

# entertainment

## Spielberg misses with '1941'

by Don Markham

Steven Spielberg's 1941 is definitely a movie to miss. It is the director's first try for comedy, and he fails dismally. He did waste \$30 million trying, but the movie is devoid and shallow. It is a hodge-podge thrown together, and it does not mesh.

Spielberg wastes time spoofing other films; among those parodies I recognized were Hitchcock's *Psycho*, Jerry Lewis movies, Charlie Chan films, and Spielberg's own *Jaws*. By no coincidence, the *Jaw's* parody was the first and best one in the movie. But did it fit in the context of the film? Not really; like the other parodies (many of which slipped right by me), they made no sense. Poor Spielberg became so entangled in spoofing other films that he forgot he was making a new one.

He should have concentrated his efforts on making

sure the \$30 million was used correctly, but it appears he was obscured by the logistics. Spielberg tries to sneak by on technical grandeur rather than jokes. The few jokes are corny; mud pies and such.

1941 is a definite movie for the children, but not for adults. Let us hope Spielberg goes back to suspense and leaves comedy to those who understand it; he certainly doesn't.

The cast is truly magnificent. Only one problem; they are all wasted. John Belushi and Robert Stack distinguish themselves in this muck. Belushi plays a role similar to his *Animal House* performance. Stack plays a general in the army who would rather watch *Dumbo the Elephant* in the theatre than pay any attention to what's going on in the real world.

I'm with Stack. I'd rather watch *Dumbo*.



Belushi in '1941'

## Between mediocrity and excellence

by Eric Lawson

When times are tough, and in modern times they are not only tough but often scary, there is a tendency to delve into escapist art. Perhaps this explains the current popularity of country music, which has always been fantasy music. Strangely, the Hollywood counterpart of Nashville music, the cowboy movie, doesn't seem to have enjoyed the same renaissance. However, in *The Electric Horseman* we finally have a blend of twangy country music and a return-to-basic-values cowboy movie; something the movie-going public seems to have been ready for.

However, a technically perfect film is not necessarily a dynamic film. Indeed, the

*Electric Horseman's* tightness and control end up being its bane; it is so tightly controlled that it is almost boring.

*The Electric Horseman* is worth going to see, though, if for one reason only. This film should be called "The Electric Duo" as Fonda and Redford share a chemistry that literally sparkles. They, too, are subdued and controlled, but they take this control and transform it into dynamic performances that nevertheless avoid excess and stereotyping. Their performances are classic examples of achieving dramatic effect from under-acting. A mediocre film, but a triumph for Fonda and Redford.

Unfortunately, *The Electric Horseman* never sustains a



standard of excellence. Fortunately, it never degenerates into a genuinely poor film, but wavers throughout between mediocrity and excellence. The story is one of an ex-rodeo star (Robert Redford) sinking deeper into drink and dissatisfaction with his new

life as an advertising symbol for Ranch Breakfast cereal.

The corporation which produces the cereal also owns another symbol, a once-great race horse. Redford becomes angered at the corporation's mistreatment of the horse, as they pump it full of dope for stage appearances. He decides to steal the horse to set it free. Enter Jane Fonda, playing an investigative journalist, who chases Redford for the story but eventually ends up trekking across Utah with him to set the horse free.

As I mentioned, the film works quite well. The themes all blend well together, for example Redford's desire to free the horse from the corporation's tyranny becomes associated with his own desire to escape his meaningless life. The other major theme in the film, Redford and Fonda's relationship itself, is not just a typical love story. Fonda doesn't fall

in love with Redford, or he with her, really, they simply develop a very close bond. Fonda doesn't develop a fanaticism for his cause, indeed she never really understands it, she simply comes to respect him as a human being and not merely a story.

Individual scenes in the film work well. For example, when the police are pursuing Redford a trucker helps him out of the state, for no other reason than because he had heard of the theft and sympathized with Redford's cause. This scene of a simple man going out on a limb for a cause he believes in is convincing and does not sink into corniness. Indeed, the film's refusal to be corny is one of its chief virtues. Once the horse has been set free, for example, Redford and Fonda go their separate ways, and their poignant-good-bye-at-the-bus-stop scene avoids being either clichéd or maudlin.

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## International night

The International Students' Association has decided to keep its name out of the International Night function. The reason for the ISA's move is that many organizations have already agreed to participate extensively.

The International Night, an annual cultural event being held on January 25 in the Garden Cafeteria, features food and entertainment from a variety of ethnic sectors. Along with shows put on by the different international societies, this year Oxfam has negotiated with the band Spectrum who have agreed to play for a nominal fee.

Various ethnic dishes will

be served at the event. These dishes were prepared by individual members of societies on campus and by many local restaurants wishing to contribute to the evening. They include the Old Spaghetti House, Zapatas, the Hermitage Restaurant, the Cranberry, the Gura, La Vela Restaurant, Chanteclar Restaurant, and the Oriental Restaurant.

Tickets can be obtained through the entertainment director of the Dal SUB, at the Grad House, the Halifax Metro Credit Union, and the Red Herring Book Co-op.

Proceeds for the event will be contributed to the Oxfam organization.