



Courtesy of Orion

Right: John Dunbar (Kevin Costner) and Stands With A Fist (Mary McDonnell) take a romantic walk in "Dances with Wolves."
Above: Dunbar and Sioux tribesmen trek across the prairie.

Visual 'Wolves' may dance to the Oscars

By Julie Naughton
Senior Reporter

Directed, co-produced and starring Kevin Costner, "Dances With Wolves," is an Academy Award-caliber film, a realistic portrayal of interaction between Native Americans and Caucasians during the time of the Civil War. It is the extraordinary story of an ordinary hero's search for the meaning of life and the meaning of his own life.

The epic film opens in the middle of the Civil War, in Tennessee. Union soldier Lt. John J. Dunbar (Costner), as a reward for heroism, chooses to be reassigned to a remote Western post. He wants to experience the frontier

before it disappears.

When he arrives at Fort Sedgewick, he finds that he is its only inhabitant. At first, Dunbar's only companions are his horse and a wolf that he dubs "Two Socks." Dunbar keeps a copious journal of his thoughts and feelings about the wilderness. "There can be no place like this on Earth," he exults one day, soon after arriving at the abandoned fort.

Soon, Dunbar comes in contact with the Sioux people. He meets the holy man, Kicking Bird (Graham Greene); the warrior, Wind in His Hair (Rodney A. Grant); the tribal chief, Ten Bears (Floyd Red Crow Westerman); and Stands With A Fist (Mary McDonnell), a white woman

adopted into the tribe as a young child.

At first, there is no communication between the Sioux and Dunbar.

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Costner uses Lakota Sioux with English subtitles when the Native Americans are speaking, adding to the realism of the film. Dunbar and the Sioux finally are able to communicate, as Stands With A Fist struggles to remember the English language.

Through Dunbar's acts of friendship, bravery and honesty, he gradually is accepted by the Sioux, and is assimilated into the tribe. The Sioux

give him a Sioux name, Dances With Wolves, which originates when they see Dunbar playing with Two Socks.

The film follows Dunbar's romance with Stands With A Fist and his remarkable friendships with the Native Americans, and what happens when the white men from the East finally arrive at Fort Sedgewick.

"Dances With Wolves" is a very visual film, featuring expansive scenery and physical action. It restores grace and dignity to the western film, while telling a poignant and moving story. It is a testament to the human spirit and definitely one of the best films of 1990.

One of the film's great successes is Costner as Dunbar. Dunbar is a sensi-

tive man — an 1860s "thirtysomething" equivalent — and the audience cares about his life and what happens to him.

It is a double triumph for the talented, popular Costner that his first directing job and second producing job should be so richly satisfying and well-done. Costner could be nominated for Best Actor and Best Director honors, and his film could be nominated for Best Film honors, at this spring's Academy Awards.

Obie Award-winning actress McDonnell, as Stands With A Fist, is moving. Her portrayal of Dunbar's love interest — of a young woman

See WOLVES on 11

Prose will keep readers up past 'Witching Hour'

By William Rudolph
Staff Reporter

The Witching Hour
Anne Rice
Alfred A. Knopf

Anne Rice likes to write about the permanent things in this world: love, the struggle between good and evil, vampires, mummies and, under various pen names, sadomasochistic versions of fairy tales.

No matter how seemingly farfetched

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or overblown her dark topics might be, Rice firmly spins out pages upon pages of luscious, hypnotic prose that have won her a rabid following and even pulled good reviews from stodgy, "serious fiction" critics at the New York Times Book Review.

In her latest work, "The Witching Hour," Anne Rice takes a break from her phenomenally popular Vampire Chronicles to create a dark mythology of witchcraft, incest, curses and obsession that spans four centuries.

Throughout the centuries, the mysterious organization known as the Talamasca has investigated occult phenomena. One particularly thick case history concerns the Mayfair Witches of New Orleans, a legacy of powerful women who have used their supernatural powers since the seventeenth century to obtain all they've ever wanted.

The Mayfair Witches have achieved their ends through the use of a demon familiar known only as Lasher, a spirit who is each witch's ally, agent and ultimately her destruction.

Each witch has been more powerful than her predecessor. Now, in the

13th generation, the unholy hopes of Lasher seem to be at their summit in the person of Rowan Mayfair, the brilliant neurosurgeon who has been raised unaware of the dark legacy threatening to claim her.

All that changes when Rowan rescues a drowned man from the waters of San Francisco Bay. When architect Michael Curry returns to life, he brings a strange psychic power with him from the other side, and the conviction that he has a mission to fulfill that is somehow tied in with his New Orleans origins.

What Rowan and Michael don't anticipate is that they will fall passionately in love. What neither of them foresees is that this rescue will set in motion the realization of the Mayfair Legacy.

And as fate stretches out its arms to bring the two lovers back to New Orleans, the tortuous history of the Mayfair Witches unfolds within the novel through the writings of the Talamasca, which has broken its code of silence to try to break Lasher's spell before it's too late.

Rice's prose is as lush as ever in "The Witching Hour," equally at home describing Rowan and Michael's supernaturally charged sexual shenanigans or recreating the intolerance of 17th century Scotland, when Suzanne of the Mayfair's burning at the stake sets in motion a future that will haunt all her descendants.

Then, too, there is the mesmerizing description of the antebellum Mayfair mansion falling into decay in the Garden District, and the many-layered mysteries that lie beneath the languid surface of New Orleans, Rice's own home. Through her eyes, we see the glittering lives of the Mayfairs,

See WITCHING on 11

'Just in Time' jingles with mix of soulful hope and jolly revel

By John Payne
Senior Reporter

Various Artists
"Just in Time For Christmas"
I.R.S.

With the holidays fast approaching, 'tis truly the season for Christmas albums, and I.R.S. has just released a hip little stocking stuffer of its own.

"Just in Time for Christmas" is a collection of Yuletide tunes from several veteran I.R.S. artists, as well as a couple of rookies.

As varied as it is festive, "Just in Time" makes a nice addition to any compact disc collection, and once again proves I.R.S.'s ability to produce good compilations.

Some of the best songs on the LP are traditional Christmas fare, like Steve Hunter's "We Three Kings," or newcomer Molly Johnson's stirring rendition of "Silent Night." Both tracks are filled with echoing vocal effects and sharp, buzzing synthesizers.

Socially conscious Timbuk 3 sings of discontent and greed with "All I Want for Christmas," while material girls Rebel Pebbles take a decidedly different outlook at the holidays with "Cool Yule."

And that's probably the nicest thing about this collection. For every song of good cheer and inspiration, there are two more strictly intended for laughs. To that end, I.R.S. has included the likes of Klark Kent and Wall of Voodoo, the latter poking serious fun at gift-giving with "Shouldn't Have Given Him a Gun for Christmas."

Those Rastafarian hound dogs Dread Zeppelin even make an appearance with "All I Want for Christmas is my Two Front Teeth." Tortelvis and Jah Paul Jo are at their best, alternating the reggae and the rockabilly in their trademark fashion.

Former Police member Stewart Copeland has been handling the production for Animal Logic, and his touch is evident on "It Only Comes Once a Year," a solo track

from Logic's lead vocalist Deborah Holland.

The real standout on the compilation, though, is Reckless Sleepers' "Every Day Will Be Like a Holiday," a soulful number about separation and reunion. Christmas melodies like this, or Torch Song's "Hark," simply beg to be heard on compact disc, with only the crackling of a warm fireplace for accom-

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Courtesy of I.R.S.