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ENCHANTED PG
[10:45, 11:25], 1:00, 1:30, 2:10, 3:45, 4:15, 4:55, 6:30, 7:00, 7:45, 9:50, 10:30

HITMAN R
[11:40], 2:20, 5:05, 7:50, 10:35

AUGUST RUSH PG
[11:20], 2:00, 4:45, 7:50, 10:25

NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN R
[10:50], 1:45, 4:40, 7:40, 10:35

THE MIST R
12:30, 3:25, 7:10, 10:15

BEOWULF PG13
[11:50], 12:10, *12:40, 2:40, 3:00, *3:35, 5:35, 6:25, *7:05, 8:25, 9:15, *9:55, 11:15
*3-D DIGITAL

MR MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM G
12:00, 2:25, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

FRED CLAUZ PG
12:45, 3:40, 7:05, 9:55

BELLA PG13
2:05, 7:35

LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA R
10:10

LIONS FOR LAMBS R
8:00, 10:30

BEE MOVIE PG
[11:35], 12:15, 1:55, 2:35, 4:25, 5:10, 7:00, 9:35

AMERICAN GANGSTER R
[11:00], 11:55, 2:30, 3:30, 6:15, 7:10, 9:45, 10:40

DAN IN REAL LIFE PG13
4:35, 10:05

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SUPERBAD R
[12:45] 4:45, 7:40, 10:20

MARTIAN CHILD PG
[1:05] 4:25, 7:00, 9:40

THE JANE AUSTEN BOOK CLUB PG13
[12:35], 7:45

HALLOWEEN (2007) R
4:05, 10:30

3:10 TO YUMA R
[1:00] 4:00, 7:15, 10:00

UNDERDOG PG
[12:20], 4:40, 6:55, 9:30

STARDUST PG13
[12:55] 4:10, 7:35, 10:25

HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX PG13
[12:50], 3:55, 7:05, 10:05

THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM PG13
[12:30] 4:15, 7:25, 10:15

RATATOUILLE G
[12:40] 4:30, 7:10, 9:50

3:10 TO YUMA R
[1:00] 4:00, 7:15, 10:00

GOOD LUCK CHUCK R
[12:15], 5:00, 7:50, 10:35

DRAGON WARS PG13
[12:25], 4:50, 7:30, 9:45

HEARTBREAK KID
[1:15] 4:35, 7:35, 10:25

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Times For 11/23 - 11/25 ©2007 www.REGmovies.com

movies BY JASON BLAIR



Giovanna Mezzogiorno in *Love in the Time of Cholera*

Lost in Translation

A literary masterpiece, defiled

LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA: Directed by Mike Newell. Written by Ronald Harwood. Cinematography, Affonso Beato. Music, Antonio Pinto. Starring Javier Bardem, Giovanna Mezzogiorno, Benjamin Bratt, Hector Elizondo, John Leguizamo and Liev Schreiber. New Line Cinema, 2007. R. 139 minutes. ★★☆☆☆

En el papel — on paper — it must have seemed like a good idea. There was the source material, *El Amor en los Tiempos del Cólera*, the literary masterpiece that Thomas Pynchon called “daring” and “revolutionary.” There was a competent director, Mike Newell, whose credits include *Donnie Brasco*; a cast of almost outlandish ability, including Javier Bardem; and the screenwriter of *The Pianist* as well as *Being Julia*. Assuming paper still records such transactions, the deal that set *Love in the Time of Cholera* into motion must have read like a treasure map. Therefore it is not insignificant that the failure of *Love in the Time of Cholera* the film — and it is a failure, oozing mediocrity from the first frame — ultimately is one of paper. The screenplay adheres to the novel so carefully that the film is a cautious reformulation, the stunt-ed offspring of a formidable parent.

Set during the years 1880 and 1930, *Love in the Time of Cholera* is the story of a triangular love affair involving Fermina Daza (Giovanna Mezzogiorno), Dr. Juvenal Urbino (Benjamin Bratt) and Florentino Ariza (Unax Ugalde). As a teen, Florentino falls madly for Fermina, a fact he professes in hundreds of love letters and telegrams, but at the insistence of her father, Fermina marries Dr. Juvenal instead. Over the next 50 years, Florentino has 622 affairs, all passionate but loveless liaisons that, in the delicate logic of the story, underscore rather than disprove his true love for Fermina. Unfortunately, to record the passing of time, the actors are subjected to an inconsistency of makeup, meaning everyone seems to age but Fermina, but none of them do so convincingly. This leads to problems of chronology, the most serious of which is how, during the span of one year, young Florentino ages into Javier Bardem (who’s 38) while Fermina doesn’t age a day. You might read, as I did, their subsequent encounter as a commentary on asynchronous aging.

It’s an odd scene in which Fermina rejects suddenly ripe Florentino after not seeing him for a year. Stunned, Florentino asks when she stopped loving him. “The moment I saw you,” she says. And no wonder. He’s suddenly old enough to be her granddad.

In *Love in the Time of Cholera* characters are defined by grand gestures rather than by the tiny, often contradictory urges that are so interesting because they’re so human. It begins with a death scene about as convincing as an elephant driving a car; this is quickly followed by a climactic scene better suited to, well, the film’s climax. (To be fair, the novel uses the same nonlinear structure, but in the film, it just feels out of sorts.) The direction is leaden, yet the script is sudden and jumpy, an incongruity that gives the film the feeling of a farce. It is abrupt when it should be patient, languid when it should be alert. It was filmed in English, a great mistake in my opinion, given that the novel was written in Spanish and set in Colombia. *Cholera*, in short, is one bad decision after another. Late in the film, when Fermina and Florentino enjoy a brief kiss, all I could think of was which animal — human, horse, goat — provided the fibers for his fake moustache.

At times, the actors elevate the material. Most of the time, they are trapped in it. John Leguizamo seems to have wandered in from another film altogether, so ill-suited is he as Fermina’s irritable father. Benjamin Bratt is more than serviceable as Juvenal, although I suspect his face, not his performance, drew the largely female crowd to the theater. Hector Elizondo is charming as Florentino’s uncle; his beard, like so many of the costumes in *Cholera*, is too much of a good thing, gripping his face so enthusiastically I began to wonder if a cat had attached itself. The one grace note is Giovanna Mezzogiorno, who despite all the gaffes and miscues in the film is never less than extraordinary. Mezzogiorno is largely unknown to American audiences but widely admired and honored abroad. She is the one survivor in the plague that is *Love in the Time of Cholera*.

EW

Love in the Time of Cholera is now playing at Cinemark.