

# REVIEWS



## Scarecrow not impressive

By DIANE NOTTLE  
of the Collegian Staff

At the 1973 Cannes Film Festival, two films shared the top honor as best film of the year: "The Hireling," a British class drama starring Sarah Miles, and "Scarecrow."

But while watching "Scarecrow," one wonders how the film could win the best film prize at Cannes or anywhere else.

This is by no means to say that "Scarecrow," produced by Robert M. Sherman and directed by Jerry Schatzberg, is a poor film. Yet, despite all its use of good film technique, it is at best unsatisfying because of a tendency to ramble without meaningful action.

## Superstar: disastrous musical

By STEVE IVEY  
of the Collegian Staff

Is nothing sacred in this age of cinematic exploitation?

"Jesus Christ Superstar" is a perfect example of how not to make a musical. "Superstar's" major failing is that it is totally ridiculous.

First of all, it is a musical in which the singers cannot sing. Andrew Lloyd Webber's music and Tim Rice's lyrics have been sung before, and better.

Ted Neeley's voice is too weak and effeminate for the role of Jesus. When he sings, it sounds as if someone were squeezing him.

Barry Dennen, playing the part of the chief priest, has the voice of a Brooklyn gangster. He is better suited to a Frankenstein movie than "Superstar."

"Scarecrow's" plot, or non-plot, tells of the adventures of two drifters who travel across the country together after meeting accidentally while trying to thumb a ride.

Maxy (Gene Hackman), a middle-aged ex-convict, dominates the pair with his plans to use his savings to open a car wash in Pittsburgh. Once led to crime by what he called a lack of planning, Maxy has resolved never to be without plans again.

His much younger sidekick is Francis (Al Pacino), an ex-sailor whose life is controlled by a dream of seeing his illegitimate five-year-old child, whom he abandoned even before its birth.

Together the two travel across the United States, sharing rides on freight trains, a few days with a pair of female junk dealers and a month on a prison farm.

In many respects, "Scarecrow" is reminiscent of "Sonder," last year's black epic. The two films share, above all else, a sense of absolute realism, focusing on instead of running from the more sordid side of life.

The world of Maxy and Francis consists of cheap bars, cheap women

and short-term menial jobs that always seem to end in fist fights. It is, in essence, the world of the stereotyped hobo, brought up to date with a modern setting and placed on a slightly higher social plane.

Fortunately, the director wisely chose to stress the crude, even vulgar aspects of their existence. In addition to enhancing the film's realistic qualities, this also creates a number of amusing scenes — most notably one in which Maxy performs a strip routine in a railroad dining car.

Hackman and Pacino fit into their roles remarkably well with a minimum of obvious acting devices. Pacino, especially shines, playing both his comic lines and his more emotional scenes with equal ease and effect.

"Scarecrow's" most satisfying effect is undoubtedly its photography and editing. Most scenes are shot in normal colors; others achieve highly artistic effects by sharply contrasting tones of dark and light.

"Scarecrow" certainly is a well-planned, well-constructed film, but overall its impact is somewhat less than impressive.

Still worse, his assistant sings like Truman Capote.

Yvonne Elliman still plays Mary Magdalene, the part she had in the original album. Her singing is acceptable but a bit nasal and lacking in body.

One of the better singers in the cast, Carl Anderson, is hindered in that as Judas he cannot act.

Pilate is excellent and the only actor to make his character come alive.

Although his singing is not superb, his acting compensates. Pilate is real, the other characters' fake.

The choreography leaves much to be desired and is reminiscent of the worst of "The Dean Martin Show."

The dances are too commercial, and the dancers act like they are monkeys on fire or as if they have the DTs.

The photography is generally poor. Close-ups on the actors singing make them look like horses neighing.

The shots of Masada and the surrounding desert and rocky crags are well done, however.

Producer-director Norman Jewison attempted the impossible and utterly failed, in an attempt to make "Superstar" simultaneously historical, relevant to today's youth, religious but not too religious, and a light comedy. Jewison came up with a disaster.

Discounting the historical inaccuracies, Jewison's bid for relevancy by introducing modern gadgets is ludicrous.

There were better methods of making it relevant than opening with a shot of a bus with a cross on top, putting cash registers and postcard stands in the Temple scene, and arming the guards with submachine guns and spears.

To top it off, Jewison has a strange sense of humor. When the Pharisees went to talk to Judas, they sent centurians after him. In the movie, however, they use centurian tanks.

Humor and irrelevant religion team up to make Jesus' encounter with Herod offensive and disgusting. Jewison has Herod wallowing in a Coney Island on a lake.

Jewison does succeed in some scenes. In particular when Jesus tries to help the sick and the grief and anguish on Mary's face when Pilate condemns Jesus to be crucified.

Unfortunately, the development of a realistic mood is always ruined by the intrusion of modern-day artifices. By far, the best scenes are those without anything modern in them.

"Jesus Christ Superstar" is a mockery of what a musical should be. But it is a film that will make money in spite of its poor quality and poorer taste.

### Editorial opinion:

President Nixon has denied pleas for secret White House tapes by Special Watergate Prosecutor Archibald Cox and the Senate Committee investigating Watergate. In doing so, he has denied the public's plea for justice.

Nixon has refused the tapes on the grounds that he must maintain the constitutionally guaranteed separation of powers.

But Cox and the Ervin Committee are requesting not permanent access to all White House papers and tapes, but access to only those tapes needed to clear up inconsistencies in the Watergate case. The request is intended not to challenge the separation of powers but rather to aid in the pursuit of justice.

The present cloud surrounding Watergate is of such proportions that it covers the White House and the presidency as well. The speculation and the inconsistencies concerning Nixon's involvement in the case do more to erode the authority of the President than a one-time dismissal of executive privilege.

The President must realize that at this point his word is not enough to clear the air. The public — and the Senate Committee and Cox — need concrete proof to establish his innocence. The tapes may help accomplish this.

Presently, the public has little reason to believe Nixon is not involved. All actions seem to indicate he has damaging evidence to hide.

Thus far Nixon has denied knowledge of the Watergate break-in and subsequent coverup. But by refusing to release the tapes, he is playing a definite role in the cover-up that has continued in the White House since the hearings and investigation began — an apparent plot to conceal any information that might further implicate Nixon or the White House.

The President has held firm before Senate and Cox subpoenas and now the stalemate is to be settled in court. President Nixon has said he will abide by the court decision.

If the court places the pursuit of justice above a one-time dismissal of Nixon's executive privilege and orders access to the tapes, Nixon should comply as previously agreed.

If the court upholds Nixon's claims, the President should re-examine his stand on Watergate and assume a less rigid, more cooperative stance.

He can best preserve the integrity of the White House and maintain the authority of the presidency by aiding in the pursuit of justice.

## In pursuit of justice

# the Collegian

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Letters should be brought to The Collegian office, 126 Carnegie, in person so proper identification of the writer can be made, although names will be withheld by request. If letters are received by mail, The Collegian will contact the signer for verification.

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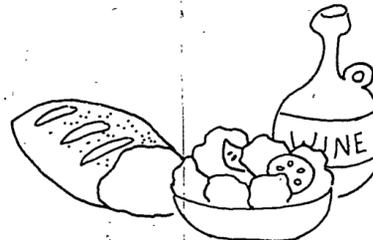
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