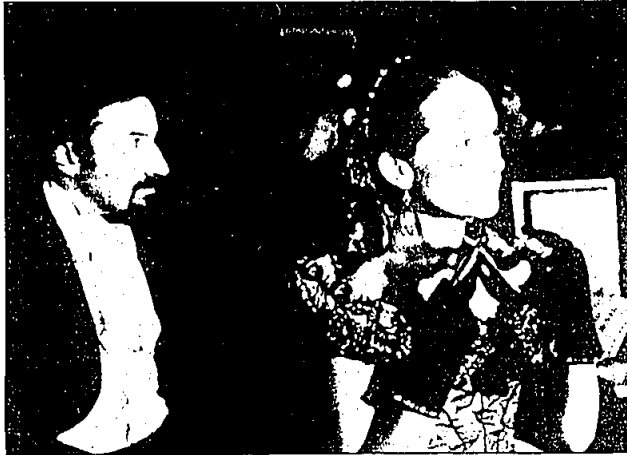


'Madame Bovary' adapts beautifully to the screen



Charles Bovary (Jean-François Balmer) takes his wife, Emma (Isabelle Huppert), to the opera in Claude Chabrol's "Madame Bovary."

'Ladyhawke' doesn't soar

If it had been done more successfully, "Ladyhawke" would have been the kind of movie I would really have liked. Through some lousy directing and inappropriate casting, the film never realizes its potential.

The 1985 film, directed by Richard Donner, tells the story of a knight and his true love, kept apart by a curse from an evil bishop. Dutch actor Rutger Hauer and Michelle Pfeiffer play the ill-fated lovers, one of the film's strong points.

Hauer, an imposing looking and stalwart knight, has returned to kill the bad guy, a revenge he'll settle for even if the evil bishop's death won't break the spell. Naturally, the bishop learns he's back and tries to have him killed, leading to some nice action scenes.

So far so good. Pfeiffer is appropriately graceful and lovely as



pass the popcorn

LeAnne Rogers

the female lead, but she isn't that wimpy swooning type of female that we've all seen ad nauseum.

PFEIFFER AND Hauer do a pretty credible job in creating a romantic couple considering the few scenes they have together due to the machinations of the plot.

It's also to these actors' credit that their characters have any impact. The majority of character development comes through their own skills and presence as actors rather than

the thin script.

Veteran character actor Leo McKern does his usual journeyman work as a booby cleric who redeems himself by helping the couple, whom he had conspired before they incurred the wrath of the bishop.

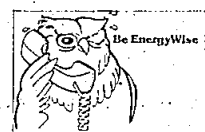
Stage actor John Wood plays the bishop as a bug-eyed wooden statue. Thanks to the lack of a strongly developed villain, most of the plot is borne by the curse and the efforts to reunite the lovers.

The biggest fly in the ointment is Matthew Broderick as a petty thief, the only person to escape from the prison before the bishop's castle. The knight coerces the young thief into helping him get into the heavily guarded castle by backtracking his escape route.

Broderick gives an incredibly stiff performance, speaking alternately in a wisecracking contemporary patter or with a stilted sort of British accent. Overall, he's really irritating.

EVERYTHING in the film looks nice although everyone seems a little neat for folks living in the Middle Ages. The impact on the ears isn't so nice with a pop score by Alan Parsons that is as tremendously inappropriate as it is irritating. Director Donner has made some much better films in his career including "Inside Moves," "Superman" and "Lethal Weapon." This isn't one of his most memorable efforts. It does rather waste his talents and those of his cast.

This probably isn't too bad a romantic adventure for pre-teens who won't be overly critical about the thin writing and poor acting from some of the leads.



Be Energy Wise

When Claude Chabrol set out to tackle a screen version of "Madame Bovary," he stuck close to his source — the classic novel by Gustave Flaubert.

"I decided to be absolutely faithful," the director has said in interviews. "All the dialogue, all the phrases from the film are taken, almost to the comma, from the book. I wanted to make a film that Flaubert could have made himself."

Along the way Chabrol has created a masterpiece of his own. Currently on screen at the Maple Theatre in Bloomfield, "Madame Bovary" is a beautifully realized examination of a woman breaking free of the restrictions of her time, escaping into passions that eventually lead to her destruction.

Isabelle Huppert plays Emma Bovary, the 19th-century tragic heroine who marries a doctor (Jean-François Balmer), has a child by him, but then finds herself trapped. She seeks the luxuries of lovers and shopping spree that the family can't afford.

VETERAN director Chabrol has perfectly captured the rustic French villages of the previous century. He has also chosen actors who become breathing embodiments of their literary counterparts.

Huppert, who worked with Chabrol on the controversial "The Story of Women," has an amazing quality that allows her to look both plain and stunningly beautiful at the same time. She begins the film grim-faced, even after an elegant ball that she describes as the best time of her life.

The depression returns. Emma seeks the help of the church, but the pastor only makes her feel guilty for her moodiness while the less fortunate starve.

Soon she allows herself to be swept off her feet by a smooth-talking aristocrat. Then she turns to a clumsy young romantic. Both turn out to be duds. When the first skips out on his promise to run away with her, Emma breaks down. Her husband fawns at her bedside throughout, neglecting his patients and throwing the family deeper into debt.

A master of turning the tables on moral issues, Chabrol obviously sympathizes with the henpecked Charles, but also points out the foolishness of blind sainthood. His puppy dog affection and lack of opinions grows grating. He's ignorant of the money that surrounds him in expensive carpeting, drapes and Emma's clothing.

LURKING throughout the film is a cunning Shylock who tempts Emma with imported finery from the big city. He allows her to use credit and when she can't pay, promissory notes and inflated interest sink her deeper and deeper into debt.

Huppert has called Emma Bovary "an eternal feminine archetype," a feminist before her time. In a time when divorce was out of the question, Emma used the resources

tickets please

John Monaghan

available to her (mostly her conniving) to fly above the boredom. Flaubert's characters are indeed timeless. The modern "born to shop"

philosophy and reliance on credit cards proves that Emma Bovary still walks among us at suburban shopping malls.

SCREEN SCENE

DETROIT FILM THEATRE, Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward, Detroit. Call 832-2730 for information. (\$5)

"Rhapsody in August" (Japan — 1991). Jan. 17-26 (call for show times). Four children spend a summer with their grandmother, who shares with them her memories of brothers and sisters and her husband, who was killed by the atomic bomb explosion in Nagasaki. Richard Gere plays the woman's Japanese-American nephew in the opening film of the DFT's new season.

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

"Romeo and Juliet" (Britain/Italy — 1968). 7 p.m. Jan. 13. Franco Zeffirelli directed perhaps the best film version of Shakespeare's classic romance. Stars Olivia Hussey and Leonard Whiting were just 15 and 17 at the time of filming. Laurence Olivier and Michael York also appear, along with a fabulous score by Nino Rota.

MAGIC BAG THEATRE CAFE, 22918 Woodward, Ferndale. Call 544-3030 for information. (\$3, \$2 students and senior citizens)

"Tune in Tomorrow" (USA — 1990). 8 p.m. Jan. 13-14. Based on the autobiographical novel by Mario Vargas Llosa, the story of a young radical journalist (Keanu Reeves), who falls in love with his scattered Aunt Julia. He receives advice for the love from a whacked-out scriptwriter in an over-the-edge performance by Peter Falk.

"Urgt! A Music War" (Britain — 1981). 11:30 p.m. Jan. 17-18. Priceless concert footage captures the early '80s' most innovative rock groups, including The Police, The Go-Gos, XTC, The Cramps, Joan Jett, Gary Numan, Pere Ubu and a wild guy named Klaus Nomi, who has apparently sunk into oblivion (along with many of the performers here) since the film was initially released.

MAPLE THEATRE, 4135 W. Maple, Bloomfield Township. Call 855-9999 for show times. (\$6, \$2.95 twilight)

"Madame Bovary" (France —

1991). French "New Wave" director Claude Chabrol tackles Gustave Flaubert's novel about Emma Bovary, whose longing for romance results in several lustful flings and luxury spending on borrowed money.

MICHIGAN THEATRE, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Call 668-8397 for information. (\$5, \$4.25 students and senior citizens)

"Jimi Hendrix on the Isle of Wight" (USA — 1991). through Jan. 17 (call for show times). The guitar legend is captured in concert just 18 days before his untimely death. Here, on England's Isle of Wight, he delivers a superb set including "Woodstock Child" and "Red House."

"The Bicycle Thief" (Italy — 1949). 7 p.m. Jan. 14-15. In post-war Rome, an Italian worker has his bike stolen, and his life is devastated. He and his son spend days searching for it in vain so that he can keep his job. Still one of the great ones.

STATE WAYNE THEATRE, 39310 Michigan West, Wayne. Call 325-4600 for information. (\$2, \$1 children and senior citizens)

Double feature — "The Sound of Music" (USA — 1965) and "High Sierra" (USA — 1941). Jan. 15-19 (call for show times). In the first, Julie Andrews stars in the syrupy Rodgers and Hammerstein musical based on the life of the Von Trapp family, who fled from the Nazis in their native Austria. In "High Sierra," Humphrey Bogart has one of his best early roles as "Mad Dog" Earle, a killer with a soft heart. Ida Lupino co-stars.

WINDSOR FILM THEATRE, 2132 Wyandotte St. West, Windsor. Call (519) 254-FILM for information. (\$4.25)

"The Adjuster" (Canada — 1991). Jan. 14-20 (call for show times). In the latest film from the talented Toronto-based director Atom Egoyan, an odd collection of stories unfold. In one, an insurance adjuster and his wife live in a grand house in the middle of nowhere. In another, a wealthy couple live out bizarre sexual fantasies through role-playing games. Definitely worth a drive over the bridge to check out.

— John Monaghan

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