

# Ross to screen donated film collection

By Samuel McKewon

Senior editor

It's the thought of a gift that counts. But perfect timing never hurts.

It's a way of looking at the 553 short and feature-length films donated to UNL's Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater by patron Jerry Jensen. The films range from the silent era to the 1980s, and include a few of the seminal works of those eras.

Ross Director Dan Ladely lauded the new additions to the theater's collection, adding that they come at a key time in the development of the UNL film community. The Film Studies major is still defining itself for the long term, while a new Ross Film Theater is being built across the street from its current location in the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery.

"(The collection) is one that will be invaluable for film students as well as our patrons for years to come," Ladely said. "It is especially auspicious in light of our new building."

The Ross will have a chance to showcase seven films in the collection during its summer outdoor series, which starts Wednesday with "The African Queen." Co-sponsored by the University Program Council with funding support from the Nebraska Arts Council, the series runs on Wednesdays around 9p.m. outside Kimball Recital Hall. Admission, which includes complimentary popcorn and soda, is free.

A schedule of the series:

June 14<sup>th</sup> "The African Queen" (1951)

Think "Heart of Darkness" without Kurtz and well, the darkness, and "The African Queen" zooms into focus with a tricky World War I subject. Humphrey Bogart and Katherine Hepburn travel on a small boat, whose mission is to cruise through the African jungle toward a lake and sink a German sub.

Not the first picture for Bogart or Hepburn, their crafts are well-honed and they play off each other for the entire movie. It's Old Hollywood, and one of its better directors, John Huston, is at the helm.

June 21- "Woodstock" (1970)

This movie is mile-long at three hours, but at least half of it is worth watching. "Woodstock" unflinchingly captures the 1969 experience, better than nearly any live music documentary ever filmed. Jimi Hendrix is the showcase for many watchers, but the film does get repetitive. Some fans, however, won't move until after midnight.

June 28- "It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World" (1963)

See this film only if you love comedy - broad, guffawing comedy. Another time beast (three hours, 10 minutes) of epic tomfoolery. Milton Berle, Sid Caesar, Ethel Merman, Mickey Rooney and Jimmy Durante. Want a plot? This film is comedy with a buried-loot backdrop. I did not like it. But Merman fans will.

July 19<sup>th</sup> - "It Happened One

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Dan Ladely

director, Mary Riepma Ross Theater

Night"

Trademark Frank Capra story starring Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert, who meet on a bus under vastly different circumstances. Sweet, well-played, meaningful. In other words, Frank Capra.

July 26 - "M\*A\*S\*H"

Not everything is initially lucid about "M\*A\*S\*H," the first well-know film of Robert Altman's career, and still one of his best. A second viewing is needed to see all its layers, the running soundtrack of the base camp, the attitudes, the odd football game right in the middle which serves as a centerpiece of the movie and an interlude at the same time. The television show, which has become more popular than the movie, owes quite a bit to Altman.

The movie proves that this type of narrative, opposite in tone and sensibility from a movie like "Saving Private Ryan," can work in proper care.

Aug. 2 - "The Bridge on the River Kwai"

And here comes a completely different war movie, entrenched

in the struggle of two proud leaders. A British officer (Alec Guinness) is imprisoned in a Japanese camp and forced to labor on a bridge by an Axis commander (Sessue Hayakawa). Another prisoner (William Holden) looks for escape. Straightforward and tense, director David Lean based this on a true story. Hard to say how much we can really believe.

Aug. 9 - "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid"

The screenplay by William Goldman lives in movie lore as a brilliant, original creation. Well, it is on most accounts, in the sense that Goldman writes action and tense dialogue together perfectly and the jump scene is cited over and over as the scene to beat most scenes. It's hard not to like bank robbers Butch and Sundance - Paul Newman and Robert Redford here. Their pairing in "The Sting" sure never lived up to their chemistry in this film. And the shift to South America works surprisingly well.

Not particularly violent, the whole effort is more or less forgettable, but very, very good while moving along.

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