

Zeffirelli's version of 'Romeo and Juliet'

Peering at movies by Rodney Powell

I went into Franco Zeffirelli's film of "Romeo and Juliet" sort of hoping that it would be as good as almost everyone was saying. Unfortunately, it wasn't. I had also half-way hoped that it would be bad, because when any movie is supposedly so warm, human and touching, I tend to cringe (remember "A Patch of Blue?"). So, this is my verdict—Franco Zeffirelli has made a boring movie, with some good photography, good set and costume design, tolerable acting, and bad direction and music.

First the relatively good things. The photography is pretty, the costumes are pretty, the set designs are pretty. The makers of the film obviously cared enough to spend the very best. Since most the action isn't very interesting, it is good to have something to look at besides the madly cavorting actors.

WHICH BRINGS us to the Zeffirelli method of directing actors — he has them gesticulate, weep, moan and all but heave up the scenery. This method may be good for slapstick comedy, but a succession of scenes in which everyone is milling, running, crying and/or writhing in agony tends to become boring, at least for me. Everyone seems close to hysteria most of the time, and two hours is a long time to sustain hysteria. It reminds me of "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World," which was one of the most boring comedies of all time simply because it was so long and so pathetically frenetic.

If Zeffirelli knew how to direct action sequences, his addiction to movement might be understandable. But here, as elsewhere, he doesn't know when to stop. Romeo and Juliet's meeting begins well as Zeffirelli moves with the dancers, alternating close-ups of the star-crossed lovers. But he drags it out too long, and shows us his whirling effect three or four times (apparently to make sure that no one misses it) so that any interest is soon dissipated. The fight scenes are standard — he doesn't know what to emphasize, it's just one furious movement after another.

IN FACT, the only long scene that comes off

is the balcony scene — here Zeffirelli's decision to use teen-agers seems right, for the scene becomes charming comedy as the hot young lovers pant with passion. It is like a refreshing Nichols and May skit thrown into the middle of an embarrassingly bad soap opera.

A word must be said about the music. It is wretched. Nina Rota piles of the stuff with reckless abandon, or else tries to be very lyrical for about 30 seconds during the love scenes (such as they are) until the violins start laying it on again (as when the lovers part after their first and last night together). Must we have this go in order to react? In this case we need something, like a little talent to match the expenditures, but instead we get a lush soundtrack. I imagine the album is selling well.

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD also say something about the acting. Olivia Hussey and Leonard Whiting are pretty as Juliet and Romeo. Milo O'Shea is convincing as the friar until his inexplicable exit at the grave. Michael York and John McEnery as Tybalt and Mercutio are dashing, and McEnery is actually able to suggest a character despite all the frenetic action. Pat Heywood overacts rather

winningly as the nurse. Everyone else is there and moving.

In short, "Romeo and Juliet" is lovely to look at, but is distinguished by little besides its sets and costumes. Orson Welles' "Falstaff" is far superior, but it is not, of course, about Young Love tragically Ruined by the System. We can only look forward to the day when Zeffirelli films "Hamlet," that touching story of a lovable student radical, caught up in forces beyond his control. But first we'll have to have "North Side Story" to provide inspiration.

PREVIEWS OF COMING attractions: Some enterprising students are bringing Norman Mailer's film "Beyond the Law" to Sheldon on April 18 and 19. Tickets are now on sale. Go buy some — it should be a very interesting cinema verite dissection of the police and of Norman Mailer. Even "Variety," not noted for its love of "art" films, gave it a good review. Mailer stars as a captain of detectives. Rip Torn and George Plimpton are among the featured players. I hate to make it sound as if going to any movie is a duty, but in this case it almost is, particularly if any interesting newer films are to be shown here by anyone except the Union Film Society.

Editorials Commentary

Let's have a party

The demise of campus political parties would be the end of nothing much.

Whether or not useful a few years ago, they have now proven farces and have contributed considerably to ineffective student government.

By their very nature, parties should provide strong, central student action. Instead, ASUN politicians have used the party labels as vote-getting devices only.

In the past, parties like PSA — which can claim no actual annual continuity — crop up about this time of year. Everyone is doing his own thing to get in the "right" party. And for the last few years the right party has been the only party — PSA.

But, immediately after election day, no matter what PSA claimed to be, the student senators go about their individual ways . . . collectively doing nothing.

Further, political parties, as they have evolved, actually thrive on prejudices and irrationality.

Whatever they are and whoever they involve, the parties have been good for little. And they have prevented some capable people from being elected to student government.

So, as Bob Zucker, Randy Reeves, Bill Chaloupka and any others map their campaign strategies, they should consider parties for what they are.

They, and the voters, should make the parties responsible and valid, or shut them down. And the latter looks by far the more practical.

Ed Icenogle

The Daily Nebraskan is solely a student-operated newspaper independent of editorial control by student government, administration and faculty. The opinion expressed on this page is that of the Nebraskan's editorial page staff.

Nebraska in revolution; a cow coup

It finally happened, just as all Nebraska knew it would. The state has been overthrown. Six weeks ago, at sunset, the protestors rose up and successfully gained control of Nebraska's government. The coup happened just before milking time on a cold Tuesday night, when Nebraska least expected it. What was even more unexpected was that the conquerors were not Communists, but cattle.

The revolution was lightning fast and complete. A large black Angus bull immediately moved into the Governor's mansion; his color alone is enough to make the average Nebraskan shudder. Hundreds

A parody on the Great State of Nebraska, this English 186 paper was written by Kathy Sass this semester. The letters quoted actually appeared in the Omaha World-Herald.

of cows now have their hoofs on the desks in the state capitol building and in the county courthouses. Virtually every police station and sheriff's office is now being run by brown-uniformed cattle, and cows can be seen cruising the streets in official police cars.

ONE OF THE most important steps in the coup was to gain control of radio and television networks and newspapers throughout the state. It is through these media that the cattle can brainwash the people of Nebraska, bully them into total submission and ultimately herd them into the abandoned cattle pens and pastures. These are their long-range goals, but so far the cattle have given the people of Nebraska nothing to fear.

According to news received through radio, television and newspapers, there have been no dramatic policy changes since the overthrow; the cattle have gained control of Nebraska's government, but their plans and political views are the same as those of their predecessors.

Many of the changes that have taken place since the coup are slight and have had no unpleasant effects on Nebraska's people. For example, when the cattle changed the name of the World-Herald to the Wild Hereford, many Nebraskans expected to find a radical newspaper

on their porches in the morning. The cattle did not make any big changes in the policies of the paper, however, indicating that their own views were the same as those of the people who had published the paper before.

ONE OF THE most interesting features of the Wild Hereford is the editorial page, which is exactly the same as it always was except that the Public Pulse is now called the Bovine Beat. Nebraska's people read the Bovine Beat with interest because it contains letters from cows all over the state, plus a few letters from people to discourage the rumor that cattle are prejudiced against human beings.

Most human subscribers to the Wild Hereford have been pleased with the attitudes and opinions shown by the cattle who write to the Bovine Beat; the cows show the same education and insight that Nebraskans always showed when they wrote to the Public Pulse. For example, here is a letter from a cow in Springfield, Neb.:

"Our schools could not play the 'Ava Maria' yet they cram the monkey theory down the throats of our children. It is taught as fact, not theory.

"The Supreme Court ruling was drawn up with the express intention of driving religion out of our land."

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"YOU CALL YOURSELVES IDEALISTS AND YOU WANT TO PUT ALL THESE PEOPLE OUT OF WORK?"

Carte Blanche by Larry Grossman

The crowded conditions of the Library became so terrible last Tuesday evening that the only places to sit were in the third floor men's room. When these became occupied, the Campus Police had to be called in to restore order.

The rising protest against the seating conditions and excessive book fines prompted me to visit the Director of the Library to find out what was happening in the halls of Love.

AS I CROSSED the threshold, I had to grab a chair to retain my balance for I had sunk into a soft carpet four inches thick. The director, sitting behind a massive mahogany desk, motioned me towards a gilt 16th Century French chair.

During the opening moments of our interview, I glanced about the room, noting the original Picasso prints which hung behind the desk, the hidden stereo speakers piping soft classical music into the room, and the open liquor cabinet which displayed an enviable collection of quality labels.

OUR CONVERSATION centered on the new system of book fines. The Director stated that contrary to rumors, fine money was not being spent by the staff on luxuries, but rather was being applied to library improvements. He noted that \$100 of boards and bricks had been ordered that day for the construction of new shelf space.

As I shook hands with the Director at the end of the interview, I saw that his desk was covered with travel brochures of Monte Carlo and the Caribbean, mixed with deposit slips from several Swiss Banks.

OUTSIDE THE director's door was a sight which gave me a great shock. A crowd of petitioners had jammed the hall seeking relief from their library fines. They were dirty and dressed in rags. As I walked out of the office, a young woman thrust her baby at me and yelled "Mercy sir. We are poor." A quiet young man tried to restrain her and quiet her tears.

Others rushed up waving envelopes, clothing, car keys, and savings bonds, yelling that they would give these things to me as a down payment on their fines. I assured them that I was a visitor to the library, not an employee.

As I left this scene, I realized that the library was in deep trouble. The clicking of the book checker's counter at the head of the second floor stairs sounded faintly like the last seconds running out on a time bomb.

Justice for Terry

Dear Editor:
May I compliment you on your legislative picture page and accompanying quotes in Monday's Nebraskan.

The quotes chosen typify to a degree each of the state senators pictured except one . . . Terry Carpenter.

I feel you've again given the Scottsbluff Senator a slap in the face when, for once, he deserves a pat on the back.

Carpenter's remarks concerning Governor Tiemann's budget recommendations, following the January 29th budget message were, contrary to the passage quoted, quite complimentary. I feel I believe you've quoted Carpenter 180 degrees out of context.

True, he did say that Tiemann seems to know more about state agencies in two years' experience than he, Carpenter, has learned in fourteen.

But following that statement, Carpenter moved to wholly accept Tiemann's budget recommendations, without question or exception, saying in effect, if the Governor knows this much about agency requests, let's take his word for it, fellow senators.

The University would have been much better off had Carpenter's motion been given consideration. Reflective of the mistrust and suspicion between the legislative and executive branches of our state government, however, Carpenter's motion to accept in toto was immediately and soundly defeated.

In my estimation, the budget will ultimately be chopped beyond all definition of the word "progress," despite Senator Carpenter's attempts to salvage it. In this matter, if in no others, he ought to be complimented.

John King

Editor's note: Direct your attention to the Nebraska Legislative Journal, page 295, Jan. 29, 1969.

Then:

"Mr. Carpenter moved that this Body meet at 9:00 a.m. Monday, February 3, 1969, for at least one hour, for the purpose of attempting by a general discussion, the procedure and sense of direction to take in the area of the conditions of the Governor's Budget."

The day when Terry Carpenter would want to salvage anything in the name of "progress" is a rare one indeed. Perhaps he doesn't deserve a slap in the face. But he doesn't deserve a pat on the back, either. He really deserves a kick in the ass.