



Mame

US : 1974 : dir. Gene Saks : Warner Bros / ABC : 131 min
 prod: Robert Fryer & James Cresson : scr: Paul Zandel : dir.ph.: Philip Lathrop
Kirby Furlong
 Lucille Ball; Beatrice Arthur, Robert Preston; Bruce Davison; Joyce Van Patten; Don Porter;
 Audrey Christie; Jane Connell; John McGiver

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Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001 review:

“Hopelessly out-of-date musical taken from Jerry Herman’s Broadway hit and based on "AUNTIE MAME" will embarrass even those who love Lucy. Calling Fred and Ethel Mertz! Bea Arthur recreates her Tony-winning stage role. Lucy’s final feature film. Shot in Panavision. **Bomb**”

Halliwell's Film Guide review

“In 1928, a 10-year old boy goes to live with his eccentric, sophisticated aunt. Old-fashioned and rather bad film of a much over-rated Broadway musical, inept in most departments but with occasional show-stopping moments. *”

“It makes one realise afresh the parlous state of the Hollywood musical, fighting to survive against misplaced superstars and elephantine budgets matched with miniscule imagination.”
 - Geoff Brown

“The cast seem to have been hand-picked for their tone-deafness, and Lucille Ball’s close-ups are shot blatantly out of focus.”
 – **Sight and Sound**

“So terrible it isn’t boring; you can get fixated staring at it and wondering what on earth Lucille Ball thought she was doing”
 - **New Yorker**, 1977

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89 review:

“The wonderful Broadway musical based on the madcap misadventures of marvellous Auntie Mame has been diluted in this screen version starring Ball, who doesn’t measure up to the sophisticated grandness of the larger-than-life character. Arthur scores in a recreation of her Broadway part of Mame’s best friend, Vera Charles, and the production values are first class, if a bit over-ambitious. *½”

The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television review:

“At 64 in 1974, Lucille Ball was frankly too old for the nifty trouper Auntie Mame should have been. And too ingratiating where Patrick Dennis’ novel portrayed as imperious. Rosalind Russell’s 50-year old "AUNTIE MAME" in 1958 was altogether more impressive. Director Gene Saks doesn’t manage to suggest that life with Aunt Lucille was much fun. 33”

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

“You won’t love Lucy in this one. Rated "PG". **Turkey**”

[no listing in "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

"MAIM" would have been more appropriate in this case. A diabolical vanity exercise by Lucille Ball, not greatly assisted by the fact it's a musical, she's the lead, and she can't sing a note. But as if that weren't bad enough, the big production numbers are limp and vapid, and when the film finally gets around to the one song anyone can remember (the one where she doesn't sing), it's delivered as though by a stage production in its fourth year, without pep or sparkle. Ball shines her Desilu smile throughout, but if she was essaying a grand dame performance for her swansong then she simply isn't a patch on Rosalind Russell in **"AUNTIE MAME"**.

Both films and the stage musical (by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E Lee) were based on the autobiography of nephew Patrick Dennis

See also **"BADKONAK-E SEFID"** and **"BASHU"** - both recent Iranian films, and subject index under **ARAB WORLD / MIDDLE EAST**.