American movies highlight this year's best



Almost a dezen l'ate callers took me to task carlier this year for my tepid reaction to "For-rest Gump." Not surprisingly, it didn't make my lat of the year's best films.

Actually, up

JOHN Actually, up until last week, I

monaghaw until last week, I be coming up with the requisite 10 until a bold new Christmas release came in just under the wire. Note that "The Snapper," which premiered at the Detroit Film Theatre in January, was on my list last year.

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"Heaveoly Creatures." New Zealand's Peter Jackson followed his splfly horror comedy "Dead Allwe" with this psychological study of two girls in the 1950s who form an "unnatural" attachment to each other. By far the year's pretitiest-looking film, with outstanding camera work.

"Naked." Like its main character, this relentlessly depressing and fascinating account of a misosynistic young drifter so has a great smound of with and charm. The best drifter of the signal director Mike Leigh, whose "life is Sweet" and "High whose "heve been tops on previous best-of-year-lists.

B "Pulp Piction." It took a second viewing to fully appreciate how funny Quentin Tarantino's Lea Angeles ganguter comedy really ia. No masterpiece, but a freewheeling, supercharged lark, especially when the Detroit Pilm Thestre premiered it, volume cranked up to 11, during its new Monday night series.

B "Ed Wood." As a longtime fan of the notorious schlock director, I can't imagine a better screen treatment of his life. Wood's optimism of spirit, awfulness of execution, and poignant relationship with Bela Lugosi all came through in this, Tim Burton's most mature work. Beware Martin Landau at the Oscars.

B "Bitter Moon." Roman Polanski was back in fine form with this dark, dark comedy about a passionate relationship that fizzles into indifference and eruelty. Disturbing and polgnant, it makes me look all the more forward to Polanski's latest, "Death of the Maiden."

B "Go Fish." This low-budget leablan love story, filmed in the streets and flats of Chicago's north side, has more truth than a dozen Hollywood movies. The acting was amsteurish, but its combination of heart and cutting edge hipness should have rewarded it a wider audience.

B "Dazed and Confused." Where were you in the summer of 1976? According to director Richard Linkister, getting stoned. The director of "Siacker" beat the sophomore slump with another funny and surprisingly complex movie about nothing — and everyth Great soundtrack too.

"Quie Show." Robert Redford's entertaining account of the 1950s quiz show scandal that lost Amer-

ica's trust in television forever.
John Turturo and Raiph Pienes
brought complexity to both of the
contestants and Riob More was
effective as the investigator, even
when he couldn't hold his Kennedy-style accon.

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Good movie: "Ed Wood," one of John Monaghan's top 10 movies for this year, stars Johnny Depp (right), Bill Murry (left), and Sarah Jessica Parker, (center).

Better Tomorrow"

Some disappointments: "NatuMonaghan, call him at \$53.2047,
ral Born Killers," "Francois Truffaut: Stolen Portraits," "Mary
Shelley's Frankenstein," "Fresh,"
The Last Seduction," "Faraway,
So Close."

Screen Scene

A sampling of what's playing at alternative movie theaters ocross metro Detroit as reviewed by

metro Detroit as reviewed by John Monaghan.

B MAGIC RAG THEATRE
22918 Woodward, Ferndalo. Call
310-544-3039 for information. (\$6)
Spike and Mike's Sick and
Twistod Festival of Animation. 8
p.m. Dec. 22: 9, 11 p.m. Dec. 30.
Beavis and Buthead made their
Detroit debut during an earlier
edition. So you can imagine what's in store in this new compilation, featuring such titles as
"Home Honey, I'm High," "Bri-

an's Brain," and "Lloyd's Lun-chbox." Not for the weak at heart — or stomach. "The Life and Times of Allen

Ginsberg" (USA - 1993), 8 p.m. Jan. 4 - 5. A new documentary about the Beat poet and activist about the Beat poet and activist is highlighted by photos and films from his personal collection that sheds new light on the lives of not only himself, but colleagues Wil-liam Burroughs and Jack

Kerousc.
MAIN ART THEATRE, 118 N.
Main Street at 11 Mile, Royal
Oak. Films play through at least

Thursday, unless noted otherwise. Call 810-542-0180 for information and showtimes. (\$6.50; \$4 students and matinee; \$3

twilight)
"The Last Seduction" (USA1994). The follow-up film noir
from John Dahl, director of "Rod
Rock West." This time Linda
Fiorentine stars as a ruthless
femme fatale who double crosses
her husband, then hides out in a

her husband, then hides out in a Smalltown, USA. "Bullets Over Broadway" (USA - 1994). Woody Allen's latest, set in the 1920s, finds an ambitious

playwright (John Cusack) offered the chance to direct his own play. The only hitch: the has to cast a mobster's girlfriend in a key role. "Heavenly Creatures" (New Zealand - 1994). The tale, based on a true story about two imaginative girls who find themselves involved in something they can't control. An acclaimed new movie from Peter Jackson, the director of "Dead Alive."

M MAPLE THEATRE
4135 W. Maple, Bloomfield, All
titles play through at least next

Thursday, Call 810-855-9090 for information, (\$6; \$2.95 twilight)
"Little Women" (USA - 1994), Yet another screen treatment of Louise May Alcott's American classic about a woman and her four daughters. Susan Sarandon, Wynona Ryder, and Gabriel Byrne star. Directed by Gillian Armstrong ("My Brilliant Careet"),

reer").
"Nell" (USA - 1994). Jodie Fos-"Nell" (USA - 1994), Jodie Fo ter tries for a third Occar in this sometimes moving, often sappy story of a woman facing the worl after growing up alone with her mother in the woods. Liam Nee-son and Natasha Richardson help

her along. Opens Dec. 23.

"Mrs. Patker and the Vicious
Griele" (USA - 1994). Alan Rudolph ("The Moderna") seems
well-suited to resurrect Dorothy
Parker and the other literary luminr "se who held court over
lunch and drinks at New York"s
Algonquin Hotel. Jennifer Jasem

Leigh stars.

Eleigh stars.

Eleigh

313-508-833" for information. (25), 4 students/scniors) "Heavenly Creatures" (New Zealand - 1994). Through Dec. 31 (call for showtimes). See Main Art Theatre listing above.



Coming Attractions

There's something for everyone at the movies. Here's a list of what's in the wings:
Opening Friday, Jan. 8
"Safe Passage" — Drams based on the novel by Ellips Bache, about a family with seven sons, one of whom is presumed dead in the Sinal Deart War. Stars Susan Sarandon and Sam Shepard.

Shepard.

"Housequeat" — Action-comedy about a dyafunctional auburban white family who takes in a black house guest only to find out

he is not who he is supposed to be. Stars Sinbad, Phil Hartman, Kim Greist and Jeffrey Jones. B "Oobb" — Sports writer is con-tacted by baseball great Ty Cobb to write his life story, and finds the dark truth behind the legend. His dilemma, write the real story or maintain the myth. Stars Tom-

or maintain the myth. Guar's tammy Les Jones.

"Immortal Beloved" — On of
history's great romantic mysteries: the search from among scores
of women for the one whom the
mercurial musical genius Ludwig

Van Beethoven called his "Immortal Beloved."
Opening Wednesday, Jan 11
"Higher Learning" — From the

streets of South Central to the college campus, the locations may be worlds apart, but some of the stories remain the same.

Walter Matthau Meg Ryan Tim Robbins

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SHOWCASE STENUNG HOTS.	SHOWCASE WESTLAND	STAR GRATIOT
STAR JOHN R # 14 ML		STAR TAMLOR
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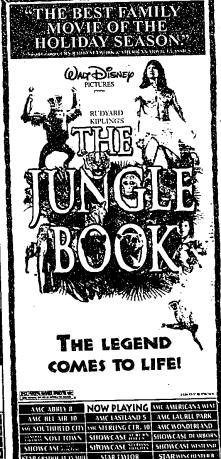
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