## 'Shakespeare in Love' a treat for the heart

Young Will Shakespeare is suffering from a rather stubborn case of writer's block. Then, one evening, he spies a beautiful stranger across a crowded room and falls hopelessly, helplessly, maddeningly in love at first sight. This passion inspires him to sit right down and write one of the most enduring love stories of all time, "Romeo and Juliet."

This, in a nusthell, is the fanciful plot of director John Madden's new flum, "Shakespeare in Love." Who knows if a smidgen of it is true? Who cares if the idea sounds slightly silly on paper? In and of itself, this

movic, scripted by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, is utterly captivating, it's lively. It's color-ful. It's witty. It's moving. And, though it always seems authen-tically Elizabethan, it nover loses touch with its 1990s audi-

loses touch with its 1990s audience.
What else could we ask as filmgoers? How about a cast that simply dazzles?
By all means, begin with Joseph Fiennes, who plays the young, smitten Bard of Avon with a kind of feverish intensity that seems just right, though you might expect it to grow tedious or to edge over-the-top. His dashing but slightly-grubby Shakespears even seems to be just a bit of a ding-a-ling now and

then, but since most of us turn a little goofy in the heat of passion, anyway, this only makes him appear more human.

As Lady Viola, the object of ardent affection, Gwyneth Paltrow supplies the requisite dreamy quality and etherad beauty, as only she can. When she takes the stage as Romeo (in this story-within-a-story, Lady Viola disguises herself as a beyin order to act on the all-make Elizabethan stage), it's a but of bedy for long, however.

A superb support gost add just the right times. Dame Judi Dench is a slightly wigged-out Elizabeth I. Colin Firth, plays Lady Viola's

cooly-calculating suitor, Lord Wessex. Ben Affleck, looking lusticus as a gypsy fiddler, appears as the popular Elizabethan thespian, Ned Alleya, and the sadeyed Geoffrey Rush makes his mark as the sad-eyed and griny theater owner, Philip Henslower. True to the era, just about every other character in this movie looks unwashed.

It's almost impossible to emphasize how important the settings, coatumes, lighting, makeup, and all other peripherals are in this movie. So central are they that one seriously hesitates even to refer to them a "peripherals" are they that one seriously hesitates even to refer to them a "peripherals".

Production designer Martin Childa, costumer Sandy Powell, and hair/make-up designer Lisa Westent obviously believe that God is in the details. Some of the shots are so beautiful that they look as if they have been shots are so beautiful that they look as if they have been designed by Caravaggie. And ware provided with a look at everything from the jewel encrusted clothing to the sop the teeming streets to the the aters, the pubs, the churches, brothels, markets, and country



Drama: Gwyneth Paltrow and Joseph Fiennes in "Shakespeare in Love."

houses. You'll even get a peek at the toothbrushes of the day. In every direction, "Shake-

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comedy: In the 1996 holiday release "The Preacher's Wife," Whitney Houston (left) stars as the gaspel-singing wife of the Rev. Henry Biggs (Courtney B. Vance, center) and daughter of Marguerite Coleman (Jennifer Lewis, right). Justin Pierre Edmund (front, left) stars as the Biggs' son Jeremiah, and Darvel Davis Jr. (right is his best friend, Hakim.

## Readers share memories of favorite holiday movies

By KEELY WYGONIK STAFF WRITER kwygonik@oc.homecomm.net

"It's a Wonderful Life." This is

"Rs a wonderful Life. This is the season when we look for a "Miracle on 34th Street" and gig-gle at the memory of "Christmas Vacation."

We asked readers to share.

We asked readers to shale.

Vacation."

Wo asked readers to share memories of their favorite helidy movies. Get out your peneli and paper, it's not late to rent a video to enjoy with your family and friends. Check your local TV listings, too, to see what holiday movies will be aired.

Emmet Hynes of Livonia remembers gathering around the TV with his family to watch "March of the Wooden Soldiers," "Babes in Toyland" with Laurel & Hardy. "A few years ago my sister gave me a Christmas gift of this tape," said Hynes about Babes in Toyland." To this day, I still watch this movie and I become a kid just for one hour; Im 64.

My favorite holiday movie is "A.

n 64. My favorite holiday movie is "A My favorite holiday movie is "A Christmas Story," wrote Gindy Koene of West Bloomfield. "It is the story of a young boy, Ralphie, who wants a Red Rider BB gan for Christmas. Yet, each time he requests it, he receives the same answer, "You'll shoot your cyout! However, it is more than just a young boys yearning for a coveted toy. It is a humorous tale of a family during the holidays.

tale of a family during the holi-days.
"Just thinking about the 'Leg Lamp,' the 'Stuck Tongue,' and the 'Bumpus Hounds' brings a smile to my face. I usually watch it every year during the holiday season. It is usually shown on your regular television stations and is also available on tape. So if the holidays are dragging you down, rent this video, lighten up, and laugh. The holidays are to be

Here are some all-time holfavorites picked by the people who recently presented The Festival of Trees at Cobo Center in Detroit.

All I Want For Christmas

1991)
■ The Bishop's Wife (1947)
■ A Christmas Carol (1938)
■ A Christmas Carol (1951)
■ Christmas In Connecticut (1945)

Christmas In Connecti-

Ethristmas In Connecticut (1992)

A Christmas Story (1983)

Christmas Vacation (1989)

Ernest Saves Christmas (1988)

Home Alone (1990)

Home Alone 2: Lost in New York (1992)

Miracle on 34th Street (19947)

Miracle on 34th Street (19947)

(1994)

enjoyed!"
Sharon Gawthrop of West-land's favorite memories aren't of one particular movie, but of time shared with her father going to the movies.
"Growing up, the tradition in my family was to open Christmas presents on Christmas Eve, wrote Gawthrop. "For many years, my father would take me to downtown Detroit to watch a novice on Christmas Eve day while my mother finished wrapping presents and getting ready for the evening. I had his undivided attention and how special Tell!

felt!
"I can remember only two
movies that we saw - Mr. Magoo
and Li! Abner. Not holiday
movies by any stretch of the

imagination, but I got to pick the movie and they were my picks. I am and I guess always have been a huge movie bull. I go to the movies one to two times a week. If there are hollday movies showing at the theater, it's great. It helps you get in a holiday spirit. I have the usual classic holiday movies on tape. Santa Claus, 'It's a Wonderful Life, 'Jingle Bells,' but nothing togos the experience of actually getting out of the house, going to the theater and immersing yourself into the story unfolding on the screen. I'm sure the pleasure I feel partially relates back to those early pleasures experienced laughing or crying, watching a movie with my now departed father. Thanks for prompting a good memory!"
Teresa Allen of Livonin recently purchased one of her favorite Christmas.

"I always used to watch it with

ly purchased one of her favorite Christmas movies – "White Christmas." "I always used to watch it with my mom at Christmas. She passed away four years ago." wrote Allen. "It is still hard for me to think of how much! I mise. We would bake her Christmas "S' cookies and make her pinulata, an Italian sweet that is made with fried dough balls mixed with honey, chopped almonds, and chocolate. "In-between, we would sip egg nog, watch 'White Christmas' -singing along with all the songs. This year, I had my children watch it with me. Initially, cried remembering all the good times passed and how much I miss my mom. Now, though, I'm glad I have this holiday movie to watch and share with my children. I pointed out to my daughter that she shares the name of one of the actresses, 'Vera' (Veronica) Allen. She thought that was pretty cool."