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Entertainment

'Field of Dreams' takes a magical journey

By Ken Nolan
Emerald Contributor

Kevin Costner has called his new film *Field of Dreams* the 1980s equivalent of *It's a Wonderful Life*. For that to be true, Costner would have to be as dynamic an actor as Jimmy Stewart, and the film would have to be good enough to touch the hearts of many generations to come. Well, Costner is no Jimmy Stewart, and *Field of Dreams* is no *It's a Wonderful Life* ... but it sure comes close.

Ray Kinsella (Costner) is a novice Iowa farmer who, for the first time in his life, does something "totally illogical." He plows under several acres of

childlike, eternally likable guy, and does a good job. Although he is the "main" character, he plays such a strait-laced guy that he is rarely the focus of the audience's attention. Costner is more of the "leading man" in this film, tying all the characters together but remaining the least-memorable.

There are some hidden gems in this film in the supporting roles. Ray Liotta, who plays legendary Black Sox player "Shoeless" Joe Jackson, is utterly convincing as this long-dead ball player. Liotta, who has starred in the minor but acclaimed films *Dominic and Eugene* and *Something Wild*, has the uncanny ability to look not at a movie camera but seemingly right into the audience. His short times on screen are electrifying and fill the film with crackling energy.

Like Burt Lancaster's small cameo, the other minor characters in this film turn out to be the most memorable. This is

due in whole to the film's superb screenplay, in which even the bit parts have something amusing to say.

Some moviegoers may claim not to believe the premise of the film. This should not even be an issue as it defeats the whole purpose of seeing a movie in the first place. But believe the premise or not, the film is an undeniably sweeping and heartwarming tale, the first film since *It's a Wonderful Life* that captures the audience in its magic and never lets them go.

The film is emotionally charged, like nothing of its kind brought to the screen in years. As one character says in the movie, this is a film where "dreams come true." These dreams come true not only for the characters but for the audience members as well. It turns viewers into giggling children for two hours, and reminds all what the magic of Hollywood can really create.

Movie Review

valuable corn to build a baseball field on the advice of a faceless, mysterious voice. Without giving away any more of the plot (If someone tries to tell you the plot, just plug your ears and run away), let's just say this is the point in the film where believability ends and magic takes over.

Like a fairy tale which sweeps the audience along from one miraculous event to another, the events which take place in *Field of Dreams* are entirely unbelievable, incredible, the kind of stuff that could never happen. But the beauty of the film is that it asks the question "What if these things could happen?" And, sitting in the audience, enraptured, one cannot help muttering the very same question to oneself. Whether the events of the film are likely to happen or not, the film takes the audience on a journey and introduces some of the freshest characters to arrive on the screen in a long while.

The first of these characters is James Earl Jones, who portrays an aging former 1960s activist and Pulitzer Prize winner whose only wish is to disappear from the public scene forever. This is Jones' best performance in years, and he makes his character rich and lively, bringing a down-to-earth eloquence to the screen that is impossible to dislike. Costner and Jones play off each other excellently, their interaction a splash of cold water on many a weary moviegoer's face.

Costner himself plays a

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about intersection, of the East and West, of the beautiful and grotesque, of the silent and the sounded."

At the heart of Noh lies some accidental encounter through which the workings of fate are revealed. One of the characters is often not what he seems to be — perhaps a ghost or a person fallen from high estate.

In "Sotoba Komachi," a young poet who visits the city park to find inspiration meets an ancient woman who will never die. As they dance, she brings him a vision of the beauty of her youth, a vision so profound that the poet dies in acknowledging it.

Mishima's use of original Noh dramas varies in his plays. Sometimes he uses only general Noh themes, and other times his plays parallel the originals closely. "The Damask Drum" is essentially the re-creation of an ancient Noh drama in a modern setting.

For example, the old man of the original "Damask Drum" who sweeps a palace garden becomes in the modern version a janitor who sweeps a law office in downtown Tokyo. He falls in love not with a princess, but with the client of a fashionable women's clothing designer across the way.

In both versions, the man believes that beating a drum will win him the favor of his beloved, but the drum is inaudible because it is made of damask, a light fabric. And in both versions, unrequited love drives the janitor to suicide.

"In 'The Damask Drum,' the janitor's ideal love for the woman bridges a divided world of good faith and bad faith," Schmor said. "She sends deceit and death, but his love intersects life and death. He is a revenant — one who returns, a ghost, a pilgrim — and his love is the magical intersection between both worlds."

Barbara Sellers, a doctoral degree candidate in theater arts, is the movement coach. Erik Ireland, a senior in theater arts, designed the set.

Performances of the two Noh plays are scheduled for 8 p.m. May 24 to 27 and June 1 to 3 in Arena Theatre.

Tickets are \$2.50 for students and seniors and \$3.50 for the general public, and are available at the University Theatre box office in the lobby of Villard Hall's Robinson Theatre. The box office is open from 12:30 to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and from 6:30 to 8:15 p.m. on performance nights.

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