movies...

'How the West Was Won': Cinerama spectacular

By Gilberto Pensa-Galierro

It is hard to view 'How The West Was Won' from any serious position. As a fictionalized history of the conquest of the American West, it lacks historical sense. The story, which follows several generations of the Prescott family as they go through the West, is sketchy and rather trite. Aside from the usual corny stuff, there is no consistent re-creating of the legends of the West, and this is missed. There is little Western flavor in the film. If any serious attempt at American epic has been made, it has certainly failed.

Still, one may view 'How The West Was Won' as a gigantic circus, with little depth and much excitement. There is no denying the entertainment potentials of such a genre, and 'How The West Was Won' is very exciting at times. The train robbery sequence is an excellent example; although the story is a bit absurd, the scene is thoroughly breathtaking. Henry Hathaway, who directed it, made full use of the excitement resources of the huge screen, playing with them in an undeniably amusing fashion.

But there is little difference between Hathaway's use of Cinerama and the look-and-feels app- proach of the roller coaster sequence in 'This is Cinerama.' In fact, there is no use of the resource to tell a story; rather, the story is used as a mere press for the invention of the Cinerama trickery.

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The departure of the son for the Civil War, directed by John Ford, is inclined to conclude negatively. However, the sequence on the roller coaster sequence in 'This is Cinerama,' with little depth and much excitement. There is no denying the entertainment possibilities of such a genre, and 'How The West Was Won' is very exciting at times. The train robbery sequence is an excellent example; although the story is a bit absurd, the scene is thoroughly breathtaking. Henry Hathaway, who directed it, made full use of the excitement resources of the huge screen, playing with them in an undeniably amusing fashion.

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