

Movie successfully portrays Irish history

By PAULA LAVIGNE
Movie Critic

It's been said that those who forget history are liable to repeat it, and the explosive "Michael Collins" should be no exception.

"Michael Collins" begins in 1916 Dublin at the time of the Easter Rising and traces the roots of the Irish Republican Army, as well as the bloodlines of those involved in its creation.

Director Neil Jordan does an excellent job in describing how Collins and the IRA became such romantic figures by showing the struggle of devotion and nationalism under an oppressive British rule.

Only actor Liam Neeson, a native of Northern Ireland, could have shown how deep Irish loyalties run.

Jordan paired Collins against Ireland's first prime minister, Eamon De Valera, played by Alan Rickman. Rickman poignantly shows the cunning puzzle of a man Ireland is still trying to figure out. And the director takes some liberty in solving the puzzle.

While De Valera was imprisoned for the 1916 Easter Rising protest against British occupation of Ireland, the terrorist actions of Collins' Irish volunteers brought the British government to the negotiating table.

The resulting treaty negotiations after De Valera's release, involving both Collins and De Valera, went on to establish an Irish Free State and sparked a civil war in Ireland. It also created a war among friends: De Valera, Collins and Harry Boland (played by Aidan Quinn), Collins' lieutenant and best friend.

Quinn, in portraying Boland's

The Facts

Name: "Michael Collins"
Director: Neil Jordan
Cast: Liam Neeson, Alan Rickman, Aidan Quinn, Stephen Rea, Julia Roberts
Rating: R (violence)
Grade: A
Five words: Explosion of Irish political passion

choice between Collins and De Valera, exemplified the desperate choice faced by every Irishman that divided Ireland itself.

Also, the use of Stephen Rea as Ned Broy, a British informant who sympathizes with and aids Collins, was an excellent choice. Jordan expanded Broy's real role in history (Broy's character is actually a composite of three people: Broy, who survived the events, Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy, friends of Collins who died the way Broy's character does in the film.) and succeeded in showing the torn allegiances on both sides.

Not all characters were in such defining roles.

Julie Roberts as Kitty Kiernan failed to accurately portray the intellect, strength — and accent — of an Irishwoman to be paired with Collins and scenes of her buying a wedding dress (harking back to the "Pretty Woman" mush) should not have been mixed in with scenes of the ambush that killed Collins.

Though Jordan implicated that De Valera was responsible for Collins' death in 1921, he did it in such a way that showed how Irish nationalism transcended the lives of either character, and made a martyr out of the 31-year-old Irishman.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GEFEN PICTURES

EAMON DE VALERA (Alan Rickman), **Michael Collins** (Liam Neeson) and **Harry Boland** (Aidan Quinn) are the men caught in a three-way nationalistic struggle in Warner Bros. new historical epic, "Michael Collins."

It was almost as if Jordan was saying that De Valera knew Collins' death would bring Irishmen to their knees, and, in retrospect, would realize how division would be the death of Ireland.

Even if Irish history isn't a reason to see the film, it's frightening to note that the majority of gruesome scenes — with minor alterations — are based on actual events.

This includes a heinous scene of a British army vehicle driving on to a soccer field and gunning down the players and several fans.

It is very important that viewers remember that movie is history. Collins' army was fighting for a dif-

ferent cause in a different time than the present terrorist organization that wages war on innocent men, women and children.

Collins' IRA split into two factions in 1921 over whether to accept the treaty for an Irish Free State that Collins negotiated with the British. The IRA active today was created in 1969 in Northern Ireland as a result of "The Troubles" that continue there today.

Nevertheless, in 1916, Collins created a monster that would never be tamed. Jordan's portrayal of history showed how Collins' contradictory attempt to take the gun out of Irish politics tragically backfired.

Play explores heroism's cost

By LIZA HOLTMEIER
Theater Critic

This weekend's Theatrix production of "Largo Desolato" delivered a deep message on the prices of heroism through the use of the absurd.

The play detailed the life of Professor Leopold Nettles, a philosopher and writer whose material had been an inspiration to the common people and a threat to the oppressive government.

The character of Leopold was brilliantly played by Mike Zaller. His frightened, almost crazy stares depicted the paranoia of a man who is precariously poised on a pedestal created by his fans.

Bertram, played by Ken Paulman, provided the analytical side of Leopold's nature by continuously confronting Leopold with the course his actions were taking.

Eva Nekovar did an admirable job portraying the hero's worshiping girlfriend who gives love but never receives it.

Suzana, superbly played by Erin McLaine, provided a glimpse into the lives of those who must actually live with a hero.

Marguerite, played by Kerry Gallagher, provided someone who Leopold could identify with. She seemed to understand how he felt about the superficiality of the world.

Despite the play's serious tone, the absurdity and repetition of dialogue and action provided comic relief. Several scenes throughout the play epitomized the absurdity and contrast utilized by the play's author and exhibited by the play's cast.



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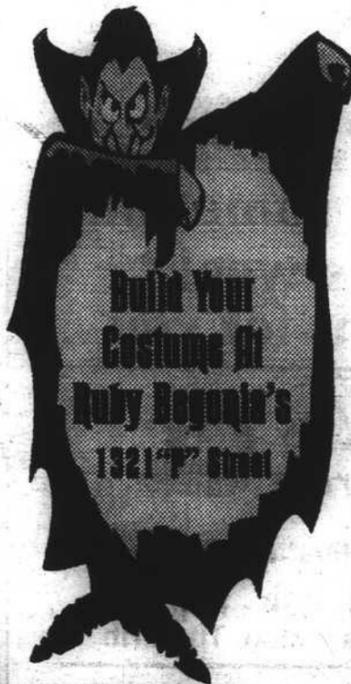
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Ballet troupe's performance encompasses various styles

By PAULA LAVIGNE
Dance Critic

Moving from point shoes to cowboy boots, the American Ballet Theatre set the stage for ancient Greece, the wild West and a bit of regality in between.

The troupe of dancers brought the legacy of the 56-year-old ballet company from New York to the Lied Center for Performing Arts this weekend.

The acting focus of the company was evident from the first piece, "Apollo," which was set in ancient Greece, the cradle of theater.

Unlike a strict, classical ballet, the dancers were more personable and characteristic in portraying the idol worship of Apollo.

Without words, they interacted with eye contact and symbolism, creating great pictures when they came together.

For the most part, the choreography was on target; however, one or two dancers fell out of sync and out of step, leading to a somewhat sloppy execution during Friday's first act.

Any problems in "Apollo" were cleared up by "Transcendental Etudes," which filled the stage with

a full cast of dancers and more body collages.

The two-person performance of "The Sleeping Beauty" showcased the talent of dancers Julie Kent and Maxim Belotserkovsky in regal, sequined costumes perfect for the portrayal.

What really shined, though, was Kent's talent and strength. The dancer mastered the tension of gravity and the ability to isolate upper leg muscles.

But for audience members who were looking for the bigger details, "Rodeo" roped them in. Set to Aaron Copland's fast-paced score, "Rodeo" put the dancers in cowboy boots and 10-gallon hats and gave the audience a character to care about.

Cowgirl Kathleen Moore became everybody's sweetheart by showing the cowboys how to really ride a bronco. But when it came time for the ranch house dance, the head wrangler — whom she had her eye on — kept treating her like one of the guys.

With a lot of spunk and storytelling, the ABT left the audience with a happy ending almost as good as a riding off into the sunset.

Box Office Top 10



| Movie | Earnings |
|----------------------------|----------|
| 2. High School High | \$7 |
| 4. The Associate | \$4.4 |
| The Ghost and the Darkness | \$4.4 |
| 8. Michael Collins | \$2.5 |
| 10. D3: The Mighty Ducks | \$1.8 |

SOURCE: AP