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FILM PICK OF THE WEEK

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE

Loosely driven by an achingly poetic string of revenge killings, *My Darling Clementine* is a Western steeped in lonely teardrops and the kind of pure quest for justice only found in flights of cinematic fancy. This John Ford classic, released in 1946, rings truer than many contemporary frontier stories — the whoosh of swinging saloon doors and the barren sweep of wind-weathered desert are at once stunningly spare and rich with suggestion. The movie is one of many screen versions of the Wyatt Earp legend; here, no less a giant than Henry Fonda plays the laconic marshal who steps into Tombstone, Arizona, and a simmering heap of trouble. The writing is laced with pulp — Wyatt to the local shopkeeper: "Mac, have you ever been in love?" Mac: "No, I've been a bartender all my life" — while the action weaves from vignette to vignette with the lazy grace of a 19th-century novel. As usual, Doc Holliday (Victor Mature) muscles into the spotlight, coughing phlegm and serving up equal parts nihilism and devotion, while the dames waft around the edges,



heads high, yearning for attention. Wyatt earns his badge by dispatching a "drunken Indian" and gives it up only after a mournful, deliciously quiet shootout at the you-know-where. A law-and-order story as conservative as they come, *My Darling Clementine* is nonetheless gallant and wistful, the kind of film that stirs compassion rather than its converse. *My Darling Clementine*, in a shimmering new 35mm print, opens Laemmle Theaters' Second Annual Classic Western Round-Up, a summerlong weekend extravaganza; the movie also sets a near impossibly high standard on the eve of the release of the much-hyped *Wyatt Earp*. (Monica 4-Plex; thru Thurs., June 23)

—Elizabeth Pincus

EVENTS

on these screenings.

obics a poor substitute for the glories of s couplings is manna from heaven. Or, at um Corp. Beginning this weekend, and s Monica 4-Plex is screening all 10 mov- s well as a couple of pictures in which

We also recommend: *Africa: The Serengeti*, *Backbeat*, *Bitter Moon*, *Bruce Brown's The Endless Summer II*, *Crooklyn*, *The Crow*, *The East Is Red*, *Endgame*, *Fear of a Black Hat*, *The Fire This Time*, *The Flintstones*, *High Lonesome: The Story of Bluegrass Music*, *I Only Want You To Love Me*, *Like Water for Chocolate*, *The Lion King*, *Living Proof*, *The Piano*, *Red Rock West*, *Schindler's List*, *Serial Mom*, *Sirens*, *Three-some*, *Two Small Bodies*, *Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography*, *When a Man Loves a Woman*, *White*, *Zeram*.