

'French Connection' builds tense cat and mouse game

Review by Bill Wallis

The *French Connection* contains a chase sequence which has been termed a "classic" by film critics everywhere. It is, but the chase sequence is an integrated part of a full-length, superbly-crafted film.

The story is that of a tough cop named Doyle, who is brilliantly brought to life by Gene Hackman. In a thousand tiny but seemingly habitual moves the attitudes of a gruff, wry and passionate individual are exposed to the viewer.

Doyle and his partner Russo (Roy Schneider—also an excellent portrayal) are Narcotics Bureau Detectives in New York City. The story is of their struggle—on duty and off—to locate and intercept an enormous shipment of heroin from France.

Their evil counterparts, Fernando Rey and Marcel Buzzuffi, are among the world's elite criminals. Only through the inordinate and passionate curiosity of Doyle as an individual (as well as a cop) is the shipment even discovered and the very violent game of cat and mouse begun in the underworld jungle.

Reasons for this film being ranked one of the best of 1971, and, one of the best action films of all time, are these: the story never stops, event flows into event with a never-ceasing tension. Climaxes occur, but never a letdown. The film's rhythm, or balance of sequences (especially of rising and falling action, and of location), is superb.

The film is dead-level realism, but never approaches dullness. Sensational elements (*Dirty Harry's* powerful handgun, his prey's abnormal psychological condition) which usually clutter up "cop stories" are absent.

This is the story of intelligent, brutal human beings who exist in a jungle of steel and flesh. It is the sharpness of their intellect, the finesse of their instinct, the thoroughness of their knowledge of their field, and the complexity of their tactics that makes this film hard-hitting brilliant entertainment.

This, plus the brilliant portrayal of virtually all the characters, and the technical mastery with which the characters, their actions and interactions, are captured on the screen.

Only in the highly-touted chase sequence is the imagination stretched beyond the bounds of believable experience, and then only a little.

This realistic atmosphere of the film gives the actors greater breadth of expression. He can better be bored as a character without boring his audience when he can relieve his boredom as any of us might—working overtime, bad coffee and all. But Doyle's overtime involves 32 million dollars worth of heroin, and a life and death game.

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Larry Kubert entertainment

Neil Simon's *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, performed by the Contemporary Theatre Company, closed the Lincoln Broadway League's season Thursday night. This production was, overall, the best of the season for the League.

It can be argued that Simon's works are mass-consumed by middle class Americans who think they're seeing "great theater." Simon's comedy is only one form of comedy however, and comedy is only one form of theater. As long as people realize this and expose themselves to the other forms, there's nothing wrong with enjoying this type of comedy.

Basically, the plot of *Lovers* centers on seafood restaurant owner Barney Cashman's three unsuccessful attempts to carry on extra-marital affairs by luring women up to his mother's apartment.

Stubby Kaye as Barney was the main reason for the success of the show. His stage experience was apparent as he wandered around the stage pouring drinks, smoking grass and trying to get a purse away from one of the women.

Kaye's facial expressions and his delivery were a delight.

Pat Benson as Elaine, the nymphomaniac, is the first woman with whom Barney tries to have an affair. She's willing, Barney isn't. Result—nothing happens.

Benson also did a good job with her characterization. In fact, she was probably the most believable of the three women in the show.

Patty Crowe as Bobbi, the psycho-actress who is convinced the world is against her, is the object of Barney's second attempt. Crowe seemed a little nervous when she made her first entrance, but as she got into the show she became more comfortable in her role.

The third woman Barney tried to seduce was disappointing. Yvonne Vincic as Jeanette, a friend of Barney's wife, seemed extremely nervous. Granted, some of the nervousness was her characterization, but she was not even waiting on her laugh lines. While the audience laughed, she would say lines the audience could not hear.

The largest problem of the production was the sound system. Throughout the show there was intermittent crackling from the speakers.

Due to the proposed Stuart Theatre remodeling plans the Lincoln Broadway League will have to find a new home next season. Not every production brought in by the League has been a winner, but they all haven't been losers either.

The League has done a great service to Lincoln over the past years. Hopefully they will find a suitable new home so they may

continue to bring productions to Lincoln.

Having Waited For Logos, an original script by William Szymanski, will be presented by Free Theatre on Monday and Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in the Nebraska Union Centennial Room.

The play is an experiment in movement and madness. Admission is free.

The Special Films Committee has scheduled *Woodstock* at the Sheldon Art Gallery on Tuesday and Wednesday at 1 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Admission is \$1.

UNL faculty member John Zei will sing the role of Count Monterone in the Omaha Opera Company's production of *Rigoletto* Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. in the Omaha Music Hall, 17th and Davenport St. Five singers from the Metropolitan and New York City opera companies will also perform in the production. Canadian baritone Louis Quilico will sing the title role.

The Harlem Globetrotters, with UNL alum Nate Branch, will be at Pershing Auditorium on Tuesday, Feb. 22 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$3, \$3.50 and \$4.50.

Rock group Three Dog Night will be at Pershing on Friday, Feb. 25, at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$5.50 and \$6.

Television movies:

Monday

KMTV, Channel 3, 8 p.m., *Operation Kid Brother* starring Neil Connery. Sean Connery's brother playing James Bond's brother.

KETV, Channel 7, 8 p.m., *Cleopatra*, conclusion starring Richard Burton, Elizabeth Taylor and Rex Harrison. 1963 \$40 million production.

Tuesday

KETV, Channel 7, 7:30 p.m., *Call Her Mom* starring Connie Stevens. Waitress takes over as fraternity's housemother.

Wednesday:

KETV, Channel 7, 8 p.m., *Die! Die! My Darling!* starring Tallulah Bankhead and Stephanie Powers. Madwoman tortures dead son's fiancée.

Thursday

KOLN, Channel 10, and WOW, Channel 6, 8 p.m., *My Blood Runs Cold* starring Troy Donahue and Joey Heatherton. Rich girl falls in love with motorcyclist.

Friday

KMTV, Channel 3, 7:30 p.m., *Evil Roy Slade* starring John Astin and Dick Shawn. Remake of a pilot film that didn't make it.

WOW, Channel 6, 8 p.m., *None But the Brave* starring Frank Sinatra and Clint Walker. World War II yarn.

KOLN, Channel 10 8 p.m., *Man on a String* starring Chris George. Police lieutenant goes underground.

KUON, Channel 12, 9:30 p.m., *Beauty and the Beast*, starring Jean Marais and Josette Day. French poet-filmmaker Jean Cocteau's 1946 interpretation of fairy tale.

Saturday:

KETV, Channel 7, 7:30 p.m., *Notorius* starring Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman. Alfred Hitchcock classic.

KMTV, Channel 3, 8 p.m., *25th Hour* starring Virna Lisi and Anthony Quinn. Another World War II goodie.

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