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Kevin Bacon (left) and his best friend Christopher Penn are determined to change the narrow-mindedness of their rural community in Footloose now showing at Markville.

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Markham Movie Scene Footloose well acted

By IAN BAILEY

"We got TV! We got Family Feud!" So exclaims Willard (Christopher Penn) in Footloose, as he defends the puritan narrowness of his hometown, Bomont, to his city slicker buddy Ren (Kevin Bacon).

Bomont, which is located in the American midwest, may have Richard Dawson, but it doesn't have rock videos or any other reflections of 80s pop culture. There's no Duran Duran, no Culture Club, no Michael Jackson, no Men at Work, no Pat Benetar and — gosh — no dancing.

In Bomont teenagers smuggle in cassette tapes and jot down lyrics in secret hiding places. Dancing is illegal and the police confiscate rock tapes.

The whole town is complacently under the thumb of the head minister, Reverend Shaw Moore (John Lithgow) who has led a successful movement to ban, what he sees as, corrupting pop culture.

The task of opening Bomont up to the more popular aspects of the 20th century is left to Ren MacCormack, a recent arrival from Chicago, who still has David Bowie in his blood and itches visibly at the town's Orwellian mentality.

What results is a conflict of epic proportions as rural complacency slams into an individual who can't forget the lights of the big city. Ren is first incredulous, then uncomfortable, then outraged.

The second result is a toe tapping, finger snapping good time. Herbert (The Turning Point) Ross, working from a screenplay by Fame lyricist Dean Pitchford (who co-wrote the film's nine original songs) has crafted a perceptive look at the spirit of teen culture that transcends its focus on the 80s.

By highlighting the frustrations that result from Bomont's repression, Ross and Pitchford manage to emphasize the spirit of the music as a means of expression and release.

Granted, the film runs a few minutes too long to sustain its breezy material, but Ross pulls it off thanks to his flashy yet perceptive handling of the material. Though Pitchford's descriptions of his characters and their emotions is surprisingly solid it is elevated a few notches into endearing sincerity by the convictions of the cast.

Kevin Bacon is excellent as Ren, a teen rebel who is pleasingly intelligent rather than inarticulate, and surly but not stupid. As Reverend Moore, Lithgow steers clear of playing the heavy as an antagonistic gargole and lends the Reverend the striking conflict between his ominous physical presence and his doe-eyed awkward sensitivity.

Footloose is playing at Markville Cinemas.

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Love Letters is a nice surprise

By IAN BAILEY

Love Letters is nothing less than a very pleasant surprise; the second film of writer/director Amy Jones (Her first film was an alleged atrocity entitled Slumber Party Massacre) is an effective, restrained drama that marks her as a talent to watch while revealing hiterto unseen acting dimensions of its star, Jamie Lee Curtis.

Love Letters is the story of two parallel love affairs; those of Anna Win-

ter (Curtis) and her mother (Bonnie Bartlet). However, Mrs. Winter is dead and her extramarital affair (which occurred when Anna was a child) is seen from the present through a series of love letters Anna discovers among her possessions.

At the same time Anna has embarked on an affair with a married photographer (James Keach, Stacy's son). In an admirably skillful manner the various stages of Anna's affair are

guided by the letters from the past.

Though the letters from the past are an obvious plot trick Jones handles the letters from the past in a subdued, but effective way. Their novelty never overshadows the compelling drama taking place in the present. They serve to highlight the painful lessons Anna learns.

Curtis, in a film where she isn't pursued by a knife wielding maniac, is astonishingly good as Anna. Though the men in the film are portrayed as louts of varying degrees Keach strikes an emphatic chord as the anguished yet passionate married man.

Foremost, however, the evident surety and flair with which Jones handles her material mark her as a film talent to be anticipated. The new dimensions of Curtis' acting range moves her up several notches as an actress.

Love Letters, which is quite rightly rated R, is playing at Thornhill Square.

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- PLAYING THIS WEEKEND!**
- Thornhill Square
- 1) Unfaithfully Yours (AA) - Starring Dudley Moore, and Nastassia Kinski.
 - 2) Flashdance (AA).
 - 3) The Dresser (PG) - Albert Finney and Tom Courteney are so powerful in their opposite roles here that the screen can hardly contain them. Finney is a declining actor, Courteney is his simpering, but devoted dresser. In directing this slightly claustrophobic drama, Peter Yates serves as lion tamer to keep the power of their performances in control.
 - 4) Silkwood (AA).
- Markville Cinemas
- 1) Terms of Endearment (AA).
 - 2) Footloose (AA), reviewed elsewhere on this page.
 - 3) Lassiter (R).
 - 4) Silkwood (AA).