

## MOVING PICTURES



Tom Berenger plays gumshoe Harry Dobbs and Kate Capshaw is Ellen McGraw in "Love at Large."

## Gumshoes star in 'Love'

The very excellent "Cinema Paradiso" (A-, 120 minutes) was rescheduled at the last minute and opened Friday, March 23, at the Maple Theater. See it for it certainly deserved its Oscar as best foreign film.

Fans of hard-boiled detective novels will enjoy "Love at Large" (A-, R, 95 minutes), a light-hearted, romantic satire of Mike Hammer and all the other pulp-fiction tough guys sitting in their fourth-floor walk-ups waiting for lush blondes with big cases — "at least a C-note a day, honey, plus expenses."

This time it's a slightly ditzy but extremely appealing brunet, Miss Dolan (Anne Archer), with lots of money who wants our hero, Harry Dobbs (Tom Berenger), to follow her mobster-love-object, Rick (Neil Young).

Mr. Dobbs ("Call me Harry.") is the quintessential down-at-the-heels gumshoe. If he has an office, we never see it. He receives Miss Dolan's call in the bed of his jealous girlfriend, Doris (Ann Magnuson).

Tom takes Miss Dolan's case but follows the wrong Rick, Frederick King (Ted Levine), with lots of money who wants our hero, Harry Dobbs (Tom Berenger), to follow her mobster-love-object, Rick (Neil Young).

While Harry is following the wrong Rick and trying to sort all this out, he, in turn, is followed by Stella Wynkowsky (Elizabeth Perkins). Berenger is nicely situated amidst these five lovely ladies in the best pulp-fiction tradition. Whether intentional or not, these women bear considerable resemblance to the actresses — O'Toole to Meryl Streep, Magnuson to Shirley MacLaine, Capshaw to Jessica Lange and Archer to a number of stars in the Hollywood of old.

**BERENGER PLAYS** the whole thing with a whimsical intensity that highlights the mild but pleasant satire. His performance is keyed to the thought, "Isn't this fun?" Yup, it sure is.

Despite a murky, somewhat disorganized opening and a sappy ending, "Opportunity Knocks" (B+, PG-13) is pretty funny with "Saturday Night Live's" Dana Carvey as Eddie Farrell, a small-time con-artist. He and his partner, Lou (Todd Graff), live by their wits and a variety of small cons.

But con games aren't paying well and the boys have a big tab with their bookie. Turning to burglaries in the night-time, Eddie stumbles into the Malkin family. Father Mitt (Robert Loggia) is CEO of a toilet fixtures manufacturing company. Most important in the Malkin family is the daughter, Annie the doctor (Julia Campbell). There are some other interesting relatives as well.

There's an obvious but humorous — and probably true — commentary here: Surviving on the streets takes the same quick wits and unmitigated gall as surviving in corporate boardrooms. In any event, Eddie's good at detecting the fact that he and Lou offend a major mob figure, Sal (James Tolkan). That offense, of course, leads to all sorts of comic complications.

The music video transitions in the opening sequences are unfortunate, unnecessary and add to the film's opening confusion. Once past that, however, "Opportunity Knocks" and Carvey takes over in the best Walter Mitty tradition.

**CARVEY'S TALENT** carries this piece past a gassy, melodramatic



the movies

Dan Greenberg

## Grading the movies

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

ending which is obligatory given the situation and the need for a happy ending.

"Nuns on the Run" (B, R, 95 minutes) is a "devine" comedy, starring Robby Coltrane and Eric Idle, both Monty Python alumni. Bryan (Coltrane) and Charlie (Idle), two washed-up bank robbers, decide to take money from a botched bank heist and start a new life by going straight. But they end up going straight to St. Joseph's College — The Brides of Christ Nunnery.

In order to elude their gang, a rival oriental gang and the police, they "become" nuns.

Transvestitism is in this season and the film is a mix between "We're No Angels" and "A Fish Called Wanda" — with some dry and very British humor mixed in alongside classic slapstick routines.

Charlie and Bryan in hiding with the nuns get a whole new perspective on religious life. Bryan falls in love with a humping, myopic blonde. Charlie is the brains of the outfit trying to figure a way out of their predicament.

Idle and Coltrane work well together in the Laurel and Hardy tradition including a hilarious interpretation of the Trinity by Idle only minutes after Coltrane relates the story. These jokes made at the expense of Christianity are mild and fairly obscure hence the entertaining, enjoyable film shouldn't prove offensive. (Reviewed by Jason Brown)

"True Love" (R) runs exclusively at the Star-Rochester Theaters with Annabella Selerra and Ron Eldard as two Italian-American sweethearts about to get married in their tight-knit Bronx comedy.

**STILL PLAYING:**

"Bad Influence" (B) (R). Slow start speeds up after a while and becomes an effective thriller as Rob Lowe corrupts James Spader.

"Blue Steel" (C+) (R) 103 minutes. Guess but little and bloody psychological thriller with Jamie Lee Curtis as girl cop with a vengeance.

"Born on the Fourth of July" (A) (R) 144 minutes. Touching, graphically disturbing, poignant, frightening autobiography of Ron

Kovic (Tom Cruise), a paraplegic Viet Vet.

"Cinema Paradiso" (A-, 120 minutes). Excellent story of Alfredo (Philippe Noiret), the projectionist in a small Sicilian town just after World War II.

"Coupe de Ville" (A-, PG-13, 100 minutes). Touching story of brotherly hate, fatherly love and the importance of family bonds.

"Driving Miss Daisy" (A) (PG) 100 minutes. Fine acting highlights personal drama of Jewish widow (Jessica Tandy) chauffeured by a black man (Morgan Freeman) set against southern changes from 1948-1972.

"Eisenstein: A Love Story" (R). Man emotionally involved with second wife and mistress is distressed when his first wife — presumed dead in the Holocaust — turns up.

"The Fourth War" (C+, R, 90 minutes). An American colonel and his Russian counterpart, two old-war warriors without a war, square off and start their own.

"Glory" (A) (R) 110 minutes. "The Last of the First Black Infantry Regiment during the Civil War is captured in this outstanding film.

"The Handmaiden's Tale" (B-) (R) 109 minutes. Compelling, but structurally flawed futuristic tale of American gone wrong with permissiveness, pollution and radiation.

"Hard to Kill" (B) (R). Martial arts film.

"Honey" (V) (unrated). Kenneth Branagh's superb new adaptation of Shakespeare's play. The director stars in the title role.

"House Party" (R). Dance, dance, dance.

"The Hunt for Red October" (C) (PG) 135 minutes. Confusing under-water sequences are as murky as this tale of Soviet sub-commander (Sean Connery) trying to defect.

"Joe Versus the Volcano" (B+) (PG) 102 minutes. A good, clean fairy tale for all ages with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.

"Ladada" (V) (PG). Let's save the world through fancy dancing.

"The Last of the Finest" (R) (R). Suspended rare squad takes matters into their own hands.

"The Little Mermaid" (A) (G) 80 minutes. Disney animation of Hans Christian Andersen tale of mermaid in love with human.

"Look Who's Talking" (C+) (PG-13) 97 minutes. Contrived, poorly structured story of pregnant CPA (Kirstie Alley) and her search for a perfect father for her baby. Bruce Willis is the baby's voice.

"Lord of the Flies" (B) (R) 85 minutes. Harry Hook remake of Sir William Golding's classic novel of young boys descended into savagery while marooned on a deserted island.

"Madhouse" (Z-) (PG-13) 85 minutes. Ridiculous, exaggerated beyond belief, story about house guests. Neither funny nor entertaining.

"My Left Foot" (A) (R). Five well-deserved Oscar nominations for this gritty but touching story of the writer, Christy Brown, and his struggles with cerebral palsy.

"Pretty Woman" (A-, R, 120 minutes). Charming, romantic fantasy with Wall Street mogul (Richard Gere) falling in love with prostitute (Julia Roberts).

"A Shock to the System" (B, R, 90 minutes). A mild-mannered, harassed ad exec (Michael Caine) takes matters into his suddenly murderous hands.

"Steel Magnolias" (B-) (PG) 110 minutes. Talented cast, led by Shirley MacLaine's performance, falls short in depicting problems of six Southern women.

"Sisters" (C) (PG-13) 115 minutes. Slow start speeds up after a while and becomes a effective thriller as Rob Lowe corrupts James Spader.

## ALTERNATIVE VIEWING

## Mall series honors Mitchum

By John Monaghan  
special writer

To some, Robert Mitchum is just a poor man's Bogart, a droopy-eyed tough guy whose off-screen antics are more exciting than what he offered to the screen. You can, however, discover some real gems in his long and prolific career.

Two of his best films highlight the month-long tribute to Mitchum at the Livonia Mall. Shown at 10 a.m. over the next two Tuesdays, "Night of the Hunter" and "Thunder Road" are the kind of movies so rarely shown on the big screen that they may be worth a morning sick call to work.

In the Charles Laughton-directed "Night of the Hunter" (1955), Mitchum and his guest-star as a psychotic preacher. On one hand, he has the word LOVE tattooed across the knuckles, on the other hand HATE. He's got plenty of the latter for a pair of children whom he's convinced have hidden away a stolen cache of money.

In an attempt to get closer to the situation, he marries the children's widowed mother (Shelley Winters at her thinnest and loveliest). In the film's most unforgettable composition, he lectures her about sin beneath the shadowy cathedral ceiling of their honeymoon bed chamber.

Had "Night of the Hunter" been more successful, Charles Laughton may have gone on to direct some equally fascinating films. The only critic who had anything really good to say about the pictures was James Agee, who wrote the screenplay.

Mitchum penned the story of "Thunder Road" (1958), which plays the following week. He is cast here as Lucas Doolin, king of Tennessee moonshiners, who refuses to hook up with the powerful syndicate trying to muscle in on the generations old Hillbilly business.

## SCREEN SCENE

**DETROIT FILM THEATRE**, Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 633-2323 for information. (R) 10 a.m. April 4 (call for show times). This dark comedy by Aussie director Jan Campion has been hailed as a modern masterpiece. When a pair of sisters move in together, the results are inexplicably surreal and disturbing. No one under 18 admitted.

**DETROIT SCIENCE CENTER**, 5020 John R, Detroit. Call 577-8400 for information. (Z-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 dome Omnimax screen.

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

"Down to Earth," 7 p.m. April 2. In this hit-or-miss musical comedy, Rita Hayworth stars as a beautiful muse who comes to earth to help Larry Parks produce a whimsical musical play. Remade as "Xanadu" with even more tepid results.

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

"Night of the Hunter" (USA — 1955). 10 a.m. April 2. A Robert Mitchum's greatest role as the psychotic preacher who has the word HATE tattooed on one hand and LOVE on the other. The only film directed by Charles Laughton was a box office flop, but has since been hailed as one of the most eerily effective portrayals of pure evil. With Shelley Winters as a lovestruck widow and Lillian Gish as a feisty spinster. As part of the mall's month-long tribute to Mitchum.

**MICHIGAN THEATRE**, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Call 660-3397 for information. (\$4, \$3.25 students and senior citizens).

"The Big Parade" (USA — 1925). 7 p.m. April 8. King Vidor's amazingly effective anti-war film brilliantly blends elements of comedy and drama. John Gilbert plays the soldier who falls for a young Frenchwoman (Renee Adoree) behind the lines, while engaged in one of the fiercest World War I battle sequences ever filmed. With the silent cartoon "Felix Revolt" (1924), both gems shown with live organ accompaniment. (Free admission this film only).

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

"I Remember Mama" (USA — 1948). 8 p.m. April 6-7. Irene Dunne stars as the Norwegian housewife who struggles to bring up a large family in turn-of-the-century San Francisco.

**SOUTHFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY**, 26000 Evergreen, Southfield. Call 354-0100 for information. (\$5 membership, \$2.50 students and senior citizens).

Making runs to the city in a souped-up Ford, Doolin eludes both marauding Treasury men and the Mob. When a thug races alongside him, Doolin casually flicks his ever-present cigarette (no one smoked more than Mitchum) outside the passenger seat window and into the

sucker's face.

This film proved a success (according to legend, it still plays at some Southern drive-ins) and produced a hit title song, which the actor both wrote and sang. Mitchum's son Jim debuted here in the role of Doolin's younger brother.

## The Trouble with 'Henry'

If "Night of the Hunter" kept '50s critics guessing, "Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer" has modern critics walking out in protest. Those who can stomach it — including Roger Ebert and the New York Times' Caryn James — are praising it as a stylized examination of a killer's mind. It premieres this weekend at the Tele Arts Theatre downtown.

Director John McNaughton saw a "20/20" report of Henry Lee Lucas, a Texas killer responsible for countless deaths. He made the low budget film, loosely based on Lee's life, in 1986. An MPA X rating has held

back its release — until now.

Looking beyond the mangled, partially clothed corpses that litter the screen, there is an understated performance from Michael Hooker, who has since played memorable heavies in such films as "Mississippi Burning" and "Sea of Love."

Still, it's hard to get beyond the content, including a brutal rape and murder scene which Henry and an accomplice record on video tape. While "Henry" has more style than the typical slasher film, disturbing images like these make for difficult viewing.



ROBERT MITCHUM

in the unconventional role of a man who married and murdered and murdered!

"Shadow of a Doubt" (USA — 1943). 7:30 p.m. April 5. One of Alfred Hitchcock's favorite efforts was this moody mystery about a teenager (Teresa Wright) who shares an unusual bond with her mysterious Uncle Charlie (Joseph Cotton). Slowly, the girl begins to suspect that he is the "Merry Widow Killer" who has been knocking off little old ladies across the country. Shown on big screen video.

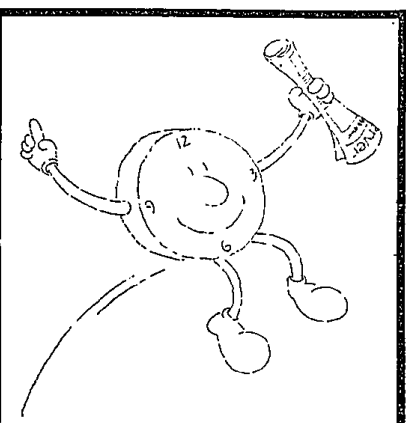
**TELE-ARTS**, 1540 Woodward, Detroit. Call 963-3918 for information. (\$3.50, \$2.50 students and senior citizens).

"Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer" (USA — 1986). April 4 (call for show times). Loosely based on a true story, this gruesome film chronicles the life of a man (Michael Hooker) who murders countless women in Texas. Obviously not for all tastes.

"Train of Dreams" (Canada —

1988). 7:30 and 9:30 p.m. April 6-7 and 1, 3, 5 and 7 p.m. April 8. A street urchin's life on the streets of Montreal takes him from one prison to the next. (A CityWide Cinema presentation).

— John Monaghan



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