

film

'Emperor of the North' bombs while 'Day of the Jackal' succeeds

schedule

At area film theaters:

McDonald, 1010 Willamette, 344-4343, "The Aristocats" at 2:05 p.m., 4:55 p.m. and 8 p.m., and "Song of the South" 12:30 p.m., 3:20 p.m., 6:25 p.m. and 9:25 p.m. Tickets \$2, with student card \$1.50.

National, 969 Willamette, 344-3401, "Live and Let Die" at 1:30 p.m., 5:25 p.m. and 9:25 p.m., and "The Magnificent Seven Ride Again" at 3:40 p.m., and 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$2, with student card \$1.50.

Oakway Cinema, Coburg Road, 342-5351, "The Day of the Jackal" at 7 p.m. and 9:45 p.m. weekdays, and 2 p.m., 4:25 p.m., 7 p.m. and 9:45 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Tickets \$2.

Mayflower, 11th and Alder, 345-1022, "Paper Moon" at 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Tickets \$2.

Saturday and Sunday, 2 p.m., Tickets for students only \$1.50.

Fine Arts, 630 Main, 747-2201, "Charlotte's Web" at 3:15 p.m., 6:40 p.m. and 10 p.m., and "Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory" at 1:30 p.m., 5:50 p.m. and 8:20 p.m. Tickets \$1.75.

Motor-Vu Drive-In, one mile east of Springfield, 747-5415, "Soylent Green" and "Sky Jacked," open at 8 p.m., show at dusk. Tickets \$1.75 per person.

North End Drive-In, Highway 99 North, one and a half miles north of Overhead, 489-0445, "The Poseidon Adventure" and "Hot Rock," open at 8 p.m., show at dusk. Tickets \$1.75 per person.

West 11th Drive-In, West 11th and Seneca, 342-4142, "High Plains Drifter" and "Chato's Land," open at 8 p.m., show at dusk. Tickets \$1.75 per person.

Eugene Drive-In, in Glenwood off Franklin Boulevard, 726-7412, "The World's Greatest Athlete" and "Now You See Him, Now You Don't," open at 8 p.m., show at dusk. Tickets \$1.75 per person.

Cascade Drive-In, Springfield, "The Getaway" and "Something Big" open at 7:45 p.m., show at dusk. Tickets \$1.75.

Valley River Twin Cinema I, across from Valley River Center, 686-8633, "Emperor of the North" at 1 p.m., 3:15 p.m., 5:30 p.m., 7:45 p.m. and 10 p.m. Tickets \$2.

Valley River Twin Cinema II, across from Valley River Center, 686-8633, "The Sound of Music" at 2 p.m., 5:15 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Tickets \$2.

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"PAPER MOON"



A Paramount Release



Photo by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Inc.

In New York during 1922, a food riot brings out riot control trucks that scoop up people like garbage in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's suspense film "Soylent Green." The film follows a detective, who while tracking down the assassins of a powerful food company executive, uncovers a secret so devastating that no man who knows it can live. Stars Charlton Heston, Leigh Taylor-Young, Edward G. Robinson, Chuck Connors, Joseph Cotten, Brock Peters and Paula Kelly. The film is now playing at the Motor-Vu Drive-In.

"Emperor of the North," which opened Friday at the Valley River Twin Cinema, is rated GP by virtue of philistine fiat. It properly deserves an "Ecch" rating. I cannot recommend it too highly for its emetic properties.

My 48-hour bout of dry heaves began with the picture's artless elaboration of that free-man-versus-the-Establishment motif, a down-at-the-heels myth if ever there was one, robbed of whatever paltry meaning it might originally have possessed by countless film-makers. Director Robert Aldrich's leachings from this theme create no heat, and just enough light to illuminate your way to the lobby, and home for a stiff drink.

The time is 1933, the confrontation that of Shack (Ernest Borgnine), the hobo-hating conductor of the Willamette Valley's old No. 19, and A-No. 1, the acknowledged king of America's tramp legions. Shack is reputed to have killed any vagrant attempting to cop a ride on his train, and A-No. 1's defiance of this substantial hobo lore as he boards No. 19 for Portland, ostensibly sets the stage for a struggle of epic proportions.

Ken Kesey might well have brought this off in collaboration with Sam Peckinpah, but Aldrich and screenwriter Christopher Knopf only manage to foist a vehicle upon the public which is as derelict as its protagonists. In apparent deference to the imminent failure of their ambitions, they resort to a number of delaying tactics prior to the picture's climax. A-No. 1's first two attempts to board the train are foiled by a brash but obviously green interloper named Cigaret (Keith Carradine), who is just stupid and boastful enough to want to tag along for the ride. Unable or unwilling to chuck the kid, A-No. 1 begins to instruct him in the finer points of hoboing, from simple train-jumping to petty larceny to outright ass-stomping. "I ain't no teacher," he insists, subsequently launching into some of the most outrageously inflated and interminable rhetoric this side of the Texas legislature. "You could be a meat-eater," he says at one point. "And I mean people, not their garbage."

This attitude is critical to "Emperor's" failure, for it is virtually identical with Shack's, who indeed gets his jollies by taking hammers to transients, and employs this and more esoteric means in attempting to

discourage Cigaret and A-No. 1 as they board No. 19 for the final time. As Shack and the tramp go to it on a flatcar with lumber, chains, hammers and axes in a climax of transcendent tastlessness, what is being glorified is the animalism of two shallow and vicious characters, holding sway over their cohorts out of pure viciousness, living primarily for the test which will determine its limits. What's being exploited is not their differences, but the peculiarly repellent traits which the two share, and which compel them to a ritual affirmation of bloodlust as impetus and end.

Worse, Marvin's besting of Borgnine culminates in his hurling the scoundrel from the train, and having Shack's voice, at impossible volume from an impossible distance, assure him that they're not through yet. This from a man who appears mortally wounded, and short an amplifier and mike. And this, by the same illogic, ushers in Marvin's final lecture as he ditches the kid and rides out of sight, yelling "you'll never make it. You haven't got it. Remember me, kid."

One looks for plus elements among all this drivel with a kind of flea-bitten and prickly desperation, and largely in vain. Aldrich, a competent director ("What Ever Happened to Baby Jane," as against "The Dirty Dozen") cannot conceal the looseness and meanness of the storyline, not least because screenwriter Knopf has insisted on substituting murderous glances, ponderous tributes to railroad lore, and arbitrary and cyclonic speechmaking for character in writing dialogue for his actors. Marvin alone emerges unharmed, looking and acting the soul of America's snot-lockers. Borgnine rages and does little else, looking slightly hyperoxygenated. Carradine is called upon only to act either cocky or abashed, and handles this thin bit of soldiering dutifully and well.

For the rest, the location shots in or near Cottage Grove are as beautiful as one would expect, and the score (imitation Copeland) is hilarious, rising to lush, evocative crescendos at times when Borgnine girds himself for battle, or a perplexed Carradine throws rocks amid the rubble of a trackside dump.

This is an essentially anti-historical, anti-mythical picture which shuns the rich artistic possibilities of the Depression era for an opportunity to romanticize the passions which have contributed to this country's retrograde motions and enduring agonies. Such oversight is more appropriately reserved for pictures like this, which are suited to play the most God-forsaken of picture houses 'way down by the tracks. Let us remember.

Chris Houglum

In 1962, France was being terrorized by the OAS, a paramilitary organization committed to French supremacy in Algeria. The OAS was particularly angered by DeGaulle, who had attained power espousing crypto-colonialist views, but once in office arranged for the French withdrawal from North Africa.

The leaders of the OAS, in their peculiar view of public sentiment, saw DeGaulle as a single treasonous official, the political block to reassertion of French military glory, a block that had to be removed — by assassination, for instance.

Fred Zinneman's film "The Day of the Jackal," now playing at the Oakway Cinema, depicts two such attempts. The first starts the film rolling, the second concludes it. The greatest part of the picture is the preparational interim leading up to the second attempt.

The result is a not-unsuccessful synthesis of "Mission: Impossible" and "The French Connection," the resourcefulness and cunning of a professional assassin juxtaposed with the resources and efforts of a French detective.

With meticulous editing, the film shows how the assassin, played by Edward Fox, assumes the code name "The Jackal" and prepares an identity switching technology of death and escape, shuttling between London and Geneva, Nice and Paris. His work is solitary, methodical, precise, and quite classy.

The background, geographically and culturally, is superb, particularly in France. The pomp and splendor of Parisian ceremony is not

exaggerated — it naturally is that spectacular. The efficacious mannerisms of the governmental officials are not overly emphasized — they are that dour.

Zinneman's atmosphere captures the particular details suggestive of Gallic reality: speeding black Citroen limousines, the interiors of rural hotels, telephones in Nice's Negresco, policemen, borders, faces . . . it's a shock to hear them speak English.

But, how deep are the cinematic implications? After all, the picture is an adaptation of Frederick Forsyth's best-seller of the same name. Beneath the deaths and deceptions, there are in fact some less gaudy ideas, if only subtly indicated.

The Jackal may not undergo profound changes in characterization during the film, but our perception of him does, from 007-ish admiration to recoiling and ever more distant revulsion toward the end.

One can also portray the personal conflict of the Jackal with the police forces of Europe as a lone struggle against massed forces of lesser intelligence and insight. To some extent, that's how it works. But the irony of restraints on the detective heading the manhunt — DeGaulle's unseen nonchalance, bureaucratically mandated secrecy, optimistic conclusions by others — works in counterpoint.

A second thematically discordant note is the trace of human flaw in the assassin himself. How can one assess the conflict in terms of man against men if the all-important character embodies non-systemic peculiarities?

The picture is tantalizing in this regard — it is additionally tantalizing in pace. Where is the assassin, who is he, which face in the crowd, when will he move? If the timing of the police is usually bad, the film's effort to create that misfortune is good.

Chilling, really.

David Novick

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