

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

On The Down Low

Movie Reel

Seige

Starring: Denzel Washington
Imagine Arab terrorists are blowing up buses, movie theaters, and holding classrooms hostage in New York City. Anthony "Hub" Hubbard (Denzel Washington), the head of the Joint FBI/NYPD Terrorism Task Force, with his stalwart crew, feels he can capture these thugs.

This viable story quickly becomes ridiculous and at times incomprehensible. Worst of all, it's often borderline dull.

On the plus side, you do get to see Denzel's "Hub" get a bloody nose during a speech and accidentally wipe the blood onto the top of his nose. He continues chatting. This was fun to watch and possibly even fun to act.

But The Siege neither delivers as an action film or as a thinking-man's time-waster. It's just there — thudding on the screen, daring us to get out of our seats to get a Butterfinger.

I'll Be Home for Christmas

Starring: Jonathan Taylor Thomas

The teen heart-throb, best known from television's Home Improvement, plays Jake, a college student who has a lot to learn about relationships. Jake has not been home for Christmas for the past couple of years. His father (Gary Cole, Mike Brady from the Brady Bunch films), bribes Jake with his 1957 red Porsche to be home for dinner on Christmas Eve. Jake, being the materialistic person that he is, jumps at the challenge.

Although the performances in this movie are not Earth shattering, teenage actors attempting to portray college students will be acceptable for the young audience this movie will attract. But future college students may be surprised when they are finished with high school and they find out that university life does not include lockers and people being locked in them on a regular basis. It does appear that Thomas has a bright future as the "cute boyfriend." Unfortunately, under his tan skin and lovable smile, he does not seem to possess what it takes to be a sincere dramatic actor.

On the plus side, I'll Be Home For Christmas' family scenario is quite realistic — something not familiar in holiday movies.

Check Out These Box Office Hits:

- The Waterboy: Starring Adam Sandler
- The Wizard of Oz: Starring Dorothy Dandridge
- Living Out Loud: Starring Oscar winner Holly Hunter & Danny Devito

And Coming At'cha:

- Rugrats- Opening Nov. 25th
- Babe: Big City-Opens Nov. 25th
- Psycho-Opens Dec 4th
- Star Trek: Insurrection- Opens Dec 11th

THE HOT SHOT TAP DANCERS

Portland is home to a group of talented dancers, composed of three brothers and a sister. There is Carl, age 14; Bethany, 13; Lloyd, 11; and Kyle, 7. They are known as The Hot Shot Tap Dancers, and are the children of Charles (Randy) and Vicki Massey.

The Masseys live in Northeast Portland. The children attend Alameda Elementary, Beaumont Middle and Grant High Schools.

Carl and Bethany began taking tap, ballroom and jazz dancing when they were 8 and 6, respectively. They began performing on the sidewalk of Portland Saturday Market at that time, taking with them only tap shoes and a boombox. The crowds they drew overflowed the sidewalk onto the MAX tracks, so the group was moved to the Skidmore Fountain cobblestoned plaza. It's difficult to tap dance on cobblestones, so Dad built a dance floor. That was hard to lug around, so Dad built a stage. Through the next six years, the group that began with a boombox has accumulated a 6x12 portable raised outdoor stage, a 15x20 sectional dance floor, and a self-contained battery-operated sound system that will rattle the windows in any nearby building.

The Hot Shot Tap Dancers have been very busy this year. In January, they provided the wake-up-and-smell-the-coffee entertainment for Coldwell Banker's annual awards breakfast held at the Portland Hilton Hotel. That was followed by a Black History assembly at Madison High School. The touring company of Bring In Da Noise, Bring In The Funk provided excitement for everyone in the family. Dad was on the outreach committee, and The Hot Shots entertained at the opening reception. Dad and Mom attended the Gala Event and the kids took lessons from some cast members of the show.

In the month of March, the group opened at the Portland Saturday Market. Also in March, the kids held two performances at the Tigard Library and had a ton of fun with the parents and young folks who attended. Moving on to April, the group traveled to Dallas, Oregon, to celebrate their grandparents' Fiftieth Anniversary. They entertained the large crowd of well-wishers and made their grandparents very proud, performing both gospel and big bands tunes. Next were three performances at the Salem Agricultural Festival at the State Fairgrounds.

The month of May had a sad change of plans. The Hot Shots were at the KPTV station, ready to do a live performance to announce National Tap Day, when a news bulletin was received that a boy had opened fire on students at his school in Eugene. The dance segment was pre-empted as everyone was caught up in the unfolding tragic news.

In June, the group danced at opening ceremonies for the Police Athletic League sports camp. Also performing were the Trailblazer Dancers. The Hot Shots also helped to celebrate the third anniversary of the Walnut Park Retail Center in Northeast Portland.

July was a month on the road. The group traveled to the Corvallis/Benton County Library for two shows before very enthusiastic crowds, appeared back in Portland for Sands in the City, in Salem for two shows at the Salem Art Festival, and returned to Portland for the Maurice Lucas/Costco Sports Invitational Auction Banquet at Legacy Emanuel Children's Hospital, where they got a standing ovation and Dad got to talk with some familiar sports figures. But the month wasn't



(L-R) Carl, age 14; Bethany, 13; Lloyd, 11; and Kyle, 7. Are known as The Hot Shot Tap Dancers

over yet.

The group entertained at four county fairs during July: Multnomah, Benton, Jackson and Polk. There was a lot of traveling, a lot of hot weather, and a lot of uncertainty. But the end result was family time spent together, appreciative crowds and the making of many new friends.

The big event came in August, when the group performed at the Oregon State Fair. They were contracted to perform four one-half hour shows per day for all 12 days of the Fair. The first two days were very hectic as the stage was moved a few times. The entertainment director and Fair staff

were as helpful as possible and once they got the wrinkles ironed out, the shows went smoothly. Large audiences ignored the 95 degree heat to watch and support the kids. The group agreed that the most complicated and grueling extended performance of their careers to date was a great success.

In October, the Portland area Italian community gave the Hot Shots a standing ovation for their performance at the annual Columbus Day Celebration. Carl couldn't attend because he

was appearing on "Great Day, America" in Los Angeles to promote the book he co-authored with a few other boys. The book is titled Boys Know It All, and will hit the bookstores in November.

During November and December, the Hot Shots will take some tap classes, concentrate on their school activities and develop new dance steps and routines. You can read more about them at their website, www.teleport.com/~hotshots/, or contact them by e-mail at hotshots@teleport.com.

Bruce BecVar

Bruce BecVar, an extraordinarily gifted multi-instrumentalist and composer, has just released his most masterful work to date: River of Gold. On this, his 12th album, the master guitarist has reached a new pinnacle of artistic achievement - in song writing, musicianship and production values. Listeners will be swept away by the album's fluid guitar, melodic keyboards and subtle percussive accents.

In many ways, River of Gold is a love letter from BecVar to his fiancée, Aurora, giving the album a surprising vulnerability. In composing music that echoes his own experience, BecVar taps into something universal: the soul stirring experience of a love that opens the heart and elevates the spirit. And the album's "New Age Fusion" sound and glimmer of exotic vocals makes it a natural for both New Age and smooth jazz fans.

A seeker and healer as well as an artist, BecVar makes music for its effect on people's lives. Listeners report feeling uplifted, soothed and joyful on hearing his music. "Intent is the mortar," says BecVar. "My attitude animates the finished product as much as the materials and skill I use. So I try to achieve and maintain a centered awareness in my work."

In the tradition of musical prodigies, BecVar records primarily in his own custom home studio, plays a variety of instruments, produces and engineers all his own albums. "Doing the engineering and production is important to me for a number of reasons, but most of all, so I can make certain the sound I have in my head is what eventually ends up on the CD. I like to put the same love and attention into production that I do into composing and play-



"I had an almost innate knowingness of the instrument, almost any instrument"

ing."

BecVar's relationship with music began at an early age. When he was 8, he picked up his father's ukulele and promptly began producing chords and harmony on it. At 9, he picked up the guitar. "I put my ear next to it and began playing, composing. I had an almost innate knowingness of the instrument, almost any instrument - violin, cello, percussion, recorder, flute and piano. I rejected formal music training and I'm glad for it. My path was clearly geared toward the intuitive approach."

His affinity for woodworking, combined with his love of music, naturally led BecVar to the fine art of building instruments. At the age of 11, he crafted a dulcimer from materials and plans given to him by his father, and by 12 had built his first acoustic guitar. He subsequently became apprentice to the town guitar repairman, working on everything from guitars to kazoo's.

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