

Seagal's directorial debut a flop; acting has film on shaky ground



"On Deadly Ground"



By Gerry Beltz
Staff Reporter

As far as actors-turned-directors go, Steven Seagal should quit while he's ahead.

But hey, at least he's staying with his formula from the past: when in doubt, put three words in the title.

Seagal's debut directorial effort "On Deadly Ground," in which he also stars, could have been a lot less preachy and a little bit more ... something. It lacked lilt, panache and substance in general.

Seagal plays Forrest Taft, a specialist in putting out oil-rig fires, hired by the slimy, money-oriented president of Aegis Oil, Michael Jennings (Michael Caine).

Taft is called in to put out a fire that is blamed on faulty workers but is

really due to substandard equipment, which was ordered by Jennings to open up the rig on time.

After stumbling onto what's going on, Taft confronts Jennings but agrees to do one more job for him.

I've worn shoes that were smarter than Seagal's character. He's just told the bad guy that he's on to his game but agrees to help him anyway.

Can we all say "DUH?!"

Anyway, our candidate for "chump-of-the-year" is soon smoldering like a used charcoal briquette and is left for dead in the Alaskan wilderness but is rescued by a tribe of Eskimos. Taft heals up and heads back to kick some butt and blow up the oil rig to save the land.

Protecting the environment by blowing up an oil rig. Does anyone else see a problem with this?

Caine is actually fun to watch; he makes Jennings ruthless but enjoyable as he rips people up one side and down the other. Granted, this role isn't anything that Caine will want to remember in his old age, but he does bring a few laughs to the audience (as opposed to Seagal's putrid one-liners).

John C. McGinley ("Wall Street," "Point Break") plays MacGruder, Jennings' bodyguard/enforcer. His performance is on par with Seagal's and has all the cinematic intensity of a Pepsi machine.

The scenery is incredible and must

be enjoyed on the big screen, but other than that, "On Deadly Ground" is nothing to write home about.

Overall, "On Deadly Ground" is better than some of Seagal's other films. Granted, the acting is typical (what's worse than "corpse-like?"), but Seagal is finally getting back to what he's good at: hand-to-hand combat.

The man has a sixth-degree black belt in aikido but has spent most of his last two movies using automatic and semi-automatic weapons. Anytwit can pick up a gun and pull the trigger, but Seagal has a gift that is amazing — and sometimes painful — to watch.

A couple of personal hints to Seagal: When you made "Above the Law" back in '88, you were trim enough that cameras didn't have to avoid showing you in profile for fear of scaring the audience; lose a few pounds (when you're wearing a parka, you look like an Ewok with a ponytail and an Uzi).

Also, drop the ego. Your climactic battle scenes (with exception to "Above the Law") have left you with nary a drop of blood or a hint of sweat. Get hit once in a while; prove to us all that even a martial artist is capable of error.

Furthermore, perhaps you could try playing a bad guy sometime, such as the evil enforcer for a mob boss. You would probably end up losing the final fight (gasp!), but it is time to try something new.



Courtesy Warner Bros.
Steven Seagal and Joan Chen team up to star in the action-thriller "On Deadly Ground."

Nylons stretch imagination with a spectacular concert

LIED CENTER

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

From the youngest jeans-clad college student to the older women donning evening gowns, everyone was dancing in their seats this weekend to the Nylons during their spectacular Lied Center performance.

With a vibrant mixture of jazzy rock songs to symphonic ballads, they stretched the limits of vocal gymnastics.

"It's about love. It's about laughter. It's about three minutes long," joked singer Claude Morrison as The Nylons supplemented their energetic singing with a healthy dose of mischief and humor.

From the "land of the free, home of the Jays," the quartet, composed of three native Canadians, asked that the audience please remove the tomatoes from the can before throwing them in response to some of their more cutting jokes.

Along with hassling the latecomers, choking on the fog and cajoling the audience with "tricky" choreography and occasional bits of

wry humor, The Nylons motivated the Liedgoers to clap and scream so much it was like watching a high school basketball game led by some very enthusiastic cheerleaders.

The Nylons performed like a well-orchestrated mixture of the Vienna Boys Choir and the Three Stooges but with a much higher level of vocal quality and talent.

Performing in front of three large nylon tents, the group twisted old favorites like "Happy Together" and "Little Red Corvette," along with a variety of innovative songs mixing traditional, a cappella harmony with a more rap-like spin.

In the dead silence of the Lied, basked in ominous green lights reflecting off the building mist, wild animal sounds started creeping from the center of the stage. The sounds built into a rocking rendition of "The Lion Sleeps Tonight."

The group's vocal range and syncopated harmony defy the need for any instrumental backing. The Nylons could stand on their own; however, they did have some help from the audience.

Well deserving of their standing ovation and enthusiastic shouts, Morrison, Garth Mosbaugh, Micah Barnes and Arnold Robinson left the Lied Center audience in a wild frenzy with their closing song, "Kiss Him Goodbye."

Band's sound earns recognition

By Ann Stack
Staff Reporter

There's a new voice to be reckoned with in the Lincoln band scene — and it's not going away.

Chronic formed nearly a year ago with guitarist Bob Spire, (formerly of Lie Awake) drummer Phil Judt, and bassist Brian Farr.

Singer Michael Thomas joined the band in May 1993, just as the band had nearly given up hope of finding a singer and was considering becoming a three-piece.

"We were looking for a singer, and we kind of found him (Thomas) out of the blue," Spire said. "We clicked well together. His lyric content is great, and he's very aggressive."

Aggressive they are. In an age where every band to break out must sound like Pearl Jam, Chronic is refreshing in the fact that they don't sound like all the other bands around. To label a band as musically diverse as Chronic is tough, but comparisons range anywhere from King's X to Soundgarden to the lighter side of Pantera.

Chronic's hard-core, heavy sound is highlighted on such rockers as "Hate Feeds Hate," "Mind," a punky, near-thrash tune, and the Metallica-esque "So What."

They also do an excellent job with ballads, something some local bands have trouble with. "Forgiveness" and "Are You Real" are just as powerful, if not more so, than their harder material.

Chronic has spent the past nine months building up an impressive resume. They have been playing the Lincoln and Omaha scene regularly and have opened for national acts

such as Bad Brains, Mind Bomb, Prong, and most recently, I Mother Earth.

Chronic, with opening acts Orange and Karma, played at Cabanas, 226 S. 9th St., last Wednesday night. The show was sponsored by Cabanas and radio station KBZM 106.3, The Blaze.

"We've been building up a good track record with national acts," Spire said.

This good track record has led to the opening spot for Candlebox, who will be at Cabanas on April 6.

Chronic is also starting to receive some national attention. They were recently chosen as one of 20 bands nationwide to appear on a compilation disk from Rodell Records, which will be distributed to major record labels.

Thomas said the opportunity came about when he saw an advertisement in a national magazine, The Note, asking unsigned bands to send in a tape of their material.

"They got thousands of tapes and from there picked 40," Thomas said. "They interviewed those 40 and then cut that number to 20. We were selected as one of those 20."

Thomas said the disk should be out at the beginning of summer. The song on the disk is the hard-hitting, pure metal "I See You And Me."

Chronic's tentatively self-titled EP will be coming out towards the end of May. It will consist of all originals, plus one cover — Jimi Hendrix's "Along the Watchtower."

Chronic is a band that has definite staying power. Like their name, they're not going anywhere.



Beyond Books A guide to this week's entertainment

Bars

Tues. Zoo Bar-136 N. 14th: Acoustic Jam Wed. Zoo Bar: Jumpin' Kate Thurs. Zoo Bar: Maurice John Vaughn Fri. Knickerbockers - 901 O. St.: Straw Dog and Rosebud; Duggan's Pub - 11th & K: Home Cookin'; J. Ryans - 27th & Holdridge: Modestos; Zoo Bar: Yabba and Traxx Sat. Duggan's Pub: Home Cookin', Owen Mutch and The Debtors; J. Ryans:

Modestos; Knickerbockers: No Left Stone and Beef Curtans; Zoo Bar: Yabba and Traxx

Movies

Cinema Twin - 13th & P: Reality Bites, 8 Seconds Douglas 3 - 13th & P: Mrs. Doubtfire, I'll Do Anything, Blue Chips The Lincoln - 12th & P: Ace Ventura, Philadelphia, In The Name Of The Father Plaza 4 - 12th & P: Blank Check, My Father The Hero, The Getaway, On Deadly Ground Ross Film Theater - Jewish Cinema: A Reflection of Jewish Culture Star Ship 9 - 13th & Q: 3 Musketeers, Perfect World, Dazed and Confused, My Life, Demolition Man, Beverly Hillbillies, Malice, Cool Runnings, Jurassic Park *Coming Friday - The Fugitive The Stuart - 13th & P: Schindler's List

Dance

Fri. Pla-Mor Ballroom - 6600 West O: Whiskey River

Music

Tues. Romanovsky & Phillips Music and Comedy-

Nebraska Union Ballroom - 8 p.m. Sat. UNL Wind Ensemble, the sounds of John Phillip Sousa, 8 p.m. Lied Center Sat. Craig & Co. Disney's Rock'n Toontown - Nebraska Union Centennial Room - 2:30 p.m. Sat. Crosby, Stills and Nash at the Orpheum in Omaha Theater Thurs - Sun. "The Search For Signs Of Intelligent Life In The Universe," Park Centers, 2608 Park Boulevard 8 p.m.

Readings Thurs. A Poetry Reading by Judith Minty - English Department Library, 3:30 p.m.

Fun Stuff Celebrate Dr. Suess' Birthday - Nebraska East Union - Wed.

Event of the Week: Sun. "A Matter of Ghost and Shadows" plus "The Hand of the Father" - 2 p.m. Temple Building Room 221

-Compiled By Sean Mc Carthy