

Arts & Entertainment

'Barbarosa': A Western with Willie that works

By Steve Abariotes

The troubled young man guides his horse down the desert canyon, cursing to himself through the thorny bush in search of water. As he and his horse quaff the sparkling water, our mythic hero arrives. At first, only a shadow, then magically appearing, mysterious, he is brilliantly back-lit by the sun,

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finally nodding, revealing his roughly textured and weathered face. He and the young man shall ride.

"Barbarosa" is a conventional formula Western, but with keen variations on the original theme — starting with Willie Nelson (a country music star) in the title role, an aging gunfighter striving to become a member of a Mexican family. Not only do they not want him, they want to kill him. But he wants to be a part of their family, anyway. "They're good people!"

Upon yet another return for acceptance, he meets Carl (Gary Busey), a bumbling "farmboy" who is running from problems at home. They become friends, despite farmboy's honest approach to lawlessness. Barbarosa teaches him how to rob and shoot, creating intense, as well as funny, comments.

Busey is convincing as the clumsy, overgrown farmboy who eventually redeems himself for Barbarosa. Nelson gives a fine performance as the outlaw. He's consistent, yet his character lacks

the emotional peaks that make a character really effective and memorable. He looks the part, however, and his twangy, witty wisecracks give credence to his believability, and it works beautifully.

Much of the film was shot with a long lens, somehow lending a sense of action even to the dialogue scenes. Actors and objects are cleverly manipulated within the frame. The picture ratio (that we saw), by the way, was the old-time, wide screen cinema-scope used in many of the Westerns of the 1950s. Its wideness helps to accentuate the landscape and the "big sky."

The musical soundtrack is aligned effectively with the images, even subtly arrayed to movements such as a rack of focus.

Some of the plot occurrences seem a bit contrived, but we know that Barbarosa and the farmboy are bigger than life, so we can let it pass.

One would not find it difficult to notice similarities to the John Ford Westerns, and the scene of Barbarosa secretly whisking the captive farmboy from the cave is downright spaghetti Western-ish.

"Barbarosa" is a full-blown, shoot-em-up with a mystical hero, stylized violence and even some romance. The camera/editing pays painstakingly close attention to cutaways that really punch the film along. This is one of the best Westerns in a few years, and a well made film, too.

"Barbarosa" is playing at the Sheldon Film Theatre tonight through Sunday, with a barbeque for "The Friends of Sheldon" Saturday night.

Gumshoe loses elusive GQ but finally gets Margot Blue

By Pat Clark

The G. Cue: I was doing time at a hospital when I got a visitor I didn't expect — Margot Blue. She said she was a private eye looking for the GQ Guy and I believed her. We both said we would take ourselves off the case, and we knew we were both lying.

The dame burst into my office just like she had maybe a day, maybe a month ago, the same pastel dreambomb of blue on blue, heartache on heartache.

"Pemberton," I said without emotion. "Gumshoe," she responded simply.

"I haven't found him," I said.

"You won't find him."

"I'll keep looking."

"You won't find him," she said again.

"He's not yours to find. He's mine. Even if I told you what he looked like, even if I knew what he looked like to tell you, you would not know it was him if you saw him."

I leaned back in my chair and rested my hands behind my head. I heard the muffled sound of my sleeve ripping as I did so. "Are you telling me to drop the case?"

"Yes," she said. I looked at her, at the weary glaze that could not quite hide the spark in those wide-open hypnoeyes. She's not mad at herself for expecting the hunt to be so easy.

"You'll find him," I said. "Who's to say he might not even find you?"

"I might find him," she said, without so much as the pretense of sadness in her voice. "I might not. The important thing is to keep looking."

She left as quickly as she had come, the door silent behind her like it had shut on its own. I noticed she left without paying me, but I told myself I didn't care. I wouldn't have paid me, either.

I slipped out of the office, trying to make the door shut as quietly as Pemberton had. The brass knob fell off in my hand. Babs, sitting at her desk trying to swim to the bottom of a bottle of Jack Daniels, looked at me and laughed. It was the kind of laugh that makes a prat-fall worthwhile, a hearty rollercoaster laugh that puts you down then takes you halfway back up. I lobbed the door knob at Babs, who caught it and slipped it into a desk drawer.

As soon as I hit the street, I saw a dame

under a lamppost in the twilight. Trite, I thought, very trite, but trite from the finest bottle of imported vintage trite, served on a day when trite would go with anything. She was the kind of a dame you could tell from the other end of the block that you didn't want her to be at the other end of the block, a double feature dream in technicolor, only better than the best movie fantasy because real and alive. I knew I could not talk to her, and knew just as certainly that I would try.

I started toward her with Gestapo subtlety, breezing down the street much faster than my mind could think of anything to say to her. She was waiting for me, I realized, but I hurried just the same.

"Light?" I said, reaching into my pocket for a lighter I knew I didn't have.

"Yes it is," she said, pointing at the sky.

"At least it will be until dark."

We made mindless weathertalk for a time, and I could tell she was getting tired of that. She wanted to tell me that she was a private eye named Margot Blue, but she stopped herself. We swapped aliases. She said she was a foreign affairs correspondent for the Martian Chronicle. I said I sang the blues and played some piano at a little speakeasy in the bad part of Oz.

I shouldn't do this, I knew. She can never be the person I imagine, any more than I can be the one she imagines. I knew that I would live to regret it, but if you don't have anything to regret you probably aren't alive anyway. Maybe we will talk it over with our imaginations, I told myself. See if they will accept a compromise. But that is all for later.

"You wanna go for a drink?" I said, my speech as sloppy as my clothes. "I may not be the guy you're looking for, but in the meantime I know a little place that they'll have to fix it up a little before they can call it a dive. They got a jukebox full of blue devils there that'll wail out your whole life story for two bits a tune."

"I know my life story," she said. "But if they play yours, I'll put in the quarters."

We started for the bar, talking when we had talk to offer, not talking when we had silence to offer. I kept looking around for Diane Pemberton; she couldn't have gotten far, but I didn't see her. She knows everything I could tell her by now anyway, I thought, knows that the GQ Guy wears a lot of disguises, and hides in a lot of places. But if he's the right guy, he can't fool her.

'Cricket Sings' earns fiction award for UNL English instructor King

By Chuck Jagoda

"It is not really unique but it is very good," said Barbara Mischnick, general book buyer at Nebraska Bookstore.

The book is *Cricket Sings* by Kathleen King, a UNL English instructor. All 10 copies that Mischnick ordered sold out within four days.

King will read from the novel tonight at 7 p.m. in the Heritage Room at Bennett Martin public library. Mischnick has secured another supply of 50 paperback copies and 10 in hardbound "because of the reading."

Mischnick ordered the original 10 copies for the general book-buying public, but when the book was assigned in an English course, the supply was depleted.

The book, set in the culture of Mississippi Native Americans before the coming of Columbus, is published by Ohio University Press. An excerpt won the Alchemist Review fiction award for 1980.

King started the book four years ago after visiting the Cahokia site where archaeologists have uncovered evidence of a prehistoric city stretching over six square miles, with a population of as many as 40,000 people.

"One evening I wrote a poem on the Great Mound (the largest earth mound in North America and one of 100 built in the area). I took it to my poetry teacher and told him I was going to write a novel about Cahokia. He said, 'I'll bet you are.' So I went and wrote a novel," King said.

The people of the Cahokia culture settled near the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers as early as 700 A.D. and traded with tribes around the Great Lakes and others near the Gulf of Mexico. They used psychedelic drugs and practiced cannibalism.

King said the central message of the book is that people have to live by their own sense of what is right as opposed to the rules of culture.

WEEKEND

The following is a list of local happenings for the coming weekend tonight through Sunday:

BARS

Akù Tiki Lounge, 5200 O St. — The Great Impostors tonight through Saturday, \$1 cover tonight, \$1.50 Friday and Saturday.

Chesterfield, Bottomsley, & Potts, 245 N. 13th St. — Brad Colerick Friday and Saturday, no cover.

Drumstick, 547 N. 48th St. — Blue Riddum Band and Cost of Living tonight, \$3 cover. Model Citizens and The Dick and Janes Friday and Saturday, \$2 cover.

Green Frog, 1010 P St. — Brutus tonight through Saturday, no cover.

Larry's Showcase, 1316 N St. — The Click and The Other Geese tonight, \$1.50 cover. Dash Riprock Friday, \$3.50 cover. Kelley and the Kinetics Saturday, \$3 cover. Charlie Burton and the Cutouts and the Leroi Brothers Sunday, \$3 cover.

McGuffey's, 1042 P St. — Jim Saelstrom tonight through Saturday, \$1 cover.

Pla-Mor Ballroom, — 6600 W. O St. — Dennis Wesely Saturday, \$2.50 cover. The Lincoln Czechs Sunday, \$2 cover.

Rivera's, 1920 W. O St. — Sweet Potato Band tonight through Saturday, no cover.

Sidetrack, 7th and P streets — Joyce Durand tonight through Saturday, no cover.

Royal Grove, 340 W. Cornhusker

Highway — Treu Bleu tonight through Saturday, no cover.

Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St. — Pinky Black and the Excessives tonight, \$1.50 cover. The Leroi Brothers Friday and Saturday, \$3 cover.

THEATERS

Cinema 1 and 2, 13th and P streets — "Spring Break" — 7:30 and 9:35 p.m.; "Joy Sticks" — 7:20 and 9:20 p.m.

Cooper, 54th and O streets — "Travelogue: The Mighty Mississippi" 2 and 6 p.m.; "Max Dugan Returns" — 9:25 p.m.

Douglas 3, 1300 P St. — "Sophie's Choice" — 5:40 and 8:30 p.m.; "Flashdance" 5:20, 7:20 and 9:20 p.m.; "Bad Boys" — 5:10, 7:25 and 9:35 p.m.

East Park 3, 6100 O St. — "High Road to China" — 5:40, 7:40 and 9:40 p.m.; "Outsiders" — 5:20, 7:20, and 9:20 p.m.; "An Officer and a Gentleman" — 5:10, 7:30 and 9:40 p.m.

Joyo, 6102 Havelock Ave. — "E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial" — 7:30 p.m.

Plaza 4, 12th and P streets — "48 HRS." — 7:45 and 9:45 p.m.; "Monty Python's Meaning of Life" — 7:30 and 9:30 p.m.; "10 to Midnight" — 7:15 and 9:15 p.m.; "Gandhi" — 8 p.m.

State, 1415 O St. — "Lone Wolf McQuade" — 7:30 and 9:35 p.m.

Sheldon Film Theater, 12th and R streets — "Barbarosa" 7 and 9 p.m.

Stuart, 13th and P streets — "Tootie" 1, 3:10, 5:30, 7:40 and 9:45 p.m.