

'Prospero' and 'Camus' dig up great writers' ghosts

In Shakespeare's "The Tempest," Prospero, the Duke of Milan, is set adrift with his young daughter, in a cell of food, rich garments and 24 favorable books. The playwright never elaborates much on what these books contain.

Peter Greenaway does, however, and the result is this highly original new film treatment called "Prospero's Books."

The books here are the best part.



tickets please

John Monaghan

There's a volume that represents all the colors of the spectrum. In another, mirrored pages reflect varied

images of the reader. Another has pop-up pictures of classical architecture while an especially graphic

anatomy book offers throbbing and bleeding illustrations.

These wild texts are introduced throughout the film in framed form over a whacked-out reading of "The Tempest." Veteran actor John Gielgud plays Prospero, who lords it over an island kingdom populated primarily by the creature Caliban and the spirit Ariel. That's the official story.

In Greenaway's version, Prospero is also surrounded by hundreds of naked slaves, introduced in a long tracking shot through the halls of his kingdom. After he conjures up a storm that sinks a ship full of noblemen, the naked servants pull the survivors up from the depths and deliver them to the island.

PROSPERO HAS long been seen as a self-portrait of Shakespeare. In Greenaway's eyes, the Duke is not only the manipulator of men and elements, he is also their creator. We see him literally write the "Tempest" story while much of the dialogue is spoken through him.

Difficult? You bet. In fact, a good portion of the audience at the suburban theaters where the film is showing have walked out in the first half hour.

They shouldn't be all that surprised. Greenaway has been messing with filmpop's heads for over a decade, most successfully in

"The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover."

In many ways, this might be the director's most accessible film yet, providing you have a decent working knowledge of The Bard. For those who don't, some theaters provide a brief synopsis of the play that provides a clue to the often maddening imagery. Ask for it, even if you think you know the story.

"Prospero's Books" is a rich, original film, but it's also incredibly repetitious. After two hours of naked bodies bathed in unnatural colors, you will find yourself exhausted, possibly sickened, which is not most people's idea of entertainment.

At the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor, "Prospero's Books" is preceded each evening through Dec. 21 by a locally produced short film called "Camus' Shoes."

THIS 30-MINUTE work by Farmington Hills-based Sundog Films postulates what would happen if a nerdy rector (Scanton Gall) met up with dead existentialist Albert Camus (Kevin Von).

They debate the meaning of life and the spiritual importance of Woodstock before Camus contends that the rector's life is the living embodiment of the existential ideal.

It's a clever idea for a skill, reminiscent of Woody Allen essays, but not nearly as funny.

No problem with the filming,



Sir John Gielgud plays Prospero in Peter Greenaway's "Prospero's Books."

which is incredibly accomplished and beautiful to watch. Producer/director Larry Carroll has worked primarily in television commercial production, so the film has a noticeably slick feel. Ann Arbor fans will recognize the front of Zingerman's delicatessen used as a primary set.

If you can't catch "Camus' Shoes" at the Michigan, the film will also make a Detroit-area appearance in early January at the Magic Bag Theatre in Ferndale.

SCREEN SCENE

HENRY FORD CENTENNIAL LIBRARY. 16001 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. Call 943-2037 for information. (Free)

"Nanook of the North" (USA — 1922), 7 p.m. Dec. 16. Documentary filmmaker Robert Flaherty's pioneering study of Eskimos still looks great today.

MAGIC BAG THEATRE CAFE. 32918 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Call 544-3030 for information. (40)

"Scrooged" (USA — 1988), 8 p.m. Dec. 17. Bill Murray plays an incredibly callous television executive who gets Scrooged when a trio of ghosts visit him on Christmas Eve. This update of the Dickens classic also stars Karen Allen, Carol Kane and David Johnson as a ghostly cab driver.

MAPLE THEATRE. 4135 W. Maple, Bloomfield. Call 553-9090 for show times. (16, 13, 59 twilght)

"Prospero's Books" (Britain/France — 1991). Controversial director of "The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover," reworks Shakespeare's "The Tempest" with John Gielgud directing most of the parts. Visually, it's a stunner. It's also a real snoozer, if you're not in the mood.

"Black Robe" (USA — 1991). A true story based on the adventures of Father Laforgue and his apprentice as they struggle for survival in the first clash between Europeans and Native Americans in 1634. From Bruce Beresford, the director of "Driving Miss Daisy" and "Breaker Morant."

"Slacker" (USA — 1991). First-time director Richard Linklater directed this crazy-quilt look at the people of Austin,

Texas. The film begins with one character, picks up the story of another and heads in some unpredictable directions.

MICHIGAN THEATRE. 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Call 668-4397 for information. (15, 12, 25 students and senior citizens)

"Camus' Shoes" (USA — 1991), 6:30 p.m. Dec. 16-21. The commercial filmmakers at Farmington Hills-based Sundog Productions created this 30-minute comedy about a Realtor in search of truth who meets up with the spirit of existentialist author Albert Camus. It screens before the regular Michigan feature all this week.

"Prospero's Books" (Britain/France — 1991). Peter Greenaway, the controversial director of "The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover," reworks Shakespeare's "The Tempest" with John Gielgud interpreting most of the parts. Visually, it's a stunner. It's also a real snoozer, if you're not in the mood.

"Henry V" (Britain — 1989), 9:25 p.m. Dec. 16 and 7 p.m. Dec. 17. Kenneth Branagh adapts, directs and stars in Shakespeare's historical drama. "Cyrano de Bergerac" (France — 1988), 9:25 p.m. Dec. 18 and 7 p.m. Dec. 19. Gerard Depardieu plays the 17th century swordsman who cuts his rivals down to size with his razor-sharp tongue. "Rosecrans and Guldentern Are

Dead" (USA — 1991), 9:25 p.m. Dec. 20 and 7 p.m. Dec. 21. Minor characters from Shakespeare's "Hamlet" are fleshed out considerably in this directorial debut from playwright Tom Stoppard. With Richard Dreyfuss.

STATE WAYNE THEATRE. 33310 Michigan Ave. West, Wayne. Call 326-4600 for more information. (32, 11 children and senior citizens)

"Father of the Bride" (USA — 1990) and "Carousel" (USA — 1956), Dec. 18-23 (call for show times). This premier double feature from the renowned theater begins with the timely return of "Father of the Bride," starring Spencer Tracy as the frazzled father trying to survive the marriage of daughter Elizabeth Taylor. "Carousel" is the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical about a devoted young woman's tragic marriage to a carousel barker. Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones star.

WINDSOR FILM THEATRE. 2135 Wyandotte St. West, Windsor. Call (519) 254-FILM for information. (40)

"Shoot the Piano Player" (France — 1960), 7 and 9:30 p.m. Dec. 16. Francois Truffaut's homage to American gangster films stars Charles Aznavour as a musician in a French cafe who tries to revive his concert career but ends up getting involved with old family gangster business instead.

Chang's
BAR & GRILL
4540 Light Mile
Farmington Hills
477-7177

OPEN NEW YEAR'S EVE
6 Item Special Menu
Party Favors
Entertainment
Accepting Reservations Now!
Karaoke
Wed. & Thurs. Evenings
Gift Certificate Prizes
Awarded Each Night

CELEBRATE THE ARRIVAL OF 1992
AT THE
Holiday Inn
LIVONIA-WEST
17123 Laurel Park Drive North
Livonia, MI 48152
(1-275 and Six Mile Road)
TOASTING
IN
1992
NEW YEAR'S EVE BALLROOM PACKAGE INCLUDES:
• Champagne toast
• Cash bar
• Change of heart
• Late check-out on New Year's Day
PACKAGE PRICE
\$129 per couple plus tax
Doors open at 7:00 p.m.
For More Information: (313) 464-1300.
CELEBRATE NEW YEAR'S EVE 1992
• Hours: 6:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
• Party Favors
• Champagne Toast at Midnight
• 1:00 a.m. Danish Buffet
\$19.92 per person
Call for Reservations 462-2196

Have an Old Fashioned Holiday Without The Old Fashioned ...When You Drive

Make this holiday one you can look back on with fond memories.

Don't Drink and Drive

This holiday season, The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers and the automotive dealerships in our area are working together with Mothers Against Drunk Driving to help change the meaning of "Tie One On".

Tying a red ribbon to your vehicle's door handle, sideview mirror or antenna seems a simple thing, but it serves as an instant reminder that if you drink, please don't drive.

Visit any of the following dealerships to pick up your red ribbon.

Tell them you're glad they care.

Explore The World At Home!
Electronic Safari!
SALE
on 100's of items
educational insights
GlobeSafari plus many more Parental Choice Gold Award Winning Toys
The Doll Hospital & Toy Soldier Shop
2947 W. 12 Mile, Westley - 543-3115
Mon., Tues. 10-6, Wed. 10-6, Thurs. 10-6, Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6

NEW YEAR'S EVE

At GUY HOLLERIN'S
Dinner, Dancing to a DJ., a Champagne Toast at Midnight and Party Favors

Menu
2 Lobster Tails or Steer & Pier or Prime Rib includes appetizer, salad, potato, vegetable, dessert and coffee

\$29.95 per person
plus tax, gratuity and cocktails
Seatings from 8 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Regular Menu until 6:30 p.m.

Special Overnight Package
\$149.99 per couple
Dinner for 2, Deluxe Hotel Room
includes tax and gratuity. Cocktails are not included.

Guy Hollerin's

In the GRAND BALLROOM
Dinner, Dancing to a DJ., Party Favors, Champagne Toast & Continental Breakfast

Spectacular Buffet Menu
Domestic and Imported Cheeses
Game Paré, Johann Strauss Spinach Salad, Caesar Salad

Roasted Striploin of Beef
Red Snapper Almondine
Fettucini Marco Polo
Breast of Chicken Calvados
Chocolate, Strawberry Mousse, Creme Caramel, Raspberry Torte, Creme Friche, Chocolate Gâteau Supreme Glace
Coffee, Tea, Milk and more.

\$29.95 per person
plus tax, gratuity and cocktails

Special Overnight Package
\$149.99 per couple
Dinner for 2, Deluxe Hotel Room
includes tax and gratuity. Cocktails are not included.

Cash bar 7 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Dinner 8 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Call 313-769-9800 for reservations

BIRMINGHAM
Fred Lavery Porsche-Audi Range Rover
400 S. Hunter
Fred Lavery Infiniti
525 S. Hunter

FARMINGTON HILLS
Bill Cook Automotive Group
37901 Grand River Ave.
Doh Saka Motor Mall
35200 Grand River Ave.
Sunshine Acura
34900 Grand River
Town & Country Dodge
31015 Grand River

ROCHESTER
Bill Fox Chevrolet
725 S. Rochester Rd.
Bill Fox Jeep Eagle
755 S. Rochester Rd.
Meadowbrook Dodge
1001 N. Main
Pat Moran Olds & GMC
3277 S. Rochester Rd.
Shelton Pontiac Buick
855 S. Rochester

ROCHESTER HILLS
Crisman Lincoln-Mercury
1185 Fairstone Ct.
Huntington Ford
2890 S. Rochester Rd.

SOUTHFIELD
Avis Ford
29200 Telegraph
Glassman Oldsmobile Saab Hyundai
28000 Telegraph
Art Moran Pontiac-GMC
29300 Telegraph
Page Toyota
21202 Telegraph
Joe Panian Chevrolet
28111 Telegraph
Tamaroff Buick-Nissan-Honda
25855 Telegraph
Tamaroff Dodge
24025 W. Twelve Mile

TROY
Fischer Mazda
1790 Maplelawn

WEST BLOOMFIELD
Jack Cauley Chevrolet-Geo
7020 Orchard Lake Rd.
John Rogin Buick
3939 S. Wayne Rd.

GARDEN CITY
Crestwood Dodge
32850 Ford Rd.
Stu Evans Lincoln-Mercury
32000 Ford Rd.

LIVONIA
Bill Brown Ford
32222 Plymouth Rd.
Tennison Chevrolet
32570 Plymouth Rd.

PLYMOUTH
Blackwell Ford
41001 Plymouth Rd.
Dick Scott Dodge
681 W. Ann Arbor Rd.
Dick Scott Buick
290 W. Ann Arbor Rd.
Fox Hills Chrysler-Plymouth
111 W. Ann Arbor Rd.
Hines Park Lincoln-Mercury
10801 Ann Arbor Rd.
Lou LaRiche Chevrolet-Subaru
40875 Plymouth Rd.
Sunshine Honda
1205 Ann Arbor Rd.

WAYNE
Jack Demmer Ford
37300 Michigan Ave.
John Rogin Buick
3939 S. Wayne Rd.

WESTLAND
North Bros. Ford
34300 Ford Rd.
Red Holman Pontiac-GMC-Toyota
35300 Ford Rd.

To our customers and our friends: Have a safe and happy holiday!
A Public Service of the Above Dealerships and...

MADD

Observer & Eccentric