

# CINEMA

## Review

### Back to the Future

Directed by Robert Zemeckis; screenplay by Robert Zemeckis and Bob Gale; with Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd, Lea Thompson and Crispin Glover.

There's nothing wrong with making movies about pop culture, as long as they're made right. Robert Zemeckis makes them right. His debut feature, *I Wanna Hold Your Hand*, captured the manic fervor of the Beatles' first American appearance on the Ed Sullivan show, and his second feature, *Used Cars* (co-written with Bob Gale), became a cult hit comedy with its wild satire on local politics, small businesses and superstition. *Back to the Future* teams Zemeckis and Gale up again as they take a nostalgic trip back to 1955 with an underachieving 80's would-be rock guitarist and an atomically souped up DeLorean.

Michael J. Fox (the best thing about TV's *Family Ties*) is confident, smart alecky Marty McFly, the only together member of his misfit family, which includes a plump mother with Victorian attitudes (Lea Thompson) and a nerdy dad who is walked on by everyone (Crispin Glover). Apart from his girlfriend, the only person he likes to be around is the town character Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd in a characteristically deranged performance), a mad scientist type whose time travel experiment is interrupted by the untimely appearance of a small band of Libyan guerrillas.

Marty tries to make his escape in the test vehicle. Before he knows it, he's driven 30 years into the past, met his dad-to-be (who is already the spineless wimp that he grows up to be) and blundered into the event that brought his parents together those oh-so-many years ago. Now he's the boy his mother nursed back to health and made rather blatant advances to. This not only sends Marty into a Freudian panic but endangers his very birth, as a much younger but still rather mad Doc Brown in-



Marty (Michael J. Fox) and inventor Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd) witness the first test of Doc's time machine.

forms him. Doc will work on fixing the out-of-fuel DeLorean, but it's up to Marty to brainstorm a meeting between his parents to correct the one he ruined with his untimely appearance.

Zemeckis and Gale cleverly engineer a history for the family and the town within the first few minutes, a history which is tied into the remainder of the film in some rather bizarre ways. Yet the focus of the film is not on the intricate plotting but on the culture shock of Marty and the cute nostalgic touches that Zemeckis and Gale pile all over the picture. Along with the obligatory Reagan B-picture playing at the local cinema, the first thing Marty spots in hometown '55 is a car receiving full service by four attendants (!) at a local gas station. In a nicely constructed chase from bully Biff Tannen, Marty takes the body off a homemade scooter and wows the town on the first skateboard they've ever seen. My favorite bit is the high school dance where Marty winds up playing guitar,

encoring with a rousing rendition of a classic oldie, "Johnny B. Goode" (which Chuck Berry would write and record three years later). His classic Berry riffs turn into a history of rock guitar solos, and his finale leaves a crowd of open mouthed prom dancers puzzling out his screeching feedbacking and epileptic throws on the stage floor.

What really makes the picture come alive, though, is the marvelous sense of wonder and excitement Zemeckis brings to the script. He genuinely likes his characters, even wimpy Dad, and so the humor is never mean spirited. On its own the screenplay provides a very funny show, but Zemeckis' warm direction provides an energetic charm that marks all of his films, most notably his *Raiders* pastiche *Romancing the Stone*. Except for an overwritten finale that tries to top each succeeding climax, the picture is an amiable, hilarious success and a wonderful little comment on pop culture past and present.

—Sean Axmaker

## NOW SHOWING

**All of Me:** Lily Tomlin, a wealthy spinster who doesn't want to die, hires a mystic to transplant her soul to the body of a beautiful young woman. Her inept lawyer (Steve Martin) bumbles into the ceremony, the mystic's aim is off, and Martin and Tomlin are zapped into one body. Carl Reiner directs, screenplay by Alden Robinson. Shows with *Mask*. Fine Arts (747-2201).

**Back to the Future:** A boy trips back to the past, and meets the teenagers who'll become his parents. West 11th (342-4142) and Springfield Quad (726-9073).

**Beverly Hills Cop:** Eddie Murphy is a Detroit cop who comes to Beverly Hills to solve the murder of his best friend. Directed by Martin Brest (*Going in Style*). Shows with *Trading Places*. Oakway (342-5351).

**Cocoon:** Old people become young again through contact with benevolent aliens. Stars Maureen Stapleton (*Reds*), Hume Cronyn (*World According to Garp*), Don Ameche and Jessica Tandy. Directed by Ron Howard (*Splash*). (We remember Ron as Ople from TV's *Andy Griffith Show* and *Happy Days*.) National (344-3431).

**Emerald Forest:** Cultures collide as a man searches the Amazon jungle for his long lost son. Based on a true story. Directed by John Boorman (*Excalibur*, *Deliverance*). Cinema World (342-6536).

**The Explorers:** Three kids seek adventure in their new spaceship. West 11th (342-4142) and McDonald (344-4343).

**Goonies:** Steven Spielberg produced this exciting adventure for young adults about a group of kids searching for treasure who must outwit the bandits and bank robbers to reach the climactic happy ending. Shot in Astoria, OR. Directed by Ric Donner (*Omen*, *Superman*). Mayflower (345-1022).

**Ladies on the Rocks:** Two women on the road with their feminist stage show. A Danish tragic-comedy. Shows at Cinema 7 (687-0733).

**Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome:** This is Mel Gibson's third film as Australia's postapocalyptic hero. Eternal rock star Tina Turner provides the challenge. Be ready for lots of violent action. Valley River Twin (686-8633) and Springfield Quad (726-9073).

**Mask:** Cher is the perfect biker mama in this "Elephant Man" (true-life) story about a teenage boy with a horribly disfigured face. Newcomer Eric Stoltz (*The Wild Life*) is sensitive and poignant as the misfit whose mother's love gives him the courage to live. Cher is tough and funny and sweet. The bikers give the film its comic relief, and provide a support community of misfits in which Mom and son live, work and play. Shows with *All of Me*. Fine Arts (747-2201).

**My New Partner:** An aging, corrupt cop gets teamed up with a young, idealistic rookie in this French comedy. So who proves to be the stronger influence? A wacky sort of thriller. (Subtitled.) At the Bijou (686-2458).

**Pale Rider:** Clint Eastwood rides again. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

**Prizzi's Honor:** Mobster hit man Jack Nicholson marries a beautiful woman (Kathleen Turner, *Romancing the Stone*) who turns out to be a bona fide hit woman herself. Should be intense. John Huston directs. Cinema World (342-6536).

**Rambo—First Blood Part II:** If you liked *Code of Silence*, you'll love *Rambo*. This film picks up where *First Blood* left off—that is, with Sylvester Stallone in prison for shooting apart a whole town. The government hires Rambo to go to Vietnam and get proof of POW's. West 11th (342-4142).

**Red Sonja:** Arnold "Conan" Schwarzenegger and his trusty sword out to help his red-headed boss. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

**Repo Man:** Emilio Estevez as a disillusioned punker-turned-repo man trying to latch onto a very, very hot chevy malibu. A surprising and original satire for the cult circuit. Late show through Saturday at the Bijou (686-2458).

**St. Elmo's Fire:** Dramatic comedy. Too old to keep playing teenagers, Emilio Estevez (*Repo Man*, *The Breakfast Club*), Ally Sheedy (*Wargames*), Andrew McCarthy (*Heaven Help Us*) and friends turn into college grads. Cinema World (342-6536).

**Silverado:** A real Western, for Pete's sake, with touches of humor and tenderness. Written and directed by Lawrence Kasdan (*The Big Chill*), and featuring a fine cast. At Cinema World (342-6536).

**Trading Places:** Dan Aykroyd plays a stuffed shirt stock broker. Eddie Murphy is the down-and-out street hustler. Their roles are reversed by two eccentric billionaires trying to settle an argument. Shows with *Beverly Hills Cop* at Oakway (342-5351).

**A View to a Kill:** James Bond (Roger Moore) engages in mortal battle with a psychotic industrialist (Christopher Walken, *Brainstorm*) and Villainess Grace Jones to save Silicon Valley from being captured, blown-up and GASP! tumbled into the ocean. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

—Michael Sussman

**CINEMA 7** 687-0733

*Ladies on the Rocks*

Oregon Premiere

Director: Christian Braad Thomsen (Denmark 1983) 35 mm 100 min.

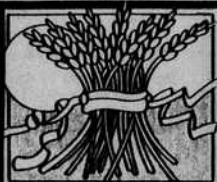
Shows: Fri-Sat. 7:30 & 9:30 pm  
Mon-Thurs. at 8:00 pm Sunday matinee 2:00 pm

At last, a very funny road movie in which the "buddies" are women; an aging rocker and a sensual hausfrau who travel through Denmark with an uproarious and bizarre feminist stage show. Danish critics have applauded the film's "tragicomic and in-spite-of-everything optimism," its "warmth and generosity" and its "own original courage."

"A sweet, sort of pint-sized ENTRE NOUS, about the friendship of two women." Canby, NY TIMES "An unusual, exuberantly acted, provocative film." Diane Jacobs, VILLAGE VOICE

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A Sunday in the Country ends Thursday, July 11 Shows 7:15 & 9:15

**My New Partner Starts Friday, July 12**

"★★★★★ WICKEDLY FUNNY!"  
—William Wolf, Gannett News Service

**MY NEW PARTNER**  
(LES RIPOUX)

WINNER OF 3 FRENCH ACADEMY AWARDS (Césars) Including Best Picture, Best Director

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Miser Monday admission \$3

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**REPO MAN** Thursday 11:15 Fri-Sat midnight