

Arts & Entertainment

Copycats leaving 'secure' Lincoln for the coast

By David Wood

The Copycats, a lively three-piece rockabilly band, have pleased growing audiences in the six weeks since their debut the first of the year, Orange Bowl night, at the Zoo Bar. They now plan to emigrate to San Diego to test that success.

Their short-order success with bar managers and clientele owes its thanks to kind connections and good, foot-tapping music: also, many remembered the dance band from its former life as the Outcats. And having conquered the Zoo, the Copycats said, their niche in the local music scene was secure.

"We knew we could make it here when we tackled the Zoo Bar," said Tom Rierden, who plays stand-up string bass in the band. "But it took a few times."

"To tackle the Zoo is something else," guitarist Steve Lamphere said. "To get in there and get them to even attempt to like you, they have to really like you."

The acceptance was too easy; Rierden said Lincoln provides good competition for a band, but not for *their* band. "We have so many connections," he said. "We have a way in here."

"There's too much security in Lincoln," the Copycats' drummer, Don Hitz, said. "A foreign place, with nothing to work off but our own resources, is going to make us that much better."

"California is a little too far to fall back," Rierden said.

"The time is ripe," said Lamphere, who has a relative in San Diego. "If we didn't go, we'd always say, 'God, what would have happened if we'd gone?'"

"You've got to grab for the guts," Hitz said.

The trio's members are all in their early 20s and were all born in Lincoln; "a great town to be from," Rierden said. The sons of middle-class parents on Sheridan Boulevard, they have known one another most their lives, a closeness they credit for much of the Copycats' success.

Best of friends

"It's the trust," Rierden said, assessing the band. "We've never had a fight, because this is what we want to do."

"The chemistry's *real* good," he said, "and the energy's *real* great."

"That's what I think makes our band fun," Hitz summed up. "We have a good time on stage. I'll probably never have two better friends."

The Copycats have jammed together for most of their musical lives. All were members in the former Outcats, which broke up because of what they collectively termed "a conflict of interests." Phil Bury, who now plays in Bump Fuzz, was the band's fourth member.

The Outcats had a louder, faster sound than the Copycats have. "We sounded like a punk band in the first place," Lamphere said with a laugh. "That was right up our alley. We were all terrible."

"But we've always played this music," Hitz said. "In the Outcats it was real punky, 1-2-3-4, but it's always been the same. We've always played Eddy Cochrane songs, old Wanda Jackson, old Elvis stuff."

After the Outcats disbanded, Lamphere moved to Tulsa and Rierden moved to Denver. Hitz jammed with local musicians and periodically mailed Lamphere tapes of songs he was working on; Lamphere learned them quickly and would return to Lincoln to perform.

Rierden called it a "correspondence band."

'On Golden Pond' receives 14-karat review; Fonda, Hepburn give magical performances

By Pat Higgins

Take your parents to see *On Golden Pond*. This is a rare contemporary movie that proves that being wholesome and entertaining aren't mutually exclusive. *On Golden Pond* is an amusing and touching movie that deserves all possible awards. Even the most jaded and cynical person will walk out of *On Golden Pond* feeling good. It is that heartwarming.

It is too bad that Henry Fonda and Katharine Hepburn have never worked together in their long illustrious careers because they are magic to watch together. Fonda is especially delightful considering the real life family circumstances which makes his performance that much more enjoyable.

Fonda and Hepburn play a retired couple, Norman Thayer Jr., and Ethel Thayer, who are spending the summer at their New England lakeside retreat. Norman is an irascible fellow understandably hung-up on aging and dying as his 80th birthday approaches. Ethel, though, is so cheerful and loving that she deflates Norman's attempt to wallow in self-pity. They are awaiting the arrival of their semi-estranged daughter Chelsea (Jane Fonda) and her fiance Bill Ray (Dabney Coleman) and his son Billy (Doug McKeon). Chelsea is bitter about what she feels was a rotten childhood thanks to Norman's barbs towards her. The verbal sparks begin to fly upon the younger couple's arrival.



Steve Lamphere, Don Hitz and Tom Rierden — The Copycats.

Photo by D. Eric Kircher

The rockabilly trio was formed after Lamphere and Rierden moved back. The story goes that Lamphere was asked by his foreman if he could put together a band to back up his wife in a country-western contest. "I needed the brownie points," Lamphere said.

Played to packed house

"So we went to K-mart to buy ourselves black shirts with flowers and some cowboy hats," Rierden said. He said that in the week between the two jobs they were contracted for, he found his upright bass at a pawn shop.

When they played the Roca Opera House, "it was packed," Hitz said. "The norm age was maybe 45 or 50."

"And they just loved it," Rierden said. "At every song, at every chorus of every song," the audience roared with applause, he said.

"We learned a lot from that. We learned what we hated," Hitz said. "But that was really the start of our rockabilly band."

Revised-up rockabilly has been re-popularized by revivalists called "cat bands," and from the term, the Copycats took their name; the Outcats' name had been by chance.

Besides Rierden, the other Copycats also have been playing new instruments. Lamphere's guitar now has a hollow body, and Hitz uses a snare in place of tom toms.

"Four-man is a hell of a lot easier, because there's just more sound there," Lamphere said of the trio. "But three-man makes you tight, *real* tight."

The Copycats will be playing as the opening act for Charlie Burton and the Cut-Outs at Malcolm's Branched Oak Inn tonight; with the recently regrouped Ripchords and a "Val-e-ween" masquerade bash at Little Bo's Center on Valentine's Eve; and at the end of the month they will be appearing four nights at the Drumstick.

Then it is off to San Diego, where Rierden said they plan to begin with small bars and fraternity parties.

"We don't want to be big," he said. "We just want to grab a good following and have a good time."

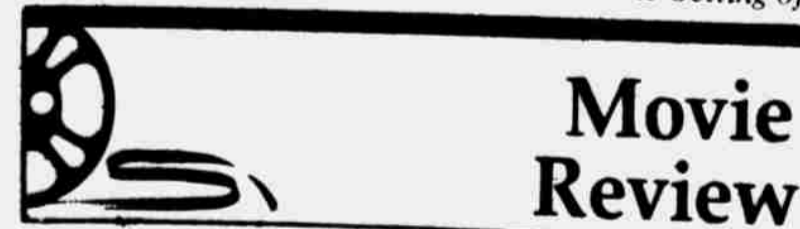
Film leaves crowd with warm feeling

By David Thompson

Acquire wisdom; and with all your acquiring, get understanding.

Proverbs 4:7

These words ring down from the pulpit of the Presbyterian Ladies College in Melbourne, Australia. It is 1883 and Laura Rambotham, a student at the school, is listening to the words. Her search for understanding and maturity is chronicled in the sensitive film *The Getting of Wisdom*.



Wisdom, showing at the Sheldon Film Theater Feb. 13 through 15.

The Getting of Wisdom is in the tradition of warm movies that don't reach out and grab you but walk by, asking you to enjoy them. Like *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the film is leisurely paced, takes place in the Victorian era, and concerns a young woman who tries to find a place for herself amidst the stifling propriety and social convention of that time.

Laura's first efforts toward being socially accepted are not successful. Her mother is a postmistress in a rural Australian town, and when there is finally enough money for her to go to college, she is ridiculed and laughed at for her lack of breeding. She tries to become accepted by demonstrating her knowledge and talent for music, but finds herself even more unpopular than before.

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