

Arts & Entertainment

Need to believe in hero makes film seem real

By Lisa Renner

Some things come naturally. Like being faster than a speeding bullet, and leaping tall buildings in a single bound, and playing baseball. Having the ability brings all the romance and glory of being a hero.

Robert Redford stars as Roy Hobbs, a boy with a dream to play baseball, turned hero in "The Natural," a movie based on the novel by Bernard Malamud.

At first, the amazing ability of Roy Hobbs seems a little unbelievable, even bordering on hokey. His

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homeruns shatter score boards, literally tear the covers off baseballs, and have such a calculated aim as to hit a single target in the bleachers. Yet by the end of the picture, not only did these things seem real, but I felt like I witnessed it myself.

It was easy to get caught up in the sensationalism. The characters, the plot, and even the language have a fairy tale-like quality, with little swearing and a lot of swells. There is no mistaking good from evil. Villians wear black, and the heroine is clad in white with a sunbeam halo. But the acting, and the need to believe in a hero make the film seem real.

Redford is perfect for the part with his athletic ability and honest face. But even Redford's boyish good looks don't make the transition of playing a boy in his early 20s very realistic. Sixteen years pass in the time span of a few seconds, and Roy Hobbs ages to a harrowed looking man just as fast. The jump is a technical problem rather than a flaw in the movie as a whole. Time slows down after that, but the action builds. Old love is renewed, and the definition of what it means to win becomes unclear. The hero is surrounded by corruption, which constantly threatens his simplistic outlook on life and his desire to be the best there ever was.

Glenn Close plays the part of Iris, the idealistic heroine. Her patience and unlimited understanding



Tri-Star Pictures

Robert Redford reports for duty on the New York Knights baseball team in "The Natural."

make her the epitome of goodness. Her character isn't well developed, in fact few of the characters are. But rather than being a flaw, this emphasized the fact that good and evil stay the same. The basic qualities that separate them never change, no matter what shape or form they take.

Robert Duvall plays Max Mercy, a big time sports columnist who doesn't rest until he has the whole story on Roy Hobbs. Wilford Brimley plays Pop Fisher, the aging manager who doesn't give Hobbs a chance to prove his talent until Hobbs becomes the factor that can make his 35 year old dream of win-

ning the pennant a reality. Both Duvall and Brimley give great performances that really add to the movie.

You don't necessarily need to be a baseball fan or even have a knowledge of the game to enjoy "The Natural." Although some of the events might be out of proportion, the movie is both funny and serious. It has just the right amount of suspense and sensationalism to keep the movie interesting. It's nice to have a hero for a change, and to have good winning over evil. Even if it is only for two hours.

"The Natural" currently is at the Plaza 4 Theater.

'Hotel' lacks meaning, is merely a distraction

By Tom Mockler

If you move quickly, you can see the movie version of "The Hotel New Hampshire," based on John Irving's novel. It ends Tuesday. After a five-day run, the State Theater is making way for "Raiders of the Lost Ark" sequel "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom." But quite frankly, it's probably just as well. Where Stephen Spielberg can keep you entertained for two hours, "The Hotel New Hampshire" leaves you merely distracted.

To be truthful, I have never read anything by John Irving. Among those who have, it is frequently said that the novels were better than the films. I was genuinely impressed with George Roy Hill's version of the "The World According to Garp." Unfortunately, in "Hotel New Hampshire," director Tony Richardson never seems to get his act together.

Like "Garp," we are given the trials of a family over time. Unlike "Garp," we never feel connected, or empathize with any of the characters. In "Garp" there was considerable character development. In "The Hotel New Hampshire," about all we learn about Rob Lowe or anyone else is that they like to have sex. Appropriately enough, everyone shows up at the end of the movie, clad in bathrobes. There is also no unifying figure like Robin Williams or Glenn Close. What we are given is a smug, obnoxious and unlikeable Jodie Foster, Rob Lowe lusting after Jodie Foster (who happens to be his sister), and too little of Nastassja Kinski walking around in a bear costume.

The story line is a bit complicated. Suffice it to say that they talk about sex a lot. There is very little plot to speak of. Beau Bridges works at a hotel, meets a character named Freud (not to be confused with the psychoanalyst), gets married, has kids, and has a bear that dies. He starts a hotel named The Hotel New Hampshire, and Jodie Foster gets raped. They move to Vienna, start a hotel named The Hotel New Hampshire, have a run-in with terrorists, move back to the good old U.S. and apparently all "find" themselves. We observe it all, but experience none of it.

I really don't know what Tony Richardson was

trying to achieve. It would almost seem as if Richardson believed that if you talked about and featured enough sex and violence for two hours, you would have a movie. People get beat up and blown up and raped, as well as having incestuous and homosexual and heterosexual affairs, but Richardson presents the image in such a matter-of-fact manner that you easily forget about what just happened and are simply waiting for something interesting to come along.

That is not to say there are not good elements in the film. The moments when John Irving apparently breaks through unadulterated are the best, but these are usually just one-liners, such as "New York is such a terrible place to be a bear." Even if Richardson never conveys a point to the film, Beau Bridges recites "It is hard work to make life not so serious."

Copperfield: Communicate through magic

By Christopher Burbach

Magic a la David Copperfield involves illusion, slight of hand, mystery, trickery... but the illusion itself is not the end.

"It (magic) is a theatrical art form. The show that I do is like any theater show," Copperfield said in a telephone interview Friday. "My idols as a kid were the Gene Kellys and the Fred Astaires. They were able to communicate through dance." Copperfield communicates through magic. He will do so for two shows at Omaha's Orpheum Theater Wednesday night at 5 and 8.

His shows feature, among other things, musical stories fraught with magic. One such story, which Copperfield will do in Omaha, is set to Barry Manilow's "Weekend in New England." An old girlfriend walks into an attic and reminisces with Copperfield. The magic moments end when she vanishes.

Copperfield, 27, began his magic career when he was 10. He was a ventriloquist then, but he admits, not a very good one — one reason he turned to magic. He performed at birthday parties, and by 16 was teaching magic in the New York University

That may be what Richardson was trying to achieve, but it was done much better in "Garp." Performances in the film are generally good, by a talented cast, especially Nastassja Kinski as a bear, although Jodie Foster is rather disappointing.

In the end, though, "The Hotel New Hampshire" is a rather silly film. On a 10-point scale, I'd give it a four not because it's a bad film, but because it's such a failure. We are given a work by a talented writer and are infrequently entertained and never enlightened. We are supposed to learn about human growth in the face of tragedy, but learn nothing. The film is for John Irving fans who *must* see the movie adaptations of novels, or for those interested in seeing any one of the co-stars perform. It is a curious film, but not inspired or inspiring. Bring on Indiana Jones. At least Spielberg knows what he's doing.

drama department.

Since then Copperfield has been named Entertainer of the Year by the American Guild of Variety Artists and Magician of the Year by the Academy of Magical Arts. He has done a number of television specials, some television producing and has acted on the big screen. He plans to pursue that facet of entertainment to include more directing and producing motion pictures — with or without magic, with or without Copperfield. "I don't have to be in front of the camera. It may be the case that I start directing films about magic, but they don't have to be about magic," Copperfield said.

Another facet of Copperfield's career is a program he started called "Project Magic." "It's a therapy program where therapists and magicians get together and teach magic to patients. It motivates patients (victims of strokes, arthritis, even psychological problems) to work on their disabilities and improve their self esteem," he said.

Copperfield is famous for large illusions like "vanishing" the Statue of Liberty and a Lear jet. This fall he plans to walk through the Great Wall in China. How? That's a secret. What's important is the performance, the drama — the communication of David Copperfield's peculiar art form, magic.