

'Footloose' has a lot of loose footage

A Movie Review By Don Strausburger

It has been billed as the street dancer's version of **Flashdance**; however, **Footloose** never quite fulfills its advance publicity.

The film stars Kevin Bacon as Ren McCormick, a "hot shot from the big city," and Lori Singer, formerly of the TV series **Fame**, as Ariel, the local

minister's daughter. The movie takes place in a small midwestern town in which loud music, drinking and dancing have been banned by law. Ren moves into the town finding the typical amount of resistance to the new kid, and is instantly labeled as a threat by the entire population. With the help of Ariel, he tries to influence the town council to let the town's teenagers have a dance. The leader of the opposition is Ariel's

father, played by John Lithgow of **Terms of Endearment**. The town's adults are finally convinced that the morals of the teenagers will not be broken by the activity and allows the dance to take place.

The subplots of this movie-prove to be the saving feature. The first of the subplots involves the development of a relationship between Ariel and Ren. The two seem destined to get together through the early part of the film; however, they desperately try to fight the obvious affection. Finally, after nearly half of the movie, they realize their passion for each other.

The second subplot involves teaching Ren's best friend how to dance. The friend in the beginning has no idea of what to do and through a crash course becomes a good dancer.

Footloose, as presented, unfortunately suffers badly in its script and technical production. The film is filled with meaningless dialogue as well as senseless reactions to emotions. For example, in the early part of the film, Ren shows his anger by driving into a warehouse, pounding on the steering wheel and then breaking into the film's best dance sequence.

The next problem is that there

is no sense of progression throughout the movie. Scene tran-

sition from beginning to end is fair at best. Most of the scene changes are very choppy, while some make no sense at all. And speaking of problems, little more was offered in regards to quality dancing than can be seen on any afternoon on **American Bandstand**.

Although all of these problems hinder the movie, there are some redeeming qualities. John Lithgow's performance as the bigoted town preacher is stimulating since his character is the only one able to develop within the strict boundaries presented by the script. The second highlight is the music used in the film. **Footloose**, with the title song by Kenny Loggins, includes music by Bonnie Tyler and several other major recording stars. This film could be another example of the "no, but I bought the soundtrack" collection of movies, which seem to have filled the theater screens in the last few years.

When it comes to the decision for seeing **Footloose**, think twice about disregarding the movie and going straight to the record dealer for the album.

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