

'13 Days' a tense retelling

BY SETH FELTON

Thirteen Days



"Thirteen Days" is a riveting rendition of events during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, with one flaw - it was made in Hollywood.

Beginning on Oct. 16, 1962, when Kennedy first received word that the U.S.S.R. was installing ballistic nuclear missiles in Cuba, the film follows the events of the next two weeks with remarkable accuracy.

"Thirteen Days" is an amazingly solid piece. The screenplay has been skillfully crafted and meticulously researched by writer David Self. The performances given by Bruce Greenwood as John F. Kennedy, Steven Culp as Robert Kennedy and Kevin Costner as Kenny O'Donnell are both believable and compelling.

The film is told through the perspective of O'Donnell, a top political aide to JFK, but Costner, who also produced the film, wisely gives his character a secondary role to the larger course of events.

Some of the more fascinating aspects of the film include the Kennedy camp's struggle with some of the top military advisors, all of whom argued for both air strike and ground invasion of Cuba to eliminate the threat posed by the Russian nukes there.

The film does an excellent job of communicating the gravity of the Cuban threat, as well as the consequences of going to war with Russia over Cuba. This event occurred at the height of tensions between the United States and the U.S.S.R. - war would have almost certainly meant the use of nuclear weapons by both sides, something Kennedy, as this film illustrates, worked to prevent.

Even more gratifying, at least, is the fact that the film wasn't another sycophantic, patriotic romp through American History Oz, where every American is a saint and all his enemies the minions of Satan.

The film could have degenerated into this, but Kennedy and his team, as well as the Russians to a certain degree (though they are still portrayed as somewhat sinister), are thoughtfully humanized.

Kennedy and his aides make mistakes, agonize over the consequences of their decisions and make every effort to see their Russian counterparts as more than "the Reds."

There is one component of this film that keeps it from being a great film, a quiet 4-star work of unusual brilliance. Someone, I don't know who, thought that the story couldn't stand on its own. So, they introduced the family, the heart-warming and heart-wrenching scenes that stain nearly every film that comes out of Hollywood and leaves the viewer desperately searching for a pillow or a sick bag.

O'Donnell's family plays a minor role in this film, but they appear often enough to delay the resolution of key events, break up and diffuse the tension and rhythm of the film, and stretch the running time in an exhausting two and a half hours.

Towards the end of the film, with my right buttock asleep and my girlfriend pounding her head on the armrest for lack of any female characters, I was out of patience. I was ready to yell "Damn it! The Russkies just shot down a U-2 spy plane, and you're wasting time in a uselessly awkward scene staring at your son with flabby-lipped affection. Get on with it!"

This is unfortunate, but if you can get past this mess (admittedly not really frustrating until the end), the film is a great rendition of an historical event, free of melodrama and satisfyingly full of what actually happened. And that makes "Thirteen Days" worth seeing.

"Thirteen Days" Starring Kevin Costner, Bruce Greenwood, Steven Culp and Dylan Baker. Directed by Roger Donaldson. Written by David Self. Rated R language. Playing at the Plaza 4 and Edgewood 3 Theaters.



Jennifer Lund/DN

Clark Potter will be performing Jan. 23, with Mark Clinton as part of the Kimball Recital Hall series. Potter plays the viola and has been a professor at UNL for the past five years.

Kimball slate promises variety

BY CHRIS JACOBS

With a number of artists from all sorts of musical backgrounds scheduled to perform this semester, the Kimball Recital Hall will supply an abundance of entertainment at a small cost.

There is no universal theme among the artists, said John Whiteman, marketing and promotions coordinator for the School of Fine and Performing Arts.

"Many of the performers are working in collaboration with other professors," he said.

"They are working in a network of friends."

Friends from far places, according to the Spring 2000 event guide, will come together from several other universities. A performance was already given last Friday by Peter Collins, representative of Southwest Missouri State University. Other performers will make the trip from Ohio University, Kansas State University and the Omaha Symphony.

Faculty artists Clark Potter, viola, and Mark Clinton, piano, will perform pieces by Rubinstein, Scharwenka, Hovhanness and Robert Kritz, who will be making a trip from Chicago to attend the event.

Potter said the Rubinstein and Scharwenka pieces had distinct differences despite being composed within a 50-year time span and a separating distance of 100 miles in their native Poland.

"The Scharwenka piece is playful and romantic, while the Rubinstein sonata is very big, loud and crashing," Potter said.

The performance will mark the first time Potter has heard the pieces actually being played, he said.

"I've been working on this music for six months without any recordings. I learned the music by trying everything out," he said.

Potter said he aimed for a show where he played new music that was more listener friendly.

"There weren't many pieces written for the viola in the 19th century," he said.

Being a former violinist, Potter switched to viola 12 years ago because he liked the instrument's "deeper, more resonant sound, that isn't as brilliant as the violin."

The free performance will take place at 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 23.

The UNL Orchestra, conducted by Tyler White, will perform along with the fine and performing arts 2000-01 undergraduate and graduate solo competition winners at 7:30 on Jan. 31.

The orchestra will preview the overture by Johann Strauss, Die Fledermaus, that they will perform for an opera on Feb. 16 and 18, White said.

The university has solo competitions every fall whose winners are chosen by a panel from the School of Fine and Performing Arts, he said.

Winners of the undergraduate competition are Nick Phillips and Nathan Knutson, both pianists. Graduate winners are Jeff Campbell, bassoon, and Ju-Hee Kim, piano.

Campbell will play the first movement of Hummel's "Grand Concerto in F Major," and Phillips will play the second movement. Ju-Hee will play the first movement of Schumann's "Piano Concerto" in A Minor, and Knutson will perform a piano concerto written by Prokofiev.

General admission tickets are \$5 for adults, \$3 for students and are available at the door one hour before the performance.

A wide variety of instruments will be featured throughout the semester including the piano, viola, trumpet, trombone, bassoon, flute, clarinet, violin and others.

Many university performance groups will make appearances in the near future including Varsity Chorus and University Singers (Feb. 20), Wind Ensemble (Feb. 25), Symphonic Band (March 1), Jazz Ensemble I (March 7) and University Orchestra & Wind Ensemble (March 8).

Whiteman said all the shows should appeal to a large, diverse audience.

Other upcoming events include:

■ Faculty artist Darryl White, trumpet, Feb. 1 at 7:30 p.m. White will play with guest artists Marie Speziale, trumpet, former associate principal of the Cincinnati Symphony and Anne Nagowsky, violin, of the Omaha Symphony.

■ Ohio University faculty members Alison Brown, flute, and Sylvia Henry, piano, Feb. 2 at 7:30 p.m.

■ KSU professor of voice Jean Sloop with William Wingfield on piano, Feb. 3 at 7:30 p.m. Each of these shows is free.

"I've been working on this music for six months without any recordings. I learned the music by trying everything out."

Clark Potter
faculty artist

'Antitrust' an unlikely script and boring end

■ The movie, possibly inspired by the case against Microsoft, is a far-fetched version of 'The Firm.'

BY BILLY SMUCK

The latest techno thriller "Antitrust" features software coding that is more impressive than the movie script itself.

The screenplay, despite having a good premise in its favor, is over saturated with laughably unrealistic plot twists that unravel a potentially convincing and entertaining film.

A picture obviously inspired by Microsoft's Bill Gates and the pending cases against his company, "Antitrust" adopts a story-line very similar the John Grisham movie "The Firm."

Tim Robbins plays Gary Winston, a Gates lookalike who is the founder of N.U.R.V. (Never Underestimate Radical Vision), a monopolistic software conglomerate on the verge of creating the first satellite-delivered global communication system.

Winston has widely publicized this digital conversion project, known as "Synapse," announcing a completion deadline he is determined to meet in order to stay ahead of the competition.

"The software business is binary," spouts Winston. "It's either one or zero. You're either alive or you're dead."

Pronouncements like these, along with Winston's success and reputation, are what lure highly sought after Stanford computer science graduate Milo Hoffman (Ryan Phillippe) to come and work for the obsessive visionary.

It doesn't take the audience long to

realize Winston is up to no good. However, whiz kid Hoffman is a little slow catching on to the criminal behavior Winston uses to carry out his plan. Once he does, Hoffman doesn't know who he can trust, as he discovers no one is quite who they seem to be. From there on it's a far-fetched cat and mouse chase as Hoffman attempts to sabotage Winston's mischievous plan.

The film plummets because of clumsy structuring and implausible action in the second half of the film creating a similar effect to a fever chart of Microsoft's falling stock last year.

One thing the movie accomplishes, however, is the Pringles and Pepsi product placements we see Winston consuming throughout the movie, which subliminally gave me a feeling of inadequacy as I looked down at my small popcorn and Coke.

"Antitrust" also preaches a sentimental message of free information through an open source approach to sharing code with the public. Isn't that sweet? Well, don't expect "Antitrust" marketing representatives to follow suit with the picture's theme, offering it free of charge to audiences any time soon.

Besides, it's only fitting that there be a parallel between a movie that depicts the inevitable loss of profits with "Antitrust's" probable real life scenario.

"Antitrust" Starring Ryan Phillippe, Tim Robbins. Directed by Peter Howitt. Written by Howard Franklin. Rated PG-13 (for language and violence). Playing at Edgewood 3 and Douglas 3.

'Double Take' too twisty

BY SEAN MCCARTHY

With some movies, you can instantly tell they will become staples on TBS, TNT or in the case of "Double Take," Comedy Central. Though the movie provides a few decent laughs, you can't help but be relieved that the station won't have to air "Mannequin 2: On The Move" as much.

The plot is simple: Daryl Chase, played by Orlando Jones, is a mover-and-shaker investment banker who is framed for double murder. Meanwhile, Freddy Tiffany (Eddie Griffin), an obnoxious hustler who seems to bump into Chase and annoy the hell out of him, is brought along for the ride to Mexico and possible freedom. The CIA and FBI become involved.

In order to shake the cops, Chase insists that he and Tiffany "switch" roles. Tiffany adopts an Ivy-league accent; Chase struts and yells out "jive turkey."

There are enough plot twists to interest, to a point. But once the characters start triple and quadruple-crossing each other, the movie swerves into a car-wreck of a mess.

The most annoying part of "Double Take" is its schizophrenic tendency to go from slapstick to suspense. One scene, Griffin and Jones are having a dance competition straight out of "Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo." In the scene before, they are running for their lives from the CIA, FBI and, hell, throw in a boarder patrol guard for good measure.

At least there's chemistry between Jones and Griffin - it keeps the movie going.

Jones, known more for his performance on "Mad TV" and as the "7-Up" adman, puts as much depth as he can into his two-dimensional yuppified role.

Griffin, of "Malcolm and Eddie" fame, tries to milk out any laugh he can from his Wu-fied version of a James Brown char-

acter.

In the subtle moments, "Double Take" is funny. Coy references to the movie "Car Wash" and old school RUN-DMC tunes are dropped so quickly, they barely register with the audience. The quiet scenes involving each of the main characters trying to figure out the true motives of the other one also are decent.

However, it seems director George Gallo felt that for every few moments of genuine dialogue, he had to mix in an uninteresting car chase. Dust flying up, windows get shattered and a hubcaps fly like Frisbees at a NORML rally; nope, haven't seen that before.

The real crime of "Double Take" is the waste of talent, including the director. Gallo, who wrote the classic mismatch crime movie, "Midnight Run," but also directed the abysmal "Trapped in Paradise," shows his flair for lyrical brilliance only to throw it down the crapper with a bunch of weak action sequences and huge plot holes.

The tired "act black" tirade that Chase and Tiffany get into is just as unsettling as tequila jokes during any scene involving a Hispanic character.

Gallo has more class than that. He should know better as a director. It seemed that "Double Take" wanted to be something more than a typical buddy-action movie. And for about half of the movie, the chemistry of the two characters and the plot saves it. For the other half of the movie, it serves as an eerie example of what Spike Lee is decrying in his movie, "Bamboozled."

"Double Take" Starring Orlando Brown and Eddie Griffin. Directed by George Gallo. Written by George Gallo. Rated R for language and violence. Playing at The Lincoln.