

entertainment

'Gambler' generates no feeling

The way movie trends usually go, the new movie, "The Gambler," should have come out before last month's "California Split." It would have been more fitting to have "The Gambler," (what should have been a serious trendsetter) followed by a comical spin-off which is what "Split" could have been.

If the two movies are amazingly similar in a few individual scenes, they are worlds apart when all the cards are on the table. Because a movie's conception is about two years before its release, it's difficult to say which of these two came first. It is easy, however, to see that "The Gambler" is no match for Altman's loosely-made, kooky masterpiece.

James Caan

James Caan is our hero, playing an English professor at a New York university and evidently doing very well on \$18,000 a year. Unfortunately, his financial books are unbalanced as the result of \$44,000 in betting losses.

It's all pain and no glory as Caan turns everyone, from his girlfriend (model Lauren Hutton) to his mother, against him. What the movie seems to say is that even your average upper-class, sports and classical music-loving college instructor can turn into a nasty person when addicted to the gambling disease. The intellectual profundities on gambling sounded better in Caan's classroom than it looks on the screen.

Not convincing

"The Gambler" does have patches of a visually interesting style but the movie, as much as it tries, is never convincing. Where "California Split" could half-heartedly, yet skillfully bounce through the exploits of a couple of fun-loving bettors and catch their

emotions as they confront each new risk, "The Gambler" gamely tries to show a pseudo-masochistic personality wallowing deeper and deeper in an inextricable situation.

The movie's final sequence is the topper. After Caan has finally worked off his debt by having one of his athletic students shade points on a school basketball game, he undertakes that ultimate trip of movie paranoia, masochism for a New York City white, by walking down the streets of Harlem at night.

greg lukow
key grip

Threatened by pimp

He accepts a come-on from a black prostitute and then refuses to pay her. Her pimp comes in and threatens to kill him with a switchblade. Caan calmly gives the go-ahead and gets a slashed face. It's all a big downer to watch, and even though it sticks out from the rest of the movie, it's message is all too apparent. Very heavy and all that.

I've seldom sat through a film as unexciting or as difficult to react to as "The Gambler." It's style generates no feeling. It is seldom profound (it wants to be) and never humorous.

"California Split", on the other hand, had joyous excesses of both. It showed men who gamble because they love the thrill of winning money. "The Gambler" portrays a man who revels in the threats and challenges of his betting and accepts the agony of losing.

UNL organ concert

UNL instructor of organ, Quentin Faulkner, will present a free organ recital Tuesday at 8 p.m. in Kimball Recital Hall.

In addition to pieces by C.P.E. Bach, Francois Couperin, Franz Tunder and Olivier Missiaen, Faulkner will play "Nova", a composition by retired UNL faculty member Myron Roberts.

Faulkner, an associate of the American Guild of Organists, is new to the music faculty this year.



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