production but continues on to the private lives of the characters. He manipulates relationships and emotions to obtain the performances he's after, but the entire production is staged for reasons only he knows. The conclusion of the play is kept secret from the players themselves until near the end of the performance. enhancing its enigmatic nature for us and throwing some light on his suspect intentions for the performers and the eavesdropping audience.

Playful and puzzling, "Love On The Ground" is a study of characters and relationships as they move through variations and permutations, rather like a mind game played with people. Rivette's structural and visual approach emphasizes the exacting nature of this "game."

Ultimately the film feels more spontaneously energetic than anything else, yet the pieces of the puzzle fit together so well that there is no doubt that Rivette has worked out every element in minute detail. Like the best Hitchcock (to name another great master of detail and structure), this film conceals its formal structure with good ensemble acting and close attention to characters.

"Love On The Ground" is

refreshingly fun and intelligent, a pleasant puzzle of a picture with endearing characters and a story that always keeps you guessing.

Plays Tuesday through Thursday only at Cinema 7. Better hurry if you don't want to miss this rare little gem.

