



Press release

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Enjoy “Dinner at Eight” with a Saginaw actress

WHAT: Riverside Saginaw Film Festival showing of Marie Dressler’s “Dinner at Eight” followed by a tour of a Midlander’s movie poster collection

WHEN AND WHERE: 3 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 22, at the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History, 500 Federal in Saginaw.

ADMISSION: \$5 for a single ticket or as part of a pass offering. Pre-festival passes go on sale Friday, Aug. 7, at the Red Eye, dawn of a new day and Magic Bean coffee houses and at the Castle Museum for \$25. Passes are \$30 once the festival begins.

SAGINAW -- Vintage movie actress Marie Dressler may have been born in Coburg, Ont. -- in 1868 -- but for three years in the 1880s, when she was a teen, her family lived in Saginaw.

“As a school girl, participating in a play was about the only thing that interested her in education,” says Scott Seeburger, a Midland resident who collects movie posters. “As a teen, she took part in local theatrical productions and she even wrote and created her own shows.

“Years later, when her (vaudeville) career was taking off, she would return to Saginaw in professional traveling theater productions.”

At 3 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 22, Dressler “returns” to Saginaw once again when the Riverside Saginaw Film Festival shows “Dinner at Eight.” The 1933 movie, directed by George Cukor, is rated by the American Film Institute as one of the top 100 Hollywood comedies of all time. And a modern-day critic says the exchange of words between Dressler and co-star Jean Harlow in it “is worth the price of admission.”

Seeburger will introduce the film, playing at the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History, 500 Federal, and talk briefly about Dressler. Following the movie, he will lead a walk through his movie poster collection on display at the Castle during the run of the festival, Thursday, Aug. 20, through Sunday, Aug. 22.

Dressler, says Seeburger, was a leading star during the Depression era. In 1931 she won a best actress Oscar for “Min and Bill.” And in 1933, at age 65, the Hollywood Reporter named her Hollywood’s top star and she became the first woman featured on the cover of Time magazine.

“Dinner at Eight” is set in the Great Depression and its humor deals with the loss of money and prestige. It stars some of MGMs biggest stars of the era. Besides Dressler and Harlow, the actors include John Barrymore, Wallace Berry, Lionel Barrymore and Billy Burke.

Seeburger, whose grandfather was the owner of one of the first silent movie houses in Midland, has collected movie posters since the 1970s and has more than 100 so far. The oldest dates to 1916’s “Old Folks at Home.”

“I mostly collect posters up through the 1970s,” says Seeburger. “After those years, posters are largely computer cut-and-paste type graphics which, for me, do not have the artistic value that older posters enjoy. The older posters were created by talented artists and were a key way to advertise movies before television and the Internet.

“I also get a kick out of the fact that some of the posters are better than the films themselves.”

The display at the Castle features 10 of his best, he says, including one for “Dinner at Eight.”

“I filled six exhibit spaces at the Castle with 10 posters. Two of them are very large -- of a size not commonly seen in mid-Michigan. Two of them feature actors connected to the Saginaw area -- Dressler and Robert Armstrong. And if you read the poster descriptions, there are other Michigan connections.”

Admission to “Dinner at Eight” and the poster tour is \$5 for single tickets and is included in the festival pass price of \$25.

About Riverside Saginaw Film Festival: Founded in 2007, the festival is an annual all-volunteer event held at six downtown Saginaw locations: the Temple Theatre, Pit and Balcony Community Theatre, the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History, Hoyt Library, the Court Theatre and the Old Saginaw City Lawn Chair Film Festival. Taking place Aug. 20-23 of this year, the festival will feature 45 showings of 25 independent and foreign films, documentaries and children's movies as well as the entries in its second short film contest.