

## MOVING PICTURES



Julia Roberts plays Vivian Ward, a street-wise working girl whose chance encounter with a handsome corporate mogul Edward Lewis, played by Richard Gere leads to a Cinderella fantasy she'll never forget in "Pretty Woman."

## 'Pretty Woman:' Updated story line is pretty good

Several readers — JCH of Bloomfield Hills and LWB of West Bloomfield — wrote to suggest that I had missed the boat on "Hunt for Red October." Thanks for your comments, but I'm sticking to my guns. For me the film was neither thrilling nor tense.

Charm, good spirits, fine dialogue and excellent performances successfully elevate a hackneyed old story line into a romantic comedy hit. Give me a break with the plot for "Pretty Woman" (A, R, 120 minutes) — major Wall Street moguls for a prostitute. Love changes both their lives.

Sounds soapy and dopey, and like acting by Richard Gere as Edward Lewis, the Wolf of Wall Street, and Julia Roberts as Vivian Ward, something special in the girls of the street, makes all the difference.

Roberts mixes the correct proportions of careless diction, insouciant hip movements, intelligent charm, a wit to learn, wide-eyed naivete and street smarts.

That combination of charm and talent propels Vivian's dialogue between the easy and clichéd. To the Wolf of Wall Street she says, "I see, your business is the same as mine, you screw people for money."

Doing just that, buying companies at bargain prices and selling them for their assets is what Lewis does so well with help of his attorney, Philip Stuckey (Jason Alexander) who plays it with a feral intensity that should raise everybody's blood pressure over at the Bar Association.

**THE BACKGROUND** to Vivian and Edward's love affair is an attempt to take over Morse Industries whose president, James Morse, is played with retired good grace by Ralph Bellamy.

It all adds up to a Pygmalion fantasy as Vivian, the lady of the night, becomes a charming lady — in the best sense — and represents the essence of femininity.

Good pacing, crisp editing, sharp dialogue, elegant Beverly Hills cinematography, lots of good music and fine supporting performances — hey, sounds like a terrific, romantic comedy. It is.

Whether or not "Cinema Paradiso" (A, 120 minutes) was tonight's best foreign film Oscar, it remains an excellent, endearing film. In particular, if you're a film buff, if you get all warm and fuzzy thinking about Italian films of the '50s or if you're just a sucker for nostalgia, "Cinema Paradiso" will sweep you off your feet.

It's the story of Salvatore DiVita, a very charming young boy in a small, post World War II Sicilian town. Nicknamed Toto, his one passion is movies and he hangs out with Alfredo, the town's projectionist who teaches him about life as well as how to project motion pictures.

Alfredo becomes the father Toto lost during the war. When he can, Toto sneaks in to watch the town's priest screen and censor all the new movies. All kissing (and other bad stuff) is removed although Toto manages to see and enjoy most of it before it is excised at these sessions.

**THE FILM** and the town's life revolve around the local cinema and the film is a superb evocation of that



the movies

Dan Greenberg

### Grading the movies

A+	Top marks — sure to please
A	Close behind — excellent
A-	Still in running for top honors
B+	Pretty good stuff, not perfect
B	Good
B-	Good but notable deficiencies
C+	Just a cut above average
C	Mediocre
C-	Not so hot and slipping fast
D+	The very best of the poor stuff
D	Poor
D-	It doesn't get much worse
F	Truly awful
Z	Reserved for the colossal bad
*	No advanced screening

time in our history when motion pictures were a civic religion. As well, the film depicts the end of that religion as life has changed in recent decades, even in small Sicilian towns. While "Cinema Paradiso" probably is too long, it was so much fun watching that we can forgive it its length.

In the final analysis, it is not only a celebration of old movies but an affirmation of life and a testimony to the finest love, that which sacrifices for the sake of the beloved.

Meanwhile in another venue, they're still fighting the Cold War. Unlike "Red October," "The Fourth War" (C+, R, 90 minutes) has some intense moments and is far better positioned politically than that submarine epic. What happens to Cold Warriors when peace breaks out?

Ever since Vietnam, Colonel Jack Knowles (Roy Scheider) has been on the muscle, so to speak, looking for trouble. It is the winter of 1988 and he has been assigned command of an American patrol along the West German-Czech border. His counterpart on the Soviet side, Colonel N.A. Valach (Jurgen Prochnow), has the same bitterness from Afghanistan that Knowles does from Vietnam.

The basic plot structure is promising — What happens when there is no need for violence but aggressive, authoritarian men filled with hostility and trained to fight are given power?

**THE ANSWER**, of course, is obvious and frightening but the film gets trite and sappy in its latter stages and collapses from the weight of its clichés. As well, it's rather hard to believe that Colonel Knowles could so easily sneak across a heavily guarded border, particularly after hostilities between the two colonels escalated.

Still, "The Fourth War" is well-

paced, nicely photographed and includes a fine supporting performance by Harry Dean Stanton as Gen. Hawksworth. But we never learn to whom his voice-over narrative is directed. The trite derivation of the title, when added to all the clichés, wipes this one out of contention for top honors.

"Coupe de Ville" (A-, PG-13, 90 minutes), written by Detroit Mike Binder, is a funny, touching story of brotherly hate, fatherly love and the recognition of the importance of family bonds and loyalty.

Marvin (David Stern), Buddy (Ayre Gross) and Bobby (Patrick Dempsey) have been summoned to Florida for their mother's (Rita Taggart) birthday. The boys' father (Alan Arkin) has purchased a '94 Coupe de Ville as a birthday present. He arranges for his three sons to drive it from Michigan to surprise his wife.

**THROUGHOUT** a series of misadventures, the boys become men and the men become brothers. All the performances are first rate. Dempsey is especially excellent as Bobby, the delinquent with a heart of gold. Alan Arkin also is very good as Fred Libner, a dying man whose gesture brings joy to his wife and closeness to his boys. The attention to period details is worth noting as well — particularly for those of us who remember the old Stuckey signs.

"Coupe de Ville" reminds us all of the feeling of connection that we share or should share with our families. See it with someone who might have forgotten that it's OK to agree to disagree and still be fond of each other. (Reviewed by Susan Finckham.)

In "A Shock to the System" (B, R, 90 minutes), Graham Marshall (Michael Caine) is a mild, easy-going bad and the mediocre. In the latter category is another Jessica Lange feminist cinema film, "Far North" (1988, color, PG, 88 minutes). Released on cassette last year, it's now available on a sell-through basis for \$19.95 although it's not worth owning.

When a younger colleague, Bob Benham (Peter Riegert), is promoted in his place, Marshall feels the magic has gone out of his personal life as well as out of his career. In his mind, he fancies himself a magician and decides to get some of the magic back.

**AFTER** He accidentally pushes a bum under a subway train — and doesn't get caught — he feels no guilt and starts climbing a fence to the people who annoy him. His methods are unique and clever, always relying on his own personal magic.

This murder mystery features fine performances including Elizabeth McGovern as Marshall's office love interest, Stella Anderson and Will Patton as L.L. Laker, but Caine's cool, intelligent character steals the show. Despite a predictable story line, "A Shock to the System" is unique enough to hold everyone's interest until the surprise ending. (Reviewed by Kathy Guyon.)

"The Forbidden Dance" (C) (PG-13) is another dance movie while "Welcome to Oblivion" (C) (R) is a sci-fi thriller.

## ALTERNATIVE VIEWING

### 'Foreigners' dominate Oscars

By John Monaghan  
special writer

When the nominees for best foreign film are read at tonight's Academy Awards ceremony, most viewers will have little background on which to base an educated guess. Only France's "Camille Claudel" (playing this weekend at the Detroit Film Theater) has had solid booking.

"Camille Claudel" is based on the obsessive relationship between French sculptor Auguste Rodin and his talented pupil, Isabelle Adjani. He has been nominated in the best actress category, a relative rarity for a foreign language film.

Actually, this year's Oscars have a decided international flair. In several of the major categories, filmmakers from lands far away have a chance at taking the gold-plated statuette.

Consider the best picture nominees. "My Left Foot" comes from Ireland. Two others, "Driving Miss Daisy" and "Dead Poets Society," were directed by Australian expatriates Bruce Beresford and Peter Weir. "Foots" Jim Sheridan was nominated for best director as was Britain's Kenneth Branagh (also best actor) for "Henry V."

**THOUGH** it isn't likely to win for best picture, "My Left Foot" did get that award from the New York Film Critics Circle. If old Uncle Oscar has any taste at all, Daniel Day-Lewis will take best actor for his role as artist Christy Brown, a talented man stricken with cerebral palsy.

It wouldn't be that big of a surprise, Oscar likes an obviously difficult role, especially when it deals with an individual fighting either on affliction or drunkenness. At various times through "My Left Foot," Day-Lewis displays both.

Tom Cruise, as the wheelchair-bound Vietnam vet of "Born on the Fourth of July," has a similar advantage.

Sound a little smarmy and overly cynical? It should. Oscar from his conception has been something of a star-studded joke. If there really is a best picture of the year, Oscar always seems to pick the wrong one.

I wasn't even born yet and I'm still fuming because "Citizen Kane" (the greatest film ever made) lost to "How Green Was My Valley" in 1941. I think I stopped watching the Awards when muscle-bound "Rocky" beat "Taxi Driver" in 1976.

Was "Doctor Doolittle" really nominated or was I dreaming?

Politics and popularity dominate the Academy Awards. This year's foreign film selections both play by the rules and break them. Many feel that Claude Chabrol's "Story of Women" should have been nominated. Perhaps the subject (a woman abortionist executed in the 1940s) changed the Academy's mind.

**YET, THERE** is also "Jesus of Montreal," a French-Canadian film about a drunken actor whose role of Jesus Christ on stage translates bizarrely into his screwed-up personal life. It generated a fair amount of controversy in the North American press.

My choice for best foreign language film? The last two nominees, "Santiago, the Story of His New Life" (Puerto Rico) and "Waltzing Flutze" (Denmark), are out of the running for obscure reasons.

Italy's acclaimed "Cinema Paradiso" is the most obvious popular choice. In it, a young boy during World War II finds solace at his local movie theater. Hopefully, it will win so we can finally see it on area screens.

## SCREEN SCENE

**DETROIT FILM THEATRE**, Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 833-2323 for information. (44)

"Camille Claudel" (France) — 1988, 7 and 9:45 p.m. March 30-31 and April 1. The story of the complex, obsessive relationship between French sculptor Rodin (Gerard Depardieu) and his talented pupil (Isabelle Adjani), who became a respected artist in her own right.

**DETROIT SCIENCE CENTER**, 5029 John R., Detroit. Call 577-8400 for information. (2-5)

"Seasons," through April 30. William Shatner narrates this study of the seasons, with music by Vivaldi and images that will take your breath away. Shown on the giant domed Omnimax screen.

**HENRY FORD CENTENNIAL LIBRARY**, 16301 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. Call 943-2330 for information. (Free)

"An Evening of Shorts," 7 p.m. March 26. A sampling of Academy Award-winning short subjects, including "Young at Heart," directed by a pair of Michigan filmmakers.

**HILL STREET CINEMA**, Hill Auditorium, 1429 Hill St., Ann Arbor. Call 769-9500 for information. (\$2.50 for a double feature)

Errol Morris' "Gates of Heaven" (USA) — 1978 and "The Thin Blue Line" (USA) — 1988. Starting at 8 p.m. March 29 and 31. Morris, the most inventive documentary filmmaker working today, sets his sights on two bizarre American phenomena. In "Gates," he examines the pet cemetery business in California. "Line" actually does rough justice to

Randall Adams, serving a life sentence for supposedly murdering a Dallas policeman. The film's convincing evidence proves him innocent beyond a shadow of a doubt.

**LIVONIA MALL**, Seven Mile at Middlebelt, Livonia. Call 476-1166 for information. (Free)

"Quo Vadis" (USA) — 1951, 10 a.m. March 27. Lavish MGM epic about the persecution of Christians and the burning of Rome during Nero's reign. Concluding the mall's month-long tribute to Robert Taylor.

**MICHIGAN THEATRE**, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Call 688-8397 for information. (\$4, \$3.25 students and senior citizens)

"Forky's" (USA) — 1982, 4 p.m. March 27 and 7:30 p.m. March 28. The theater says that the tasteless teen pic is being shown in conjunction with a University of Michigan film class. You figure.

"Crimes and Misdemeanors" (USA) — 1989, 9:15 p.m. March 28. Woody Allen's latest (and perhaps best) film, a morality tale with humor that stars Allen, Martin Landau, Anjelica Huston and Mia Farrow. Nominated for several Academy Awards.

"L'Avventura" (Italy) — 1960, 7 p.m. April 1. Michelangelo Antonioni's stunningly photographed study of alienation in the modern world. When a member of a yachting is lost at sea, her husband and another woman embark on a love affair during the search. Starring Monica Vitti. (Free admission this film only)

**REDFORD THEATRE**, 17360 Lashier, Detroit. Call 537-2560 for information. (\$2.50)

Shirley Temple — "The Little

Colonel" (USA) — 1935 and "Wee Willie Winkie" (USA) — 1937. Beginning at 8 p.m. March 30-31. Two of Temple's best loved films. In the first, a Civil War story, she tap dances down a staircase with Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. In the second, directed by John Ford, she plays a young girl who lives on a British Army base in India. Special prizes awarded for Shirley Temple look-alikes.

**TELE-ARTS**, 1540 Woodward, Detroit. Call 963-3918 for information. (\$3.50, \$2.50 students and senior citizens)

"Sex, lies and videotapes" (USA) — 1989, 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. March 28 and 5:30 p.m. March 30. Stephen Soderbergh's award-winning examination of four friends and lovers. Perhaps overrated but still fascinating.

"The Magic Toy Shop" (England) — 1968, March 28-April (call for show times). A disturbing fairy tale for adults. (CityWide Cinema)

"Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer" (USA) — 1986, 11:30 p.m. March 30-31 and 9 p.m. April 1. Loosely based on the exploits of Henry Lee Lucas, a Texas serial killer responsible for the deaths of countless women. Obviously not for all tastes.

**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN**, Recreation Center, 4901 Evergreen, Dearborn. Call 593-5390 for information. (Free)

"Uncle Buck" (USA) — 1989, 7:30 p.m. March 28-29. John Candy as the irresponsible uncle who shows up to care for a household of kids. John Hughes directed.

— John Monaghan

## VIDEO VIEWING

By Dan Greenberg  
special writer

Not all the March madness is at the NCAA Tournament as movies on video cassette continue to appear in eye-straining quantities.

As always, there's the good, the bad and the mediocre. In the latter category is another Jessica Lange feminist cinema film, "Far North" (1988, color, PG, 88 minutes). Released on cassette last year, it's now available on a sell-through basis for \$19.95 although it's not worth owning.

Katie (Lange) returns home — a farm near Duluth, Minn. — because of a family horse injured by father, Bertram (Charles Durning), so badly he's in the hospital and there's no one to shoot the horse. There's a houseful of nutty ladies — sister, mother, grandmother and so on — but no one to shoot the horse. Katie must do it in order to win her father's love.

This Sam Shepherd comedy affirms the cliché that they don't make movies like they used to. Speaking of which — CBS/Fox Video has a promotion for eight "Classic Films of Epic Proportions" due March 28. We'll forgive them their hyperbole because cause there's some pretty terrific viewing here. Three of the eight have never been released before on tape and are appropriate to the Easter/Pasover season: Gregory Peck and Vincent Price in "The Keys of the Kingdom" (1944, 137 minutes), Richard Todd and Jean Peters in "A Man Called Peter" (1955, 117 minutes) and Elana Eden

in the title role of "The Story of Ruth" (1950, 132 minutes).

**THE FIVE** previous released titles, also appropriate for this time of year, are: John Huston's "The Bible" (1966, 171 minutes), Elizabeth Taylor's "Cleopatra" (1953, 185 minutes), Burt Lancaster as "Moses" (1976, 11 minutes), Richard Burton in the five Oscar-winning "The Robe" (1953, 135 minutes) and Charlton Heston and Rex Harrison in "The Aagay and the Exstasy" (1955, 138 minutes).

All except "A Man Called Peter" are in color. None of these were rated, but there's no need to fear offending anyone by screening them. Bargain hunters and Bette Davis fans will be pleased with her 16 titles available this month at the reduced, sell-through rate of \$19.95. Included in this collection from MGM/UA are "The Man Who Came to Dinner," "Dark Victory," "The Corn Is Green" and "The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex."

If Westerns are more to your liking, Republic Pictures Home Video has a lot to offer this month, including three available for the first time on video: "Jubilee Trail" (103 minutes) with Forrest Tucker, Vera Ralston and Joan Leslie, "Ramrod" (94 minutes) with Lee Remick, and "The Lone Ranger" (104 minutes) with Clayton Kopp and Donald Crisp.

"Thunder Pass" (78 minutes) with Dane Clark and Andy Devine. In Hollywood's studio years, Republic specialized in producing B-Westerns and these three, along with the other nine, are ample proof of their excellence in that genre.

**PAUL NEWMAN** fans will be

pleased to learn that seven of your hero's titles are being re-released at the bargain price of \$19.98. Even though they've been in video circulation for some time, these are some of Newman's best films and, at this price, should attract new viewers.

Leading the list is the well-known "Butch Cassidy & The Sundance Kid" (1969, color, R, 111 minutes) with Paul Newman, Robert Redford, "From the Terrace" (1959, color, unrated, 144 minutes) also stars Joanne Woodward. Another western, "Hombre" (1960, color, unrated, 111 minutes), was based on Elmore Leonard's novel and directed by Martin Ritt. ("The Front," "Norma Rae" and "Hush").

The well-known "The Hustler" (1961, black and white, unrated, 138 minutes) stars Jackie Gleason and George C. Scott, as well as Newman, and was a sequel of sorts to Newman's recent success in "The Color of Money."

Orson Welles, Joanne Woodward, Angela Lansbury and Lee Remick, John Newman in "The Long Hot Summer" (1958, color, unrated, 117 minutes), a tense and powerful story, also directed by Martin Ritt.

Finally, this Newman collection includes "Quintet" (1975, color, R, 118 minutes) and "Verdict" (1982, color, R, 128 minutes) in which Sidney Lumet directs Newman as an alcoholic attorney with his last chance to redeem himself.

Not quite movies, but close, are 11 episodes of Sherlock Holmes, available this Wednesday. All are not-<sup>to</sup> rated, in color, run just under an hour and cost prices less than \$19.98. The Baker Street Irregulars should have a ball.