

MOSTLY MATINEE TIME 2010

By Dorothy Kurtz

Hello, and welcome to my second year of writing this column. In case you didn't read last year's MOSTLY MATINEE TIME (2009), I write a yearly column about one live show in Philadelphia and three films that I've seen in New York City. According to some editors, they have plenty of reports about live shows in NYC but not enough about live shows in other USA cities. They also mentioned that they don't have enough reports about cinemas and films being shown in NYC. Therefore, this has been the reason for my column. If you would like more details about films in NYC, I'd recommend the *New York Times*, especially the Friday "Weekender" section.

Saturday, April 3: A stretch of Broad Street in Philadelphia, most of it in Center City, was where the city officials decided to turn it into the "Avenue of the Arts" back in the 1990s. Although a few older theaters were already located here in the 1990s, later, newer theaters, concert halls, and other cultural institutions opened for business making this Philly's smaller version of NYC's Broadway. On the date above, I saw a show at one of those theaters along Broad Street. The show was *Red Hot Patriot: the Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins* at the Suzanne Roberts Theater, Broad St. at Lombard St. (215-985-0420 or 866-985-0420). This theater was one of the newer cultural

institutes in the neighborhood. Therefore, after I picked up my tickets, I waited in the contemporary-styled lobby-lounge area until about 15 minutes before show time. Once inside the auditorium, I watched actress Kathleen Turner play journalist/author Molly Ivins. For almost an hour and a half, Ms. Turner mostly kept me laughing as I learned more about Molly Ivins life, both personal and professional--and especially Ms. Ivins famous witty sayings and opinions. Aside from actor Billy Kametz in a non-speaking role as a copy boy, this was a one-person show. With the aid of projected pictures in the background, I found out that at different times in her career, Molly Ivins worked for four different newspapers in her native Texas and the *New York Times*. Her syndicated column appeared in over 300 publications where the readers read her witty and liberal views on politics. She also wrote three best-selling books; Lou Dubose co-wrote two of those books with her. She kept up her witty and liberal views until her death in 2007 of breast cancer. During this show, Ms. Turner kept delivering one of Molly Ivins's witty sayings after another. So much so, that I couldn't keep track of them all. I wish I had heard of Molly Ivins sooner. She spared nobody of her criticism and wit if she thought they were doing something wrong. In the end, she made the *Texas Observer* and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) recipients of her will. In her own words: "I can't think of

anything I'd rather do with my worldly goods than fund folks who will be a pain in the ass to whatever powers come to be."

Saturday, May 1: Keeping on the subject of kicking asses, the film I saw in NYC on the date above was called *Kick Ass* at the Clearview Chelsea cinema, 260 W.23rd St. between 7th and 8th Aves. (212-505-2463). The Art-Deco exterior of this cinema also carried on a bit inside, especially in the main lobby. Here, I sat on a stuffed chair and watched some film trailers on a nearby video screen. Then I entered the screening room with its chairs that I could lean back on. This cinema presented first-run films, second-run films, and independent films. Overall, I was more impressed with the cinema itself than with the film I saw. I would best describe *Kick Ass* as anime using live actors instead of animation, especially in its excessive and graphic details of violence. Mild mannered teenager, Dave Lizewski, wanted to be a super hero just like his favorite super heroes in the comic books. Therefore, he ordered a green & yellow wet suit and mask. Nevertheless, he realized that being a super hero called *Kick Ass* was harder than he thought. To be honest with you, this film turned out to be much different than I imagined. I would have written it differently by having *Kick Ass* fighting school bullies and other bad teenagers; although I would have him roughing up the villains, there would be no killing and graphic violence. With this film, however, even *The*

Godfather looked milder in its violence. This was the worst film I've seen in a long time!

Wednesday, June 2: No more kicking asses this time. Shortly after I arrived at Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St., between 5th Ave. and University Place (212-924-3363), I saw a documentary film called *Picasso and Braque Go to the Movies*. The last time, I found the cinema itself more impressive than the film I viewed there; this time, however, it was the other way around. Cinema Village was in a small brick building with no lobby area. Therefore, nobody could go into the cinema until about 15 minutes before show time. Nevertheless, in a small screening room, I watched an hour-long documentary movie about how the early 20th-century films influenced both artists Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque to create their Cubism paintings. Narrated by producer Martin Scorsese, much of the film included Scorsese and others--artists and art scholars--explaining how pre-World War I arts and films had an affect on each other. In between the interviews, I looked at film clips from the early 20th century, especially movies by the Lumiere Brothers. Many of those films presented hand-tinted color, and others showed events that happened in Europe at that time, especially the Paris Exposition of 1900. During those early cinema years, Picasso and Braque painted many similar Cubists pictures of the same subjects and themes. Finally, the era ended for both artists with WWI. Of

course, I liked documentaries anyway. Thus, I may be bias, but I agreed with Scorsese on the cinema influencing art to this very day.

Thursday, July 1: I saw another documentary film, *Joan Rivers: A Piece of Work*, at the Lincoln Plaza cinema, 1886 Broadway at W.62nd St. (212-757-2280). This cinema, most of it below ground, mainly presented limited-release, international, and independent films. The lounge area had soft seating and oil paintings on the walls. Once inside the screening room, I watched a combination of an autobiography and a year in the life of Joan Rivers. Starting with Ms. Rivers putting on her makeup, I learned about a person who wanted to keep busy working to support her luxurious lifestyle as well as the staff on her payroll. In-between her hectic work schedule, the film showed bits and pieces about how she got started in show business, her marriage, and her relationship with her daughter, Melissa Rivers. Some of that mother-daughter relationship covered how they both coped with the suicide of Joan's husband, Edgar Rosenberg. Other people also had comments about her, especially Kathy Griffin and Don Rickles. Thus, Joan has definitely been a workaholic and addicted to being a celebrity. Overall, I watched both the strong and vulnerable side to this very funny lady, even if she had to use foul language to tell some of her jokes and handle hecklers. In addition, I realized how hard it has

been for comedians to keep a steady stream of jokes for different performances.