

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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free for all
Friday

Jeff Randall

Columnist thrives on real cheese

As a great man (or woman, I'm not really sure) once put it, "One man's trash is another man's treasure."

I still don't know who first uttered those sage words of advice, but I'm pretty sure he/she got a good look at my collection of movies, music and clothes before being inspired to do so.

I revel in the less-appreciated remnants of pop culture from days gone by, I worship at the altar of the scandalously gaudy, and I choke back tears of joy at the sight of anything truly cheesy.

Cheese — for some, it's only a dairy product; for me, it's a way of life.

For a solid affirmation of this statement, one need only look in my record bin, where albums as diverse as "Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely," "Sammy Davis Jr., Mr. Entertainment," and Neil Diamond's "The Jazz Singer" soundtrack lie nestled beneath a scattering of the latest in local rock bands and other "respectable" musicians.

This isn't to say that artists such as Sinatra and Davis are truly terrible vocalists. I'm merely suggesting that, to members of my generation, they aren't considered high priorities.

My taste for film, however, doesn't run along a very high road at all in any respects. I, sadly enough, find the utmost pleasure in exploitation cinema at its worst.

"Shaft," "Dolemite," and "Superfly" have grown to be icons of my existence. I know they were horrible films that exploited African-Americans beyond all belief; but, God help me, I think they're hilarious.

This weakness is a guilty pleasure, at the very least, but it is also one that I think may be shared by a multitude of other members of my generation. (That's right, kids, I've seen you eyeing that "Campus Cult Classics" wall at Blockbuster.)

These films not only inspire my cinematic selections, but they have also given me insight into the subtle workings of fashion that, for many, remain shrouded in an air of mystery and blasphemy from previous generations.

My closet? The most prized items I possess are pinstriped, wide-lapelled, at least 50-percent polyester suits that never wrinkle, never fade, and never (in my book) go out of style.

At this point I own four of them, at a total cost of about \$13.75. This is just one of the side benefits of shopping for clothes from an era gone by.

I may not be on the cutting edge according to Mr. Blackman (or whatever his name is), but I'm enjoying myself. And, to top it off, I'm doing it cheaply.

If there is a God, I'm pretty sure he's respectful of my choices. And I'm also pretty sure he's wearing one of my suits and listening to "Bim Bam Baby" by Old Blue Eyes.

Randall is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

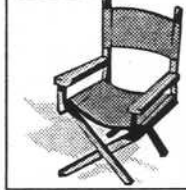
French film explores chaos of social strife

By Fred Poyner
Film Critic

Too many novels have been ruined in the process of transfer to the big screen. "Germinal," a French film by director Claude Berri, is not counted among them.

Berri has taken Emile Zola's written account of French mine worker exploitation circa late 1800s, and created an interesting film about commitment and human dignity amidst the chaos of rebellion.

Movie Review



The story opens with Etienne Lantier, a drifter played by French protest singer Renaud, who has the great luck to be hired as a replacement worker at the Voreaux coal mine. Maheu (Gerard Depardieu) is a fellow mine worker, who quickly becomes Etienne's friend and confidante.

The duo sets the stage for a general strike that alternates in intensity from all-out revolt (a mob destroying a local mineworks) to moments of quiet despair (the death of Maheu's 12-year-old daughter).

Despite the film's background, it does not wallow in revolutionary jargon or plunge the viewer into a pit of pointless suffering.

The imagery, due in no small part to the cinematography of Yves Angelo, accurately describes the life of turn-of-the-century northern France through Zola's views of mining conditions. Vertical shots down mine shafts and using shades of darkness to enhance the mood of each scene testify to Berri's eye for details.

What would seem to be a flaw on first inspection is the portrayal of Renaud's character. From the onset, it appears he is the predictable natural leader for the miner's plight. Yet Renaud's gift for subtle intensity and unwavering gaze is used for far more.

His position is incidental from the start. In reality he is a man of many options, which invariably draw in those surrounding him, often

The Facts

Film: "Germinal"

Stars: Gerard Depardieu, Renaud, Judith Henry

Director: Claude Berri

Rating: R

Grade: A

Five Words: Captivating tale of social injustice

with conflicting and tragic results.

Depardieu's performance as a family man with much to lose and everything to gain from a successful strike, ultimately proves to be the more conventional role of the two. The combination of the actors is dynamic, and builds in energy as the film progresses.

See **GERMINAL** on 13



Courtesy of Columbia Pictures

Nicole Kidman stars in "To Die For," opening today.

Four good releases opening in Lincoln

By Gerry Beltz
Film Critic

As the midterms of the fall semester begin to pile up, new movie releases become more frequent. And this week, Lincoln moviegoers have four good releases to choose from. All four open today.

Movie Preview



fans.

Kidman stars as Suzanne Stone, a woman obsessed with becoming a well-known TV personality, who decides to have her husband killed to help things along.

Action lovers need not worry. In "Assassins," Sylvester Stallone — still trying to recover from this summer's loser "Judge Dredd" — stars as Rath, an expert hitman who tries to quit the business.

Unfortunately, Rath's protege Bain, (Antonio Banderas) decides

that he is the next in line of history's greatest assassins, and the only thing in his way from making his mark is Rath.

The directorial team of Albert and Allen Hughes ("Menace II Society") brings another white-knuckle drama to the big screen with "Dead Presidents," a tale about four war veterans who, upon realizing there are no jobs for them now that the war is over, decide to rob an armored car to gain some "dead presidents" — a slang term for cash.

Rounding out this foursome is "How To Make an American Quilt," which features an all-star cast, including Winona Ryder, Maya Angelou and Alfre Woodard.

Finn (Ryder) spends the summer at the home of her grandmother and great aunt, intent on finishing her thesis on the "rituals of women's handiwork in tribal cultures."

Through the quilting bee held at the house, however, Finn's eyes are opened to what life can hold for anyone.

And for those people seeking "family-friendly" entertainment, the latest Disney flick "Pocahontas" opens in second-run at the Starship 9 today, as well.

Old 97's mixes country, rock

By Cliff A. Hicks
Music Critic

Since the end of Uncle Tupelo, fans may have found themselves craving rock with that strong country flair. Like an itch they just can't scratch.

Lincoln fans are in luck tonight as the Old 97's comes to town for a CD release show at Knickerbockers, 901 O St. The show is in support of the group's new CD, "Wreck Your Life."

Concert Preview

Old 97's succeeds fairly well where so many other bands fail — walking a fine line between country and rock when combining the two styles, rather than leaning too far one way or the other.

Rhett Miller has a voice cut out for the rock/country ballads that are the staple for "Wreck Your Life." Murry Hammond's bass can occasionally get drowned out, although for the most part, there is always a trace of it. Philip Peeples keeps the tempo on the trap kit with a perfect swing.

Acoustic or electric, it really doesn't matter too much for a lot of the album. But quite a bit of the songs are played acoustically — a refreshing change of pace from the heavy-distortion world.

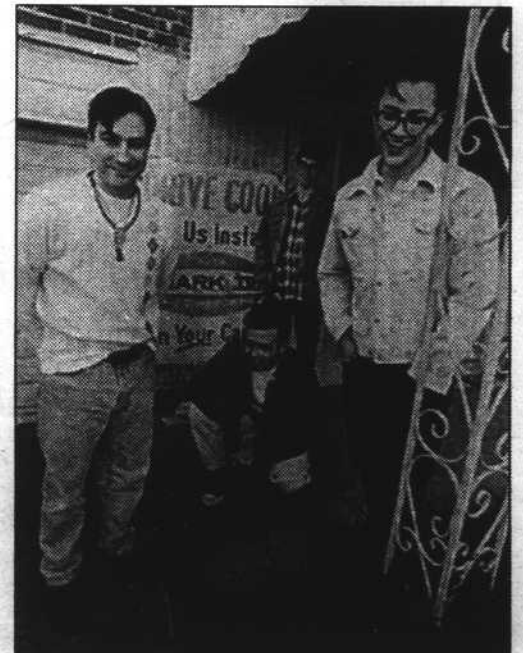
Perhaps the most distinct element of "Wreck Your Life" is Ken Bethea's guitar. Although he plays several different types of guitars on "Wreck Your Life," from acoustic to electric, the one that grabs the listener the most is a cagey, buzzy sound, like a droning bee swirling around.

It stands out notably on songs like "Bel Air," "Victoria" and "Goin', Goin', Gone," bringing back ... dare I say, surf thoughts?

True, not everything on the album comes out spotless. "W-I-F-E" pushes over too much into the country realm, abandoning almost all rock elements, and the song comes off about as fitting on the album as a zebra would in a lion's cage.

The most interesting aspect, however, is that the album features a Disney song. That's right, "You Belong To My Heart" from "The Three Caballeros" gives the album a bit of flavor one might not expect.

See **OLD 97'S** on 13



Courtesy of Big West Productions
Alternative country band Old 97's plays at Knickerbockers tonight.