

'Omen' is chilling summer fare

By REBECCA SCHMIDT

Stated for a June 25th opener in the metropolitan area, you can plan on having "The Omen" spend the summer with us. The new release, starring Gregory Peck and Lee Remick, is guaranteed to keep the box office lines long and steady.

"The Omen" is a prophetic tale that relates to the coming of the anti-Christ and the annihilation of mankind, no light subject and one that is certainly flop material if poorly handled.

But it's not. The film has been handled deftly and forged into a slick, absorbing thriller by director Richard Donner. The storyline revolves around the American Ambassador to Great Britain (Gregory Peck), his wife (Lee Remick) and an adopted child who turns out to be the anti-Christ. Carefully and well scripted by David Seltzer, "Omen" is destined to be a

The Reel Story

big grower in more ways than one.

EVEN THOUGH the conclusion of the tale is fairly obvious by the mid-point of the film, the suspenseful and shocking path it takes to the ending will give it high marks among thrillers.

An immediate comparison is, of course, to "The Exorcist." But that is a bit unfair considering the technical quality of the picture. Let's just say that this one is the second half of a one-two punch. If "The Exorcist" set you up, "The Omen" will deliver the knockout.

Both Gregory Peck and Lee Remick are given a fair shot at pretty solidly written roles and, in keeping with past performance, neither of them condescends to take it up and run off with the money. Both offer characters that are consistent with the standard of the whole project.

Peck's performance is rife with the presence and dignity necessary to sell the plot of the film. And Lee Remick? Well, she simply has had a hard time ever turning in an unacceptable performance. John Richardson deserves lots of credit for the design and execution of the film's

special effects. He has created some never before experienced and will most surely be well in the running for an Oscar.

DETECTIVE DONNER looks like a graduate of "Alfred Hitchcock M.V." The staging and presentation of his story is blatant manipulation of every suspense response you've got. It may lack that total command of each detail that we've come to expect from the Hitchcock genre but, be that as it may, the same nerves haven't twisted in my body since the first time I saw "Psycho."

Although not recommended for the faint-hearted, don't say you weren't warned when those long box office lines and the prodding of your friends finally coax you into seeing it. However, for the rest of us who enjoy the front seat of the roller coaster and spooky stories in the dark, "The Omen" will be an immediate must.

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