

Document Citation

Title	Film pick of the week: Love, the magician
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Source	<i>L.A. Weekly</i>
Date	1986 Dec 26
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	El amor brujo (Love, the magician), Saura, Carlos, 1986

FILM

PICK OF THE WEEK



LOVE, THE MAGICIAN

Carlos Saura's flamenco films (*Blood Wedding*, *Carmen*) always manage to put a knot in my stomach and bring a lump to my throat. I go hot, I go cold, I shiver out of fear, dread and exhilaration. It's the feet-stomping and rigid steaminess of the gestures that get to me. *Love, the Magician*, the third in this trilogy, provoked the same kind of physical symptoms. Tragic love, again, is the issue. As children, Candela (Christina Hoyos) and Jose (Juan Antonio Jimenez) were promised in marriage, a gypsy custom. But Carmelo (Antonio Gades) loves Candela and Jose loves Lucia (Laura del Sol), or, at any rate, loved her at the time he was fatally stabbed. Carmelo is jailed for the killing and while he's gone, Candela goes slightly crazy, meeting Jose's apparition nightly for a ghostly *pas de deux* behind the encampment's garbage dump. Filmed on a sound stage, cleanly and incisively despite the deliberate squalor of the set, *Love, the Magician* makes no effort to hide its own artifice. There's nothing remotely realistic about choreographed flamenco, all the emotion and action expressed in highly stylized movement. Yet it all seems so real, so primal and genuinely tragic — even to somebody who is skeptical of the intense emotiveness, conservative values and violence. The dancing is, of course, incomparable, but there's a slight problem with casting Hoyos as Gades' lover. She may be a better dancer, but del Sol and Gades make a dynamite couple, the stuff fantasies are made of, as *Carmen* showed us. (*Laemmle's Royal*)

—Helen Knode

We also recommend: *Animation Celebration*, *The Best of the Fox International*, *"Crocodile" Dundee*, *The Decline of the American Empire*, *Defense of the Realm*, *Heartbreak Ridge*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Mariene*, *Menage*, *Native Son*, *Nutcracker*, *Peggy Sue Got Married*, *Platoon*, *The Sacrifice*, *Sid and Nancy*, *Stand By Me*, *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*.