BLACK AND WHITE POPCORN

The chocolate popcorn at Cinerama, here in Seattle, is legendary. My brother pleaded with me to replicate the recipe, and for years I tried, even before I stepped foot in the theater. Finally, I went and experienced the popcorn myself and felt the urgency of my brother's request.

This recipe is the result of many trials and oh so many errors. At the Cinerama, you can get all chocolate popcorn or half chocolate and half regular. Half and half is my favorite, so that's what we've done here. Although mine is doused with a bit of brown butter, which really takes the whole thing over the top.

SERVES 4 TO 6

1⁄2 cup / 100 g unpopped popcorn (about 6 cups popped)

1⁄2 cup / 110 g unsalted butter

1⁄4 cup / 50 g packed dark brown sugar

2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted

1⁄2 teaspoon sea salt, plus more to finish

1⁄4 teaspoon baking soda

1⁄4 cup / 40 g finely chopped chocolate

Prepare the popcorn and divide it equally between 2 large bowls.

Preheat the oven to 250°F / 120°C. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper, then set aside.

Melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium-high heat until bubbling and frothy. When the milk solids present in the butter start to caramelize and the butter smells nutty, transfer 2 tablespoons to a small bowl, then set that aside. To the rest of the butter, add the brown sugar, cocoa powder, 1⁄2 teaspoon sea salt, and the baking soda. Bring back to a boil, then cook, whisking continuously, until the sugar dissolves, about 1 minute.

Pour this mixture over one of the bowls of popcorn. Stir to coat well. Dump the popcorn mixture onto the prepared sheet pan, then bake for 30 to 40 minutes, stirring a couple of times throughout the baking process.

Remove the popcorn from the oven, then transfer the chocolate popcorn back to its bowl and stir in the chopped chocolate. The finer it's chopped, the more it will melt and coat the popcorn, but if you want

some bits of chocolate not melted, then wait until the popcorn is not quite so warm or chop the chocolate roughly.

Let the chocolate cool on the popcorn, about 20 minutes, or pop it into the refrigerator if your patience won't allow the wait. After about 10 minutes, the chocolate will be set.

Add the remaining 2 tablespoons brown butter to the plain popcorn. (Microwave the butter just until it's melted, about 20 seconds, if it has firmed up, or warm in a saucepan over low heat.) Season the plain popcorn with sea salt to taste.

Combine the chocolate and regular popcorn, then press Play on your favorite movie.