

Star Wars is action-packed, spaced-out fantasy

Review by Jim Williams

Cautiously, the bigtime studios have been getting back into science-fiction movies.

Most of the efforts so far have blended grimly apocalyptic visions of the future with allegorical condemnations of some aspect of present civilization.

Star Wars, thank God, isn't like that at all.

It's rootin', tootin', shootin' excitement from start to finish, a deft mix of appealing good guys and appalling bad guys, mysticism, very convincing hardware and a dash of comic relief.

The plot goes back at least to King Arthur. An idealistic young man and a wise old sage set out to free a beautiful princess, destroy an impregnable fortress, vanquish an evil sorcerer and free the good people from the tyrant's yoke.

But this tale is set "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away," where interstellar travel and robots are everyday

things. The hardware is exotic, gorgeous and convincing.

Painstaking attention to detail does it—for instance, the makers realized that even the most futuristic appliances get dirty and rusty. Every gadget, every instrument, every scene is carefully thought out—from the sleazebag bar in anybody's galaxy, to the heroes' beat-up starship and shrieking single-seat space fighters; to blasters that make a much more exciting shootout than mundane .38s; to the evil space station complete with slimy garbage dump through which the good guys escape. It all looks functional, lived-in, and real.

The same goes for the characters. The actors are mostly unknowns, and the parts won't make you point and whisper, "My, what wonderful acting!" That would get in the way of the story.

The story's the thing, and the makers never forgot that *Star Wars* is an adventure story, a pulse-pounding,

larger-than-life epic on a titanic scale, like a supercharged James Bond romp, shorn of the smirking sex and gratuitous bloodshed. It's the *Longest Day* and *The Flying Tigers* and *The Guns of Navarone* all over again, and you can bet the blaster bolts won't stop flying until the galaxy's safe for democracy one more.

Okay, so it's a cliché. It only got to be a cliché because people like it, you know. If you go to movies so you can talk afterward about Fellini's existential surrealism, you can stay home from *Star Wars*. You're probably too stuck-up to cheer the hero and hiss the villain.

The reality of *Star Wars* is an alluring one for techno-romantics like me, who yearn for things that cannot be, but remain intrigued by nuts and bolts. Things are clear there—you don't need a Woodward and Bernstein to tell good from evil. And there's a fighting chance that good can kick evil's behind once and for all, given determination and skilled use of all that fascinating gear.

It's the kind of movie that makes you wish you could cut a hole in the screen and move in for a long stay. Zap! Take that, bad guys!

Repertory season to open June 24

The Nebraska Repertory Theatre's 10th season opens June 24 with "Cabaret," the first of four major productions this summer.

Three of the four productions, including "Cabaret," "The Night of the Iguana," by Tennessee Williams; and "The Matchmaker," a comedy by Thornton Wilder, will be performed on the Howell Theater stage. The fourth, Edward Albee's Pulitzer Prize winning "Seascape" will be produced in the Studio Theater.

The season's offerings vary from the poetic and passionate, in Williams's "The Night of the Iguana," to the light-hearted "The Matchmaker."

Rex McGraw, chairman of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) theater department, will direct the musical "Cabaret."

McGraw said he wants to capture the theatrical and decadent feeling of the short stories from which the musical version evolved.

According to the director of "The Night of the Iguana," Bill Kirk, UNL assistant professor of theater, Williams' play sets forceful characters against the background of a steamy Mexican summer.

Another member of the UNL theatre faculty, William Morgan, will direct "Seascape."

Morgan described the play as one of Albee's "rose" plays because it shows the brightness in humanity's future and the promise of evolution.

"The play says we have to keep trying to assist in the process of evolution, to move forward," Morgan said.

"The Matchmaker" is the comedy basis for the hit

movie-musical "Hello, Dolly!" "The Matchmaker" will be directed by this summer's guest director, Dennis Dalen.

Dalen comes from Ohio University where he is a theater professor. He was a member of the University of Kansas Resident Acting Company for five years and was the American Drama instructor at the University of Posnan in Poland from 1966-68.

According to McGraw, one of this summer's special attractions is the participation of two professional actors in the major productions.

Patricia Ryan, theater professor at Pennsylvania State University and Maurice Erickson, a member of the Virginia Museum Theater, will have major roles in all four productions.

Professionals in choreography and costume design will also join the Nebraska Repertory Theatre this summer.

Dancer Rich Rahn will be the choreographer for "Cabaret." Rahn has been a professional dancer for eight years. His choreographic credits include work with national companies of "The Music Man," "Guys and Dolls," and "Bye-Bye Birdie."

To celebrate their first decade, the theater has added a children's theater production for the first time.

"Bumberton, Hopping and Snickerville," by Doug Anderson, a UNL graduate student in theatre, will be directed by McGraw and will be available for performances within a one-hundred mile radius of Lincoln.

Season memberships are now on sale at the Temple Theater Box Office at 12th and R Sts. for \$16.

Curtain time for all plays is 8 p.m.

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