



Father-Land

One Man's Story

McGraw, Hill perform to eager fans

By DAVID WILSON
Music Critic

Country stars Tim McGraw and Faith Hill kept the Pershing Auditorium on its feet for over three hours Saturday night as the "Spontaneous Combustion" tour passed through Lincoln.

Before he even took the stage, McGraw had the crowd chanting. His antics on the stage — fully equipped with neon lights and multiple sets of stairs and platforms — kept them pumping all night.

McGraw, who puts on one of the most enthusiastic shows in country music, played a wide variety of his songs, past and present.

After his opening song, "Reneegade," McGraw followed with "Down On The Farm," his second No. 1 single — and one of his more typical country-sounding songs.

McGraw, whose facial expressions could be seen on three large video screens, teased the audience with the introduction to "I Like It, I Love It," which spent five weeks as the No. 1 spot on the Billboard country music charts last summer. He ended up playing the entire song as his finale.

Although McGraw didn't always reach the high notes in his 17-song show (and even forgot a verse to one), his enthusiasm encouraged the crowd to cheer him back for an encore.

His eight-piece band was led back on stage by lead guitarist Darren Smith.

Smith, who wore a cowboy hat and a Superman T-shirt, wrote "Where The Green Grass Grows," which will be on McGraw's fourth album.

His second encore finished the concert with the controversial song, "Indian Outlaw," which, despite stereotypical lyrics, received the best reaction from the crowd — and numerous breakouts of the tomahawk chop.

Hill displayed the flexibility of her voice through her opening act singing everything from blues, to gospel, to honky-tonk country.

For her final song, Hill and her six-piece band performed a dance mix of her hit "Piece of My Heart," before their encore of the pop hit "Open Arms."

By ANN STACK
Senior Reporter

All it took was a photograph, and a play was born.

Actually, it took several photographs and a push from a friend in the business for Jeff Raz to write and produce "Father-Land," a one-man, one-act production.

Raz is a theater artist visiting the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with the College of Fine and Performing Arts' Artists Diversity Residency Program. He performed "Father-Land" Sunday night at Kimball Hall, to a nearly full house.

"Father-Land" is about Jeff, an actor, who gets an audition for Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice" in London. It's there he meets a German woman named Helga who is obsessed with Jews.

Jeff lands the role of Shylock in "The Merchant of Venice," and the

director tells Jeff he needs to research his character. He and Helga begin working together to research the role.

During the course of the play, the audience finds out that Helga's grandfather was a Nazi, and that she cannot escape the guilt she feels being the granddaughter of a Nazi.

The ghosts of Helga's grandfather and Jeff's father appear, as Helga and Jeff realize issues in their pasts that they need to come to terms with in order to go on with their own lives.

A circus performer on the side, Raz incorporates humor, audience participation and circus theatrics into "Father-Land" as well.

"I think that humor and seriousness are wedded instead of being opposites," Raz said.

The idea for "Father-Land" came about after a trip to Europe in 1989. While in Germany, Raz visited Dachau, a town that, during World War II, was the site of the infamous concentration camp.

While he was there, Raz said he

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JEFF RAZ
playwright

remembered that his father had been a photographer with the United States Army during World War II. He said he even wondered if his father had taken some of the photos hanging in the Holocaust museum in Dachau.

"I got home and I asked my mother about it," he said. "She did one of those classic, 'Wait here' things, and came back with a photo album." In that album were letters Raz's father had written to his own mother (Raz's grandmother) during the war.

"I just started writing down the stories," he said. His friend, director and co-writer Jael Wiseman, encouraged

him to make those stories into a play. The play began as an autobiography, Raz said. The character of Jeff's father in the play is based on his own father.

"There's certainly a large connection to my life," he said. "To get to the truth of the matter, I had to create fiction. There's as much truth in the film 'Casablanca' as there was during the war."

"Father-Land" does a superb job of looking at the issues Raz dealt with growing up Jewish. The play also dealt well with the guilt the main character's father faced looking at the suffering of his own race through a camera lens.

Plot offers weird yet intriguing twist

Danny Aiello, James Spader and the rest of the cast give a good performance in "Two Days in the Valley."

By CLIFF HICKS
Film Critic

Every year, Hollywood is required to release a film that comes from deep left field and this year, it gives us "Two Days In The Valley."

"Two Days In The Valley" draws comparisons to "Pulp Fiction" only because the storytelling method is similar.

Five groups of people start out and slowly converge together at one point where their lives all intersect. Some groups are fascinating, some are not.

As an ensemble piece, none of the groups really have the spotlight. They all just share the film with one another, trying not to upstage anyone else.

Still, two people really stand out in this film: Danny Aiello and James Spader.

Aiello, one of Hollywood's most underappreciated actors, plays a down-on-his-luck hitman named Dosmo whose life, it seems, can only go downhill. He shows both a comic and serious side to the character and gives the audience someone to relate to.

There's an absolutely hilarious scene where Dosmo threatens a dog at gunpoint. Dosmo's toupee is crooked, and his hands are shaking like crazy.

Spader, on the other hand, plays Lee, who is about as opposite from Dosmo as possible. He is the ultimate control freak, grinning yet wicked. Spader's performance is flawless with this gleeful psychopath — he is the reason to see the film.

Out of all the creeps in movies to-

The Facts

Film: "Two Days In The Valley"
Cast: Danny Aiello, Greg Cruttwell, Jeff Daniels, Teri Hatcher, Glenn Headly, Peter Horton, Marsha Mason, Paul Mazursky, James Spader, Eric Stolz, Charlize Theron
Director: John Herzfeld
Rating: R (violence, nudity, language)
Grade: B-
Five Words: "Two Days" is really weird

day (Christopher Walken, Rutger Hauer), Spader is one of the best. Despite his lanky appearance, there's something in his eyes and a smile that has a way of making viewers feel like they're under a microscope.

Greg Cruttwell is the guy everyone will hate, which is an indication of how well he played the part. Paul Mazursky is excellent in the most realistic part of the film, an out-of-work writer/director.

Both Teri Hatcher and Charlize Theron also put on fairly good performances. A fight scene between them will go down in history as one of the biggest all-out brawls between two women. It's a no-holds-barred, winner-takes-all slugfest.

Glenn Headly offers a so-so performance, and there's not really much for Marsha Mason to work with. Her character has little dialogue; she functions more as a plot device than a character. The dialogue in her first scene with Paul Mazursky is strange, like a lot of this film.

The bedroom scene between Spader and Theron is not excessive because it's fun to watch but weird. Weird is definitely the right word.

Weird describes a lot of this film, from the sudden cut-transitions to some of the unusually worded dialogue. This film just has weird written all over it.

But the film does have shortcomings. Out of the hour and 45 minutes



PHOTO COURTESY OF MGM

CHARLIZE THERON, left, and James Spader star in "Two Days in the Valley," a new release from MGM that has drawn critical comparisons to the 1994 hit "Pulp Fiction" because of its wide range of characters and convoluted story lines.

that make up the film, more than an hour of the picture is for setup. It takes too long for this film to get off the ground.

A couple of the characters are also left without any real sense of completion. They just sort of trail off into the

distance with out making exits like the rest of the cast.

It's hard to talk about the film without spoiling anything, so let's just say that, while worth seeing, this film isn't worth a full \$4. At least catch it at the Starship.

Box Office Top 10

Below are the top 10 money-making movies of last weekend. The dollar amounts are represented in millions of dollars.

Movie	Earnings
1. The First Wives Club	\$16.9
2. Extreme Measures	\$7.1
3. Last Man Standing	\$4.2
4. 2 Days in the Valley	\$3.5
5. Fly Away Home	\$3.2
6. Independence Day	\$2.5
7. Bulletproof	\$1.9
8. First Kid	\$1.9
9. Independence Day	\$1.7
10. Tin Cup	\$1.2

SOURCE: AP