

'raiders' ranks with best

By **MATT MEYER**
Of the Emerald

When I first looked at the ad in the newspaper, I thought Harrison Ford (of *Star Wars* fame) was starring in a Western.

It's a mistake anyone could make, seeing him glaring menacingly with a few days' growth on his chin, a coiled whip on his shoulder, and a rumpled hat on his head. I held off seeing it until I heard.

What you've heard is true. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* is an incredible movie, rating right up there with the greats, and with good reason: *Raiders* was written and produced by George (Star Wars) Lucas and directed by Steven (Jaws) Spielberg. With credits like that, you'd naturally expect lots of special effects, action, comedy and suspense. And that's what you get, as Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) and Marion Ravenwood (Karen Allen) whirl their way through jam after jam with edge-of-the-seat suspense and hilarity results.

The plot is simple enough. The Nazis are searching to recover the Ark of the Covenant, a gold container used to carry the stone tablets the Ten Commandments were written on, according to the Old Testament. Indiana Jones, an adventurer-archeologist, is hired to recover the ark before the Nazis do. Ravenwood, Jones' old flame, happens to possess the artifact necessary to locate the missing ark. Put the pieces together and you have a movie — an incredible movie.

The picture's strength lies in its keen balance between action and humor. Jones and Ravenwood trade verbal — and occasionally physical — blows at every turn, yet Lucas and Spielberg take special care to make sure the comedy doesn't overwhelm the action. The result is a precisely produced film that moves so fast you feel as though you're on a roller coaster run by a speed freak. In spite of the pace, the audience never gets

lost. Everything is nice and tidy, and the movie works like clockwork.

Surprisingly enough, much of this precision wasn't as careful-

special effects, while awesome, are a little too gruesome (heads blowing up when a simple decapitation would do). These are just minor points, though,

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ly planned as one might expect. In the funniest scene of the movie, Indiana Jones is faced with a black-clothed assassin wielding a scimitar that makes Excalibur look like a Swiss army knife. The story goes that Ford was miserable with a case of dysentery and came up with a new idea for the assassin's demise largely as a way to get out of Tunisia as quickly as possible.

Raiders of the Lost Ark is a tongue-in-cheek throwback to the serials of the '30s and '40s. Everything is there — the rugged hero, the beautiful heroine, the evil villains, fists, machine guns... everything. It would be hard to sit through the whole film without comparing Harrison Ford to Humphrey Bogart at least once, and bad-guy Ronald Lacey would score extremely well in a Peter Lorre look-alike contest. Karen Allen isn't exactly the typical heroine of the '30s, considering she punches out and drinks down guys right and left. The combination works perfectly, however, and we find ourselves faced with another shining addition to the new brand of serial-type movies characterized by *Star Wars*.

If there's a weak point to the film, it would have to be that the creators have their tongues too firmly in their cheeks. Marion seems to continually run into new situations in which she is forced to wear revealing gowns. The bad guys are a little too sadistic and cruel. And the



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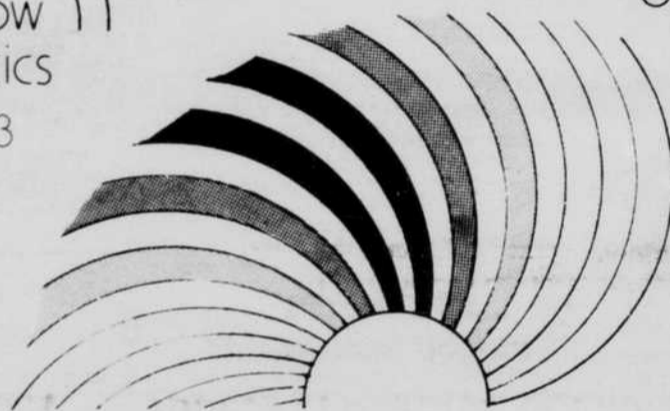
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