movies...

A great way 'to cut the rope'

By David Swedlow

"Zorba The Greek," the film adaptation of the best-seller by Nikos Kazantzakis, is surely destined for one of the best picture awards. Nominated for seven academy awards, "Zorba," now serves every foot of the two block-long line that waits anxiously outside the theater.

The plot of the film is quite simple. Zorba (Anthony Quinn) adopts the young writer (Alan Bates) and the two go off on an adventure to Crete, where the young writer is going to open a hotel. Coincidentally enough, Zorba, just happens to be an expert lignite miner. The two travelers are met in the village by Madame Hortense, a retired French courtesan with visions of Madame Hortense, a retired French courtesan with visions of Madame Hortense, a retired

Meanwhile the young writer befriends a beautiful young widow who is desired by the young men of the village but who scorns them all. Zorba is convinced that she wants the writer ("Didn't you see the look in her eyes?"); but he is

One of the many outstanding features of this film is the photography. Many of the scenes which would otherwise have been a bit neutral, were made up through the use of creative photography. One scene in particular deserves attention. At the ship's dock with the two travelers to the island of Crete, there is a storm at sea. Naturally Zorba is highly susceptible to motion sickness. The camera follows the action through Zorba's eyes and the audience knows, or rather, experiences, what is happening from the most intimate viewing position. This intimacy, which distinguishes this scene from any usual run-of-the-mill storm scene would never have come about without the superb photography of the camera crew. It is no wonder that one of the film's academy award nominations is for "Best Cinematography."

If one had to pick out the single most outstanding feature of the film, it would have to be the actor. In his portrayal of Zorba, Mr. Quinn has one of his finest roles. No monologues, no words, no expressions are wasted by this most talented man. Quinn and Zorba were made for one another, and the audience senses this as it is drawn into the action. For his efforts, Mr. Quinn was nominated for "Best Actor."

Again, it is no surprise to one who has seen the movie. 'Zorba' makes one aware of life and the joy of living. It is full of warmth, humor, and a touch of madness. As Zorba himself says, "A man needs a touch of madness, or else he will never cut the rope and be free."

To see Zorba is to cut the rope, if only for a short time. If for no other reason than this, it is well worth seeing.