

LET'S GO! MOVIES

'Princess Caraboo' captivates those she encounters

One day in 1817, a beautiful young woman mysteriously appears in an English village.

Wearing a turban and speaking a language no one in this corner of the world has ever heard before, the exotic stranger, whose name seems to be Caraboo, completely baffles everyone she meets in "Princess Caraboo" opening Friday at metro Detroit movie theaters.

It may be that Caraboo is a gypsy or, worse, a vagrant. In either case, the authorities, not knowing what to do with her, put Caraboo in jail. Yet there is something graceful, self-assured, even regal about her, and soon she captures the imagination of the local aristocrats when she manages to convey to them that she is a princess from a faraway land. This secures her release from jail and brings her to the attention of several skeptics, including newspaperman John A. Gutch. He suspects she might be a fraud and begins to investigate her origins even as he, too, is falling under her spell.

Princess Caraboo, a romantic and comic film based on a true story, stars Phoebe Cates, Jim Broadbent, Wendy Hughes, Kevin Kline, John Lithgow and Stephen Rea. Directed by Michael

PREVIEW

Austin, the film is produced by Andrew Kersch and Simon Bosanquet and written by Michael Austin and John Warrall.

It is England in 1817, and there is general unrest among the poor. The English aristocracy, in fact, has had strict laws passed to keep the peasants under control, laws that allow for the jailing of vagrants or just about any other suspicious characters. Even more dire consequences await anyone committing fraud: in most cases it could mean the death penalty. And that is what Caraboo faces if she turns out to be a charlatan. Is she a princess from a Southeast Asian kingdom as she claims to be or an impudent fraud playing a dangerous game with the most powerful in the land? Whatever the answer, no one can doubt her extraordinary appeal as she manages to climb to the top of England's social ladder in no time at all, captivating all those she encounters.

Playing Caraboo is Phoebe Cates (Gremlins, Bodies, Rest and Motion), who had to learn a strange vocabulary of words which, along with her character's graceful hand language, convinces all around Caraboo that she really is a princess from somewhere near

Java.

"Most of it is made up, but it is based on real Indonesian and Thai sounds in particular," Cates says. "Michael (Austin) wrote them into the script, and I translated in my head what they meant. Occasionally he did say, 'Just mutter something.' I was also really helped by Anthony Van Laan, the choreographer, before the movie and during because he helped me to create a convincing body language."

Jim Broadbent and Wendy Hughes star as he and Mrs. Worrall, leading citizens of the area who hope to advance themselves in wealth and social status by taking Caraboo into their stately home.

Broadbent describes his character as "a nouveau riche on other people's money. He's an entrepreneurial merchant banker who has borrowed heavily and is deeply in debt, but he has to have a lot of front, so he's rented this huge, stately home with his wife's money. He's got a lot of energy and a lot of ideas but is fairly ruthless."

Mrs. Worrall, on the other hand, "is a very kind person and quite gullible," Hughes says. "Through the film she actually develops some courage and she really does have a personal journey."



LEAM LOWE/SON

Mysterious guest: Thinking she is a princess, England's aristocrats shower luxuries and attention on Caraboo (Phoebe Cates, center).

She learns something by spending time with Caraboo. She is not greedy, like her husband, and when she sees what a monster he has become, she realizes that she

has no need for him at all." Oscar and Tony Award-winning actor Kevin Kline stars as the Worralls' Greek butler, Frixos, who, along with the other Worrall

servants, is initially very suspicious of Caraboo.

"Princess Caraboo" is rated PG (Parental Guidance Suggested).

'Where the River Flows North' deserves a look



JOHN MONAGHAN

"Where the River Flows North" tells a story as old as the hills, or at least the Vermont forests in which it is set.

Old Noel Lord, a cranky and grey-bearded logger, refuses to be "bribed off his land" by a group of developers.

It's 1927 and the valley where Noel's family has been making its living for generations will soon be

many people building the area's first hydro-electric dam offer him \$5,000, far more than other locals are receiving, yet he refuses to budge.

Instead, he comes up with what he considers a brilliant trade. He'll give up his lifelong lease to the land for a stand of 100 ancient trees. They think he'll preserve the trees as a nature park, but he plans to cut each one of them down, make a killing on the lumber, and move to Oregon.

What saves the movie from becoming a cliché is the fortitude with which it has arrived at the theaters. It is now playing at the

REVIEW

Main Theatre in Royal Oak after setting house records in the northeast, an amazing feat for a movie starring Rip Torn and an unknown Indian actress.

The movie rides on these two actors' shoulders, and each is up to the task. Torn, best known today for his role as the on-screen producer of "The Larry Sanders Show," is virtually unrecognizable beneath a shaggy grey beard and layers of rough, bulky clothing.

Most of the time, however, it's

Tantoo Cardinal who steals the film. The Native American actress (she had bits in "Dances with Wolves" and "The Black Robe") plays Bangor, Noel's mate and housekeeper, who speaks her mind whether the old man wants to hear it or not.

The relationship is a strange one. Frequent visits to the wife and child buried atop the hill show that Noel's true love died long ago. Cardinal's depiction of companionship is both funny and poignant, her smile and unpolished love of life reminiscent of Giulietta Masina in Fellini's "La Strada."

She echoes our own thoughts when she wonders out loud whether the old man is up to the task of cutting down so many trees before the company people figure out what he's up to.

At least two of the smaller parts are filled by well-known actors. Michael J. Fox, donning Teddy Roosevelt mustache and round glasses, tries his hardest but still looks like a boy in a man's part. Treat Williams fares better as a fight promoter who offers Noel yet another option to logging.

The movie, co-written and directed by Jay Craven, takes its time to reach the final credits. It

lingers for a spell on the blazing leaves in fall and the all-important river and forces you to recognize the beauty that Noel doesn't want to give up.

"Where the River Flows North" is dynamic almost without meaning to be. Although far from a great film, it deserves a look for its depiction of a lifestyle long buried by progress.

If you have a comment for John Monaghan, call him at 983-9247, mailbox 1868, on a Touch-Tone phone, or write to him care of Street Scene, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

Screen Scene

A sampling of what's playing at alternative movie theaters across metro Detroit as reviewed by John Monaghan.

DETROIT FILM THEATRE
Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 883-2323 for information. (\$5)

"Elbail on the Beach" (Britain — 1993). 7 and 9:30 p.m. Sept. 16-17; 4 and 7 p.m. Sept. 18. In working-class England, a group of Indian women celebrate "Women's Amusement Day" with a quick trip to the resort city of Blackpool.

SEASIDE BAG THEATRE
22918 Woodward, Ferndale. Call 444-1991 for information. (\$5 admission per screening; \$35 for the entire festival.)

"Lesbian and Gay Film Festival," starting at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 17. The second annual event kicks off with this panel discussion by film critics and performers, followed by screenings of

several short works. The festival continues through the following weekend.

MAIN ART THEATRE
118 N. Main St. at 11 Mile, Royal Oak. Films play through at least Thursday, unless noted otherwise. Call 642-0180 for information and show times. (\$5.50; \$4 students and matinee; \$3 twilight)

"Barcelona" (USA — 1994). Whit Stillman, who made such a splash with "Metropolitan," a few years back, brings droll humor back to the movie. The story finds a pair of preppy suburban Chicago couples dealing with fashionable American-bathing in 1980s Spain.

"That's Entertainment 3" (USA — 1994). Movie star legends Gene Kelly, Cyd Charisse, Mickey Rooney let a homesick Debbie Reynolds share their memories of the glory years of the MGM musical. Included are clips from classics like "On the Town,"

plus never-before-seen musical sketches of Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra and others.

MAPLE THEATRE
4135 W. Maple, Bloomfield. All titles play through at least next Thursday. Call 855-9590 for information. (\$5; \$2.95 twilight)

"Eat Drink Man Woman" (USA/Thailand — 1994). A comedy from the director of "The Wedding Banquet," about food, fatherhood and family ties. A famous chef mysteriously loses his sense of taste, but with three daughters, that's the least of his troubles.

"The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert" (Australia — 1994). What could have been a one-joke movie — a trio of drag queens tour the Australian outback — is livened up by believable performances, wickedly catty humor and musical numbers so campy even Busby Berkeley wouldn't own up to them.

MICHAEL THEATRE
603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Call 668-6397 for information. (\$5; \$4 students and senior citizens)

"Froth" (USA — 1993). 8:30 p.m. Sept. 18. A cinema verite documentary examining the lives of 80 freshmen at Stanford University. Filmmakers Daniel Giller and Deborah Goldfine actually moved into the freshman dorm to capture how a diverse group of individuals form a loose community.

RABBIT COFFEEHOUSE
22010 Harper, St. Clair Shores. Call 779-0707 for information. (Free)

"Blackboard Jungle" (USA — 1955). 10 p.m. Sept. 18. Glenn Ford plays an idealistic teacher in an inner-city high school who learns to fight back when his hoodligan students go too far. Sidney Poitier and Vic Morrow co-star in this time-honored juvenile delinquent drama.

"A FRESH, FUNNY, FEEL-GOOD FILM!"
— from *Chicago*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*

"A FUN, ROMANTIC COMEDY. A CHARMING FAIRY TALE."
— *Los Angeles Times*, 10/1/94

"DRINK UP!"
— *Los Angeles Times*, 10/1/94

MELANIE GRIFFITH
ED HARRIS
MILK MONEY

PG-13

SHOWTIME CITY	NOW PLAYING	AMC WOODS G
STARS CANTON	SHOWCASE 20/20	SHOWCASE 20/20
SHOWCASE 20/20	SHOWCASE 20/20	STAR CRADICAL 15/16
STAR 15/16/17/18	STAR TAYLOR	STAR CRADICAL 15/16
STAR 15/16/17/18	STAR TAYLOR	STAR CRADICAL 15/16
STAR 15/16/17/18	STAR TAYLOR	STAR CRADICAL 15/16
STAR 15/16/17/18	STAR TAYLOR	STAR CRADICAL 15/16
STAR 15/16/17/18	STAR TAYLOR	STAR CRADICAL 15/16
STAR 15/16/17/18	STAR TAYLOR	STAR CRADICAL 15/16

"A PERFECT '10!"
A GREAT DATE MOVIE

"ONE OF THE BEST ROMANCES OF THE YEAR!"
— *Los Angeles Times*, 10/1/94

PRINCESS CARABOO
A TRUE STORY TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.

PG-13

STARTS FRIDAY, AUGUST 16TH

AMC WOODS	SHOWCASE	AMC AMERICANA WEST
STAR JOHN RAY 15/16	STAR TAYLOR	STAR 12 OAKS

TOP 10 MOVIES

Having trouble deciding what to watch? These are the top 10 movies for the week ending Sept. 15, 1994.

1. "The Rain" (USA — 1994)

2. "Schindler's List" (USA — 1993)

3. "The Shawshank Redemption" (USA — 1994)

4. "The Untouchables" (USA — 1993)

5. "The Godfather Part II" (USA — 1973)

6. "The Godfather" (USA — 1972)

7. "The Godfather Part III" (USA — 1990)

8. "The Godfather Part I" (USA — 1972)

9. "The Godfather Part II" (USA — 1973)

10. "The Godfather Part III" (USA — 1990)

Coming Attractions

There's something for everyone at the movies. Here's a list of what's in the wings:

Opening Friday, Sept. 18:

- "Timecop" — Futuristic thriller has "Timecop" on a man-hunt for a corrupt senator who has the power to change history.
- "The Shawshank Redemption" — The Robbing Let's home goes Morgan Freeman in a seasoned life in this tale of hope, survival and friendship within a maximum security prison.
- "Quin Show" — A provocative and often-humorous drama about the power of television and the real-life quiz show scandals that erupted in the late 1950s.
- "Terminal Velocity" — Action drama of espionage and double-cross starring Charlie Sheen and Nastassja Kinski. A skydiving instructor finds his career in jeopardy when a beginner plummet to her death under his watch.
- "Jason's Lyric" — Drama tells the story of an urban youth falling in love for the first time while living in the shadow of his father's death.
- "Little Giants" — Comedy about families, football and how the game of life should be played.
- "The Scout" — When a baseball scout travels to Mexico in search of the next Babe Ruth, he finds a player who has amnesia.
- "Pulp Fiction" — Tale of America's big city criminal subculture that weaves intersecting stories with plenty of blood, lust, greed and wit. Stars John Travolta, Uma Thurman, and Harvey Keitel.

Opening Friday, Oct. 7:

- "Only You" — Romantic comedy about a girl who is given the name of her spouse to be Damon — by a fortune teller with