

'Heartland' . . .

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Elinore's concerns are similar, but she is older and has a daughter to support. *Heartland* shows Elinore's efforts to retain autonomy and dignity within the traditional framework of marriage.

Producers Beth Ferris and Michael Hausman carefully researched the story of Elinore and Clyde Stewart, interviewing their children and making use of Elinore's letters and mementos. Ferris wrote the screenplay with the aid of Elizabeth Clark and William Kittredge. The producers chose Richard Pearce, who did camera work on *Hearts and Minds* as director.

Heartland was filmed on location in Montana within a six-week period under variable, and sometimes adverse, weather conditions. Local residents helped the filmmakers with their knowledge of ranch life.

Megal Folsom, who played Jerrine, was found in a local children's theater group in western Montana. Rip Torn and Conchata Ferrell play Clyde and Elinore. Lila Skala and Amy Wright are effective in their roles of neighbors. The careful and sensitive performances of these actors hold *Heartland* together.

Ferrell, Torn and Folsom subtly show the changes the characters undergo during their first year together. Elinore begins to learn life's realities, a day's ride away from the nearest midwife. The family faces their first winter unable to pay the hired hand or feed all their cattle. As low temperatures and deep snow isolate the Stewarts, they draw together for companionship and strength.

Director of photography Fred Murphy vividly captures the contrast between the small dark interiors and the limitless white exterior of the Stewart's wintertime world.

Heartland tells the story of these people in realistic, unromantic terms. Their struggle to make a living is not rendered ridiculous by depicting them as martyrs of their

situation or by making them symbolic figures. Their successes and failures are seen as quiet and personal.

The film gives the land and the elements major roles without subordinating the story of Elinore, Clyde and Jerrine to them. *Heartland* never becomes just an atmospheric, geographic study, even though the land and climate are major factors in shaping the characters' lives.

Butchering, cutting and branding, milking and plowing a garden all occupy the Stewarts' time but are only important as they help us understand the characters.

As the opening and closing credits of *Heartland* are on the screen, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" is heard. But what is seen in between says that the primary source of comfort and help for the Stewarts is in themselves.

Heartland is showing at Sheldon Film Theater Friday through Monday.

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Olsson . . .

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"There are not many singing, songwriting drummers," he jokes. "But I'm not a technician. I like to paint a picture with my drums, keep the time and then color it if I want a solo."

And as for the future of music from a man who saw the 1960s out with the Spencer Davis Groups, and is starting the 1980s reunited with a pop superstar, Olsson replies; "We're all still struggling for something new and original, waiting for the next Beatles," he says, "I'm just going with the times."

His daily schedule is one of many interviews and promotions set up by publicity people, but Olsson's attitude is cordial and accepting.

"(The promotions) make it an especially heavy-duty tour for me," he says. "But if you want to make it, you've got to go along for the ride."

From all indications, Nigel Olsson is glad to be home.

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