

No simple way for you to cool relationship

STREET SENSE



BARBARA SCHIFF

Message from Voice Mail: Barbara, I have befriended a woman at work. A year ago when she was going through a difficult divorce, I was there for her and listened to her difficulties.

Now, she tells me everything that happens in her personal life. I am not really interested in hearing all that she wants to tell me and often the material is so intimate that I am embarrassed.

How can I back away without hurting her? I don't want to lose her as a friend, but this is too intense and too intimate.

Dear caller:

Whenever a person like yourself presents a true dilemma, I know I will not be able to give an answer but she would like to hear.

In your situation, you would like to hear that there is some way to cool the relationship down without any hard feelings. Most likely, that is not possible. In any case you must be able to take the chance of there being resentment.

It is possible that your friend will understand your point of view, but the greater possibility

is that she will be hurt. My advice is to cut things clean. However, to do this you will have to be able to handle the fallout, most likely bad feelings.

Your call brought to mind a problem I struggle with as a therapist, as a friend and as the writer of this column. Sometimes people in need want to confide in me. They write letters or call on the phone. Often, I want very much to lend my ear one time, then the person at the other end comes to rely on my presence. That misleads them because time would not allow for it to be available.

I solve this dilemma by setting up clear boundaries for myself. I often wish I could offer more to others but I have been in your position, not because of difficulty with intimacy but with time. It was painful to disappoint people who had come to count on my unlimited attention and so I began to practice prevention. For your sake, I hope you have learned your lesson.

Barbara

If you have a question or comment for Barbara Schiff, a trained therapist and experienced counselor, send it to Street Sense, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. You can also leave a message by calling 953-2047, mailbox 1877, on a Touch-Tone phone.

Much to like about Branagh's 'Ado'

BY JOHN MONAGHAN
STAFF WRITER

Anyone who doesn't believe in the timeless quality of Shakespeare should catch "Much Ado About Nothing," a new film adaptation of The Bard currently at The Maple. The infectious jolly story of romance and villainy in 17th-century Italy comes alive through Kenneth Branagh's immensely clever translation.

Branagh, who brought "Henry V" to the screen in 1989, and reality wife Emma Thompson head the cast. They play Benedick and Beatrice, confirmed bachelor and bachelorette, who spend all of their time together exchanging insults. Of course, their quick wit only hides their passion for each other.

Both are delightful. When the two are tricked into believing that they love each other, both drop their spindly wits and go loopy with love. He splashes up to his knees in a fountain. She rocks

wildly on a tree swing. Branagh, not afraid of goofing it up a bit, melds the two images into a montage backed by Patrick Doyle's lilting musical score.

The great Denzel Washington plays Prince Don Pedro, who rides into town with his merry men. They will rest for a month in the picturesque Italian villa owned by the Prince's friend, Leonato (Richard Briers). The visit is filled with the usual Shakespearean touches — mistaken identity, verbal sparring and true love whose course never runs smooth.

The credit sequence sets the happy tone, as the Prince's arrival sends the villa into a frenzy. The women head upstairs for primping and new frocks, their naked bodies revealed tastefully by the camera. Don Pedro's men arrive and strip for a cleansing swim, enthusiastically preparing for the revelry at the quite

With "Much Ado," Branagh has found a medium ground with

MOVIES

the Shakespeare directors (Orson Welles and Laurence Olivier among them) who preceded him. He employs a bankable cast, an appealing visual style and just enough reverence to the source so that English majors won't picket the theater.

Branagh's aim to please sometimes goes astray, which isn't surprising with all the personalities at work.

"I am a man of few words," says Keanu Reeves as Don Pedro's half brother, and we're glad of it. Reeves, who butchered an English accent in "Bram Stoker's Dracula," is best seen and not heard. He dinks around effectively as the sharp-bearded evildoer who sets young lovers Claudio and Hero (Robert Sean Leonard and Kate Beckinsale, both quite good) at odds on their wedding day.

Dogberry, who provides the rough comic relief in the play, comes off tediously here. Michael Keaton plays this village constable the same way he did *Batman*, with manic facial gestures, dinks in the eyes, and kicks in the groin. The only thing worse would be Robin Williams in the role.

Still, there's something irresistible about seeing these different acting styles together in tribute to Shakespeare. Branagh's film works because he doesn't try to make a textbook version of "Much Ado About Nothing." Just like the playwright, he wants first and foremost to entertain — and that the film certainly does.

If you have a comment for John Monaghan, call him at 953-2047, mailbox number 1888, on a touch-tone phone, or write him care of Street Sense, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

SCREEN SCENE

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

MAPLE THEATRE
4185 W. Maple Road, Bloomfield Hills. Call 555-9090 for show times. (\$5.75 evenings; \$2.95 twilight.)

"Like Water for Chocolate" (Mexico — 1992). A lonely woman puts all her energies into creating unforgettable meals in this blend of fantasy and drama. As with the Danish hit "Babettes Feast," you won't want to watch on an empty stomach.

"Much Ado About Nothing" (USA — 1993). Kenneth Branagh, the force behind "Henry V," re-

turns to Shakespeare with this delightful film adaptation of the popular comedy. Branagh, real-life wife Emma Thompson, Michael Keaton, Denzel Washington and Keanu Reeves star.

MICHIGAN THEATRE
603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Call 688-8397 for information and show times. (\$5; \$4 students and senior citizens.)

"Volere Volare" (Italy — 1991), through June 3. Maurizio Nichetti, the director of "The Icicle Thief," also stars as a voice artist for cartoons who finds himself slowly turning into an animated character himself.

"Tous Les Matins Du Monde" (France — 1992), through June

12. Gerard Depardieu stars as Marala, a famous cellist in the court of Louis XVI, who recalls his tangle under the reclusive Sainte Colombe. A feast for the ears and eyes, directed by Alain Corneau.

"The Match Factory Girl" (Finland — 1989), June 4-11. Director Aki Kaurismaki before his internal acclaim with "Arto" and "Leningrad Cowboys." This time the focus is on a young girl weighed down by her tedious job and dysfunctional family.

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STAR JOHN R
32289 John R (at 14 Mile), Madison Heights. Call 685-2070 for show times. (\$6 evenings; \$3.75 twilight.)

"Bodles, Rest, and Motion" (USA — 1993). Bridgeport Fonda, Eric Stoltz, Phoebe Cates and Tim Roth play four young people whose lives change dramatically over the course of just two days. "Bad Lieutenant" (USA — 1993). Harvey Keitel's lead performance is apparently the best thing about this nasty exploration of a New York detective who indulges in reckless nights of sex, violence and drugs when he falls into debt. Directed by Abel Ferrara ("King of New York").

STATE THEATRE
2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 961-5450 for information. (\$1.89.)

"The Amityville Horror" (USA — 1979), 9 p.m. May 31. Supposedly based on fact, this haunted house story was a huge hit when first released. Today, it's good for laughs, as James Brolin and Margot Kidder discover that their New England dream house has blood dripping from the walls.

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