

## Roman Holiday: Four-Star Movie Reviews

by David Macdonald

One of the great romantic comedies is William Wyler's Roman Holiday (1953), starring Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck. The film is perfect in nearly every way, managing to be both bittersweet and charming at the same time.

Hepburn plays a princess on an official tour of Europe, and who makes a stop in Italy; Rome to be precise. As is customary, she presides over a gathering of dignitaries, and is introduced to each one in a very long list of individuals. After this, she must rest up for another very long day, with yet more meetings, appearances, and photo ops. But the princess is growing increasingly angry at this regulated, suffocating lifestyle (amusing dialogue about how she should wear what she wants in bed), and wishes to have some time for herself. So after the official gathering, she simply flips out, requiring her mistress to call the doctor for a tranquillizer. But before the drug kicks in, she is able to cleverly sneak out of the building, sneaking a ride in a produce truck. Now she is in Rome, with nowhere to go.

But somebody eventually does find her. It's Gregory Peck, playing a reporter stuck in a place

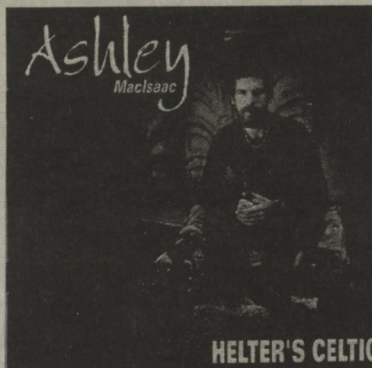
without exciting news. He finds her on a park bench, in a state which he thinks is drunkenness, but which is actually the grogginess from the tranquillizer. He attempts to take her home, but she keeps mumbling that she is staying in the Coliseum, which can't be right. So, reluctantly, he takes her to his apartment to let her sleep on the couch. Little does he know that this will turn from a drunk sleeping on his couch to the biggest scoop of his life. He finds out her identity from his boss, who shows him her picture splashed across the front page of the local newspapers, with the headline that the princess is ill. It's that drunk woman sleeping on the couch! Peck keeps this fact to himself, but bets his boss that he can get an exclusive interview with the princess. The boss accepts, knowing there's an extra buck to be made for Peck's failure to follow through.

Peck must do everything to keep her in sight. This builds up to the main sequence, when, after having followed her through town, he meets up with her, pretending to have just been surprised at running into her again. In a mutual deception, Hepburn tells Peck that she has run away from school, while Peck tells her he is a salesman. The catch is that Peck already

knows the truth, but Hepburn doesn't. Peck offers her a tour of the city and its sights, and she accepts. As the day moves on, however, Peck begins to see her less and less as a great scoop, and more as a real, and wonderful person. He grows conflicted between his heart and his desire to move up the job ladder.

This is a cute and charming movie, much like the immortal Hepburn. She renders both fear and happiness at her boldness at running away to enjoy a brief foray into the ordinary person's life. The title is appropriate, as this is a unique adventure for both main characters, and we can't take for granted that the romance will be forever. The romance is great, however, and includes a number of classic scenes, from the scene with "The Mouth of Truth", famous for Peck's ad-libbing the scene's climatic event, the first moment in the apartment when a groggy Hepburn thinks she is in her own bedroom (Hepburn: "I've never been alone with a man before, even with my dress on. With my dress off, it's MOST unusual!"), their love scene, after an escape from an unexpected dance-hall brawl, and the final, bittersweet scene. Roman Holiday is a classic example of old Hollywood romance.

## Reviews, ETC.



### Ashley MacIsaac Helter's Celtic (3)

Loggerhead Records

A frustrating release from the "media darling" (note the sarcasm), it is occasionally interesting, but more often than not comes off as obnoxious noise. There is an interesting techno song titled "Fairy," and a couple of tunes featuring MacIsaac's raspy voice, including "I'm Movin' On," which was penned by the recently deceased Hank Snow (I wouldn't be surprised if hearing it hastened Snow's passing away). Even the traditional tunes on this album are under par, resulting in a major let-down from such a talented, but troubled, man.

O'Connor



### Alanis Morissette MTV Unplugged (7)

Warner/Maverick

It seems that Morissette's music is perfectly suited for the unplugged environment, as it showcases her songwriting ability. This album couples hits from her last two albums, as well as three excellent new tracks. Not stopping at that, this twelve song collection also features a well done cover of Sting's "King Of Pain." Morissette's fans will enjoy this, but it is unlikely that she will make any new ones with this recording.

O'Connor



### The Donnas Get Skintight (8)

Lookout Records

Four lustful gals that sing about hanging out, guys, and rock music. Barely out of high school, they downplay being labeled as punks, saying that there music is purely rock — which they take seriously. Sounding like a young, female Ramones, their songs are mainly two and a half minutes anthems about being young and having fun. Fun, goofy lyrics on songs with titles such as "Zero," "Hyperactive" and "Hook It Up" make the Donnas a band to be on the lookout for. Not