



Shirley MacLaine as Madame Irena Sousatzka; she plays a piano teacher who is strongly attached to her students.

Another Vietnam movie

Bat 21 ★★★
Famous Players Capitol Square

review by Shelby Cook

The grim realities of senseless bloodshed and the dog-eat-dog coldness of the Vietnam war come through in *Bat 21*, based on the book of the same name by William C. Anderson.

Bat 21 focuses on the massive air assaults which took place on both North Vietnam and rebel-held areas in the south from 1965-75. Danny Glover plays Clark "Bird Dog" Bartholomew, a U.S. airforce pilot who encounters the fighting front for the first time while struggling to rescue the injured Colonel Icael "Bat 21" Hambleton. Hambleton, played by Gene Hackman, is stuck on land and behind enemy lines. Hambleton, who has been involved in the air force for most of his life but has never been in combat, and Bird Dog exchange

ingeniously-disguised situation commands over their walkie-talkies.

Director Peter Markle deserves credit for capturing beautiful amber colored sunsets, blackened with intimidating helicopters and aerial shots.

Obviously, the immorality of war is not buried in enough justification. Much of the rationale behind the massive napalm attacks was that the civilian population would flee to urban areas under the protection of the ARVN and U.S. forces. Art imitates life in this film; a village is destroyed as is part of the ecological system — the agriculture and forest cover of rebel areas of Vietnam.

A peaceful encounter with the enemy occurs when Hambleton, hobbling across a bridge, approaches a young Korean boy who passes him quietly and continues on his way. A moment later, the boy turns, and watches the limping captain walk away. Hambleton takes a few steps, just as



Gene Hackman prepares to take a swing in *Bat 21*; no reason a little napalm should interfere with a good game of golf.

Massey

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played. The wide spectrum of music the EYO encounters provides invaluable experience for the players, as well as helping to build their knowledge of orchestral music.

Enjoying conducting as much as he does, Massey does not see himself relegating performing to a minor role in the future, nor does he envision himself in the role of composer. "Some of us are just interpreters. Composers," he says, "are special people." Massey feels that he does not have the time necessary to devote to composing; as well, he is content with his many other activities. He does not seem overly concerned about the future, knowing that if he had to he could build a more active career as an international performer. But for now, Massey is satisfied relaxing in his many-faceted musical world. He is happy, if busy, and that is what seems to matter to him.

In his niche as music director, Massey has found a rewarding place of his own, as rewarding as conducting the London Philharmonia (which he has just done), and as satisfying as performing, but each in a different way. "If the second EYO plays well, if they do something really nice — one little moment in the third movement of a Haydn symphony that they're working on — that pleases me just as much as the Philharmonia does, because you know that's the first time those kids have made that kind of music as a group. And maybe even they might realize it. Maybe that kid will say 'Hey, this is great! This is fun! I want to do this! That's my goal.'" Such a modest, yet incredibly demanding goal satisfies Michael Massey. This satisfaction is perhaps best conveyed by the image of him seated next to his piano, discussing the merits, or lack thereof, of country music. He is exasperated for a moment at its popularity and then pauses, trying to express his feelings about classical music, his music. Then, simply, "It's life. That's what the music is." For Michael Massey, it is indeed.

Sousatzka offers musical drama

Madame Sousatzka ★★★ ½
Cineplex Odeon Westmount

review by Rachel Sanders

Madame Irena Sousatzka is a mixed bag, combining a dynamic and rather eccentric personality with a passionate dedication to her work. She is the main character (played by Shirley MacLaine) in John Schlesinger's new film *Madame Sousatzka*.

Sousatzka is a piano teacher, or actually more than a piano teacher, as she claims to teach not only how to play the piano, but "how to live". She demands excellence from her students and many are put off by her perfectionist attitude. There is, however, one young pianist whose talent and dedication meet, almost, with Madame's expectations.

Manek Sen, played by Navin Chowdhry, is an exceptionally gifted, charismatic, 15 year old Indian boy who has begun to take lessons from Madame. She tries to control his life, telling him how to dress, how to act and what to do. He follows her guidance to some extent but his rebellious nature shows through also when he roller-skates against her wishes, risking injury to his hands.

the boy sets off a trap which could have further injured Hambleton. The boy hands him his rain hat and Hambleton hands him back a morsel of food.

All in all, *BAT 21* is a good film to watch. Sarcastic humor, reminiscent of M A S H days, balances the bloodshed. The only difference is there is no medical aid in this film.

The bond between teacher and student grows strong and Manek spends more and more time practising and taking lessons in Madame's small studio. Madame Sousatzka begins to love Manek and becomes even more possessive as she sees in him the chance to have her lost dreams fulfilled vicariously.

Shirley MacLaine delivers a stunning performance, portraying a woman who seems to be made of steel. Just as easily, though, MacLaine shows us Madame's softer side when she puts her heart and soul into the cultivation of Manek's talents.

When Manek decides to perform in a festival, against Madame's wishes, she is heartbroken because he has gone completely against her principles. She refuses to continue teaching him but finds herself drawn to his performance because of the possessiveness she feels for him.

MacLaine's riveting performance is complimented by the sensitive and charismatic acting of Navin Chowdhry. Whenever the plot seems to slow down, Sousatzka's unpredictable mood swings send the action back into motion. The script has very few cliches and works well, helping the movie flow quite smoothly.

The high point of this film, however, is the characterization of not only Sousatzka and Manek, but also the assorted neighbors living in the same house as Madame Sousatzka. Their eccentricities added sparkle to the film and helped develop exploration into human nature the film was based on.

Music lovers aren't the only people who will enjoy *Madame Sousatzka*, although the musical score is definitely a bright spot of the movie. This is a movie that will be enjoyed by everyone, and it is certainly well worth seeing.

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