

arts and entertainment

'Comes a Horseman' breathes new life into Old West

By Peg Sheldrick

It has all the trappings of a classic western: a beautiful woman is struggling to hold onto her ranch against a malevolent cattle baron who wants the land. It looks like all is lost when along comes a horseman, a handsome good guy who saves the day.

If *Comes a Horseman* had been made thirty years ago, that's as far as the story would have gone. John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara would have starred, no doubt. But *Comes a Horseman* is a new movie that takes a decidedly modern approach to a stock western situation.

Instead of a shallow shoot-em-up, the film is a rich complex look at the traditional Old West in its last gasps. Dennis Lynton Clark's terse script reveals, little by little, the multiple tensions underlying the deceptively simple surface of this ranching community. Characters and situations that might otherwise have seemed

to become involved in a war just as ruthless and bitter, a war of wills.

Ella and Frank are at odds to begin with, both strong-willed and unsentimental. Apart they are formidable foes for Ewing, but together they're "just plumb awful,"

as one character puts it.

All of them are struggling against the land itself and all are threatened by the early encroachments of modern technology. An oil company wants to drill on the land that Ewing hopes to cover with cattle and

Ella wants to keep. The conflicts of these uncompromising characters with each other and with the forces around them are fascinating to watch.

Fine acting, scenery

Fonda, Caan, and Robards are excellent in the leading roles, and, in a supporting role as Ella's aging cowhand, Richard Farnsworth nearly steals the picture. Fonda is especially fine, portraying Ella's defiance and clenched emotions at war with her desperate need for help. Robards manages to inject pathos now and then into an otherwise despicable character. And as the horseman, Caan in charming and believable.

The fine acting and script are almost overshadowed by the settings in which the action takes place. The movie was filmed in Coconino National Forest, a place of open sky, grassy plains, and distant blue mountains that has somehow survived modern life.

Best of the West

The photography is stunning. Even the buildings are lovely, rich in detail and authenticity. Like Fonda, the scenery needs no bright adornments with its simple, natural beauty. Michael Small's Copelandish score complements the tone of the film and the splendor of its setting.

The movie is realistic throughout, neither sentimental or cynical. It starts slowly but builds to an exciting climax. Along the way, there are moments of warmth and humor as well as moments of violence and horror. The land can be as violent as it is beautiful. The telling of the story is uncompromising and excellent. Director Alan J. Pakula succeeds in breathing new life into an old, old story. *Comes a Horseman* is a film of rare quality, the best thing to ride out of the west in a long time.

The film is playing at the Cinema 2 Theatre.



Jane Fonda and James Caan star in a new western that ropes the audience with its fine acting and scenery.

movie review

trite emerge here with dimension and substance.

War of wills

The story is set in the latter years of World War II. Jane Fonda plays Ella, a tough, fiercely independent woman holding on by her fingernails to the ranch her father built. Jason Robards is Ewing, the last of the empire builders who dreams of regaining his lost domain and who would stop at nothing to crush Ella. As Frank, James Caan is a cowboy who did his time overseas and has returned home only

Jennings album lacks originality—free spirit stuck

By Jeff Taebel

Waylon Jennings is one of a handful of country western artists who have made a big impression on the rock music market without forgetting their country roots. While the music of Buck Owens, George Jones and Conway Twitty still may dominate the Nashville scene, it rarely is heard on rock-oriented AM or FM stations.

album review

Waylon's oft-heralded collaboration with Willie Nelson and the ensuing "outlaw" persona that has since surrounded him has immensely boosted his popularity with younger audiences. His resultant financial success has allowed him to freely lambast the "Nashville establishment" in songs and interviews.

Waylon may be one of the country western's black sheep, but he also is one of the most successful artists in the field.

Waylon's latest release, *I've Always Been Crazy*, is his sixteenth, and he seems to have his formula down rather well. Hence, there are no strikingly original or unique selections on this album. However,

I've Always Been Crazy does have its share of refreshing moments, most of them provided by the lyrics, which gives the listener an interesting perspective on Waylon Jennings—the man behind the myth.

Blasts the bust

Side one opens with "I've Always Been Crazy," an upbeat number that sounds like "Good Hearted Woman."

The side's second offering "Don't You Think This Outlaw Bit's Done Got Out Of Hand," is much more interesting. Waylon seems to be suggesting that his cocaine possession bust during his 1977 concert tour was set up because of his "outlaw" image.

Waylon laments: "Don't you think this outlaw bit's done got out of hand/What started out to be a joke, the law don't

understand/Was it singing through my nose that got me busted by The Man?/Don't you think this outlaw bit's done got out of hand." He later adds that a New York City "posse" came in and "got me for possession of something that was gone, long gone."

The last two songs on the first side, "A Long Time Ago" and "As The Billy World Turns," also are interesting. "A Long Time Ago" has some great lines like "women been my trouble since I found out they weren't men."

Waylon also refers to himself and Willie fighting the country western "system," explaining, "We're not the only outlaws, just the only ones they caught."

Song stealing

"As The 'Billy World Turns' is about song stealing in the country music industry. Considering the serious nature of the lyrics, Waylon approaches the song in a

surprisingly lighthearted manner as well as playing a hot guitar solo that is a musical high point of the album.

Unfortunately, most of the ingenuity displayed on side one is absent on side two, which opens with a medley of Buddy Holly hits.

Recording Holly's music seems to be quite fashionable (not to mention profitable) these days, yet Waylon's readings of "Well All Right," "It's So Easy," "Maybe Baby" and "Peggy Sue" are so wooden and constrained that one wonders why he recorded the songs if he wasn't going to do anything with them.

The Holly medley is followed by a disastrous rendition of "I Walk The Line." Waylon sings the song at an excruciatingly slow pace, making it sound like a dirge. Waylon is not entirely convincing when he sings this tune, sounding like he'd much rather be "rambling" than walking the

line.

Free spirit snagged

The next number, "Tonight The Bottle Let Me Down" is a fine country western song, but the subject of drinking away romantic memories is so overworked in country music that one might expect something a little fresher from a free spirit like Waylon.

The album closed with "Whistlers And Jugglers," a fine, mournful song which features an instrumental break that sounds pretty loose for a country western band.

I've Always Been Crazy is a spotty album, like many of his others. Waylon is at his best when he's breaking new ground, not when he's rehashing other people's material or reworking old standards. But perhaps it's a little late for Waylon to be changing his style at this point in his career. Even outlaws become set in their ways.

Scalpers feast on return of 'messiah'

"... and who should I see coming in but an old friend of mine from Nebraska who had called from out of town collect. She cast that old wandering eye on me as I flipped off my shoe and threw it to her. What else could I do...?"

—Bob Dylan

The messiah finally has returned, but you can't beg, borrow, or steal tickets to see him.

michael zangari

Bob Dylan's second coming in Nebraska will take place on Nov. 4 in Omaha, and tickets have evaporated faster than the proverbial silver bullet.

The only thing faster than the disappearance of tickets was the appearance of the vultures who feed off the ticket void. When we're in a generous mood we call them "scalpers."

Shot and buried

In a somewhat less generous mood it

doesn't matter what we call them, as long as they are shot on sight and buried at the crossroads.

Ticket prices for under the table sales more than likely will not peak until the night of the show when the cold panic sets in. There is nothing that disturbs the American state of mind more than the fear or being left out.

From what I gather, scalped tickets are going for anywhere from \$20 a piece to \$150 a pair. For \$150 you'd better be on Dylan's lap. At any rate, the tickets range from very good to somewhere east of Scottsbluff. All are being hoarded.

I am of the general opinion that when the world monetary market collapses, the medium of world exchange will more than likely be Dylan tickets.

Somewhere behind the money changers that are warring with trash can lids behind my temples, there seems to be something wrong.

It's not as if anyone is going to hear Dylan. It's like the kids' day out of the orphanage. We're all going to the zoo to see Dylan. To look at the man like he was an Egyptian mummy of rather funky

reputation.

Phenomenal impact

Dylan is easy to make fun of, but the man's impact on the way pop music has gone is truly phenomenal. Since he has written such an incredible volume of music, crossing all lines and emotions, everyone has his own Dylan image.

Hunter S. Thompson's dedication to *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* has always made me smile. In part he dedicates it to Dylan for "Mr. Tamborine Man." I'd add "Don't Think Twice," but given half a chance I'd more than likely add several albums to that list.

Because of Dylan's place in our recent cultural history, and the incredible amount of people he still seems to speak to, it's hard to look at this as just another concert.

The whole ticket mess really is unfortunate. It clouds what by all rights should be an open experience for anyone who claims a piece of Dylan's last 15 years.

Dylan will more than likely be around for the next 15 years, and if you can't see him now, perhaps he'll eventually peter out and they won't be able to give tickets away.

But don't count on it.