

ENTERTAINMENT

Reel Reviews

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This is the first of what I hope will become a regular film-criticism column in the *Brunns*. I will offer comments and will give rankings according to my personal opinion.

I will review major movies that are to be held over. As the state of the films changes on Fridays, reviews of films that are in town for only one week cannot appear in print before the film leaves. This is unfortunate, but I will still attempt to make some comment about these as they will likely one day appear on television.

THE LEGEND OF BILLIE JEAN

This was the best film playing in the town over the past week (Plaza Cinemas). It chronicles the activities of a group of teenagers on the run due to an unfortunate series of events, and the public hysteria that develops surrounding them.

Some films have no theme; many films have one theme and try to drive home a point. What I like about "The Legend of Billie-Jean" is that it combines many themes but does not try to force any one on you leaving you with that "lectured-at" feeling.

The themes of this film are by-and-large familiar ones. The gun-control issue (what happens when citizens and law-enforcement officers have guns, how does one know if a gun is loaded or toy etc.) is highlighted by the many twist of the plot.

The issue of sensationalism in the media and its consequences is also forefront. Other common issues the film deals with include the conflict between law-enforcement officers and politicians; the generation gap; child-abuse and its consequences; the advantage-taking rich versus the poor; and many others.

The use of symbolism and imagery in the film is also good. The Joan of Arc image is a common denominator. There is also a certain amount of sexual symbolism some of which in my opinion, is misplaced.

There is much to think about in this film, but "Billie-Jean" can also be viewed for its entertainment value alone. There is plenty of action but it is not insulted by too much violence or sex.

The plot moves along quite fast resulting in good use of time. The film is, in my opi-

nion, suitable for both adolescents and mature adults who will probably get different impressions of it.

The major fault of "Billie-Jean" was its poor timing of humour and inconsistent atmosphere. In several places that were relatively serious, the audience laughed so loud that the succeeding dialogue was drowned out.

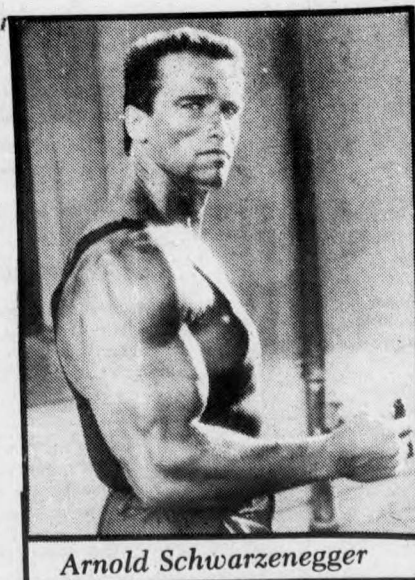
The inconsistent atmosphere was a by-product of putting so many themes into one film--this resulted in the lack of that deep sense of feeling one finds in a truly great film.

The acting was moderately good; the lead role of Billie-Jean was played by Helen Slater. The other young actors were all able to portray unique and distinct characters extremely well. The film was capably directed by Mathew Robins.

COMMANDO

"Commando" was envisioned by its producers as a big box-office hit. It will probably live up to this, as hard-hitting action movies usually are successful (especially those with Arnold Schwarzenegger), however "Commando" was not a good film.

The problems were manifold. The plot was simplistic to the extreme and lacked credibility throughout (could any commando, no matter how good, kill well over a hundred men, all firing at him, without being killed? Especially without good cover?) There was not much of a message or theme and the acting was mediocre.



Arnold Schwarzenegger

The plot can be summarized in one sentence: Col. John Matrix (played by Schwarzenegger) fights a gang who has kidnapped his daughter.

"Commando" is the successor to "Rambo" and sees Matrix forced back into action

involuntarily. The last scene invites the possibility of further sequels in the future. A sequel could have potential, but it better have a plot and some credibility this time. I like action so this film got a few points from me. The killing, however, was vastly overdone.

Other positive points were the witticism exhibited in a few places and the development of the character of Cindy (Ray Dawn Chong) who supplies a little comic relief as Matrix's sidekick.

NOTES ABOUT THE RATINGS

I will use the same ratings system throughout the year. It is generally self-explanatory, however the following are my definitions for some of the categories which could be uncertain:

Maturity is a function of how significant or thought-provoking the film is from an adult's viewpoint. It is not intended to rate the film on sex and violence or lack thereof, in-

TNB's Garrisons Garage

by Kelly Maher
Brunswick Staff

Theatre New Brunswick opened its 18th season last week with a comedy entitled "Garrison's Garage."

The setting was a garage in a rural village, and the play was written by Ted Johns, who also played the lead role of Garrison Springer: landowner, real estate investor, and all-around tyrant.

The show opens with Frank (played by Robert King), the mechanic who really owns the garage trying to fix a businessman's car. Within five minutes, one realizes that Frank knows absolutely nothing about mechanical matters, and the customer, Blair Daniels (played by David Fox) soon discovers this as well. The interplay between the two involves some hilarious dialogues and action.

Enter Lorna Springer (played by Marianne McIsaac), Garrison's daughter and femme fatale of the play. The character of Lorna is played off against Garrison but, unfortunately, the actors appeared to be overacting and gave one the impression they did not "believe" in their characters.

One saw each encounter bet-

ween the two as a conversation between McIsaac and Johns, not between Lorna and Garrison. This was, however, the only drawback in the play.

The final character left to mention is Bert (played by Ron Gabriel), the town councillor. This man definitely did not look like a town councillor. One expected a three-piece suit; instead one got a poor farmer with a broken tractor. But the moment he spoke, he stole the show. One would understand why Mr. Gabriel has many credits to his name. He played the part so convincingly that it was hard to keep an eye on anyone else. He definitely gave an exceptional performance.

David Fox, as Blair Daniels, the tax man from Revenue Canada, also gave a wonderful performance, as did Robert King as Frank. The style and talent of McIsaac and Johns were obvious; however, their characters seemed to clash, and consequently detracted from the comedic effect of their colleagues.

Some mention must also go to the backstage crew, for without them, the show would not go on. Director Katharine Kaszas deserves credit for a job well done. Lighting Director Harry

Freher created the proper mood throughout the show, and Costume Designer Kerry Hacker was extremely accurate in portraying the characters through costumes.

clude costumes, the set, makeup, sound and light.

By action I mean the movement of the film--did it move at the right pace without stagnating or becoming bewildering. A film with a lot of fighting or stunts will generally have a high action rating because it is hard to slow these down. ACTION should not be confused with ACTING; the latter rates how well the actors expressed themselves in their roles.

Special kudos to Jules Tonus, Set Designer. The entire play took place in the garage, but what a wonderful set it was. Very authentic -- garages are always cluttered!

Overall, it was a performance well worth seeing. As usual, TNB, with Producer Janet Amos, came through with another smash season opener.

Thanksgiving

I would like to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and extend my wishes for an enjoyable and safe weekend.

Film	Cinema	RATINGS OF RECENT FILMS									
		L	Y	G	S	E	S	N	T	Y	Y
Legend of Billie-Jean	Plaza	A	A-	A-	A	A+B	A	A	A	A-	B
Code Emerald	Plaza	A-	A	A	A	B	B	B+	A+	A-	B
Agnes of God	Na'sis	B	A	A-	A-	B	B-	B	B	C	B
Commando	Plaza	D	D	B-	B-	D	B+	A+	D	F	B