

behrroll5@aol.com

# 'Friends,' 'ER' take home People's Choice awards

by Jeanine Noce  
A & E editor

Kissing fans, giving autographs and taking your pants off. What do these three things have in common? These are what actors, actresses and singers are supposed to do for the fans. In fact, that's what they did at the 28th annual "People's Choice Awards" Sunday on CBS.

Kevin James, the star of "The King of Queens" returned as the comedic host for the awards show televised from the Pasadena Civic Auditorium in California. The gala recognized special achievement in movies, television and music, and awards were chosen by the people through a nationwide Gallup poll. The show is a platform for the winners to express their thanks and appreciation to those who love and support their performances when they attend concerts, buy CDs, rent or buy videos, go see a movie or watch them at home on television.

Voting took place at www.cbs.com for several awards such as the favorite new television dramatic series which "Alias" won. Favorite male and female music performers were Garth Brooks and Faith Hill. Favorite musical group or band nominees were 'N Sync, Backstreet Boys and the Dixie Chicks. 'N Sync won.

The favorite male performer in a new television series was Damon Wayans for the comedy "My Wife and Kids" which also won the award for favorite new television comedy series. Reba McEntire won for favorite female performer in a new television series for "Reba." Before

receiving her award, McIntire performed a song.

The favorite female television performer was Jennifer Aniston, who was not able to be at the awards show. However, she did give a recorded "thank you" for the fans from the Sundance film festival.

"This is not really my area of expertise, but I am here to present the award for favorite male television

for favorite motion picture actress and was extremely excited and nervous while thanking everyone. Tom Hanks was the winner for favorite motion picture actor and also received the favorite motion picture star in a drama award for "Cast Away." The favorite motion picture star in a movie was Eddie Murphy, who was on location. He had a recorded speech and thanked all of the people for their support for him throughout the years.

The favorite reality based program was "Survivor: The Australian Outback" and the favorite daytime dramatic series was "Days of Our Lives."

Smash Mouth performed its hit song, "I'm a Believer" during the awards show.

Tony Danza paid tribute to the police, firemen, paramedics and all of the brave New York citizens. He spoke with kind words about the New York citizens and all of the helpful people in America and thanked them on behalf of everyone at the People's Choice awards.

The presenters included Carol Burnett, Ted Danson, Craig T. Nelson and Kiefer Sutherland among many others. This special presentation allowed the American people to express their feelings towards their favorite actors and singers and to hear from the winners allowed the audience to see just how grateful the fans were for their support.

Julia Roberts summed up the evening's events.

"Let's all try to help one another and get along. God bless everyone and thank you," said Roberts.



Kevin James from "King of Queens" returned to host the live telecast and began by walking through the audience chatting with celebrities.

performer." Ellen DeGeneres jokingly told the audience. Kelsey Grammer and Ray Romano tied for that award.

The favorite television comedy series was "Friends" and Matt LeBlanc spoke about how the fans were the most important people. "ER" beat out "Law & Order" and "The West Wing" for favorite dramatic series. The cast and crew accepted the award and spoke about "ER" not just being a television series but also a person who brings so many wonderful people together.

Julia Roberts picked up the award

# 'Phantom' - an encore production

Ask the many Erie Playhouse people associated with the musical "Phantom" what they think of the show and the answer you will most likely get is "it is better than the other version."

"What other version?" you may well ask. "Isn't there only one 'Phantom of the Opera?'"

Yes, there is on version called "Phantom of the Opera" and that is the musical written by Andrew Lloyd Webber. At the time Webber was working, composer Maury Yeston was at work on his own version titled, "Phantom." Webber beat Yeston by finishing first and once "Phantom of the Opera" opened in London, Yeston let his version languish, assuming no one would be interested.

Several years later, a Texas theatre heard about the Yeston version asked if it could produce it. Audiences and critics alike deemed it superior to the famous Webber version. Indeed theatres all over the United States and

the world started producing Yeston's "Phantom." The Erie Playhouse mounted "Phantom" in July of 1995 and it was extremely successful.

"Phantom" will star the original 1995 leads again, with Jeff Lipiec playing the Phantom and Laurie Green re-creating Christine. Al Braun will play the Phantom's father Gerard. Sean Baley will play Raoul, Christine's love interest. A large cast of Playhouse singers, dancers and actors will complete the company.

Richard Davis will direct, choreograph and costume the characters and Joe Hassler will add scenery and lights.

"Phantom" weaves the tale of a disfigured musical genius and a mysterious life below the stage of the Paris Opera. Secretive, unhappy and bitter over the turns his life has taken, the only joy he finds is in his coaching of a young soprano (Christine). His warped love for her almost destroys them both. The story of "Phantom of

the Opera" has captured theatergoers all over the world and every indication is that "Phantom" will repeat the success of all former productions.

**Show Dates & Times:**  
Jan. 17-20, 24-26  
Thursday - 7:30 p.m., Friday & Saturday - 8 p.m., Sunday - 2 p.m.  
Jan. 26 - 5 p.m.

**Ticket Prices:**  
Thursday & Sunday: adults \$17, seniors \$16, students \$9  
Friday & Saturday: adults \$19, seniors \$18, students \$9

The Erie Playhouse  
13 West 10th St. Erie, PA  
Box Office: 454-2852 ext. 41  
www.erieplayhouse.org

# Don't make trip to 'Orange County'

by Daniel J. Stasiewski  
staff writer

As a life-long Erie resident with no west coast ties to speak of, ripping into what has become the clichéd California lifestyle isn't something I could successfully pull off. Just watching "Clueless" or "Saved by the Bell" doesn't give me that personal input needed to make believable criticism.

Such commentary can be found in writer Michael White's MTV-produced film "Orange County." Raised in Pasadena, his insider's perspective of the superficial and uncultured California populace can be quite amusing. When combined with the necessary drama, however, "Orange County's" satirical point of view makes the film feel more conflicted than the characters ever do.

After the death of a close friend, Shaun Brumder (Colin Hanks) goes into a meditative state. His days, no longer wasted on surfing, are spent peering into the ocean off the beaches of Orange County, Calif. One fateful day, Shaun stumbles upon a book written by Stanford Professor Marcus Skinner (Kevin Kline). The book forces Shaun to question everything about his brain-dead hometown, and inspires him to become a Stanford educated writer.

Everything goes perfectly until his college counselor sends the wrong transcript to Stanford. Rejected from his choice college, Shaun goes on a 300-mile road trip with his drugged-up older brother Lance (Jack Black) and his girlfriend Ashley (Schuyler Fisk) in hopes of setting the record straight.

Almost immediately, "Orange County" has trouble keeping its footing. Satire slips in and out of the heartening story in the same fashion as product placement. It's obviously in



Colin Hanks is the star of the MTV comedy "Orange County" which was released on January 11.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ORANGECOUNTYMOVIE.COM

there, because I was laughing. But just as the jokes don't hinder the plot, they don't push it much either. The promiscuous head cheerleader, bungling faculty members, and a downright obnoxious family are all quite entertaining. The only problem is, they don't need to be. After all, should I really be laughing at Shaun's alcoholic mother?

Now, the ill-placed comedy is unnecessary only because the film seems autobiographical at points. Jokes tend to be more of a coping mechanism than a creative outlet for real emotions. Compliments to White if this film doesn't have any true-life roots; Shaun is certainly more personal than most central characters. If, however, this is White's attempt at "Almost Famous," it's a considerable failure.

I wouldn't call just any aspect of "Orange County" disappointing because, frankly, I wasn't expecting much. Black, however, was a disappointment. After his sidesplitting role in "High Fidelity," Black's only unique character has come from "Shallow Hal." In "Orange County," Black resorts to the frenzied sidekick everyone knows. While he's still funny, Black's lack of innovation only

causes him to lose his appeal.

Hanks and Fisk are competent in the lead roles. Hanks keeps the movie afloat, much as his father Tom Hanks did in his early comedic roles. Also the child of a veteran actor (Sissy Spacek), Fisk adds tremendous heart to a film that sees Black running around in his underwear most of the time. The two rising stars are the highlight of this otherwise lackluster comedy.

Besides the irony in MTV producing a film that parodies most of the network's audience, the entertainment value of "Orange County" is mediocre at best. The film could have been a nice break from recent heartless, gross-out teen movies, but "Orange County" doesn't sustain itself long enough to matter. At least it's a starting point for new talent like Hanks and Fisk. Without their fresh performances, "Orange County" would have been a total loss.



# 'Two on the Aisle' is a musical treat

Take your seat at the Erie Playhouse for the next composer/lyricist concert featuring the lyrics of Betty Comden and Adolph Green on Jan. 22 and 23. This dynamic duo have penned lyrics for Broadway productions such as "Peter Pan," "On the Town," "Bells are Ringing" and "The Will Rogers Follies."

Playhouse managing director, David Matthews acts as host and

pianist for the concert. Concert audiences have come to enjoy Matthews wit and spontaneity as he shares backstage gossip about the creators and stars of various Broadway shows.

Joining Matthews are Geri Baker, June Braun, Lisa Campbell, Joe Cirino, Almitra Clerkin, Charles Corritore, Jerry Gill, Joe Hassler, Kate Neubert-Lechner, Marilyn Smith and Rich Tryzbiak singing the

lyrics of Comden and Green. There is no reserved seating and tickets are available at the door for \$10 each. Curtain time is 7:30 p.m. No advance reservations are accepted.

**'Two on the Aisle'**  
Jan. 22 & 23 - 7:30 p.m.  
Erie Playhouse  
454-2852 ext. 41  
www.erieplayhouse.org

# 'Art' - wonderfully funny

It is time for the return of 'Art,' the Tony Award-winning comedy about art and the art of friendship. The show was a smash hit in its short run in March and April of last year. Now the three Kings of Erie comedy -- Jim Gandolfo, John Stockhausen and Mark Tanenbaum -- return for a second limited run of the play.

Showcase raves, "Art and friendship come together in 'Art' at the Roadhouse Theatre. Under the direction of Scott McClelland, the comic

actors succeed in making the production even funnier than the play reads."

The story turns on a disagreement between friends Serge and Mark over a large all-white painting purchased by Serge for \$200,000. Marc brings their mutual friend "Ivan" into the fray and soon the arguments leap from theoretical to personal with hilarious results.

Whether you missed it the first time around, want to see it again, or plan to bring your friends for a much

needed evening of laughs, 'Art' is back for a great night out at the theatre.

**Jan. 11 - Feb. 23**  
Fridays & Saturday at 8 p.m.  
Reservations: 456-5656  
Roadhouse Theatre  
145 West 11th St. - Erie PA  
Admission: \$10 adults, \$5 students with ID

MILLCREEK • Phone 344-868-5551

•Stereo sound in all auditoriums  
•Handicap accessible  
\$1.00 Regular Admission  
\$1.50 Friday and Saturday after 5:00 p.m.  
50¢ All shows on Tuesday

INSIDE TOWN • Phone 344-868-3444

•Stereo sound in all auditoriums  
•Handicap accessible  
\$3.50 first matinee (Monday - Friday)  
\$4.50 seniors and children  
\$4.50 shows before 5:00pm  
\$6.50 adults (Sunday - Thursday)  
\$6.75 adults (Friday - Saturday)

# New Releases

**Movies**  
- 'Black Hawk Down'  
- 'Snow Dogs'

**Video\***  
- 'American Pie 2'  
- 'Glitter'  
- 'Bubble Boy'  
- 'The Anniversary Party'

**Music\***  
- 'Chemical Brothers'  
- 'Alan Jackson'

**DVD\***  
- 'The Sixth Sense'  
- 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer - Season 1'  
- 'American Pie 2'

\*Release Date: 1/18

Special thanks to Media Play for providing information

