Ryan, with help from Matthau, shines in I.Q.


By Jimmy Wong

Those who enjoyed Sleepless in Seattle may initially be shocked that Meg Ryan has become a doctoral candidate in mathematics in her new movie, I.Q. Don't worry — she is still the warm, vivacious character that her fans have come to love. Her strong performance, as well as an exceptional performance by Walter Matthau as Albert Einstein, makes this film a good addition to the romantic comedy genre.

The story begins as Ryan and her uptight fiancé (Stephen Fry) make an emergency stop at an auto repair shop. One of the mechanics (Tim Robbins) instantly falls in love with her but can't seem to bridge the apparent intellectual gap. When Ryan leaves her watch behind, he decides to take a chance and return it. He then finds out that she lives with her uncle, physicist Albert Einstein.

Fortunately for Robbins' character, the great scientist and his friends (LouJacobi, Gene Salk, Joe Maz) take an instant liking to him and decide to help him out. Their task is not easy.

Ryan's character, Catherine Boyd, is determined to marry a genius so that her children will be brilliant like her uncle. Her self-centered fiancé, James, has already established himself as a respected scholar in psychology. The old men, who think that James is a snob, decide the only way to get the Robbins' character, Ed Walters, and Catherine together is to give Ed the illusion of genius.

Surprisingly, it is not Ryan or Robbins who stands out in the film, but Matthau. His quirky Einstein comes up with a crazy plan that begins innocently but soon draws President Eisenhower to Princeton University. Einstein's incredible ideas as well as the hilarious antics of his friends bring a fresh perspective to romance. They prove that there are few situations that senior citizens can't handle — getting involved in everything from friendly sabotage to emergency damage control.

Fans of Ryan will not be disappointed either, especially those who like her performances in Sleepless in Seattle and When Harry Met Sally. Her simple charm and endless energy once again demonstrate why she is so effective in these romantic comedies.

Little Women still enjoyable for a 1990's audience


For those of you not familiar with Louisa May Alcott, she was a New Englander who tells the story of the four March sisters, Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy, Little Women is about their struggles against poverty, inequality, and sickness.

The main character is Jo March (played by Winona Ryder), a tomboy, an educator, and an aspiring writer. She is the leader of the sisters in their various entertainments and adventures. The eldest is Meg (Trini Alvarado), more serious than Jo, she is concerned with the prospect of marriage. Beth (Clare Danes) is the quiet, caring one. And Amy (played by Kirsten Dunst and Samantha Mathis) is the youngest, most worldly of the sisters.

Taking place in the 19th century, theirs is a picturesque world — a world of candlelight, lace, and drawn curtains. The audience follows the sisters through the years. We watch as they grow older and go in different directions as they pursue their interests. And we also see that despite the physical distance between them, the sisters remain close.

Little Women is a feminine movie. The family has a strong matronly figure found in Marmee, portrayed superbly by Susan Sarandon. The father has an insignificant role as do the old men, who think that James is a snob, decide the only way to get the Robbins' character, Ed Walters, and Catherine together is to give Ed the illusion of genius.

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