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## Movies

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### Go west, young classic film lover

DEBORAH NICOL • THE DESERT SUN

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What better way to shake up the traditional American Western than with a Greek chorus and a drunken hero?

**ADVERTISEMENT** Director Elliot Silverstein will discuss "Cat Ballou," his 1965 satire of the cowboy and Indians genre, as part of the Palm Springs International Film Society's How the West Was Won program at 7 p.m. Wednesday.

Turning the genre on its head for Silverstein's first feature film was no easy feat. "I had to be careful about satirizing an American icon, the Western hero," the director remembers. He claims to have been fired four or five times for each occasion the studio became anxious about stretching the norm and risking studio backing.

Silverstein reflects, "We thought this movie was going to be a little different - a modest film that wasn't going to go anywhere. We felt this was our golden door; if we could get through this movie, we would be allowed to do other projects. Little did I know what it was."

Lee Marvin won multiple awards including an Oscar and Golden Globe for his role as humorously washed up gunslinger Kid Shelleen, and the film received four other Academy Award nominations.

Wednesday's program will mark the first time that Silverstein has seen "Cat Ballou" with an audience since its release. The initial screening was a double bill with "How the West Was Won," and the audience was apprehensive about laughing at Silverstein's comedy until its second reel. Associate producer Mitch Lindemann's solution was to morph the studio's toga attired "Columbia lady" into a cowgirl, so that audiences were prepared to laugh from the first frame.

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### GO WEST

**How the West Was Won: The Evolution of the Western Genre** sponsored by Palm Springs International Film Society

**Where:** Palm Canyon Theatre, Palm Springs

**When:** July 25 at 7 p.m.

**Admission:** Free, reservations required

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