

Films

Raging Bull
Starring Robert DeNiro
Directed by Martin Scorsese
Cinema World, 342-6536

If Robert DeNiro wants your sympathy he'll beat it out of you.

Violence seems to be inherent in DeNiro's character: he's portrayed violent men in films like *The Godfather*, *The Deer Hunter*, and *Taxi Driver*. DeNiro and director Martin Scorsese brought *Taxi Driver* to the screen, and now they're back together for *Raging Bull*.

Raging Bull is a relentless film that never stops hammer-

ing. DeNiro is a middleweight boxing champ, Jake LaMotta, a man who thrives on violence in and out of the rink. Scorsese pulls no punches in his portrayal of the profession's brutality.

LaMotta is a hard guy to sympathize with, but, then, he really doesn't ask for sympathy. He's a volatile man who pulverizes his opponents and beats people when he gets mad. At the same time he's a victim: Violence is all he's ever been good at.

From the film's very first frame LaMotta's life is tragic. He seems incapable of the

sensitivity brought from intelligent evaluation. There's an adolescent awkwardness between him and his girlfriend. LaMotta is interested in a serious relationship; his girlfriend says she loves him, but in truth her love for him is rarely evident.

LaMotta can't deal with love. He transforms his relationship with her into a prison of jealousy and paranoia. With little tenderness in his life he batters himself emotionally like he batters his opponents in the ring.

Scorsese and cinemato-

grapher Michael Chapman float the film through round after round of dreamy battles, which maintain a poetic quality despite their brutality, sharply etched in black and white.

The fight scenes are gracefully savage. When the blows land, the frame explodes with slow motion fountains of sweat and blood, punctuated by exaggerated smashing sounds. Chapman's camera careens with LaMotta in the ring. DeNiro's opponents are real-life boxers, and the real-life Jake LaMotta was technical adviser during the filming.

DeNiro's LaMotta thrives in the ring. This is what makes him great, what allows his insecure ego to survive. When LaMotta is finally beaten, he reminds his vanquisher that despite his bloody face and swollen eyes, he didn't fall down.

Through with boxing, we see LaMotta degenerate physically and emotionally. Confined in prison at one point, humiliated, he cries "I'm not an animal!" Unlike the same line in *The Elephant Man*, LaMotta's line is a lie. In the end, LaMotta is a loser.

By Richard Laliberte

The Competition
Starring Richard Dreyfuss and Amy Irving
Directed by Joel Oliansky
Valley River Twin

It's irritating when a film gets a lot of advance publicity and fails to deliver the story promised. *The Competition* could have been a fine movie, but it consistently fails to come together as a whole. We are left with a good scene here and there, with the rest of the film being easily forgettable.

It's a shame, because the film attempts to explore competition between men and women. As a dramatic idea, its time has come as more women gain the power, prestige and skill that men now hold in a variety of fields.

The story centers around two gifted pianists who are competing in a prestigious recital which guarantees a bright future for one of them. They fall in love and attempt to explore the problem that such a relationship must surely invite. Paul Dietrich (Richard Dreyfuss) is more comfortable with the idea of losing to a man rather than to the woman he loves. Heidi Schoonover (Amy Irving) is uncomfortable at the thought of being a better pianist than her lover.

The Competition could have earned the respect that *An*

Unmarried Woman, *Kramer vs Kramer* and *Ordinary People* share: A sensitive look at the problems contemporary people face in their relationships.

Dreyfuss' portrayal as the enormously arrogant, yet basically insecure pianist is appealing and has a ring of truth most of the time. Irving is less

too much, neither of which give her any greater sensitivity.

Both of them give superb piano performances; it's hard

exception is when Dreyfuss is explaining his devotion to music to Irving after breaking down under the pressure he's facing.

But these scenes are sandwiched too far between a ridiculous plot involving the defection by a Soviet piano instructor, a twist that could have been cut without hurting the film in the slightest.

The bright spark in the middle of all this mediocrity is Lee Remick, as Greta Vandemann, Irving's piano instructor and mentor. She gives the film more credibility than anyone except Dreyfuss, and she's the only character to address what's really important about this film: How far are people willing to go to be the best in their field? She tells Heidi the piano "gives you a center that no man — that very few men — can give you." Women don't hear that kind of statement often, whether or not it's true.

It's that kind of choice *The Competition* considers, but not consistently or forcefully. Oliansky strays from the point too often. Instead of focusing on self-exploration, he has his characters wandering around uttering meaningless phrases to one another. Remick's tart, realistic remarks are a welcome change from too many longing glances across the piano.

Sally Oljar



Richard Dreyfuss and Amy Irving star in "The Competition." They are drawn to each other both as young lovers and as rivals vying for the same prize in an international competition.

But the film falls short of the mark, suffering mainly from a bad screenplay and poor direction. There are intermittent flashes of clarity in both, but director Joel Oliansky relies too much on slushy romance.

arrogant, more secure and more willing to give up her career to save his. Her naivete is unsettling in scenes which call for greater personal strength. She is prone to wringing her hands and crying

to believe they aren't actually playing. The piano concertos are wonderful, and better illustrate the intensity of the couple's relationship to each other and their work than in any dialogue they share. The



**WE BUY
USED
RECORDS**

Bring in your Jazz, Rock,
Classical, and Blues

We Pay Top Prices

**HOUSE OF
RECORDS**

258 E. 13th

Between Pearl
and High Streets

NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW!

INTRODUCTORY OFFER

**Barbecue
PORK RIBS**

\$5.95

Right now, The Branding Iron is introducing their Brand New Hickory-Smoked Barbecue Pork Ribs. They're served with a complete dinner that includes home-made soup or tossed green salad, rice pilaf, french fries or baked potato and bread for only \$5.95.

But what's even more amazing than that, is that these Texas-Style Pork Ribs are so big, lean, meaty, and delicious, they even fooled "El Paso Billy", and we all know about him; he thinks we rustled the recipe from Texas. But we didn't.

Ask for Oregon's own Texas-style Pork Ribs for only \$5.95 tonight at The Branding Iron.

BRANDING IRON

579 East Broadway, Eugene Phone 344-3201
(Visa, Master Charge, American Express)

emu Cultural Forum Presents

Contraband
from Virginia



with **Bob Childs**, caller

**TRADITIONAL AMERICAN
CONTRAS-CIRCLES-SQUARES**

— All dances taught —
— Beginners, singles welcomed —

Friday, February 27 8:00 p.m.
EMU Ballroom U of O Campus
\$2.00 Admission