

# Entertainment Outlook

## 'January Man' fails in any season

### FILMETER



ROBERT DIMATTEO

In Movie Theaters

**THE JANUARY MAN (R)** The new movie year gets off to a shaky start with this latest effort from screenwriter John Patrick Shanley, author of the wonderful "Moonstruck." At his best, Shanley mixes moods with alchemical skill. At his worst, as here, he tosses together elements that refuse to cohere.

This decidedly odd romantic comedy-cum-thriller stars Kevin Kline ("A Fish Called Wanda") as a renegade cop who relies upon astrology, computers and other esoterica to solve his cases. Now he's stalking a serial killer, aided by a weirdo artist (Alan Rickman, the suave villain in "Die Hard"). On the personal front, Kline still can't get used to the fact that his ex-girlfriend (Susan Sarandon) dumped him for his brother, the police commissioner (Harvey Keitel). This sounds more sensible than it plays.

The movie is screwy. Scenes begin as drama and suddenly veer into crackpot comedy; others start out joky and turn jejune. Characters behave improbably, presumably so that the killer can hound them better. The actors don't seem to know what is expected of them from minute to min-

ute, so they do a little bit of everything. Kline, a likable theater-trained type who tends toward big effects on screen, is downright hyperbolic here. This is simply a movie that doesn't work, a batch made by talented people. **GRADE: ★**

New Home Video

**PASCALI'S ISLAND (PG-13)** Ever read the novels of Lawrence Durrell, those period tales of perfumed exoticism? Here's a British film that takes

you into such a world.

Set on a shimmeringly beautiful Greek island in 1908, it's the tale of a spy (Ben Kingsley) for the Ottoman Empire — a tired functionary whose careful missives may not even be read by the folks back home. Suddenly, he's galvanized by the arrival of an enigmatic Britisher (Charles Dance), who claims to be in the Aegean on archeological business.



KEVIN KLINE, a former super-sleuth on the trail of a serial killer, finds his life complicated by his ex-girlfriend (Susan Sarandon) in the new comedy "The January Man."

## How did Donna Mills get started?

**Q.** Question regarding Donna Mills of "Knots Landing." In a column, you said she did not have a part on "One Life to Live." But I remember her first TV appearance was on a soap opera. What was that soap opera? — T.J.H., Council Bluffs, Ia.

**A.** You're right. Donna Mills, in all her blonde glory, was a regular on "The Secret Storm" for a while. But she was most famous as Laura on "Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing" from 1967 until 1970.

**Q.** Could you provide some information about Edward Woodward ("The Equalizer")? I'm interested in his background, family and what movies he's made besides "Breaker Morant." — J.V., Trenton, N.J.

**A.** Edward Woodward comes from Surrey, England. He studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. He has been practicing his considerable craft since 1955. He is now married to Michele Dotrice, the daughter of Roy Dotrice (Father on "Beauty and the Beast") and they have a five-year-old daughter. Woodward has three grown

### ASK DICK KLEINER



DICK KLEINER

children from a previous marriage. His other movies include "Becket," "Young Winston" and "The Wicker Man." He is a very urbane gentleman, as his hobby — collecting walking sticks — attests.

**Q.** On "Beauty and the Beast," what roles do Jay Acovone, Roy Dotrice and Ren Woods play? — S.J.F., Amarillo, Texas.

**A.** Dotrice, as noted above, plays Father. Acovone is Joe Maxwell, the assistant D.A. who often works with (or against) Catherine (Linda Hamilton). Ren Woods plays Edie.

**Q.** Somewhere in the '30s, there was a horror movie called "The Gorilla Kills Another Man," or maybe it was just "The Gorilla." But a couple of cousins doubt there was such a movie. Was there? — Mrs. F.G.R., Rock Hill, S.C.

**A.** Are you sure you're not thinking of "Gorilla My Dreams"? The only movie I can find was a horror spoof, "The Gorilla," from 1939, with The Ritz Brothers, Bela Lugosi and Lionel Atwill.



Donna Mills



Edward Woodward

Directed by James Dearden, who wrote "Fatal Attraction," the movie grows rather precious and flowery as its characters' fates are elaborately intertwined. And what does the shocking ending mean? But Kingsley is superb, and, for the most part, the picture casts a civilized spell. **GRADE: ★★**

**GRADE: ★★½**

**THE PRESIDIO (R)** Some critics were very hard on this San Francisco-set thriller, and almost no one went to see it. It's really a pretty decent movie, with colorful Bay area locations and a few thoughtfully written and acted scenes.

Sean Connery stars as a robust martinet of a provost marshal at the Presidio military compound. Years ago, he came into conflict with a young MP (Mark Harmon); now he and the ex-MP turned city cop are assigned to work together to track the killer of a female MP. Along the way, Harmon succumbs to Connery's daughter (Meg Ryan), a free-spirited hot number.

Don't get the idea that this is a seamless movie. The resolution of the mystery is very hokey, and the movie has pretensions to seriousness that it can't always validate. But you may agree that there are far worse thrillers out there. **GRADE: ★★½**

(Film grading: ★★★★★ — excellent, ★★★ — good, ★★ — fair, ★ — poor)

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