

Arts & Entertainment

Omaha cinema offers classics, new wave films

By Mike Frost

A fanatic is often described as someone who will travel great distances in order to sate his fetish. Film fanatics in Lincoln are fortunate to have the Sheldon Film Theatre program to satisfy their cinematic appetites. However, the film fan who is able to make the 60-mile trip can complement this menu with the bevy of foreign and domestic releases Omaha has to offer.

One of the most extensive programs is UNO's Student Programming Organization's series. It features a mix of new and vintage Hollywood films, with some foreign films thrown in for good measure. The next two weekends will feature a retrospective of western films. "Little Big Man" will show Friday, "Once Upon a Time in the West" on Saturday and "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly" Sunday. "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," "The Wild Bunch," and "The Magnificent Seven" will be featured next weekend.

Other highlights are a Humphrey Bogart Film Festival (Oct. 14 and 15), Jean-Luc Godard's "Breathless" (Oct. 23), "A Star is Born" with Judy Garland (Nov. 13), the French cult film "The King of Hearts" (Dec. 2 and 3) and Frank Capra's "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" (Dec. 11).

The films show at 5:15, 7:30 and 9:45 p.m. Fridays; 7:30 and 9:45 p.m. Saturdays and 3 and 7:30 p.m. on Sundays at the Epply Auditorium, 62nd and Dodge streets. Admission to the films is \$1.50. For a complete schedule, write the Student Programming Organizations, University of Nebraska-Omaha Milo Bail Student Center, Omaha, Neb. 68182-0295.

The New Cinema Cooperative, also in Omaha, features independent film-makers' ventures. Screenings are at the Emmy Gifford Children's Theater, 3504 Center St. Films to be presented in the series

are Rainer Werner Fassbinder's "Lola" (Oct. 1), "Say Amen Somebody," (Oct. 15), "Vortex," (Nov. 5), "Yol," which won the Cannes Film Festival's prize in 1982 and "La Nuit de Varennes," a French film starring Marcello Mastroianni. Admission to each film is \$3.50.

The Park Four Theaters, 84th and Park Drive in Omaha, is offering an American Classic Film Festival scheduled to begin Sept. 28. It will run through Nov. 15.

The Park Four series offers double features, which change twice weekly. Among the bills are "Casablanca" and "The Maltese Falcon" (Oct. 12 through Oct. 15), "Rebecca" and "Notorious" (Nov. 2 through Nov. 5), "A Night at the Opera" and "A Day at the Races" with the Marx Brothers (Oct. 23 through Oct. 25) and a special screening of James Dean's "Giant" (Nov. 9 through 15).

Admission is \$3.50 for each double feature. However, tickets can be purchased in advance, five for \$12.50.

For more information, write the Park Four Theaters, P.O. Box 27315, Ralston, 68127.

The Joslyn Art Museum also features a film series. "New Wave Cinema," as it is commonly called, is characterized by innovative editing, political subject matter and low budgets.

The series features Werner Herzog's "Aguirre, the Wrath of God" (Oct. 2), "Rocco and His Brothers," an Italian film (Oct. 16), "The Ruling Class" (Oct. 30), "The Last Wave," directed by Australian filmmaker Peter Weir, (Nov. 13), "The Harder They Come" which stars reggae singer Jimmy Cliff (Dec. 11), and "Greaser's Palace," (Dec. 18). Screenings are at the Joslyn Museum, 2200 Dodge St. Tickets are \$2.50 for students and \$3 for the general public. Series passes also are available, \$9 for students, \$12 for the general public. Shows begin at 2 p.m.

“★★★★½”
“WONDERFULLY ZESTY.”
Kathleen Carroll, New York Daily News
“IT’S TERRIFIC.”
Joyous, Funny, Unabashedly Emotional
Regina Barry, All the Movies
“WONDERFUL!”
Michael Sauter, Rolling Stone

Say Amen, Somebody

A FILM BY
 GEORGE T.
 NIENBERG

Photo courtesy Sheldon Film Theatre

"Say Amen, Somebody" will show as part of The New Cinema Cooperative series in Omaha and will show at Lincoln's Sheldon Film Theatre.

'Nancy' withstands test of time

As a public service, here is the solution to the mystery of the creator(s) of the "Nancy" comic strip, the subject of much heated debate recently in art circles.

For 43 years, the late great Ernie Bushmiller created this classic funny. Seven times weekly, its combination of naivete and stylistic simplicity has graced up to 600 newspapers worldwide.

Bushmiller died August 15, 1982, at 76. In his



Billy Shaffer

tradition, his protege Mark Lasky took over production of the strip. But at the age of 29, Lasky died of cancer July 31 after nearly a year of producing the weekday versions of "Nancy." The colored Sunday editions since Bushmiller's demise have and will continue to be produced by Al Plastino, a longtime assistant. Lasky produced a large amount of work that will continue to run, unsigned, until October 10.

Starting then, California cartoonist Jerry Scott will draw the daily strip.

Diane Heine of United Feature Syndicate's promotion and publicity department, said Scott plans on retaining the same patented Bushmiller look, but plans to add more physical movement and to emphasize the major adult character, Nancy's Aunt Fritzi.

Originally, Bushmiller's strip was called "Fritzi Ritz," and I can recall comic books from my childhood based on the character. But eventually, public opinion proved Nancy (and her orphan pal, Sluggo), to be more popular, and the strip came to be called "Nancy."

From its inception, Bushmiller's strip has been characterized by a clarity of line, a directness in approach with emphasis on the sight gag, and a childlike naivete. This ain't no "Doonesbury." While other trends in cartoon humor become more and more based on biting and cynical attacks on human failings, "Nancy" never has resorted to a cheap laugh at someone else's expense. "Nancy" may read like a children's primer, but in that sense, it has an escapist essence of a time that no longer exists, similar to watching the nuclear family ethic in a good "Beaver"



Ernie Bushmiller's "Nancy" (above) and Al Plastino's version (below).

Illustrations courtesy United Feature Syndicate



episode.

The best part of "Nancy," though, is the drawing. It is definitive cartooning. Characters continually have few movement lines around them. Grass at the edge of a sidewalk is depicted by a series of perfectly parallel strikes. All the men still wear hats.

The fact that "Nancy" exists after 43 years is indication enough of its timelessness and universality. Through four decades and four artists, Nancy lives on.

'Chained Heat' not worth ticket price

By Ward W. Triplett III

The scene is the dark corner of a small prison cell. As a male guard unlocks the door, the beautiful woman inside cowers in the corner, hiding the plastic gun she has made.

Naturally, the guard begins to undress. The girl pulls out the gun and backs him into the hallway while he berates her with a mouth-full of cliches. ("You'll never get away with this!") Next, the cocking

Film Review

of a triggers is heard. The girl whirls around and aims at the darkness, but too late, as six guards fire at once. The girl falls in slow motion to the floor, Hollywood bullet wounds everywhere.

The beginning of "Chained Heat," the latest in the lovable genre of women-behind-bars films, offers the audience its only intellectual challenge: "Do I actually sit through the rest of this?" If you can get beyond the non-stop violence and sex, then you stay. However, the best thing would be not to spend the \$3.50 in the first place.

"Chained Heat" has the usual story line. Naive, sweet little girl gets sent to prison after an honest accident; in this case, Linda Blair accidentally runs over someone with her car. Then, the little girl gets caught up in the various struggles within the prison. She then gets beaten up and has friends killed by the warfare among the prisoners, then gets raped and beaten by the warden. After all this, the little girl becomes a prison-tough leader, who organizes the warring prisoners and proceeds to rid the prison of its evil administrators.

Along the way, of course, is the dizzying cinematic mass of sex and violence, including three lesbian scenes and two sobering rape scenes. People are killed and mutilated in as many different ways as the producers could dream up.

Blair's predictable progression isn't helped by the loosely written script, which has the warden (played by John Vernon, who has seen better days as Dean Wormer in "Animal House") and his chief officer trying to better each other's drug traffic within the prison.

Continued on Page 13