

## The chosen Reviewers pick best, worst features of Lincoln theaters

By Gerry Beltz and Anne Steyer  
Staff Reporters

This article, for better or worse, is what we believe to be the truth.

For all intents and purposes, we are professional moviegoers and, therefore, are probably the best authorities at this university on the subject of what makes a movie theater good. Or so we think.

In this article, we have taken into account all theaters in Lincoln, and it should be noted that only two of those theaters (the Joyo Theater and the Mary Riepma Ross Theater) are not owned by the Douglas Theater Co.

There will be those who disagree, or even get downright upset, with what is said in this article.

Yeah, well . . . tough.

To quote Mel Gibson in "Lethal Weapon 2," "We're professionals. We do this for a living."

### Best sound:

**Gerry:** I have to go with the Starship 9. With 10 viewings of "Beauty and the Beast" at the theater, the music got better with every showing.

**Anne:** Best sound must belong to one of the newer two: Edgewood 3 or The Lincoln 3. I used to love to see science fiction at the Cooper; they had great sound. The Plaza has a bad sound system — fade in, fade out.

### Best seats:

**G:** Cinema Twin, you people can keep your seats with the handy-dandy beverage/popcorn holder. I'll take one of the upper-deck seats that's soft and reclines.

**A:** I can't argue. I always love to see a show at the Cinema. Who doesn't like to see a movie sitting in a recliner? Second place goes to the Stuart for ambiance.

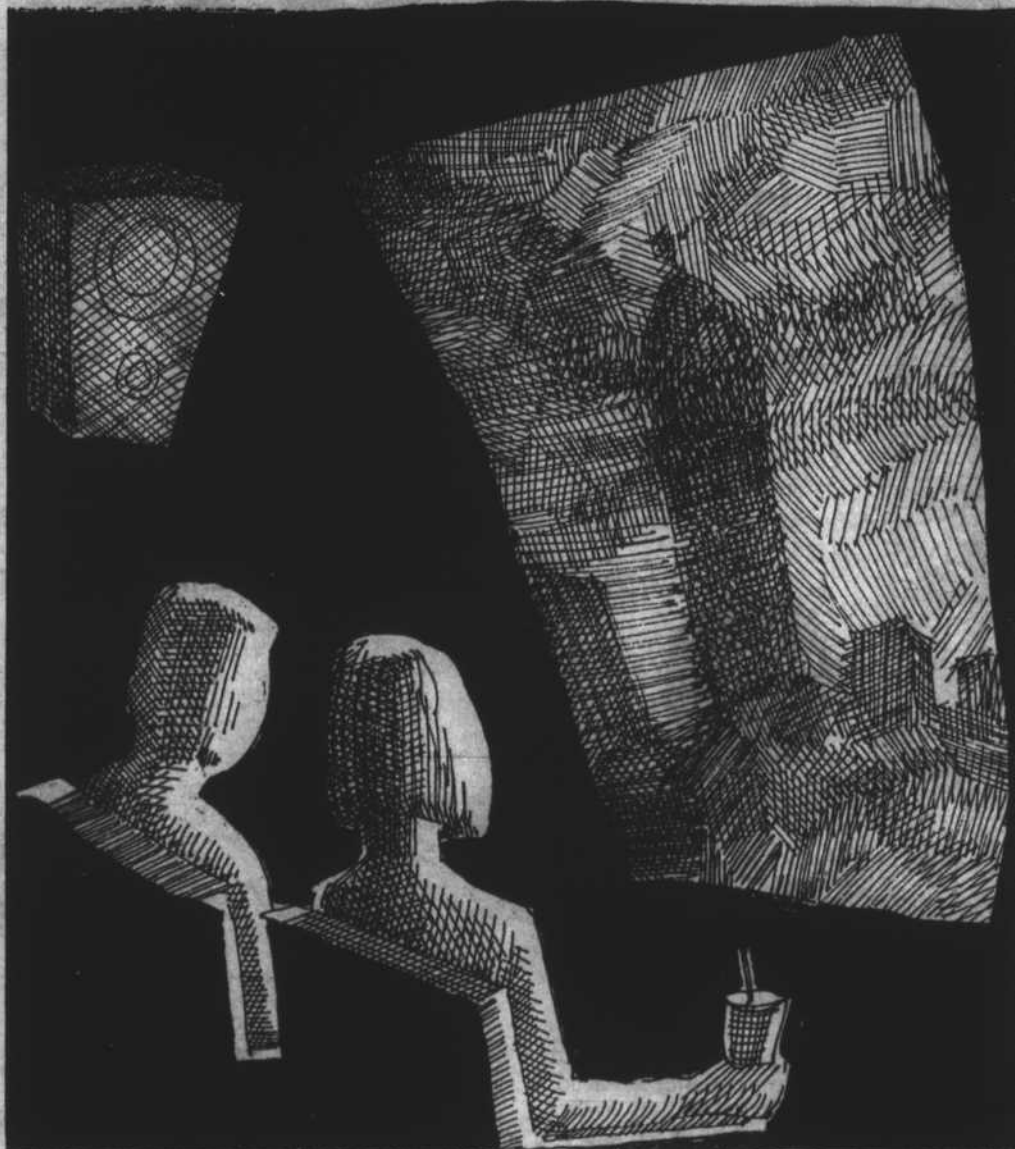
### Best popcorn:

**G:** This was a toughie because nobody puts on enough butter, but the edge goes to Edgewood. I had to go out for more butter the fewest times there.

**A:** I hate the butter. To call it butter is to insult oleo. Otherwise, Edgewood or The Lincoln, definitely not the Plaza, has the best popcorn. I don't know if they burn it or if it just sits there a couple of days, but the worst popcorn was always at the Cooper. That is probably why they closed down.

### Best place for strict enforcement of the R rating:

**G:** I'd love to give an award here, but there's not a theater in Lincoln that really deserves it. Sorry, people, but I'm sick of going to R-rated movies with unattended children in the theater.



David Badders/DN

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**A:** I never tried to get into an R-rated movie as a young person.

### Best place to kill time before a movie:

**G:** Hands down, the Starship 9, with a dozen pinball and video games, takes it. I missed a movie once because I was kickin' butt on "Addams Family."

**A:** Who makes it there early enough to kill time?

### Best beverages:

**G:** Yes, this matters. Now that more theaters are getting punch, iced tea and Clearly

Canadian in their snack bars, it has become very important to the snack bar connoisseur. The Lincoln definitely has the best beverages. They have the best tasting punch in town.

**A:** Sometimes the pop at the Plaza tastes too watered down. And if you just want water, you must pay regular price for a regular cup. Otherwise, you are given this itty-bitty cup with ice. I give it to Edgewood or The Lincoln just because I like them so much.

### Best snack bar:

**G:** Before I name this one, I'd like everybody to think about that film trailer that bombards audience members with weak sublimi-

nal messages to make a trip to the snack bar.

In it, there is a momentary montage of candy items, and, with the exception of the red licorice in the upper-left corner, none of that stuff is available at any snack bar owned by the Douglas Theater Co., much less any other theater company that I have visited in the last eight years.

The best snack bar is at a quiet, little theater in northeast Lincoln that garners this award without a fight.

Yes, the Joyo out in Havelock takes this one.

No, it isn't one of those high-tech, fluorescently lit theaters that downtown Lincoln claims. But, come on, can anyone out there find me another theater in this monopolized city that has plain chocolate bars, Slush Puppies and a wide variety of choices in concessions at a much more affordable price than at the typical movie theater?

I didn't think so.

**A:** Considering none of the concessions in the said trailer looks tasty, my purse/backpack is the best snack bar.

### Worst Theater:

**G:** Although East Park 3 is generally overrun by inconsiderate, little prepubescent monsters, I have to go with the Plaza, but this may be a subconscious decision because they dumped "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" years ago.

**A:** East Park takes it hands down. Ugh.

### Best Art House:

**G:** This one goes to the Ross Theater by default, but I could really care less. It never has enough showings and its seating situation sucks.

**A:** Give me the Dundee in Omaha any day, but in Lincoln, give me the Ross Theater. Of course, it is the only art house in town, with extremely limited showings, too steep seats and no concessions. But in my moviegoing lifetime, it has shown wonderful films — "Sid and Nancy," "Henry V" and "Howard's End" among them — so I will always love it.

### Best Theater

**G:** I really enjoy going to the Stuart (psychedelic carpet, lots of mirrors and a usually closed balcony to catch teen-agers frantically groping each other), but I'll have to go with the Lincoln.

**A:** I sit in the balcony and I never see any groping. I love the Stuart.

### Special kudos:

The Starship is the best thing to happen to Lincoln's moviegoers in years. It features nine almost-new movies every week, inexpensive admission and a friendly staff. What more could we want? And now it is bringing great classics to Lincoln as well, e.g. "Monty Python and the Holy Grail."

Thank you, manager Byron Bonsall and Douglas Theater Co.

## Fine performances shine in Nazi era film



Courtesy of Hollywood Pictures

The Swing Kids and some of their friends.



### 'Swing Kids'



Nazis by day, dancers by night — an odd premise for a film to be sure.

"Swing Kids" (Starship 9, 14th and Q streets) is a story about freedom, friendship and the struggle for individuality in a world overwrought with fascist conformity.

Robert Sean Leonard ("Dead Poet's Society," "Married to It") is Peter Muller, a 17-year-old boy in 1939 Germany. He's passionate about the freedom of dance during a period when freedoms are limited and rigorously controlled.

Peter is one of the many German youth known as the "Swing Kids." That's a nonconformist youth movement that embraces the freedom of American swing music, dancing to express themselves and their youthful enthusiasm for living.

When the Nazi leaders crack down on recreation, the Swing Kids are the first to suffer. Peter and his best friend Thomas (Christian Bale of "Newsies") are caught stealing during a prank and are forced to join the Hitler Youth.

Thinking they can play along with the Nazis by day and dance secretly by night, both Peter and Thomas experience shocking revelations about themselves.

While Peter continues to rebel in his own way, Thomas succumbs to the Nazi propaganda and the harsh reality of war-torn Germany eats away at their friendship.

Although the story sounds strange, the Swing Kids actually did exist. And the movie makes some thoughtful points about friendship and individuality that are not limited to Nazi Germany.

The principle leads, Leonard and Bale, are fine actors who work well together. They are surrounded by a fine ensemble of supporting actors including Frank Whaley, Barbara Hershey and the incomparable Kenneth Branagh.

In addition to the acting, the music is fantastic — Count Basie and Benny Goodman tunes, among others — and the dancing is excellent. The movie drags a tiny bit, but this is offset by the positives.

"Swing Kids" is playing Lincoln's second-run movie house, the Starship 9, but is not a second-rate picture: For \$1.50, it's worth the price of admission.

— Anne Steyer