

Marx madness shown in Union

A festival of Marx Brothers madness presented by the Union Program Council in cooperation with the East Union Program Council will conclude tonight.

A Night at the Opera and *Duck Soup* will be screened at the Nebraska East Union and *A Day at the Races* and *Monkey Business* will be shown at the Nebraska Union tonight.

All four films are from the 1930s, when the brothers were at their peak. In *Monkey Business* (1931), they stow away on a luxury liner, while in *A Night at the Opera* they create havoc in Sig Ruman's opera house.

A Day at the Races (1937) finds Groucho as Dr. Hackenbush treating a hypochondriac played by Margaret Dumont.

Duck Soup (1933) is the brothers' "most audacious film," according to critic Andrew Bergman.

Set in the mythical land of Freedonia, *Duck Soup* provides a scathing satire on politics with Groucho portraying the leader of the country, Rufus T. Firefly.

Critic Andrew Sarris calls the scenes of Harpo's madness with the passports and the puppets in *Monkey Business*, and confrontation in the magical mirror between Harpo and Groucho in *Duck Soup* and the stateroom scene in *A Night at the Opera* "as funny as anything the sound film has produced."

The double feature programs begin at 7 p.m. Admission is \$2.

Films screened

The Films on the Arts Series will present two films this week at the Sheldon Film Theatre.

Odeon Cavalcade and *Jim Stirling's Architecture* will be screened today at 2 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m.

The films are part of a continuing series of films on different types of art and artists sponsored by the Sheldon Film Theatre.

The program runs 85 minutes and admission is \$1.



Photo courtesy of The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archives.

Sig Ruman, Margaret Dumont and Groucho in a scene from *A Night at the Opera*.

'Pop' fits country-western image

At first, country and western singer Pop Wagner looks like a typical sidekick in an old Western. His light brown beard, 10-gallon hat and matching denim jeans and jacket make one think he should be sitting around a campfire eating beans.

Wagner's singing does even more to reinforce the image. He sings old and new country songs about aching hearts, leaving women and women leaving him.

Wagner, 27, played at the Zoo Bar Monday through Wednesday. He said he likes playing at The Zoo, but many times there is too much noise from the crowd he described as "honky tonky" because of their occasional rowdiness.

Wagner said his music is an outgrowth of the country

songs he listened to as a child and the folk music revival of the middle 1960s led by Bob Dylan and Joan Baez.

As a part of a wave of young artists who lean heavily on the Hank Williams influence, Wagner has traveled throughout the country singing in coffee houses and bars. If he was somewhere without a singing job, he said, he would do street singing.

Two of Wagner's songs have been recorded by other artists in Germany, where there is a large following for American country-western music, he said. He also said one of his songs has been recorded in Belgium.

Wagner played at Expo '74 in Spokane, Wash., with Bob Bovee, a friend and fellow song writer. Wagner said he played at bars and coffee houses in the Northwest, Midwest and East, as well as some street singing in Germany.

Wagner travels in his Volkswagen bus with his wife Dixie. He tours about half of the year away from his home in Minnesota.

With no lofty ambitions of becoming a great recording star, Wagner said he would like to record himself some day but "I'll take it as it comes."

arts and entertainment

Films

'Eagle' is a tribute to cast, 'Airport' not worth time

Review by Will Huffman

The Eagle Has Landed (currently at the Plaza 4) revolves around an attempt by German paratroopers to kidnap Winston Churchill during the waning days of World War II.

Since we know from our history lessons that Churchill never was kidnapped, it is a tribute to the cast and director that the film manages to come off so well. We end up getting so involved that it is hard not to wonder if the historians didn't make a mistake somewhere.

Based on the best-selling novel by Jack Higgins, *The Eagle Has Landed* is handled in old-pro style by director John Sturges, a veteran of action suspense movies (*Bad Day at Black Rock*). The story is basically a good old fashioned adventure tale totally lacking in fancy pretensions, and Sturges doesn't make any attempts to jazz it up with flashy technique. He relies on solid and simple screen storytelling.

Michael Caine plays a renegade German officer given one last chance to redeem himself and his men by leading the seemingly impossible mission to kidnap Sir Winston. Robert Duvall, one of the most solid actors around, is the one-eyed general who masterminds the scheme while trying to keep his slightly psychotic superior Heinrich Himmler (Donald Pleasance) happy.

Donald Sutherland plays a cocky Irish revolutionary who joins the effort just because he wants to see Britain defeated; he serves as the undercover advance man for the Germans.

Brisk pace

Director Sturges keeps the action perking along at a brisk pace and there's usually an unexpected turn in the road just as the proceedings threaten to become predictable.

The story is laced with some strange ironies which elevate the movie above the usual simple comic book level. Our loyalties are effectively divided between the Germans, whom we come to admire and respect (one of them saves a little English girl from drowning at the cost of his own

life), and our inbred desire to root for the "good guys" (the Americans and the British).

But even the Americans come off rather badly. They are led by an over-zealous but horribly inept colonel (Larry Hagman) who sees his fervent hope for combat experience more than fulfilled as he finds himself smack in the middle of the action as the German paratroopers take an entire

English village hostage and fortify themselves in the local church.

A couple of well-handled subplots really don't get in the way—Sutherland falls in love with a local village girl (Jenny Agutter), while a trusted resident of the village (Jean Marsh) turns out to be a German spy. Fortunately, these side-tracks don't slow the film down because

everything is integrated into the main flow of the action.

The action flows so smoothly that our disbelief is suspended for two hours as we watch the Germans close in on Churchill. And any film that can suspend our disbelief is well worth the time for the adventurer escapist crowd, or anyone longing for a good old-fashioned movie.

Alas, the latest in the seemingly unending line of disaster flicks *Airport '77* is not worth the time.

Lost its punch

We've all been over this same territory many times before; the story has lost its punch through repetition. As usual, we have the old *Grand Hotel* set in the sky: the courageous pilot (Jack Lemmon) and his courageous girlfriend (Brenda Vaccaro); the two aging lovers reunited after forty years (Olivia De Havilland and Joseph Cotten); the wealthy but humane businessman (Christopher Lee, minus his fangs) and his bitchy but basically insecure wife (Lee Grant, who seems to be making a career out of these roles).

Meanwhile, down on the ground, Jimmy Stewart looks worried a lot, which is understandable considering some of the lines he's given to read.

This time around (and we can only hope they start to run out of plotlines soon) the above described planeload is on its way to millionaire Stewart's new art gallery grand opening. Enroute the plane is hijacked, hits an offshore oil derrick and ends up submerged in the Bermuda Triangle (bet it took them a long time to think up that one).

There are the usual heroics and shortcomings, with much of the film's running time occupied by the complicated rescue operation. Unfortunately most of the considerable talent on board the plane stays submerged for the entire duration.

The film's advertising slogan gives it all away. "Bigger, more exciting than *Airport 1975!*" it proclaims, which is like saying *Sermonette* is bigger and more exciting than the test pattern.



Photo courtesy of National Screen Service Corporation.

Donald Sutherland, plays an Irish revolutionary who falls in love with Jenny Agutter in *The Eagle Has Landed*.