The Lover's Exile: † † † †

Franca Miraglia

Toronto filmmaker Marty Gross' *The Lover's Exile* is an important experience for anyone claiming artistic sensibilities. Gross, in his first feature film, reveals considerable talent by his straight-forward filming of a performance by the Bunraku

Theatre of Osaka, Japan's oldest tradition of puppet theatre dating back to the 18th century.

The Lover's Exile, an adaptation (the 4 hour play is edited to 1½ hours) of Monzaemon Chikamatsu's (1673-1724) classic domestic tragedy, recounts the actual crime of a poor clerk, Chubei. Tortured by his love for an indentured prostitute, Umegawa, he steals money to buy her freedom. The couple, in an attempt to escape their fate, try to run away bvut not before a poignant last good-bye to Chubel's father, Magoemon.

The Lover's Exile is told in Japanese (English subtitles) by a "joruri" who chants the text to the rhythm of a samisen player while the puppets bring the story to life. The puppets, almost life-size, are worked by three people—a master puppeteer who moves the head and right arm, and two assistants cloaked completely in black, who work the left hand and legs. the presence of the handlers on stage is surprisingly unobtrusive; the intensity of the scene focuses all attention to the puppets embracing, weeping and cursing, thereby making the puppeteers "invisible".

The puppets' movements are extremely refined: their intricate gestures express an amazing range of complex and subtle emotions. It is the reality and genuine human quality of the art that causes the Bunraku Theatre to be considered entertainment for adults.

The Lover's Exile reveals the Japanese dedication and love for art and its perfection. Many of the men at the Bunraku Theatre have had an extensive apprenticeship starting as early as the age of fourteen. The result is an impressive collaboration of skill and exactness with the beauty and warmth of human emotion. *The Lover's Exile* is the marriage of the contemporary Canadian film with the tradition of Japanese theatre—it works to sweep the viewer into the dream world of living puppets.

The Lover's Exile plays at 2:30 p.m. on Sundays in February at the Fine Arts Cinema. Don't miss it.

Cannery Row: † † †

Lisa Kates

John Steinbeck's novel, *Cannery Row*, has been magically transformed into an inspiring sentimental drama. It possesses many endearing qualities which should leave a lasting impression on its viewers.

Suggestive colours

Nick Nolte is both soothing and outrageous as the stabilizing factor of the tainted ex-sardine community. Nolte's character Doc takes care of all those who have been marooned by the Depression. High spirited Susy Sesko (played by Debra Winger) is the Snow White of the shambled society. Her innocent 'clean' character excite all those who venture into Cannery Row.

Distinguished Swedish cinematographer Swen Nykvist has taken the cold reality of a constructed metal set and created an ambiance through the use of suggestive colours and fog. He taints the screen when it needs tarnishing and creates purple haze when they are masquerading in fairy tale land.

Beauty and warmth

The narration of John Huston and the music of Jack Nitzsche add to the thoroughness of Director David S. Ward's interpretation.

High spirited

This is an emotionally engaging movie, which takes its viewers to another place in time, allowing them to experience the injustices engulfing those who live at the water's edge.

Debra Winger & Nick Nolte

Personal Best: † † †

Jules Xavier

It's not often the motion picture industry can combine sports and movie making and come out with an athletically accurate endeavour.

Personal Best, written, produced and directed by Robert Towne, succeeds as an authentic sports movie, by primarily using athletes rather than professional actors.

The film is about four years in the lives of two female athletes, played by Mariel Hemingway and Patrice Donnelly.

Meeting as strangers at the 1976 Olympic trials, they become friends, lovers and ultimately competitors at the 1980 Olympic trials. Both compete in the pentathlon, perhaps the most demanding event in women's sports.

Combined sensuality

Hemingway's thoroughly convincing performance left this viewer in wonder. Her preparation, involving a year of intense training, paid off, contributing to Towne's quest for authenticity.

Donnelly, once the fourth-ranked hurdler in the world, combined sensuality and athletic prowess in her movie debut.

Towne says *Personal Best* is about excellence, and excellent is what it was.

Patrice Donnelly

Fourteen years ago, "2001: A Space Odyssey" was the astounding epic that aroused a generation, telling them where they might be headed.

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