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## At the movies

### Fun tale, fine cast are 'Natural'

Once upon a time, when men wore hats and ties and baseball was king, there lived a young boy named Roy Hobbs who always desired to be one of those baseball players; in fact he wanted to be *the best* baseball player.

His father told him he was a natural, and his father was right. He could throw better and hit harder than any other player around. Then, just before he was about to show the world his marvelous skills, he was attacked and seriously wounded by an evil but beautiful witch clothed in black.

It wasn't until much, much later that the boy, who'd become a middle-aged knight, attempted to come back and show the world what he could do. Only now the world didn't think he could do it, because he was so old. Baseball belonged to young men.

But he proved his worth, because he had to. He had to save the kindly old king whom he called Pop. He battled the evil king who threatened Pop, overcoming a spell put on him by another evil beautiful witch. Like all good knights Roy had the help of a good princess dressed in white who saved him from the evil witch, and inspired him to tap his marvelous abilities. And of course, when all the rigmarole was over, Roy and the good princess lived happily ever after.

Such is "The Natural," a new film by Barry Levinson based on the classic novel by Bernard Malamud. And I'm not exaggerating; it really is a fairy tale. It's a modern sports fairy tale in the tradition of "Rocky" and countless films before. How else can you describe a tale that relies so heavily on evil women in black and good women in white? Luck, the supernatural, and a seemingly magic bat?

"The Natural" is a fantasy film presented in the grand tradition of great mythic stories and it works beautifully. Robert Redford is near perfect in the role of Roy Hobbs, bringing forth the presence needed to make his part believable.

Kim Basinger gives the best performance of her career as the traitorous Memo Paris, and Robert Duvall brings the controlled malice of sports writer Max Mercy to understated glory. Wilford Brimley is congenial and likeable as ever as Pop, the aging manager of the flailing New York Knights.

Director Levinson, screenwriters Roger Towne and Philip Breen and cinematographer Caleb Deshanel give this film the ultimate mythic treatment.

Deshanel is a master of color, texture and shot composition and he makes every frame shine with the golden luster of yesteryear. Towne and Breen structure the film with a plot that could only work in this setting, complete with strikes of lightning at the key moments.

In their treatment it works without being hokey.

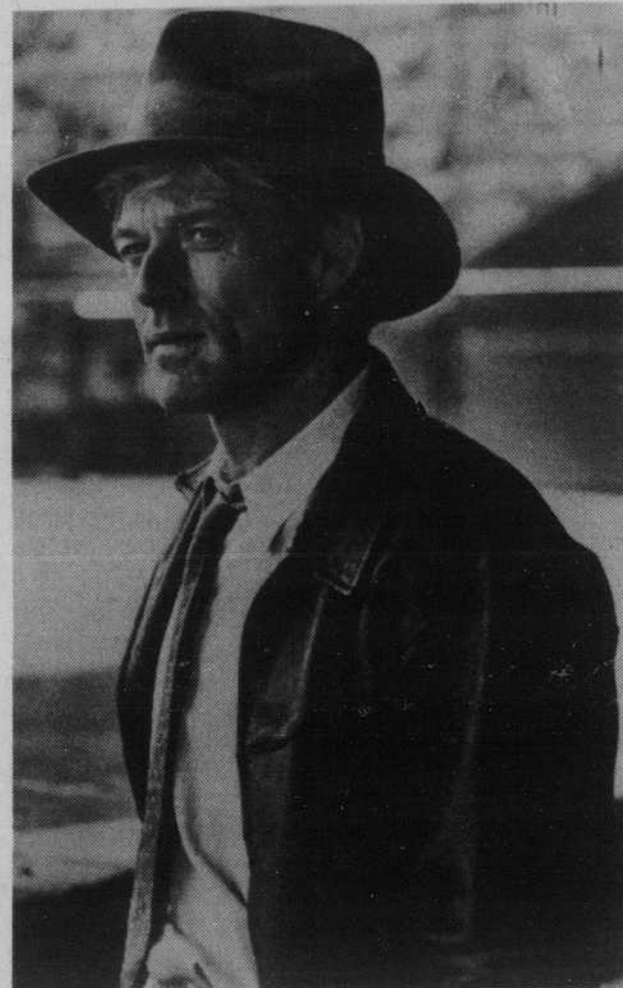


Photo courtesy of Tri-Star Pictures

Robert Redford is near perfect as Roy Hobbs in "The Natural," a film about the late comeback of a star baseball player.

They spice the script with many other fantastic elements that work equally well and then suffuse it with wonderful dialogue that is both understated and dramatically appropriate.

Levinson pulls it all together, letting the mythic elements carry the film. He knows which devices to use at the appropriate moment: slow motion, silhouettes, close-ups and just the right gestures and expressions. It all works and it works well, from the careful attention to period clothing and antique trappings that suggest an indefinite period somewhere around the 1940s, to Randy Newman's grand rousing score.

"The Natural" is the kind of story we like to think we've outgrown. It's a wonderful, vital film about fathers and sons, winning and losing, honor and corruption, good and evil. It's a modern myth about the archetypal hero given the grand treatment it needs. If "The Natural" doesn't bring out the child in you, nothing will.

Plays at the McDonald on the Eugene Mall.

By Sean Axmaker

## Traveling art adorns Aperture

May is a different month for the Aperture Gallery, the corner art spot in the lobby of the EMU.

Usually the area showcases University student work, juried by the Cultural Forum. This month, a traveling show of two-dimensional works from college unions throughout the Northwest is replacing the familiar

photography.

The 18-piece exhibit, which has been traveling from Alaska to Medford since last Fall, was juried by judges from the Association of College Unions International.

"The show is not really representative of Northwest arts," says Carol Ten Eyck, Cultural Forum visual arts coordinator. "We had to hang it like a 19th-century Louvre show.

There just wasn't enough space."

Later in May, the Forum will hang an installation by artist Carol Westlake in the gallery. "Carol has been instrumental in showing people in the Northwest what a camera can do," Ten Eyck says.

Aperture Gallery will be open throughout the summer. It is open the same hours as the Erb Memorial Union.

## oregon daily emerald

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