

# arts & entertainment



## 'Bad News' misfits top summer movie leftovers

By Will Huffman

"Bad news" is highlighting the summer movie leftovers in downtown Lincoln this week.

If you didn't catch it last spring or summer *The Bad News Bears* (Douglas 3) is one of the best American comedies of the year. Walter Matthau stars as a broken-

freeze frames



down hooze bum who is hired to coach a little league baseball team of overweight or undersized misfits.

Tatum O'Neal is the 12-year-old pitching ace Matthau enlists to help his team. The rest of the cast is made up largely of non professionals doing a convincing job as inept players.

*The Bad News Bears* is the work of director Michael Ritchie, whose previous features include *Downhill Racer* (1969), *The Candidate* (1972) (both with Robert Red-

ford), and *Smile* (1975). Each of these films is a perceptive study of an American institution—competitive athletics in *Downhill Racer*, big-time politics in *The Candidate*, and behind the scenes of a beauty contest in *Smile*.

In *Bears*, Ritchie explores middle class America through the revered American pastime of little league baseball. The film points out the value Americans place on winning—without undue sermonizing or pretentiousness.

Much of the film's message is disguised in effective comedy sequences which depict the hopeless team in defeat after defeat, and the team's indignant reaction to a girl joining its ranks.

The film provides a genuinely compassionate view of

those who are downgraded in modern society for their lack of athletic prowess.

The last shot of the film, with the American flag waving prominently in the foreground and the now successful Bears celebrating in the background, is a final image that leaves us wondering just how satirical Ritchie's intentions really are. Like its ending, *The Bad News Bears* is a film that manages to walk the tightrope between sentiment and cynicism.

Sheldon Film Theater is offering a special presentation of Martin Scorsese's first feature film *Who's That Knocking at My Door?*, produced in 1967 and grand prize winner at the Chicago Film Festival. Scorsese has become one of the most prominent new directors with *Mean Streets*, *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* and *Taxi Driver*. *Who's That Knocking at My Door?* was shot on location in New York City and stars Harvey Keitel, who appeared in most of Scorsese's later films. The film takes place in Little Italy during the sixties and uses innovative techniques and a musical score incorporating big hits from the sixties.

The film will be shown through Saturday at the Sheldon Film Theater at 7 and 9 p.m. with afternoon shows Friday and Saturday at 3 p.m. Admission is \$1.50.

## Hitchcock thriller is series opener

The first feature of the Union Program Council's Foreign Classics Series will be Sunday and Monday with Alfred Hitchcock's 1938 thriller *The Lady Vanishes*.

Hitchcock won the Best Director Award from the New York Film Critics Circle from his direction of the film. *The Lady Vanishes* contains the usual Hitchcock touches—suspense, humor and the masterful technique that has made him one of the most admired and studied directors.

The film is the story of an elderly woman, Dame May Whitty, who disappears from her train compartment. When her traveling companion tries to find her, everyone denies knowing the woman. With the help of a musician, the companion tries to unravel the mystery and finds herself caught in a complex web of intrigue.

Included in the film is the customary cameo by Hitchcock.

The film will be shown Sunday and Monday at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. at the Sheldon Film Theater. Admission is \$1.50 but ticket holders of the regular Foreign Film Series will be admitted for \$1.

Later films in the Series include *The Conformist* by Bernardo Bertolucci, *La Dolce Vita* by Federico Fellini and *The 400 Blows* by Francois Truffaut.

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