

SCREEN SCENE

DETROIT FILM THEATRE. Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 832-2730 for information. (R)

"Howard's End" (Britain — 1992). 7 and 9:30 p.m. May 8-9 and 1, 4 and 7 p.m. May 10. The long-awaited film version of E.M. Forster's 1910 novel about greed and its impact on the human spirit. This 29th production by the producer-director team of James Ivory and Ismail Merchant stars Anthony Hopkins, Vanessa Redgrave and Emma Thompson.

HENRY FORD CENTENNIAL LIBRARY. 16301 Michigan Ave. Dearborn. Call 943-2037 for information. (Free)

"Terms of Endearment" (USA — 1983). 7 p.m. May 4. Shirley MacLaine and Debra Winger star as mother and daughter in the popular film, but Jack Nicholson steals each scene he's in as a lusty retired astronaut.

MAGIC BAG THEATRE CAFE. 2219 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Call 544-3039 for information. (R)

"Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation." 11:30 p.m. May 8-9. A wicked collection of some of the sickest cartoon shorts ever created. Along the way, you'll meet such off-color creations as "In-Bred Jell" and

"Dog Pile." No one under 17 will be admitted.

MAPLE THEATRE. 4135 W. Maple, Bloomfield. Call 855-9091 for information. (\$5.75; \$2.95 twilight show)

"Antonia and Jane" (Britain — 1991). A British comedy about two women — one a cool beauty, the other a lost soul — who spend each year preparing for their annual reunion lunch. Directed by Beeban Kidron.

STATE WAYNE THEATRE. 35310 Michigan Ave., Wayne. Call 326-6600 for information. (\$2; \$1 students and senior citizens)

"Fanny" (USA — 1952). May 6-10. Walter Scott's epic of English chivalry in the Middle Ages receives a worthy screen treatment in this colorful adventure starring Robert Taylor. Filmed on location in Great Britain.

"His Girl Friday" (USA — 1940). May 6-10 (call for show times). Howard Hawks' fast-paced remake of "The Front Page" stars Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell as a big-city newspaper editor and his star reporter. When she wants to leave the paper to marry a boring insurance salesman (Ralph Bellamy), the wily boss sabotages her at every turn. — John Monaghan

Foreign film has belated premier



tickets please
John Monaghan

Let's call it nepotism. After all, had it not been for good old uncle Oscar, this year's winner for best foreign language film probably wouldn't have made it to Detroit at all.

And it may not have been that tragic a loss. "Mediterraneo," an Italian anti-war comedy headed for an exclusive run at the Maple Theatre in Bloomfield, gives you the impression that Academy members choose international winners by sticking a pin in the map.

Although given to occasional clever moments, it doesn't have nearly enough charm to hold together an entire film. It wisely keeps the running time to under 80 minutes.

During World War II, a motley crew of Italian soldiers land on a small Greek island with the intention of occupying it. A sweep through the city finds no one living there — or so they think.

Soon the local women, children, and senior citizens start to venture from their hiding places. German invaders have recently taken their men, yet the Greeks treat the new soldiers with open arms — "one face, one race," they say to their Italian brothers.

TO TOP IT off, a beautiful woman named Vasilla offers her services as

a "puta," or prostitute. Instead of figuring out who pulls guard duty, the men concoct an elaborate schedule delegating by rank who sleeps with the woman and when.

Ultimately, their three-hour tour of duty develops into a three-year shore leave. The castaways hardly care whether or not the Axis powers are winning the war and abandon efforts to fix their radio to signal passing ships and planes.

"Mediterraneo" desperately wants to capture the magic of the great Scottish film "Local Hero." It beckons us to enter-uptight and bask in the simple pleasures of faraway lands.

Unfortunately, director Gabriele Salvatores has such a light touch that you have the constant feeling that something really wonderful is being lost in the translation from Italian.

Some scenes do stick with you. The daily soccer game on the beach

is interrupted by the arrival of an airplane, whose image shimmers on the sun-soaked beach and sneaks up behind the unknowing sergeant so totally immersed in the game.

The lieutenant, meanwhile, busies himself in the local church. The pastor admires his sketches and offers him the chance to paint an elaborate fresco.

THE AZURE blue Mediterranean looks stunning in some scenes but not in others. A glimpse of the two

mountain brothers swimming naked with one of the maidens is too often followed by washed-out images taken in the unflattering light of afternoon sun.

No problem with the performances. The Italian actors — Vane Barba, Diego Abantantuno, and Claudio Bigagli among them — have unusual physical qualities and character quirks that endear them to an audience after while.

A running gag finds one of the soldiers constantly trying to escape from the island. Another finds his true love in the form of a gray-haired donkey.

Still you expect something more out of the best foreign film winner. The best way to appreciate "Mediterraneo" is to simply enjoy it on its own merits as a tiny, unpretentious, and occasionally witty fable.

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