

ARTS & Entertainment

The Newton Brothers

20th Century fox

Roaring into the lives of Americans with sweeping changes, the 1920s marked the passing of an era. The horse-and-buggy had given way to a four-wheel, mechanized contraption known as an automobile. The wild west was tamed, and the American frontier was bursting with new towns, shops, banks and schools. Corporate America now reigned supreme in a land which had once been characterized by heroic settlers pushing westward against incredible odds.

This new American dream of opportunity and prosperity had reached many of the nation's citizens - bankers, lawyers, shopkeepers...even criminals. Take the Newton Boys for example. Living in Texas, a state which was still wild, rough, wide open and without rules or limitations, brothers Willis, Jess, Dock and Joe embraced this new technology - and this new American way of life - to take their fair share of the wealth they saw around them. The Newton brothers decided to turn to a career for which they seemed to have a natural affinity.

They became America's most prolific bank robbers.

The Newton boys' true-life exploits, crossing over into several states, captured the imagination of the public - and the attention of numerous law enforcement agents and insurance investigators. The brothers' "crowning achievement," the three million dollar heist of a federal mail train, was the biggest haul ever for such a robbery; it also led to their downfall.

The Newton Brothers stars Matthew McConaughey (*"A Time to Kill"*) as Willis Newton, Ethan Hawke (*"Great Expectations"*) as Jess Newton, Vincent S'Onofrio (*"Strange Days"*) as Dock Newton and Skeet Ulrich (*"Scream"*) as Joe Newton. The film also stars Julianna Margulies (*"ER"*) and Dwight Yoakam (*"Sling Blade"*). Richard Linklater (*"Before Sunrise"*) directs from a screenplay he wrote with Claude Stanush and Clark Lee Walker, based on a book by Stanush. The motion picture is also produced by Anne Walker-McBay.

This motion picture, due out on March 27th, is sure to be a crowd pleaser.



Foreign film review

BY DAVID MACDONALD

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg is a film made in France in about 1964, and is a musical which involves a relationship between a mechanic and a woman who sells umbrellas at her mother's shop. The plot is essentially your typical teenage love threatened to be torn apart by outside forces (in this case, an eventual two-year stint in the army) and the predictably turbulent emotions that occur. In the first musical number, a fellow mechanic complains that such things as opera and musicals are such a pain with all that singing. If those are his feelings, then he ought to put this movie in a safe place and run as far away as possible from it, for there is a lot of singing, and, yes, it does become a pain.

The gimmick to this musical is not the fact that there are any songs at all, but the fact that *every single word* in the entire script is sung! That's right, the music never ends, the singers never stop, and nobody gets a rationally spoken phrase in at all. This actually would be alright if the songs were any good, but there really isn't anything here that is better sung than spoken. It's just regular, mediocre dialogue, not lyrics that actually say anything about the character(s); we know very little except for the basics: they love each other, people like the woman's mother don't accept such a passionate love among people who are still young and not "mature", another guy is trying to compete for the woman's attention, and so on. There are no memorable songs, just a bunch of unmemorable musical variations and dialogue (as opposed to poetic lyrics) being sung over the top of them.

There are a few good points. Unlike most musicals, this one is not stuck in the past. This actually is a French city in the early sixties, not a setting from the distant past, and so instead of songs being sung at an embassy ball or an extravagant kingdom, we get garage mechanics at an Esso station singing over a big-band arrangement. Also, the ending is unexpected, which is a surprise considering the previous sappy love story. The gimmick itself is interesting to witness as an experiment, and the film itself is quite colourful in its appearance. But there are no big show-stopping numbers (maybe the garage mechanics should have done a song-and-dance number similar to the ridiculous Speedy Muffler commercial; that would have been memorable!). The film would have been much better as a regular non-musical movie, and after having seen such great musical films like *My Fair Lady*, *Singin' in the Rain*, and *Cabaret*, I thought that this was somewhat of a disappointment.

Rating: **1/2

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