

Arts & Entertainment

NETV's 'Winterfest' a mixed bag

This December, with winter's chilly days and long, dark evenings upon us, the Nebraska ETV Network presents a mixed bag of seasonal specials, nature documentaries and a variety of musical offerings, from big band to rock, during its nine-day "Winterfest" celebration, which began Saturday.

Sponsored by Nebraskans for Public Television, Inc., "Winterfest" — Dec. 6 through 14 — is the annual early-winter programming celebration to increase viewer awareness of Nebraska public television and encouraging membership in the NPTV citizen support organization.

Here are some of the highlights of the "Winterfest" celebration:

- A traditional public television seasonal special, "The Nutcracker," airs Wednesday, at 7 p.m. Mikhail Baryshnikov stars in this American Ballet Theatre production of the enchanting holiday story about young Clara, whose Christmas Eve dreams conjure up dancing toys, battling toy soldiers and a prince. Gelsey Kirkland dances the role of Clara, and Alexander Minz is Herr Drosselmeyer.

- Live performances by the late "King of Swing," Benny Goodman, are featured in "Benny Goodman: Let's Dance — A Musical Tribute" at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday. This special program includes performances and comments by Goodman's fellow musicians and contemporaries plus film clips of Goodman in his earlier years.

- Cameras follow a historical and dangerous aviation journey, in which a 40-year-old veteran World War II bomber pilot attempts to fly from San Francisco to Sydney, Australia — a distance far beyond his aircraft's designed capabilities — on "Ghosts of the Sky" Thursday at 7 p.m.

- London's Royal Albert Hall is the site for "The Everly Brothers Reunion Concert" airing at 8 p.m. Thursday. Among the songs performed by the rock

'n' roll duo in the 1983 concert are "Bird Dog," "Cathy's Clown" and "All I Have to Do Is Dream."

- The Everly Brothers continue at 9:10 p.m. Thursday with "The Everly Brothers Rock 'n' Roll Odyssey." The lives, careers and families of the famed duo are the focus of this documentary that leads up to their 1983 reunion concert.

- The Mormon Tabernacle Choir and opera diva Shirley Verrett present a holiday treat from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City on "Christmas with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Shirley Verrett" Friday at 7 p.m. Among the seasonal favorites performed are "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," "O Come All Ye Faithful" and Mozart's "Alleluia" from "Exultante Jubilate."

- Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire are united for the first time in the 1942 film "Holiday Inn" Friday, at 8 p.m. The film is about a song-and-dance trio that breaks up when one of them (Crosby) "retires" to a Connecticut farm where he stages shows on the holidays and loaf the remainder of the year. It's not long before the remainder of the act — Astaire and Virginia Dale — reappears. Irving Berlin's Academy Award-winning "White Christmas" makes its cinematic debut in this motion picture.

- At 6 p.m. Saturday, noted economist Louis Rukeyser and a panel of experts analyze the new bill on tax reform and its implications for viewers over the next year on "Wall Street Week with Louis Rukeyser: The New Tax Law and You."

- On the conclusion of Wonderworks' "Anne of Green Gables," airing at 7 p.m., Saturday, Anne saves the life of Diana's young sister one wintry night, and their friendship is renewed. Later Anne goes off to college and finds her niche in the academic world.

- Irving Berlin gave Americans a legacy of songs, such as "There's No Business Like Show Business," "White

Christmas" and "God Bless America," which reflected the times, changed our moods, inspired our patriotic fervor and entertained us when there was little to make us smile. "Irving Berlin's America," telecast Saturday at 9 p.m., highlights the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers movies and the wonderful musicals of the 1940s with all the memorable Berlin melodies that people have been singing and dancing to for nearly 50 years.

- Rare film footage of legendary performances show the birth of rock 'n' roll as it really happened on "Rock and Roll: The Early Days" Saturday, at 10:50 p.m. Elvis Presley is shown in his first television appearance on Uncle Miltie's show. Other film clips include appearances by Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, the Everly Brothers, Little Richard, Bill Haley, Fats Domino and Buddy Holly.

- A team of young divers explores a labyrinth of underwater caves that form a honeycomb beneath the Caribbean island of Andros on "Deep into Blue Holes," Sunday, at 6 p.m.

- The final evening of "Winterfest" activities continues at 7:05 p.m. Sunday, with the Vienna Boys Choir and the Tanglewood Festival Chorus joining conductor John Williams and the Boston Pops Orchestra for a festival holiday celebration on "A Christmas with Pops." Opening with the Vienna Boys Choir a cappella version of "Adeste Fideles," the choirs also perform such favorites as "Silent Night" and "The Little Drummer Boy." Also on tap is a visit from Santa Claus and the Traditional Pops audience sing-along.

- "A Passion to Protect," airing Sunday, at 9:10 p.m., visits the unique wildlife sanctuary of professional gambler John Aspinall in the English countryside. The sanctuary houses more than 500 wild animals from 79 different species.

'Heartbreak Ridge' a piece of trash

By **Stew Magnuson**
Staff Reporter

"Heartbreak Ridge," Clint Eastwood's latest adventure flick, is a piece of trash. OK, I admit I'm a "light years to the left of liberal DN staffer," and the chance that I was going to like "Heartbreak Ridge" was infinitesimal at best. But I have to ask myself, "If I were a right-wing militarist or an easily entertained 15-year-old boy, would I have liked this movie?" I can honestly say no. "Heartbreak Ridge" is still quite silly.

"Heartbreak Ridge" centers around Gunnery Sergeant Tom Highway, an irritable longtime Marine vet, who speaks in a whisper due to a throat wound he picked up in one of his many battle experiences. He's not an entirely straight Marine, though; he has a knack for getting extremely drunk, and beating up superior officers and urinating on police cars. Due to his latest brush with the law, Highway is transferred to his original unit, where he's put in charge of a squadron of rebellious Marines, who are lazy after suffering from a weak commanding officer.

Highway spends the rest of the movie shipping these "ladies" into real men and Marines. To earn their respect,

Highway simply does some tough, he-man things such as beating up the biggest guy in the squadron, and ripping an earring out of the hipster Stitch Jones's ear.

Besides this little story, the scriptwriters threw in some other subplots to bolster the overall plot that's thinner than tracing paper.

Highway spends his off-duty hours wooing his ex-wife, played by Marsha Mason. Wait! What's this, Clint? Could it be you finally realized that America was sick of seeing Sandra Locke in your movies? He also has two difficult commanding officers to deal with: a likable but naive nerd and a hard-ass major, neither of whom has seen a day of combat.

Naturally there's a rivalry between Highway's outfit and the major's elite fighting force. But this rivalry just isn't enough to make the first hour and a half of "Heartbreak Ridge," interesting. The renewed romance between Highway and his wife is cliché and just plain dull. We also get some glimpses into Highway's past; all those big wars and his divorce are supposed to make me feel sympathy for him. I'm sorry, I just felt sympathy for myself for having to sit through this dull movie.

But wait, just when I was thinking

about checking out the video games in the lobby, the United States invades Grenada. What luck, now our fighting boys can prove their mettle by invading a tiny island country in the Caribbean. And just after Highway and his old war buddy were lamenting the fact that the only wars they fought in were either ties or losses (Korea and Vietnam). Now they can hit the beaches and kick some ass!

Well, you remember the news reports; that's just what Highway and his Marines did. They killed off a few of those nasty Commie Cuban soldiers and went home to a hero's welcome. Listing all the little stupid things that happened in the heat of battle would take too long. But the commanding officer making a collect call to the United States to call in an airstrike is definitely worth mentioning.

"Now we're not 0-1-1 anymore," Highway's old war buddy proudly says. Well, heck, why doesn't the United States just invade every tiny country smaller than Rhode Island if we want to make up for a bad war record? That last ridiculous line was a perfect ending for a ridiculous movie.

"Heartbreak Ridge" is playing at the Douglas 3 and is rated R.



Photo courtesy of Warner Brothers. The women are in costumes for the film 'The Untouchables' production of 'A Flea in Her Ear'.

Flora in her ear

The film "A Flea in Her Ear" is a comedy about a woman who is accused of being a spy. The story is set in the 1940s and involves a woman named Flora who is caught up in a web of intrigue and deception. The film is a classic example of the genre and is well worth a watch.

Theater Review

Theater review section discussing various plays and performances. It mentions the production of 'A Flea in Her Ear' and other theatrical works. The review highlights the quality of the acting and the production values, providing a detailed critique of the stage performances.



Eastwood in "Heartbreak Ridge" Photo courtesy of Warner Brothers