

ARTS & LEISURE

KEELY WYGONIK, EDITOR • 313-953-2105

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1997 • PAGE 1 SECTION C

TICKETS PLEASE



JOHN MONAGHAN

Hollywood has done right by Elmore Leonard

Since emerging from the typewriter in 1977, Elmore Leonard's "Touch" has passed through more hands than the Maltese Falcon.

The story of how it found its way onto the screen has as many twists and turns as the Birmingham author's latest crime yarn.

His study of a bonafide faith healer, and the media circus that springs up around him, was shelved because the publisher, Bantam, didn't know how to market it. As Leonard remembers, "I'd call them and say, 'I think we're ready for a stigmata story,' but they just couldn't commit to publish it." When Leonard received notoriety for "Glitz" in 1985, the earlier book became such a hot property that he bought it back and sold it for ten times the price to a rival publisher.

The opportunity to make a movie out of "Touch" originally fell to David Sole, best known as half of TV's "Starsky and Hutch." The option was sold to Norman Lear, then Bruce Willis and eventually to a South African production company. The film has finally been made by the French company Lumiere, the same one that produced "Leaving Las Vegas."

Opening Friday at area theaters, "Touch" is the second film in as many years to get



Elmore Leonard

Leonard right on film. Like "Get Shorty," it allows the tale to unfold gradually, much like a book. The low budget (about \$5 million) and ensemble cast of character actors like Christopher Walken and Tom Arnold makes sure that the story remains the star.

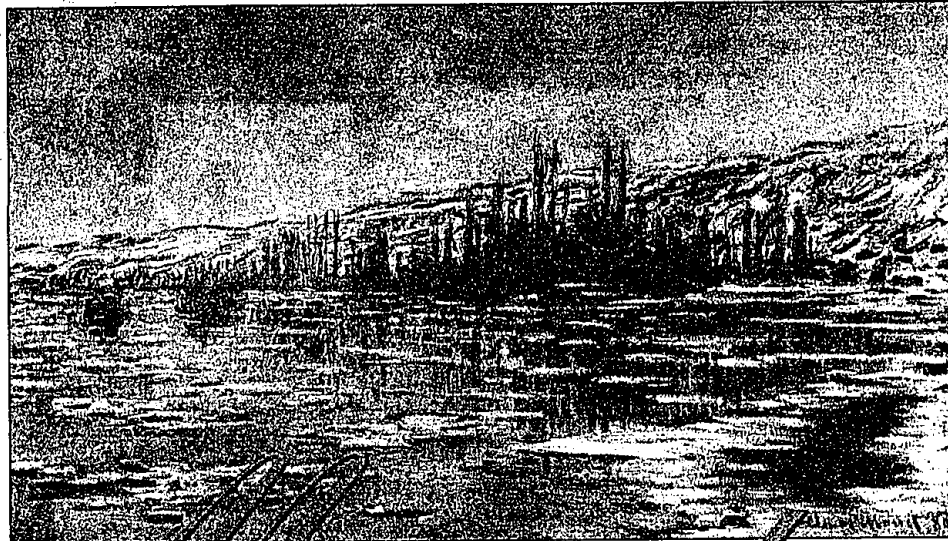
Here a young social worker named Juvenal (newcomer Skeet Ulrich) discovers that he has the power to heal the sick. When he lays his hands on their heads, blood begins to pour from wounds on his palms and a deep gasp appears mysteriously on his side.

Walken and Bridget Fonda are the first to get to Juvenal, urging him to make a television appearance and cash in while the buzz is hot.

Leonard explains, "What if you take a person who has stigmata and performs miracles and drop him into society? How does he act? How do people react to him? The whole point is the acceptance of himself and how he doesn't make a big deal of it at all. He accepts all these different characters who approach him, even though in many cases they're trying to exploit him."

The possibility of a person developing the wounds of Christ is the kind of story Leonard remembers from his days attending high school at the University of Detroit. "Going to a Catholic school you can't avoid it. Sisters would talk about miracles and

See TICKETS PLEASE, 2C



Monet

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
SPECIAL WRITER

Excitement levels rose rapidly last week as members of the local art community learned the University of Michigan Museum of Art is organizing an exhibition of Monet paintings for early 1998. The last Monet exhibit to visit the area was at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1995.

"Turning Point: Monet's Debacles at Vetheuil" will magnify a crucial period in the French Impressionist's career when Monet lived at Vetheuil, 40 miles west of Paris on the Seine River.

Assembled around the Michigan museum's "La Debacle" painting, the tightly focused exhibition includes 11 other landscape, still life and portrait paintings lent by Paris, Madrid, New York, Toronto, Dallas, Minneapolis, Switzerland, and New Zealand museums. All were created in 1879 and 1880. Five of the landscapes deal with the debacle of 1880 when rising temperatures, during the coldest winter ever recorded, thawed the ice on the Seine. The natural cataclysm sent a torrent of ice and snow rushing through Vetheuil and Lavacourt across the river, toppling trees and wreaking havoc. The Michigan painting was done after the death of his wife Camille in September 1879.

As former museum administrator, Janet Torno took part in the exhibition's planning stages begun in 1994. Now executive director of the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association, Torno thinks "the exhibit will expand people's consciousness."

"I think the Monet exhibit will be a great resource for our members at the BBAA. It's a learning experience. Art and art history is very important because we learn more about the artist's life and what motivated them," said Janet Torno.

Ralph F. Glenn, art department chairman at Madonna University in Livonia, agrees with Torno that the exhibition will prove very educational, especially for his modern art students.

Monet is famous for being one of the plain air or outdoor painters. In contrast to Manet who did Parisian scenes, he did scenes outside of Paris. Monet's one of the pivotal figures that leads us into the 20th century, not only as a plain air painter but because he pursued his own path,

EXHIBITION PLANNED FOR EARLY 1998

which is very 20th century," said Glenn of Bloomfield Hills.

According to Annette Dixon, curator of Western art, the Jan. 24 to March 16 exhibition will provide a rare opportunity to view the museum's Monet and "La Debacle at Vetheuil" from Madrid's Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, side-by-side for the first time since the two oil-on-canvas paintings were painted. These works precede Monet's series of paintings of grainstacks and water lilies.

"It was a period of crisis emotionally because his wife was dying, and a critical period artistically because his paintings weren't selling. Before this he'd been criticized for his paintings being too sketchy," said Dixon, who co-curated the exhibition with museum collections manager Carole McNamara.

"The paintings have a melancholy mood. They touch us emotionally. Monet did about 20 paintings like this which showed he saw both the destruction as well as the beauty."

A portrait of the dying Camille, lent by Musée d'Orsay in Paris, reveals the inner turmoil Monet endured at Vetheuil. The Monets and their two children were sharing a household with Ernest and Alice Hoschede and their six children. A supporter of Monet since the early 1870s, Ernest went bankrupt in 1877. They combined the two families with the hope of easing their strained finances. Instead his love affair with Alice began to create problems.

As he was about to turn 40, Monet wrote to his friend and patron Dr. de Bellio that there was no hope left because he'd painted nothing worthy to show at an upcoming exhibition with his Impressionist friends. This depression was to haunt him periodically throughout the rest of his life.

"His art turns around eventually as he experiments with light, atmosphere and weather. He stops painting people and focuses on nature. He begins serial painting. When he exhibited with

the Impressionists, Monet was painting triplets. Now he was painting 20 on the same theme, varying times of day and other conditions," said Dixon.

In April Dixon and McNamara will travel to Paris to research the archives in Paris. Photographs will be taken of the topographical site where Monet sketched the winter landscape in Vetheuil.

"We're going to Paris because there are some books and letters we can't get anywhere but France. While it's going to be a small exhibit, it's going to be a mini-blockbuster. It will pull in people from all over the state, Ohio, Indiana and Ontario because it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the paintings from a period when Monet's sense of himself was changing. It's a very experimental period which took place over a period of a few weeks in January and early February of 1880," said Dixon.

One of three venues, "Turning Point" will travel to the Dallas Museum of Art after leaving Michigan, then to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. A catalog will feature essays by Dixon, McNamara and Monet scholar Charles F. Stuckey, curator of paintings at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Stuckey will examine the psychological aspects which fueled Monet's work at Vetheuil.

In the past several years, the Plymouth Community Arts Council has organized trips and train weekends to various exhibitions of Cezanne and Degas in Philadelphia and Chicago. Executive director Randy Lee plans to schedule a day away to Ann Arbor for local art enthusiasts to view the Monet exhibition in 1998.

"It's thrilling to have an exhibit of that importance, this close to us," said Randy Lee.

Turning Point: Claude Monet's "The Breakup of the Ice, (La Debacle)" 1880, is the focal point around which an exhibition of the French Impressionist's paintings will focus in early 1998 at the University of Michigan Museum of Art in Ann Arbor. The oil on canvas was a gift to the museum from Russell and Andree Stearns of Massachusetts in 1976.

Impressionist's paintings will focus in early 1998 at the University of Michigan Museum of Art in Ann Arbor. The oil on canvas was a gift to the museum from Russell and Andree Stearns of Massachusetts in 1976.

Museum of Art in Ann Arbor. The oil on canvas was a gift to the museum from Russell and Andree Stearns of Massachusetts in 1976.

MUSIC

Featured soloist: Jean-Pierre Rampal will perform at the fifth annual Michigan Flute Festival Feb. 24.



CHRISTIAN STUCKEY

Rampal brings magic to flute festival

BY CORINNE ABRAIT
SPECIAL WRITER

Legendary French flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal will lead a parade of stars at the fifth annual Michigan Flute Festival Feb. 24 at Temple Beth El, 7400 Telegraph (at 14 Mile Road), Birmingham.

The program is part of the 10th anniversary season of Musica Viva International concerts under founder and artistic director Ginka Gerova-Ortega of Bloomfield Hills, herself a noteworthy flutist and former student of Rampal.

"We usually have our flute festivals in May, but we changed because Jean-Pierre Rampal is here in America on

tour, that's how he could accept our invitation. His gesture to come here is a gesture of respect for what we are doing. He was my teacher on and off for three or four summers," said Gerova-Ortega.

Leading Spanish flutist Claudio Arimany, who is with Rampal on this American tour, will be on the Temple Beth El program as well. With them will be pianist John Ritter, who has been Rampal's accompanist since the late 1970s. The threesome will perform works for two flutes and piano by J.C.F. Bach, Mozart, Kuhl, Doppler and Verdi.

"Rampal is tremendously inspiring —

just being around him is inspiring," Gerova-Ortega. "He made the flute what it is today."

Few would question that statement. Rampal, considered by his legions of admirers throughout the world to be forever young at 74, has been performing in concert halls for more than 50 years. He is also, very likely, the most-recorded soloist on any instrument. Appropriately for his five decades of concertizing, he plays a 14-karat solid-gold flute. Gerova-Ortega describes Rampal as "a life-loving person, touring, always touring, from Japan to Alaska."

See FLUTE, 2C

Michigan Flute Festival

When: 8 p.m. Monday, Feb. 24

Where: Temple Beth El, 7400 Telegraph (at 14 Mile Road) Birmingham

Tickets: \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. Available at Ticketmaster (810) 645-6666 and Flute World (810) 855-0410.

Patron tickets \$50 per person include prime seating, and reception with Jean-Pierre Rampal after the concert. For reservation information call Flute World.