

Friday, October 20, 1989

Fall flick 'The Package' should fulfill film fetish

By Mark Hain and
Becky Tideman
Staff Reviewers

Becky Tideman: I generally dread the dismal selection of movies begrudgingly offered by theater marquis in the fall months. Barring the few slash 'em-gash 'em hatchet thrillers in late October, the movie moguls horde all the quality releases until the



Christmas season. Beware, this miserly tendency can create convulsion-type withdrawal symptoms for the die-hard movie buff. However, before you scamper out to the nearest movie rental store to satiate your flick fetish, I recommend "The Package."

Mark Hain: Although it has probably made me paranoid for life, "The Package" was a really great espionage thriller.

The title refers to the military term for a prisoner under escort. Sergeant Johnny Gallagher (Gene Hackman) finds himself in the middle of an international conspiracy when his particular "package" (Tommy Lee Jones) manages to escape.

"The Package" is set on the eve of a disarmament treaty between the United States and Russia. Unfortunately for global peace, an underground group of Russian and American military zealots, led by John Heard as the steely-eyed psycho Colonel With-

ache, are plotting the assassinations of the U.S. President and the Soviet General Secretary. This small bastion of macho-militant muscle sees nuclear weapons and the fear the group inspires as the only true "peace keepers." They will kill before they see an armistice treaty signed: a pretty nifty set-up for some heavy-duty earth-saving action, right?

BT: Earth-saving action, yeah... but my thumb kinda went a little sideways on this one. I appreciate any new movie in town, considering "When Harry Met Sally" is in its 80 millionth week, but there were a few aspects of this flick that didn't exactly trip my trigger. I'm not sure if Hackman feels bad about his Lex Luther days or what.

MH: I don't know. I thought he was very convincing without being overly nice or squeaky clean. There's always a bit of grit to his characters. Actually, I was never much of a Gene Hackman fan until after I saw this movie, but I was impressed with his performance. The same goes for Joanna Cassidy, who played a strong, independent and intelligent woman who wasn't victimized, brutalized or trivialized -- a nice change.

BT: Good point, Cassidy played Lt. Colonel Eileen Gallagher, Johnny's ex-wife (she outranks him). Throughout the film I had this nagging feeling that a forced, token lovefest was bound to take place between them, but fortunately "The Package" allowed them to remain just friends.

MH: It was nice to have a mature, non-sexual relationship between a male and female charac-



Eileen (Joanna Cassidy) and Johnny (Gene Hackman) in a scene from "The Package." Courtesy of Orion Pictures

ter. I also found it interesting that none of the main characters in this movie seemed to be under 40. It's not often you see an action-drama without young studs or hot babes. I thought this movie was quite intelligently done. I didn't feel like I was demeaned by a barrage of feeble old clichés.

Nearly as fun as seeing Grier and her bullet-shaped hairdo, was recognizing some of the location shots of downtown Chicago from the impressive skyline down to the depressing rat-hole slums.

BT: Yeah, I loved hearing all the bit-part extras clearly enunciate the old intrusive "r," that always gives me a warm down-home feeling inside. I appreciate, however, that not one cop, villain or general bad guy collided with a fruit cart in a chase scene. Colorful

though those collisions may be, they become very trite to the frequent movie-goer.

MH: Of course there was a car chase or two, and I think more people died in this film than in the past ten I've seen put together, but for the most part, the excitement level was kept at a steady pace. I think we both felt like it ended a bit too abruptly. They could have milked a little more tension and "Oh god, hurry, HURRY!" type comments out of it. Still, there were enough murderous spies, concealed identities and close calls to keep my attention from wandering to the fact that I should be doing my homework.

BT: Close calls, yeah, but not a whole lot of originality. I was hoping for a little more ingenuity on the part of the upwardly mobile

military brass. Maybe I'm a little perverse, but I get a charge out of creative deceit.

MH: My only real problem with the film was the Neo-Nazi sub-plot. It was confusing and unnecessary. Also, the depiction of "evil" was a bit forced, especially the scene where Tommy Lee Jones nearly blasts away an adorable infant. Overall though, I found the mixture of a clever plot, fine performances, attractive and effective cinematography, plus a good deal of plain old intelligence resulted in an interesting and entertaining film.

BT: I agree the performances were solid, and again, this time of the year I'm looking for quantity of movies not necessarily quality, so I'll go along with you and recommend "The Package."

Orchestra performs with soloist

By Stacey McKenzie
Staff Reporter

Performing musically is like shooting foul shots, according to the conductor of the university orchestra. "When you perform it's a one-shot thing," said Dr. Robert Emile, professor of music at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. "Either it goes or it doesn't."

However, the UNL orchestra won't be shooting free throws this weekend. Rather, they will be performing 3 p.m. Sunday at Kimball Recital Hall. Pianist Phil McCarthy, a senior music major, will be the featured soloist.

A native of Norfolk, McCarthy won a senior soloist competition last spring and was awarded the opportunity to perform in one fall UNL orchestra performance.

"It's nice to know that all the work you do pays off," he said. Not having played much with an

orchestra before, McCarthy said he feels a certain strength and power from the group.

Made up of college students who want to maintain their skills, said Dr. Emile, the orchestra is a mix of music majors and non-music majors. The group practices twice a week and has six performances a year.

The class is different from a normal orchestra situation, said Leah

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Sorensen, a sophomore art major and cellist, because students don't have to audition. They just have to have reasonable ability.

"You also don't get paid," she said.

In class, Sorensen said, the orchestra rehearses as if it were a regular performance.

Playing in the orchestra is challenging, said JoAnne Ingram, a junior music major and violinist.

"There's a greater dependency on everyone's part to learn the music," she said. "I've had an opportunity to play parts that are more exposing."

Susan Spilker, a trumpet player majoring in biology and music, said she likes playing in the group because her instrument is "one on a part," meaning she plays a separate part from the rest of the trumpet section.

"Because you're responsible for your own part," she said, "there's nowhere to hide."

The program's solo feature will be a concerto by Khachaturian followed by "Lenore #3" by Beethoven and "Siegfried Idyll" by Wagner.

"The piece I play is really colorful and lively," said McCarthy. "It's not stuffy at all and is for a wide audience."

The concert is free and open to the public.

Group to play Bach-intended way

By Deanne Nelson
Staff Editor

Bach's music, the way it's supposed to be played, comes to the Kimball Recital Hall tonight in the form of the internationally acclaimed Bach Ensemble.

The ensemble, under the direction of Joshua Rifkin, will play in Lincoln for the first time although Rifkin has been a guest professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's School of Music before, said Bill Stibor, publicity coordinator for the World on Stage series at Kimball Recital Hall.

Stibor said the ensemble will play a collection of Johann Sebastian Bach's music in an "unusual" way that makes this Baroque performance unusual, Stibor said, is that the music will be played in its historically accurate form of "only one instrument per part."

Rifkin has studied extensively the background of the man and his works, and in this research has discovered that Bach intended his music to be played in this way rather than with a full orchestra, Stibor said.

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The Bach Ensemble, founded in 1978, is comprised of Christopher Krueger, flute; Stephen Hammer, oboe d'amore; Benjamin Hudson, violin; Linda Quan, violin; David Miller, viola; Myron Lutzke, violoncello; Michael Willens, violone; and Rifkin on harpsichord.

The 8 p.m. performance in Kimball Recital Hall will include Bach's Concerto in A major for Harpsichord, 2 Violins, Viola, Violone, and Continuo; Overture in B minor for Flute,

2 Violins, Viola, and Continuo; Concerto in C minor for Oboe, Violone concertato, Violin, Viola, and Continuo; and Concerto in F major for Harpsichord, 2 Recorders, 2 Violins, Viola, Violoncello and Violone.

The Ensemble has received many international honors, including Great Britain's Gramophone Award in 1983 and invitations to perform in Great Britain, France and Israel.

Articles on Rifkin and the Ensemble have appeared in American, European and Japanese publications, and the BBC's World Service devoted a broadcast to Rifkin as one of the eight leading figures in the world of early music.

Tickets for Rifkin's and the Bach Ensemble's musical interpretation of Bach's works are \$13 and \$9, with UNL students and youths 18 and under admitted for half-price.

entertainment

SHORTS

Sheldon to show 'Yeelen'

Four showings of "Yeelen", a new film from the African country of Mali, will play this weekend at the Sheldon Film Theater. The University Program Council will sponsor this heralded story of a tribal boy's coming of age set amidst the backdrop of African mysticism and ritual.

Malian filmmaker Souleymane Cisse shot "Yeelen" (brightness) entirely on location in his homeland. "Yeelen" features the Bambarian language from the villages of Dilly, Moutoungoula, Falani, Dra, Drani, Sangha and Hombon with English subtitles. Film times are Sunday at 3, 5, 7, and 9 p.m.

Ragtime pianist performs update on Joplin classics

By Gretchen Boehr
Senior Reporter

Joshua Rifkin, one of the country's renowned ragtime pianists, performed before a capacity audience of 140 Thursday night at the Wick Alumni Center.

Rifkin gave a smooth and lively interpretation of piano selections by Scott Joplin, a founding composer of ragtime.

concert REVIEW

Rifkin led the ragtime and Scott Joplin revival of the 1970s. Considered a leading authority on Bach, Rifkin also is a musicologist focusing his studies on ragtime music and Joplin.

Rifkin's style, however, is not a copy of the old brash saloon-type ragtime, but an updated version with a touch of sensitivity.

The evening featured old favorites like the "Maple Leaf Rag" and "The Entertainer" plus other rags evoking the spirit of New Orleans prior to the Jazz era of the early 1900s.

Rifkin's careful attention to crescendos and timing was polished and lent a classic sound to Joplin's music.

His style made "The Entertainer" especially enjoyable and different from other popular versions of the song.

"Weeping Willow," a ragtime two-step and "Bethene," a concert waltz, featured a slower style and sentimental feeling.

Rifkin gave a superb performance of Gladiolus Rag, which was dramatic because of many driving crescendos.

In 1899 Joplin composed "Original Rags" and "Maple Leaf Rag," which became popular across the United States.

The term "ragged time" describes the syncopation characteristic of this style which became a forerunner of Jazz music. The ragtime style of American music flourished from 1890 until World War II.

The alumni center was a perfect place for this performance, with its high ceiling and relaxed atmosphere. The setting added a touch of comfortable informality as members of the audience sat at round tables and refreshments were served during the performance.

Rifkin also will perform with the Bach Ensemble Sunday at Kimball Recital Hall.