

Tekst 11

Altman's out of step

The great director comes unstuck with a ballet film

THE COMPANY

(112 mins, 12A) Directed by Robert Altman; starring Neve Campbell, Malcolm McDowell, James Franco

DEMONLOVER

(120 mins, n.c.) Directed by Olivier Assayas; starring Connie Nielsen, Charles Berling, Chloë Sevigny, Gina Gershon

LAWS OF ATTRACTION

(90 mins, 12A) Directed by Peter Howitt; starring Pierce Brosnan, Julianne Moore

CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN

(93 mins, PG) Directed by Sara Sugarman; starring Lindsay Lohan, Glenna Headly

MARRIED/UNMARRIED

(100 mins, 18) Directed by Noli; starring Paoli Seganti, Ben Daniels, Gina Bellman, Kristen McMenamy

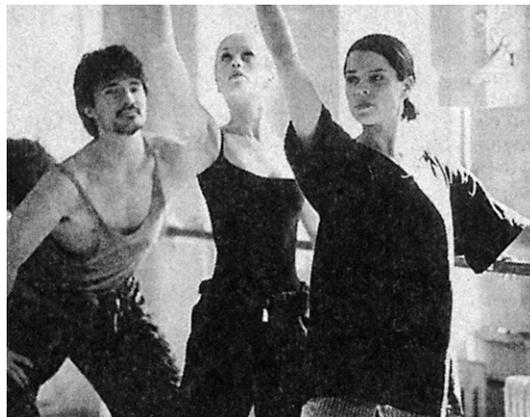
RE-INVENTING EDDIE

(93 mins, 15) Directed by Jim Doyle; starring John Lynch, Geraldine Somerville, John Thomson

ANAZAPTA

(110 mins, 15) Directed by Alberto Sciamma; starring Lena Headey, Jason Flemyng, Ian McNeice

THE RICHLY romantic, deeply mysterious, death-loving *The Red Shoes* created more vocations in ballet than any movie before or since and remains, after 46 years, the standard by which subsequent films on the world of the dance have been judged, and usually found wanting. In the latest up for comparison, **The Company**, Robert Altman has brought his formidable form of ensemble acting, widescreen images, overlapping dialogue and feeling for groups of people as semi-dysfunctional



families, to bear on the Joffrey Ballet troupe of Chicago. Sadly the result is infinitely inferior to his last film, the splendid *Gosford Park*. Indeed, along with *Prêt-à-Porter*, it's one of his few real duds.

As chilly and slow-moving as a glacier, but rather less translucent, Olivier Assayas's **Demonlover** is a business conspiracy thriller dealing in pornography. A French conglomerate is working with an American firm in the satellite TV business to bankrupt their chief competitors by acquiring a controlling interest in a Japanese manufacturer of pornographic 3-D animé. All the men and women involved are utterly corrupt, everyone is betraying or doing down everyone else, and porn is a metaphor for impersonality, the abuse of power and a blinkered morality. It's fun for a while, but gets steadily more opaque, elliptical and annoying.

Directed by Peter Howitt, who made the amusing *Sliding Doors*, **Laws of Attraction** is a comedy about two high-profile New York divorce lawyers played by Pierce Brosnan and Julianne Moore, who fight in court, bicker outside and fall

in love. In the past it might have been the first draft of a screenplay for Tracy and Hepburn or Day and Hudson. But the five credited writers haven't managed to equip it with five decent jokes. Brosnan and Moore haven't got a straw to grasp, let alone bricks to build with.

In **Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen**, also the work of a British director (Sara Sugarman), a New York teenager (the delightful Lindsay Lohan) exiled to suburban New Jersey, would do anything to attend the farewell Manhattan gig of her hero, another foul-mouthed drunken British pop star (Adam Garcia). The heroine is eager to appear in *Pygmalion* but settles for the lead in the school production of *Eliza Rocks*, a musical transposition of Shaw's play to present-day New York. On the whole a superior example of its genre.

A trio of British movies, all made three years ago, are being simultaneously released by the same distributor. They are, I regret to say, largely without merit.

Married/Unmarried is a pretentious four-hander in which two pairs of well-heeled young Londoners, one married, the other single, talk in

different combinations about life, love, infidelity and transgressive sex.

The second British film, Jim Doyle's **Re-Inventing Eddie**, has been opened up from a one-character play, but retains the frequent monologues delivered straight to camera. John Lynch, a brooding actor who exudes sadness from every pore, plays a Warrington factory worker whose two small children are taken away from him when over-zealous teachers and social workers wrongly suspect him of sexual abuse. His subsequent conduct – violent, childish, criminally irresponsible – helps to dig his grave, though the movie contrives an unsatisfactory sentimental ending.

The third film retrieved from the shelf is **Anazapta**, a medieval tale shot in Wales by the Spanish director of videos and commercials, Alberto Sciamma, about the Black Death coming to England in the mid-fourteenth century. A decent British cast struggle with mud and terrible dialogue. The spirit of St Turgid, the patron saint of low-budget historical movies, hovers over the proceedings and it's to be avoided like – well, like the plague.

The Observer

Lees bij de volgende opgave eerst de vraag voordat je de bijbehorende tekst raadpleegt.

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- 1p 45 Is er bij de besproken films (zie de titels links bovenaan) een film die de recensent positief beoordeelt? Zo nee, antwoord "Nee". Zo ja, noteer de titel van deze film.