

REEL REVIEWS

By WILLIAM CLAIRE

Brainstorm, the long overdue film about thought and emotion transfers, was well worth the wait.

Producer-director Douglas Trumbull has put together a dandy story: one part science fiction, one part computer who dunnit one part industrial espionage, a twist of love and a dash of metaphysics.

Jerking the rug out from under during the opening sequence, Trumbull manages to keep the audience off balance and involved until the final credits.

Brainstorm is of significant historical interest because one of its stars, Natalie Wood, died before a number of key sequences demanding her presence were shot.

Happily, Trumbull was able to work out the logistical problems. The result demonstrates just how much he owes to a former mentor, Stanley Kubrick, with whom he worked in the special effects department on *2001: A Space Odyssey*, a work one film writer has called a catalogue of special effects.

The latest technological advances are layered with metaphysical overtones.

Once again, man searches for his ultimate roots by using his most sophisticated scientific achievements. *2001*, released in 1968, reflected the fascination with space exploration technology; *Brainstorm's* point of departure is the computer connection.

Kubrick's metaphysics also rubbed off on Trumbull, who uses the latest computer graphic and animation techniques to explore inner space and the ultimate trip-death. One sequence, showing spheroids whizzing down a corridor composed of two horizontal rows of rectangular parallelograms, evoked memories of one scene in *2001* where the astronaut, on his way to his date with destiny, travels through the space/time warp near a moon of Jupiter.

The film is dedicated to Wood, but Louise Fletcher steals the show as a dedicated, strong-willed, chain smoking scientific genius who heads up the sensory simulation project

that turns into a nightmare. Her demise by heart attack is terrifyingly gripping and reveals the horror of knowing that death is near. Definitely best supporting actress material.

Christopher Walken, as Fletcher's brainy co-worker, is well suited in a role demanding accurate portrayals of a wide range of emotional traits. Walken shows he can play the happy, life-loving sort, but is also given the opportunity to exploit his more familiar role, personifying the darker side of man's emotions as he did in last month's *The Danger Zone*.

If *Brainstorm* had not been held up by Wood's tragic, accidental drowning, the film would have been viewed prior to *War Games*, a release earlier in the year that capitalized on the home computer fad. Happily (again), *Brainstorm* does not suffer in comparison, ending the idea of breaking into the computer with a novel twist and incorporating the illegal tapping as only one of many plot threads.

Ultimately, Trumbull's touchstone in *Brainstorm* is the soul and spirit of man. In his hands, the film poses some possible answers to metaphysical puzzles without sacrificing the movie's accessibility to the average movie goer. That is its triumph.

CHARIOTS OF BUCKSKIN -- *Running Brave* is also seemingly inspired by a more recent success, *Chariots of Fire*. Based on the true tale of Billy Mills, a half-white Sioux who won a gold medal at the 1964 Olympics in the 10,000 metre event, the story is in-

spiring without resorting to *Chariots'* religious overtones.

The outcome of the final race is a foregone conclusion, but *Running Brave* is enough of a character study to overcome this obstacle. Mills was a naturally gifted runner who also happened to be an Indian -- defiant in the face of prejudice, proud in the strength of his heritage.

When Robby Benson was cast to play Mills, a cry of indignation arose. How could Benson, the perfect all-American Anglo possibly play an Indian? The fears were ill-founded. Benson gives an impressively convincing performance.

Running Brave is significant as a vehicle to demonstrate Benson's seldom seen, top-level acting abilities. A little makeup, proper camera angles and a lot of physical fitness make Benson believable. Even his voice is perfect for conveying Mills' sensitivity and inner strength.

Pat Hingle is an excellent foil for Benson as the non-sense coach whose unyielding demand that the "will to win" dominate his charges' existence drives Mills from the university.

Filmed entirely in Alber-

ta, with Edmonton and Drumheller substituting for the South Dakota reservation and the University of Kansas, *Running Brave* features fine performances by Canadians August

Schellenberg as Mills' father and Denis Lacroix as his half-brother.

The credits show D.S. Everett as director. Actually, Don Shebib directed the film. A dedicated and talented Canadian director responsible for *Goin' Down The Road and Heartaches*, Shebib asked that his name be removed from the film because he did not wish to be associated with the final product.

The film is not flawless, to be sure, but it is nowhere near the stage where a director need remove himself totally. It would be interesting to know how Shebib would have changed the film if given the opportunity. *Running Brave*, mainly due to Benson's performance, captures the spirit of a man who exemplified the commitment necessary for achieving one's goals, the determination to do the job well and the understanding that the motivation to succeed must come from within.

"Brainstorm" worth the wait "Running Brave" tells Barry Mills Story

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20th century works (continued from page 14)

Debussy's *Book II*, a set of works which demanded virtuosity and received it at the hands of Pelletier. Its mixture of modern musical structures and Romantic sensuousness was a perfect

pivotal point for the concert, since Pelletier had chosen a work from the Romantic period for the second half of his concert.

Schumann's *Fantasia*, op. 17 provided Pelletier with a chance to demonstrate his sensitivity to the more traditional

repertoire. This was coupled with Schumann's *Romance in F*, which Pelletier chose as an encore. Both pieces gave the audience a taste of Pelletier's intense involvement with his music -- it was like being invited to witness a private and special event.

In short, Louis-Philippe Pelletier gave a superb performance, and his interpretations of the 20th century material may have even succeeded in expanding the musical horizons of many listeners.