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**Helen
Reddy**

IN CONCERT



OMAHA CIVIC AUD.

MAY 9, 1974 8:00pm

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entertainment

**French
films
slight
favors**

Greg Lukow/Key Grip

Two (slight) French favors:
The Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe is a small scale French production, a trivial, but often funny, game of confusion among Paris mobsters. It's a comedy with a made for TV feel, and a cast whose names would mean little.

So suffice it to say that the tall blond man with one black shoe is really a bumbling concert violinist who is used by the sneaky rich executive with the black mustache to set a fool's trap for the short, bald man in the gray suit, and ends up being seduced by the cute, blonde girl in the leopard skin coat.

The sneaky rich executive soon has the short, bald man believing our innocent hero to be the cleverest undercover agent he's ever come up against ("His eyes betray him," the bald man says). Spies and hit men from both sides battle around the tall blond but he goes merrily on his way, never suspecting a thing when they start shooting each other all around him.

This is the type of quasi-sophisticated, runaround comedy the British are so good at (with their pompous absurd logic), and indeed, director Yves Robert seems to be imitating that English style with a bit of Jerry Lewis thrown in. It works, if you don't mind watching a French Jerry Lewis movie.

...

Happy New Year, written, produced and directed by Claude LeLouch, is an odd combination of subtle, low keyed comedy and some heavy handed, intellectual romance. LeLouch also sandwiches his color film between two reels of black and white footage and uses some strange flashback techniques that look like his film editor got the pieces mixed up.

This mixture works better than it sounds, but the film is hard to grasp in tone, and looking back, I even began wondering why LeLouch's *A Man and a Woman* was so popular back in the '60s.

Happy New Year begins with LeLouch paying tribute to himself by showing scenes from that earlier film and then sinks into the same kind of puzzling love story between jewel thief (Lino Ventura) and antique shop owner (Francoise Fabian). Many of his sequences end up in static two shots of the couple, redeemed only by some of the most fascinating movie dialog I've ever heard. LeLouch makes us feel that neither of the two has any business loving the other but, like the couple in *A Man and a Woman*, they do.

The jewelry heist, then, holds the most interest, even if it is relegated a secondary role in the film. Ventura's thief is a master of disguise and his acting when he impersonates a rich, doddering, old man, is marvelous.

But all Ventura's intricate planning goes for nothing when he is caught during the robbery. Seven years of prison life roll by a matter of seconds and when he is released he almost doesn't go back to his lover, but in the end, of course, he has second thoughts.

LeLouch always has been a politically minded film maker, so what you evidently are seeing in *Happy New Year*, is a lot of left wing, French schmaltz.

greg lukow
key grip

**half
frames**

Tuesday

Shoot the Piano Player, Sheldon Gallery Auditorium, 7 and 9 p.m., through Thursday, admission by Foreign Film Season Ticket. An internationally famous concert pianist is transformed into just another piano player (with a murder and a suicide along the way) as Francois Truffaut juxtaposes tragedy and comedy.

Thursday

Elmer Gantry, channel 7, 10:30 p.m. Burt Lancaster gives a fine

Monday

The 39 Steps, channel 10, 10:30 p.m. Alfred Hitchcock's thriller from the '30s.

performance as an evangelist in the Midwest.

Friday

Hard Day's Night, Cable 4, 10:30 p.m. The Beatles' film is shown one more time.

Friday and Saturday

She Wore a Yellow Ribbon and Tobacco Road, Sheldon Film Theater, 3, 7 and 9 p.m., admission \$1.25. Two of John Ford's films shown. *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* is Ford's tribute to the cavalry. John Wayne stars in the award winning epic. *Tobacco Road* is one of Ford's lesser known films, an adaptation of Erskine Caldwell's best seller about the family of Jester Lester, an irascible old man who must raise \$100 for rent or go to the poorhouse.

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