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TIME OF LOVE

(NOBAT — E ASHEGHI)

(IRANIAN)

A Khaneh Film Sabz production. Produced by Khaneh Film Sabz and Shahed Exhibition Complex.

Directed, written by Mohsen Makhmalbaf. Camera (color), Mahmud Kalari; editor, Makhmalbaf; sound, Jahaangir Mirshekari; set design, Mohammad Nasrollahi. Reviewed at Fajr Film Festival, Teheran, Iran, Feb. 12, 1991. (In Cannes Film Festival — Un Certain Regard.) Running time: 75 MIN.

With: Shiva Gerde, Abdorahman Yalmai, Aken Tune, Menderes Samanjelari.

"Time of Love," an intriguing romantic trilogy, is the first post-revolutionary Iranian film about adultery. Pic should be a hit in Islamic territories where love is considered racy onscreen.

Considered a radical departure for fundamentalist helmer Mohsen Makhmalbaf, pic is pristine by Western standards. Characters never touch, the mandatory head scarf for women never shed. Love-making is implied but not shown.

Makhmalbaf reprises the tragic trilogy structure he used in "The Peddler" to tell an adulterous married woman's story with three different endings.

Unlike traditional Iranian pics, love knows no boundary in this one, which is perhaps why Makhmalbaf shot the film in Turkey with Turkish actors and subtitled it in Persian for release in Teheran.

Part one begins when the lovers meet in a cemetery. Lovemaking is intimated with tight closeups of birds, flowers and the woman's mouth seductively biting the corner of her scarf. The husband finds out, kills the lover and stands before the judge without remorse. He must choose his own method of execution.

In part two, the blond lover of the first part is the husband. Back in the cemetery, the husband attacks the lover, but the husband winds up dead. The social order is questioned, but someone must pay. The lover is hanged offscreen.

Act three, by far the best, hinges on a traitor, an old man who sees the lovers in the graveyard and coaxes the husband to get revenge.

Tech credits are superior to other Iranian films and are quite good by international standards.

—Suzan Ayscough