

Arts and Entertainment

POPCORN™

Austin Powers:

The Spy Who Shagged Me:

Zany Sleuth Will Seduce Diehard Fans

By Michael S. Goldberger

One Popcorn, Poor • Two Popcorns, Fair • Three Popcorns, Good • Four Popcorns, Excellent



3 popcorns

We all have a friend who makes us laugh more than anyone else. The mere utterance of certain catchphrases has us holding our sides and begging for mercy. Stand-up comics, motion picture clowns and sitcom jesters simply can't hold a candle to these personal humorists. My funny friend is Benny.

For those who don't know him, might I suggest, even at this late date it's probably worth going through all the rigmarole (whether dinner invites, business luncheons or theater tickets) of becoming his friend — just to claim your share of custom-fit humor.

While that may or may not be possible, note that a very similar dynamic is key to appreciating funnyman Michael Myers's *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me*. Granted, his follow-up to 1997's cult comedy phenomenon, *Austin Powers: International Man Of Mystery*, has plenty of its own zaniness to recommend it; but a familiarity with the absolutely absurd world inhabited by sex-crazed secret agent Austin Powers and his foppish alter ego, Dr. Evil (both played by Mr. Myers), will assure your guffawing entrance into Mr. Myers' giant private joke.

For those not among the Powersian cognoscenti, it bears noting that the British title character, a transplanted 60's era icon ("I put the grrr in groovy"), did his last secret agent adventuring in the 1990s. Then, unfrozen after 30 years on ice because he was (and still is) the only one who could defeat Dr. Evil, the refugee from the land of paisley successfully dispatched the bad guy, saved the world, and got the girl.

The objective is identical this time. Except that the action is moved back to the Carnaby Street-attired 60's. The change in venue is necessitated when Dr. Evil acquires a time machine.

After he escapes from his outer space Elba, we learn of his return to Earth in one of the film's more memorable scenes, when he and his issue-laden son, Scott, appear on the "Jerry Springer Show" in an episode titled, "My Evil Father Wants To Take Over The World."

Scott speaks the truth. In this variation on the nefarious theme, Dr. Evil's scheme is to travel back to 1969, where Powers is still frozen, and filch the mojo from his cryogenically challenged nemesis. Rendering the mod hero impotent, both literally and figuratively, His Evilness will then be able to blackmail the U.S. President (Tim Robbins) with his Death Ray (one of several *Star Wars* rip-offs), menacingly aimed at Washington, D.C., from its perch on the Moon.

Happily, insofar as Austin's coyly nicknamed libido is concerned, it just so happens that Her Majesty's Secret Service has also developed a time machine; this allows the cinema's most outlandish ladies man, velvet suit and all, to chase his arch enemy back in time and defend his, well, his honor, so to speak.

In the film, as well as in the various and ubiquitous product advertisements that have hitched themselves to the Austin Powers star, it has become a smirkingly competitive exercise to see how many different bawdy euphemisms for male private parts can be issued in marathon frenzy.

The movie boasts two such stunts, featuring a star-studded chorus of welcome cameo appearances. It's really very silly. Childish, actually. But it's precisely this counterbalancing combination of absolutely adolescent naughtiness and scattershot satire that comprises the bizarre charm of things Austin Powers in the first place.

The buoyant sequel takes pot shots at just about anything, whether director Jay Roach can smoothly integrate it into the plot or not. The wildly creative hits outweigh the misses.

A hydrogen bomb of double entendres, Mr. Myers' ribald send-up of the 007 genre is a bold, liberating declaration of political incorrectness, mixing playground humor with its very own resurrection of classic burlesque sensibilities. And as with bad puns, we both grimace and laugh at the sheer chutzpah of the screenplay's insanely broad strokes, spun before us like a cackling carousel of risqué postcards.

But scratch the surface of these racy antics and there's a good-natured naive to it all, a refreshing innocence in its juvenility. These aren't the disparagingly obscene rantings of an envelope-pushing shock-jock; there is no implied malice. Myers is the anti-Stern.

Some outrageous ploys don't work.

Completely disgusting but only funny in parts is the inclusion of an obese Scottish hitman (Myers also) in the employ of Dr. Evil, who, for propriety's sake, will simply be referred to here as Fat B. Half-naked and sloppily eating a bucket of fried chicken in bed, this is among the least offensive of Fat B's untidy assaults on the senses.

We can also do without the curious predominance of toilet humor, an odd entry in that this is a PG-13 movie and such scatological indelicacies are usually the province of the under 9 set; whether intended or not, the potty jokes are bound to be ruminated by said younger crowd once the film goes to video and plays the family room ad nauseam.

A novel touch this go-round is the introduction of Mini-Me (Verne J. Troyer), a miniature clone meant to satisfy Dr. Evil's world-dominating vanity. While Mr. Troyer is less an actor and more a catalytic oddity, his presence allows for some clever song and dance duets, including a particularly inspired rap routine.

In one of the picture's many running gags, the ridiculous little companion serves as an irksomely Freudian reminder to normal son Scott that he "just isn't evil enough" to earn Dad's love and approval. And in a return performance that holds a secret twist (and sends Scott to another cathartic appearance on the "Jerry Springer Show"), Mindy Sterling is back as Frau Farbissina, the wicked henchwoman no self-respecting megalomaniac should be without.

Among the more conventional cast is the usual retinue of suggestively named and visually alluring sexpots. These include Kristen Johnston as a Mata Hari pretending to be a fashion model and Elizabeth Hurley briefly reprising her role as wife Vanessa.

But when at the movie's outset it becomes obvious that Vanessa isn't exactly what she appears to be, Austin takes the sad realization and turns it into a positive: "Crikey! I'm single again."

Thus, arriving back in the free love 1960s matrimonially unfettered ("Yeah, baby!"), he is able to take up with winsome Felicity Shagwell (Heather Graham), an adoring C.I.A. sweetie ("You're the reason I decided to become a secret agent") assigned to aid him.

Never mind the rampant time travel inconsistencies. In fact, we're instructed to do just that in a stage whisper from Austin's boss, Basil Exposition, once again played by Michael York. And it's good advice, because the nostalgic lampoon of the 1960s, replete with a rub-your-eyes sidewalk cafe performance of "I'll Never Fall In Love Again" by Burt Bacharach and Elvis Costello, is then anachronistically paralleled with a variety of 90's notions.

In a car chase scene, Powers himself makes audiences a partner in the joke, pausing to confide how surprisingly similar to Southern California the English countryside looks. Art director Alexander Hammond's day-glow-enhanced sets spoof the times with colorful wit. Austin drives his Union Jack-adorned "Shaguar." Felicity wheels a Corvette decorated in the stars and stripes.

Laughter awaits those who can warm up to Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me. For those who simply can't or won't, the alternative is to travel back in time, sow the seeds of friendship with my pal Benny, and thus ensure yourself some laughs in the present.

Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me, a New Line Cinema release directed by Jay Roach, stars Mike Myers, Heather Graham and Seth Green. Running time: 95 minutes

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Community Band to Celebrate Musical Heritage

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Community Band, under the direction of Elias J. Zareva, will continue its 87th season of Summer Concert performances in Mindowaskin Park in Westfield on Thursday, July 1, at 8 p.m.

Celebrating Independence Day during the upcoming weekend, the band will feature an evening of patriotic, historical and family favorites such as "On the Mall," "Yankee Doodle," "Stars and Stripes," "Hoe Down," "Themes Like Old Times," and "Belle of the Ball."

The Sons of the American Revolution and Daughters of the American Revolution will join in the celebration. Sam McCaulley will reenact the role of the Town Crier. Senator Donald T. DiFrancesco will be the featured speaker for the



Elias J. Zareva

evening.

The band will continue its Summer Concert Series on Thursday, July 8 and 15 in Mindowaskin Park. The rain site will be the Westfield Community Room at the Municipal Building.

All events are free and open to the public. Participants should bring their own lawn chairs or blankets.

The Westfield Community Band is sponsored by the Westfield Recreation Commission, Glenn S. Burrell, Director. For more information, please call (908) 789-4080.

Fanwood Author, Adele Kenny, Awarded Freeholder Grant

FANWOOD — Fanwood author Adele Kenny has received a 1999 HEART Grant (History, Education, Art, Reaching Thousands), which will provide funding to establish a writing workshop series at the Patricia M. Kuran Cultural Arts Center in Fanwood.

Ms. Kenny has authored 19 books and her poetry, reviews, and non-fiction have appeared widely throughout North and South America, Europe, and Asia.

She has received numerous awards and honors for her writing, including two Fellowships in Poetry from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a Women of Excellence Award from the Union County Commission on the Status of Women, an Allen Ginsberg Award, a *Writer's Digest* Award, the Roseliep and Henderson Awards, and four Merit Book Awards.

In 1996, she was a featured poet in the "Poets Among Us" segment of the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry

Festival.

Ms. Kenny has also authored three grants, which will sponsor projects in Fanwood. She volunteers for the Can of Corn Project which provides food for the homeless and is a volunteer director of both the Carriage House Poetry Reading Series in Fanwood and the Fanwood Cultural Arts Committee.

She is a candidate for the Fanwood Borough Council and was recently appointed to the borough's Long Range Planning Committee and the Union County Air Traffic Advisory Board.

Ms. Kenny has taught in the Rahway Public Schools for 20 years as well as in the Graduate School at the College of New Rochelle, where she earned her master's degree.

The workshop series is scheduled to begin in the fall and will be open to the public free of charge. For more information, please call Ms. Kenny at (908) 889-7223.

Eugenie Gallery to Hold Opening Reception

SCOTCH PLAINS — Eugenie Gallery, 501 Park Avenue, Scotch Plains will present "Summer Salon 1999" featuring a variety of original pieces by artists Christina Buschiazio, Adam S. Garrett, Gilberti, Owen Kanzler, Zaza Khabuliani, Clara Manheim-Liss, Kelvin McCleendon, Ray A. Mobley, Mario Robinson and Peter Syak.

An opening reception will take place on Sunday, June 27, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the gallery.

The works will be featured from

day, June 27, to Friday, September 17. Gallery hours are Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The gallery will be closed on Tuesdays and Sundays.

Gallery summer hours are from Monday, June 28, to Friday, September 3, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

THE MAIN INGREDIENT

Pumpkin Cheesecake

Don't make the mistake of only associating pumpkin with the fall or Thanksgiving holiday -- it's a wonderfully light flavor for the summer too! Toting this dessert to your neighborhood picnic or Fourth of July bash will surely create some fireworks!

- 1 8 OUNCE PACKAGE OF CREAM CHEESE
- 3/4 CAN OF PUMPKIN FROM A 16 OUNCE CAN
- 1/4 CAN OF PUMPKIN
- 1/2 CUP OF LIGHT BROWN SUGAR
- 1 TEASPOON OF VANILLA EXTRACT
- 2 EGGS
- 2 CUPS OF NON-DAIRY WHIPPED TOPPING
- 1 1/2 TEASPOONS OF CLOVE
- 1 18-INCH GRAHAM CRACKER PIE CRUST

Cream cheese should be softened at room temperature. Mix cream cheese with 3/4 can of pumpkin, sugar, vanilla extract and clove. Blend eggs into the mixture. Beat for 10 minutes. Pour mixture into the crust and bake for 35 minutes in a 350 degree oven. Check the center of the pie before removing from the oven.

Blend remaining pumpkin filling with non-dairy topping. Swirl apple pie once it has been cooled for about 30 minutes-1 hour. Chill well.



TO SUBMIT A RECIPE FOR THE MAIN INGREDIENT, PLEASE MAIL, E-MAIL (MICHELLE@GOLEADER.COM) OR FAX TO MICHELLE'S ATTENTION BY FRIDAYS AT 4 P.M. FOR CONSIDERATION.

STATE OF THE ART



Music

Carmen will be performed by the New Jersey State Opera on Thursday, June 24, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, June 27, at 3 p.m. at the NJPAC. For tickets, please call 1-888-GO-NJPAC.

The Union County Summer Arts Festival will host Vince Calabrese who will perform Latin music on Thursday, June 24, at 8 p.m. at Friberger Park in Union; and the Westfield Community Concert Band on Thursday, June 24, at 8 p.m. at Mindowaskin Park in Westfield.

Tapping the Grey Sky: Grateful Dead Tribute will perform at The Crossroads on Thursday, June 24; Royal Scam: Steely Dan Tribute will take the stage on Friday, June 25, and Funky Black Widows will perform on Saturday, June 26. For more information, please call (908) 232-5666.

Journey and Foreigner will take the stage at the PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel on Saturday, June 26. Tom Petty will appear in concert on Wednesday, June 30. For ticket information, please call (732) 335-0400.

New Power Soul, a blues and rock and roll band, will perform at Memorial Park, Plainfield Avenue, in Berkeley Heights on Wednesday, June 30, at 7:30 p.m. Admission requires one canned food item.

Jazzfest '99 will be sponsored by The New Jersey Jazz Society at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison on Saturday, June 26, and Sunday, June 27, from noon to 6 p.m. One day tickets at \$30. Two day tickets are \$55. Children 12 and under are free. Students with ID are \$10. For further information, please call (800) 303-NJJS or visit www.njjs.org.

Art

Slate Painting will be demonstrated at Treasure Island in North Plainfield on Thursday, June 24, from 7 to 8 p.m.; Marbleizing will be taught on Friday, June 25, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.; Kid's Tye Dye will be demonstrated on Saturday,

June 26, from 3 to 4 p.m.; Kid's Sports Bottles will be made on Sunday, June 27, from 11:30 to 12:30 p.m.; Painting on Glass will be instructed on Monday, June 28, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. On Wednesday, June 30, Floral Design will be demonstrated from 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Literature

Barnes & Noble in Clark will host a health discussion, "Oh My Aching Back," on Monday, June 28, at 7:30 p.m. Financial Tips will be discussed on Tuesday, June 29, at 7:30 p.m. based on "Point and Figure Charting" by Thomas J. Dorsey. Norman Beim will offer a discussion and book signing for his novel, "Hymie and the Angel" on Wednesday, June 30, at 7:30 p.m. Comedy Night will include "On the Spot," an improvisational group, on Friday, June 25, from 8 to 10 p.m.

Mixed Bag

6th Raritan Street Fair on Sunday, June 27, from 12 to 6 p.m. on Somerset Street in Raritan off Route 287 or Route 22 to 202/206 South. The raindate will be July 4. For more information, please call (908) 996-3036.

Third Annual Garden State Craft Brewers' Festival will be held at Waterloo Village in Stanhope on Saturday, June 26, from noon to 5 p.m. A sampling of 75 beers will be available. For more information, please call (973) 347-0900.

The Meadowlands Fair will be held from Saturday, June 24, to Sunday, July 11, in the parking lot outside of Giants Stadium in East Rutherford. For ticket information, please call (201) 933-0199.

Irish Festival will celebrate everything Irish on Sunday, June 27, beginning at 9 a.m. Irish bands Wolfstones, Celtic Cross, The Whole Shabang, Willie Lynch and Celtic Rain.

Tibetan Monks to Perform Music at Area High School

WESTFIELD — Richard Gere Productions and the Loseling Institute will present "The Mystical Arts of Tibet: Sacred Music, Sacred Dance for World Healing" on Saturday, June 26, at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium of Westfield High School.

The monks have been featured on the Golden Globe-nominated soundtrack to the movie, *Seven Years in Tibet* and have performed with Phillip Glass in the premier presentation of his Academy Award nominated music to *Kundrun*.

Two of the CDs by monks have

achieved top 10 listing on the US charts. Tibetan multi-phonetic chanting was an integral part of the opening ceremony music composed by Mickey Hart at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. The monks have performed with Mr. Glass, Kitaro, Paul Simon, Patti Smith, Natalie Merchant, the Beastie Boys and others.

The concert will benefit the monks and Tibetan relief. Tickets will cost \$15. They may be purchased at the Town Bookstore and Nirvana, both of Westfield, or HealthBest in Union. Tickets may also be purchased at the door.



READY FOR THE GREAT WHITE WAY...The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of J. Ackerman Coles Elementary School in Scotch Plains recently sponsored a Variety Show entitled, "Broadway Bound" in the Terrill Middle School auditorium. This year's show was the largest production the school has performed in years. PTA Chairmen Tom D'Aloisio and Robin Price worked with a large group of parents and directors and the majority of the student population. Teachers and staff members performed a number entitled, "I've Lost My Homework." Pictured above, members of the entire cast perform "One" from A Chorus Line.

Parness Gallery Sets Reception For Contemporary Artist

WESTFIELD — Contemporary New Jersey artist, Edward M. Adams, will hold a one-man exhibition at Parness Gallery in Westfield from Sunday, June 27, to Sunday, July 18. An opening reception will be held on June 27 from 1 to 5 p.m. to meet Mr. Adams.

The artist utilizes the element of "spirit" in his paintings. He applies his paint without using brushes. Instead, he uses his hands, cloth, sticks, or other tools that create marks.

Mr. Adams is an accomplished

sculptor. A Holocaust Committee has commissioned the artist to create a 13-foot bronze statue to honor the memory of Raoul Wallenberg. The original creation is located in a park in New Jersey while 25 smaller versions were cast for acquisition by private collections.

One of these sculptures is owned by film director, Steven Spielberg. Mr. Adams has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Arizona, New York, Ohio and Chartres, France.