



bart becker

'Wind from the East' blows into Sheldon

The big event this week is the Special Film Tuesday at Sheldon Gallery. A buck will get you into Goddard's *Wind from the East* at 3, 7 and 9 p.m.

Also showing with the Goddard feature is a short film by Lincolnites Ted Kooser and John Spence, *For the Loved Ones at Home*. I haven't heard a description of the film, but people have hinted it should be good.

The Weekend Film is *Little Big Man* with Chief Dan George and Dustin Hoffman. If you've never seen it, you'll probably enjoy this report of Custer's Last Stand. It's presented with a little different viewpoint than usual.

Watch out! Friday night is the Gordon MacRae "Spotlight on Nebraska No. 1 Show" at Pershing. It's Gordon, Marty Brill and Meredith MacRae plus Bob Devaney and the football team. I'm not going on the assumption that it'll be pretty weak stuff.

The film schedule: Sept. 17, *Animal Crackers* with the Marx Brothers; Sept. 24, *Dinner at 8* with Jean Harlow, Wallace Beery and John Barrymore; Oct. 8, *The Champ* with Wallace Beery and Jackie Cooper; Oct. 15, *Ziegfeld Follies* with Judy Garland, William Powell, Fred Astaire and Lucille Ball; Oct. 22, *As You Desire Me* with Greta Garbo and Eric von Stroheim.

Good reading:

Canyon by John van der Zee. Available from Ballantine, the book is subtitled *Story of the Last Rustic Community in Metropolitan America* and is a report of Canyon, Calif. and its residents' efforts to exist in the midst of urban sprawl.

Just over the hills from Berkeley, Canyon is a spot of deliberate near-wilderness and inaccessibility. Canyon's residents are unconventional and of varied ages and backgrounds. They share a disregard for permits, rules, public officials and roads. In short, they're my kind of people.

The thing that binds them together is a desire to keep the utilities district from buying up all their land and turning it into an ecological disaster. They find themselves outbidding the agency for land and collectively resisting government agencies to declare some of their facilities inadequate.

Van der Zee, author of *The Hand Picked Man*, *The Plum Explosion* and *Blood Brotherhood*, has done a pleasant job of reporting the growth of the community.

Prairie Schooner, summer issue. *Prairie Schooner*, if you're not aware, is sponsored by the UNL English Department and University of Nebraska Press.

The summer issue includes poems by Philip Dacey, Edward Morin, Nebraska Wesleyan's William Kloefkorn and others.

In addition there are three stories, a fable, two articles and a bunch of reviews.

I was especially pleased with "Smalleye's Last Hunt," a first published short story by Jon Hassler.

In all, it's a very enjoyable issue, available for \$1.50 at bookstores around town or in the English Department.

The Firesign Theatre's Big Book of Plays by the Firesign Theatre. Available from Straight Arrow Books. The Firesign boys are mixing their media again, and though this review is a bit premature in that I've not yet seen the book, I'm sure it will be a mind boggler.

The book features four of their plays annotated and explained, which should ease a lot of people's minds. And it should make you an authority on the guys. Of course, that probably will make you incredibly overbearing and a source of constant irritation to your friends because you'll always be playing the records and explaining them yourselves.

Featured are the plays "Waiting for the Electrician or Someone like Him," "How Can You Be in Two Places at Once When You're Not Anywhere at All," "Don't Crush that Dwarf, Hand Me the Pliers" and "We're All Bozos on this Bus."

Add a brief history and biography of the group and a lot of photos and you've got \$4 worth of enjoyment and entertainment.

Bluegrass becomes respectable

Bluegrass music, long disdained by "cultured" folks as crass "hillbilly" music, apparently is on the popular upswing among both critics and the public.

It was apparent at this year's Brownville Music Festival. Heads that hadn't seen the inside of a barber shop in years bobbed in time to the music right alongside heads still bristling from a stint under the shears.

Reports from the annual old-time fiddlers festival said about 15,000 people attended the two-day event. The singing, picking and fiddling were outstanding by the time competition finals rolled around.

The youngsters were a large share of both the performance and the audience. Former UNL student Jim Pipher was judged the outstanding vocalist, and his trio was awarded second place.

Nebraska Wesleyan instructor John Walker took top honors in the pickers category with his guitar. Omahan Bob Letterly was second and Lincoln's Steve Hanson third.

The fiddlers all were oldsters—in fact, one said he figured he'd been playing for 50 years. But the winners in the group category were youngsters. Letterly on banjo and Hanson on mandolin were joined by Terry Schmitt on guitar and Dave Morris on string bass for some rousing bluegrass. They were both the judges and the people's choice.

Last year the Union concerts series brought Doc Watson to town along with his son Merle, and they pleased an audience on the East Campus to no end. The rumor (unfounded as yet) is that negotiations are underway with the Earl Scruggs review for an appearance some time this year.

Also last spring, Mike Seeger and a troupe of folk artists were on campus for a largely underpublicized series of small concerts and workshops. Their music was more mountain folk than what we think of as bluegrass, but it provided a good look at the roots of folk and subsequently bluegrass.

Although there are many bluegrass music albums available, two in particular might help in understanding the music, the people who make it and its evolution.

Strictly Instrumental by Flatt and Scruggs with Doc Watson features a number of sprightly bluegrass tunes. The performers are among the best, if not the best, in the business.

Recorded in December, 1966, the record features Earl on banjo and Doc on guitar with Earl's partner Lester Flatt on guitar; Grady Martin on electric guitar; Charlie McCoy on harmonica; Buddy Harmon on snare drum; and, from the Foggy Mountain Boys, Jake Tullock on bass, Buck Graves on dobro and Paul Warren on fiddle.

They zoom their way through 10 songs,

including "Pick Along," "Nothing to It," "Jazzing," the old standard "John Hardy was a Desperate Little Man" and the raucous "Bill Cheatham."

For an indication of where bluegrass has arrived in 1972, try the Flying Burrito Bros. album *Last of the Red Hot Burritos*.

The personnel includes Burritos Al Perkins on pedal steel guitar, Kenny Wertz on acoustic guitar and banjo, Chris Hillman on bass and mandolin, Rick Roberts on rhythm guitar and Michael Clarke on drums. Also on hand for the album are Byron Berline, three times national fiddle champion, and acoustic bassist Roger Bush from *Country Gazette*.

The tunes include "Six Days on the Road," always a mover, "My Uncle," an anti-draft song in the bluegrass genre, "Dixie Breakdown," "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down," and everybody's favorite fiddle tune "Orange Blossom Special," in which Berline does things apparently defying laws of physics and physiology.

Both albums are likely to increase your understanding of the music and possibly likely to send you scurrying out after more of this "hillbilly" music.



Bluegrass picker... Doc Watson brought the house down at an East Campus appearance last spring.

Van Morrison scores again

Review by Bart Becker

I wish I were working for a radio station right now instead of for this newspaper so I could play Van Morrison's new record, *St. Dominic's Preview* for you. Because I can't begin to try and describe my reaction to it, which is favorable.

In fact, I'd be willing to go out on a limb and say this is one of the best records that's going to be made this year. And I realize that's something that gets said about nearly every record released, and I say it quite a bit, but that's what I think.

Van Morrison has plenty of staying power, as evidenced by the success of his last couple of albums and singles: *Tupelo Honey*, "Domino," and the lesser known things like "Caledonia Soul."

A couple of cuts from this album are

being played on the radio but there is a wealth of enjoyment here. The arrangements are phenomenal and Van Morrison sings the hell out of them. His voice is a remarkably potent instrument. Some of it is very big band, some of it is very personal, all of it is very tender and powerful. These are songs that everybody should listen to.

The songs are called "Jackie Wilson Said (I'm in Heaven When You Smile)," "Gypsy," "I Will Be There," "Listen to the Lion," "Dominic's Preview," "Redwood Tree," and "Almost Independence Day." Here are some lyrics although they are only a small part of the strength of the album:

"Listen to the Lion"

All my love come down,
All my love come tumbling down.
Listen to the Lion... inside me.

And I shall search my soul,
I shall search my very soul
for the lion... inside of me.

And all my tears have flowed,
all my tears like water flow
for the lion... inside of me.

We sailed and we sailed;
sailed to Caledonia.

And we sailed and we sailed
away from Denmark
way up to Caledonia,
and we sailed and we sailed
all around the world
looking for a brand new start
And we sailed
away from the Golden Gate
way up to the New York City.