

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Deja Vu

Cliff A. Hicks

Wanted: acoustical comeback

You know what I want to hear?
"Hotel California" by The Eagles.

I can hear you scoffing, and I'm not even finished yet. Sure, it's an old song. Sure, it's not like stuff that's being made anymore. But that's my point.

Where has acoustic rock gone?

Oh, I can hear you all telling me that I'm disregarding the "Unplugged" performances. Pfah. Those are songs written and usually recorded on electric guitars and then played acoustically.

What I want is an acoustic rock band. That's what I try to play. Acoustic rock. When I got my first guitar, guess what one of the first songs I learned to play was? "Hotel California." At one point, I could even fingerpick it. If I practiced for a while, I could probably pick it again.

R.E.M. is about as close as we have to an acoustic rock band, and that's if you disregard "Monster." Songs like "Low" and "Me In Honey" aren't all that common anymore. Neither, for that matter, are lovely piano songs like "Nightswimming," though those are a bit more common, especially with Tori Amos out there now.

There's also the Indigo Girls, who are great too. They play acoustic rock a lot of the time. Not always, but most of the time. There's a strong element of folk to their music, which is nice, but not rock, you know?

I want solid rock, written and played acoustically. I want a sound that I haven't heard in a long time, back when Bob Dylan and The Eagles were not considered "classic rock" or "oldies." I want the sound of acoustic guitars gliding across my ears. Still, acoustic rock isn't in big demand right now.

Why isn't acoustic rock big? Maybe it's because it was never designed for a giant number of people, which is the way the world seems to want to head. Bigger, better, faster, more. We want our music so loud it rips through our skulls, slaps our brains silly and then jumps up and down on our aching heads, and we want it that way all the time.

Or do we?

There's something about the beauty of an acoustic guitar that I miss. People like Paul Simon went on the acoustic rock path for a while, but he left to become more diverse, which is fine.

What I want is a basic four-person band. One person singing and playing rhythm guitar, one person playing lead guitar, one person playing bass and a fourth person drumming softly.

Is that really so much to ask?

Don't get me wrong. Electric guitar is a marvelous thing and I love it as much as anyone else. I listen to Hendrix, Smashing Pumpkins and other electric bands, but still ... an acoustic guitar has such a nice ring to it.

Sooner or later, everything comes back to the basics, so musicians of the world ... unplug when you write songs and when you record ... keep it that way.

Hicks is a freshman news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan staff reporter.



Sylvester Stallone and Antonio Banderas star in Warner Bros. "Assassins."

courtesy of Warner Bros.

Banderas dangerous in 'Assassins'

By Gerry Beltz
Film Critic

Antonio Banderas' star is on the rise. Sensational work in "The Mambo Kings," "Philadelphia," and "Interview With The Vampire" led to the lead role in "Desperado," and now Banderas steals the show in "Assassins."

Movie Review



Granted, Sylvester Stallone's work in the film is some of his best to date, but Banderas just rips the rug out from underneath Stallone, upstaging him at every turn.

Curiously enough, the same thing happens with the characters in the movie. Robert Rath (Stallone) is an expert hitman who has begun to feel the morality of what he is doing. He's been killing for a living, and he wants to quit.

On what is to be his last hit, he is beaten to the punch by Miguel Bain (Banderas), an assassin who loves his work for the thrill and rush of the kill, and doesn't burden himself with a con-

science about who he kills.

Rath decides to quit the business, but agrees to one last contract for a sizable amount of money. His target: Electra (Julianne Moore, "Nine Months"), a surveillance expert who steals valuable information.

Unfortunately, Bain is on the same trail. Rath and Electra eventually join forces, hoping for a chance to survive against the odds put against them, namely Bain and his thirst to be the best.

Both Stallone and Moore are good in their roles, showing the isolation and paranoia that these characters would feel. They don't have phones or receive mail, and must communicate through portable computers with people they never see or hear.

Interesting note: Sean Connery was first asked to fill the role of Robert Rath, but it never came to be.

It is Banderas who really takes the proverbial cake in this film. His performance as Bain is completely over the top and absolutely beautiful. This film, along with his past work and the upcoming "Never Talk To Strangers," should solidify him as a bankable star.

The Facts

Movie: "Assassins"

Stars: Sylvester Stallone, Antonio Banderas, Julianne Moore

Director: Richard Donner

Rating: R (violence, language)

Grade: B+

Five Words: Taut action, suspense blend wonderfully

Director Richard Donner keeps the action and drama moving at various paces, but once in a while lets things just sort of "exist" without serving any real purpose.

For fans of Richard Donner films, Steve Kahan plays Stallone/Bain's first target. Kahan appeared in all three of Donner's "Lethal Weapon" films as Captain Murphy, and also appeared in Donner's "Maverick" as a dealer at the poker championship.

"Assassins" hits a bullseye.

New video torrent mixes bombs, blossoms

By Gerry Beltz and Jeff Randall
Film Critics

WHOA!! The slow trickle of recent new video releases has broken into a raging river of cinematic bombs and blossoms. All movies are available today, and the pick-of-the-week is the predecessor to a movie hitting the big screens this Friday.

"Casper" (G) — The comic-book character comes to life in this tale for kids and adults alike.

Christina Ricci ("The Addams Family") plays a young girl who is befriended by Casper, who gets picked on by his ghostly cousins Fatso, Stinkie and Stretch.

The special effects which bring the ghosts to life are absolutely wonderful, and the film is a nice diver-

sion from some of the other releases this week.

Speaking of crap ...

"Village of the Damned" (R) — And the crap just keeps on coming! This remake of the 1960 horror classic should have never been touched, but it's too late now.

A cavalcade of ex-stars (Christopher Reeve, Kirstie Alley, Mark Hamill) leads the way in this John Carpenter film about 10 children born with white hair, telekinetic powers and an agenda that doesn't have a Mary Moppet feel to it.

Blech. Rent the original instead. "Tommy Boy" (PG-13) — AAUUGGHH! Is there no end to the vile garbage strewn to us like slop to wharf rats?

In another "Saturday Night Live" concept gone awry, Tommy (Chris Farley) and Richard (David Spade) must defend Tommy's father's company from the clutches of Tommy's evil stepmother.

Everything — acting, script, etc. — about this movie sucks peach

pits. Skip it.

"Rob Roy" (R) — At last! Quality cinema has been achieved!! Liam Neeson ("Schindler's List," "Nell") stars as this legendary Scottish figure, a man who finds himself with no allies after a loan payment to his lord is intercepted by the lord's vile nephew (Tim Roth, "Pulp Fiction").

Outstanding swordplay sequences and a terrific performance by Tim Roth, plus kilts, kilts, kilts aplenty make "Rob Roy" a choice rental.

"Friday" (R) — This one sold out in Omaha on a regular basis, but never played in Lincoln. (Probably didn't have "family-friendly" values).

The story centers on the day in the life of two South Central Los Angeles residents, played by Ice Cube and Chris Tucker ("Dead Presidents").

The humor is somewhat simplistic, but it never fails to work. The performances are above average, with Ice Cube as the straight man to

Chris Tucker's drug-dealing, wise-cracking performance.

It may be tough to find, but it's definitely worth it.

PICK-OF-THE-WEEK — With "Strange Days" coming out this week, centering on a man who sells pieces of life which can be experienced through black-market software and headgear, this isn't exactly something new.

A similar idea was already explored in the '80s release "Brainstorm," starring Christopher Walken, Cliff Robertson and Natalie Wood in her final role.

Walken discovers a way to record experiences, right down to the involuntary reactions and specific tastes. Unfortunately, the slimy government gets its hands on the stuff, and all heck begins to break loose.

The special effects — courtesy of Douglas Trumbull ("2001: A Space Odyssey") — are top-notch and worth seeing. Check it out.