Richard Channing. Please settle this before my daughter and I lose our good mother/daughter relationship. — R.L.M., Houston.

A. I assume you disagreed with her about both of her ideas. She's right on the first — Harmon was Fielding Carlyle on "Flamingo Road." But she's wrong on the second — the part of Richard Channing was played by David Selby. That should keep both mother and daughter content.
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have different last names? — J.B., Portage, Mich.
A. They are unrelated, which accounts for the different last names.

Q. Some years ago a movie was produced called "The Great Meadow," with a pioneer background about the settlement of Kentucky. The movie received a rave from Life Magazine for the excellent photography. In what year was it released? — J.H.E., Malvern, Ar.
A. That was a 1931 release.

(Send your questions to: Ask Dick Kleiner, c/o Newspaper Enterprise Association, 200 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10166. Due to the volume of mail, personal replies cannot be provided.)

Midler's at her sassy best in 'Beaches'

By Robert DiMatteo

In Movie Theaters

BEACHES (PG-13) From her very first scene, Bette Midler takes this movie, puts it in her pocket, and never gives it back. Playing a musical comedy star who makes up in charm and chutzpah what she lacks in perfect looks, Bette is at her sassy best. If, while watching her recent wacko comedy roles, you've wondered what happened to the heart-on-her-sleeve Midler of "The Rose," this movie shows you she's alive and well.

Alas, most of "Beaches" is dead on arrival. It's a shameless hybrid of that women's-picture weeper "Old Acquaintance," "Rich and Famous" (the remake of "Acquaintance"), "Turning Point" and "Terms of Endearment."

Barbara Hershey — fresh from plastic surgery that makes her look more perfectly beautiful, but also less interesting — co-stars as Bette's opposite number, a sleek WASP princess who becomes an earnest, successful ACLU lawyer.

Following the friendship of these two very different women from childhood on, "Beaches" finally arrives at one of those tear-jerker climaxes that, depending on your tolerance for manipulation, will either warm your heart or make you retch.

Through it all, Bette shines. She sings several songs, with each arriving like a present for the viewers. Lainie Kazan livens things up briefly as Bette's brass-lunged mother, and two child actresses are wonderfully effective as young versions of the Midler and Hershey characters. A case could be made that the two or three best written (and most sustained) scenes in the movie are the childhood ones in which the two stars don't even appear. **GRADE: ★★★**

WORKING GIRL (R) Melanie Griffith — that slightly dizzy, breathy-voiced actress with a tantalizing edge of sexual effrontery — is cast to full advantage in this entertaining romantic comedy. Griffith plays Tess McGill, a guppy among the sharks of corporate Manhattan. Prime barracuda is her boss Sigourney Weaver, a pretentiously self-centered exec who thinks nothing of appropriating Tess' bright ideas for her own.

Adding spice to the stew is fellow exec Harrison Ford: Tess approaches him with her idea, along with way succumbing to his Gary Cooper charm. Little does she know that he's also Sigourney's main man.

Written by Kevin Wade, the movie is slickly satiric — just like Wade's play "Key Exchange." At its most serious, it suggests that women can bring something humane to the male-dominated world of big business. (The Sigourney Weaver character is more of a cutthroat than any of the male execs.)

The script is just serviceable at

times, especially in the later scenes when farcical complications fail to build as effortlessly as they might. But the actors are a lot of fun to watch, and this may be director Mike Nichols' liveliest movie in years. **GRADE: ★★★**

TWINS (PG) As a genetically perfect specimen of manhood raised on a remote island — who suddenly learns that he has a twin brother — Arnold Schwarzenegger shows some warmth and a flair for silliness in this otherwise disappointing comedy.

The brother is played by Danny DeVito — hardly your candidate for genetic perfection. Once the boys get acquainted, they team up to find their long-lost mother, while dodging thugs and driving a stolen car with a prize discovery hidden in the trunk.

DeVito is more subdued than usual, which is nice. He seems to be willing to hand the picture over to Schwarzenegger, who responds with a non-stop show of glee; he often seems to be grinning from ear to ear.

Face in the Crowd

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