

Growing up in a Civil War western

Larry Kubert

Draft evasion to stay out of the Vietnam war is something we're all familiar with—but draft dodging to stay out of the Civil War is something new.

Stanley Jaffe's off-beat production of *Bad Company* uses this theme as a kick-off point for his story of two nomadic youths coming of age on the western prairies. But it's not all-American Roy Rogers' West! It's gritty, violent and lonesome.

Barry Brown is Drew Dixon, a fine Christian boy from "good stock". He delivers an excellent low-key performance. He drifts in with a lawless gang of youths who are heading West, and gradually develops the hard-core survival instinct which he needs to exist.

Con-artist, back-alley fighter and army deserter Jake Rumsey (Jeff Bridges) is the leader of the gang and the primary cause for the changes in Drew.

Bridges also delivers a fine performance, but he's less impressive than Brown, mainly because his character remains static, while Brown's character development is more interesting.

The sepia-toned production (both in photography and in mood) is a sensitive approach to Drew and Jake's relationship, first as their personalities and beliefs oppose each other, and later when they complement each other.

The violence in *Bad Company* at times approaches morbid humor, but again, because of the brown-tinged mood of the film, it's acceptable.

The supporting cast is outstanding. David Huddleston's performance as Big Joe, an imposing leader of an inept gang of marauders, ("I'm the oldest whore on the block.") leads the Jim Davis as a cold-hearted, all-business marshall is also good.

Harvey Schmidt's occasional old-time piano music matches the loneliness and authenticity of the movie.

Bad Company is one of the better westerns to come along in a long time—but then, it's not just a western.



Music students ready Christmas programs

For most students the passing of Thanksgiving only brings visions of finals, but the School of Music has visions of the season not far behind—Christmas.

Each year students are featured in concerts celebrating Advent. The season opens this Sunday with the 82nd annual performance of George Frederick Handel's "Messiah" at 3 p.m. in the Coliseum. Earl Jenkins will be conducting the combined University orchestra, choruses and soloists.

Student soloists are soprano Rita Smith, alto Cynthia McNally, tenor Philip Boehr and bass Kent Hall.

The traditional Christmas Carol Concert will be presented at 4 p.m. Sunday Dec. 10 at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ at 35th and Sheridan.

J. S. Bach's "Wachet auf" and Benjamin Britten's "Rejoice in the Lamb," both festival cantatas, will be included in the program.

Carols from many lands and religions will be sung, ranging from the medieval "O come, O come Emmanuel" to "Hacia Belen va un Borrico," a Spanish carol.

Remaining concerts in the series are the Madrigal Singers performing at 8 p.m. Tuesday Dec. 12 and the Varsity Men's Glee Club and Women's Chorale at 4 p.m. Sunday Dec. 17 in Kimball.

George C. Scott runs off with cliched 'Centurions'

Review by Roy Baldwin

Stacy Keach is still waiting for his big break. One look at the man and one just knows that he's going to be a great actor someday, and one goes to each of his movies—*Fat City* last month and now *The New Centurions* at Cinema II—with the hope that finally the magic combination of script, director and cast is going to come his way.

Well, "his" movie is still waiting out there wherever great movies are born.

There are two reasons: (1) *New Centurions* is stultified by a script full of cliches; (2) George C. Scott steals every scene worth taking.

If you've caught a *Rookies* segment on TV you already know the plot: young law student Roy (Keach) joins the force to support wife (Jane Alexander, who gets the donkey-worker medal for carrying so much of the plot) and kid, falls in with crusty but lovable old cop Kilvinsky (Scott), who has given his life to the force and leads Roy to doing the same.

Roy finds out he likes copping (policeman-ing?) more than anything else, drops out of school, loses his wife, etc. The rest isn't worth going into.

The trouble with the movie is that the script, while trying its darndest to be sympathetic to the police, is so hackneyed the actors don't have a chance to convey anything more than cardboard cutouts of themselves.

There's a black cop for scenes involving black crimes, there's a Chicano cop for scenes involving Chicanos, there's Whitey (Clifton Jones), crusty but lovable old cop No. 2 who manages to have the most fun of anyone in the cast, and there are swarms of cops and just-plain folks, all of whom seem

equally "place-able".

To scenewriter Stirling Silliphant's credit, though, it should be noted that at least there is no bust of a commune-full of long hairs a la *Dragnet*.

Back to Scott, since his is the story of this movie. For all practical purposes the film ends when Scott exits midway through. His character, while it lasts, is worth seeing.

In an early scene Roy and Kilvinsky sit in a bar discussing crime and society. Kilvinsky is not so much a cop as he is a crusader. His job is not so much to enforce the law, he tells Roy, it is combating evil. "It's easy to get rid of crime", he says, "No law against selling dope, dope's not a crime anymore. Easy to get rid of crime not so easy to get rid of evil."

On the eve of retirement and seeing society no better for his years of labor, he is pessimistic. Roy offers encouragement, telling him about Rome's centurions — "They weren't well liked or respected either, but they held the line, at least until the barbarians."

As always, Scott is such a good, such a believable character that, drawn in by his lines, you realize only at the end of the scene that his whole discussion of morality and "holding the line" is taking place in a topless bar.

Kilvinsky's crusade ends in retirement and death by his own hand. Roy's crusade sputters in alcoholism and death at the hand of a crazy old man. The movie ends too — after wandering around pointlessly for another half-hour after Scott exits.

If you like cops and robbers, or if you're a George C. Scott fan or a Stacy Keach fan with patience, *New Centurions* is your baby. The rest of you, get in the patrol car. We're going downtown.

ARTISTS

December 5, 6, & 7

there will be an art exhibit/sale in the Centennial Rm. of the Union

ANY MEDIUM ELIGIBLE

PICK UP AN INFORMATION CARD TO CONFIRM SPACE IN THE STUDENT UNION PROGRAM OFFICE RM. 128

sponsored by Nebraska Union Displays Committee & Free University

cinema

Cinema 1: "The New Centurions" 1, 3:02, 5:04 7:10, 9:16 p.m.

Cinema 2: "Fiddler on the Roof" 1:15, 4:30, 8:15 p.m.

Cooper/Lincoln "Play It as It Lays" 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30 p.m.

Embassy: "Street of 1000 Pleasures" 11:45 a.m., 1:25, 3, 4:35, 6:10, 7:45, 9:20, 11 p.m.

Stuart: "Bad Company" 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30 p.m.

State: "Dumbo" 1, 3:11, 5:22, 7:33, 9:44 p.m. "The Legend of Lobo" 2:04, 4:15, 6:26, 8:37 p.m.

Varsity: "The Mechanic" 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 p.m.

Union film: "Getting Straight" 7, 9 p.m.