

# Big stars fuel hopes for Christmas movies

By BOB THOMAS  
Associated Press Writer

HOLLYWOOD — America's movie theater owners are dreaming of a green Christmas to climax a record year at the box office.

The return of Steven Spielberg, Bill Cosby and Barbra Streisand, a drama about Wall Street and such promising comedies as *Three Men and a Cradle*, *Planes, Trains and Automobiles* and *Moonstruck* are among the reasons film exhibitors are looking forward to the holiday season. In fact, they don't need to wait, since some of those movies will be on the screens by Thanksgiving.

"*Three Men and a Cradle* is going to do fantastic business," predicts Millie Gautier, a booker for the 100-screen, New York-based Creative Entertainment Consultants.

In a survey of theater circuits, *Three Men and a Cradle* was the film that most bookers mentioned first. The Touchstone Picture comedy stars Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg and Ted Danson as bachelors in charge of an infant. Based on the French film *Three Men and a Cradle*, it will open Nov. 25.

*Planes, Trains and Automobiles*, a John Hughes comedy about the sorrows of modern travel, has also drawn glowing comments from theater people.

"It's got money in it," said Bruce Corwin, president of the 80-screen Metropolitan Theaters, all in Southern California. The Steve Martin-John Candy film also has a Nov. 25 release.

Corwin adds that he has high hopes for *Empire of the Sun*, though it has not yet been previewed: "It's (Steven) Spielberg, and his track record is the best in the business." The story concerns an 11-year-old who witnesses the Japanese invasion of Shanghai in World War II.

*Nuts*, with Barbra Streisand and Richard Dreyfuss in a courtroom drama, has "excellent possibilities," says Ross Wheeler, booker for the 160-screen Cinemette chain, mostly in Pennsylvania.

"A fantastic movie with a great cast," agrees Gautier.

*Cry Freedom*, Richard Attenborough's extraordinary and powerful movie about the slain South African leader Steve Biko and the

newspaper editor who forms a friendship with him, has already hit movie theaters but should last through the holidays. It stars Denzel Washington and Kevin Kline and has won rave reviews from critics.

Bookers are predicting that *Wall Street* will profit from the stock market crash in the manner that *The China Syndrome* did after the Three Mile Island nuclear disaster.

"It couldn't be more timely, but the cast alone would make it seem like a winner," Gautier said. The movie was directed by Academy Award winner Oliver Stone (*Platoon*) and stars Michael Douglas, hot from *Fatal Attraction*, and Charlie Sheen of *Platoon*.

There is wary optimism about *Leonard: Part VI*, which will bring Bill Cosby back to the big screen.

"He's the most popular man in America, so his movie should attract business," says Corwin. The Columbia Pictures comedy has undergone revisions after test previews drew negative reactions.

Another popular funnyman, Eddie Murphy, will be a holiday attraction but not as a fast-

talking cop. *Eddie Murphy Raw* is expected to be just that. The unexpurgated concert film is rated R because of his language, and hence the audience may be curtailed.

Other comedies for the holidays include the following:

*Throw Momma From the Train*, starring Danny De Vito and Billy Crystal, directed by De Vito.

*Overboard*, a domestic comedy with Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell, directed by Norman Jewison.

*Moonstruck*, Cher and Nicholas Cage in a romantic comedy.

*Batteries Not Included*, a fantasy from the Spielberg company starring Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn.

*Good Morning, Vietnam*, a M-A-S-H-like story with Robin Williams as a Saigon disc jockey.

The holidays also will bring dramatic films, some of them aiming for the Academy Awards.

James Brooks, directing his first film since *Terms of Endearment*, offers William Hurt, Holly Hunter and Albert Brooks in *Broadcast*

*News*, about a Washington TV station. Woody Allen turns dramatic again with *September*, featuring Mia Farrow, Diane Wiest and Sam Waterston.

Those Oscar veterans Meryl Streep and Jack Nicholson reteam in *Ironweed*, directed by Hector Babenco (*Kiss of the Spider Woman*). Ed Harris and Oscar winner Marlee Matlin appear in *Walker*, about an American soldier of fortune in Central America in the last century.

Bernardo Bertolucci's epic of recent Chinese history, *The Last Emperor*, may have Academy possibilities. The same for John Huston's final film, *The Dead* and *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*, with Maggie Smith and Bob Hoskins.

The holiday attractions are likely to add more jubilation for the theaters' New Year's celebration. By that time, estimates Art Murphy of Daily Variety, 1987 will have produced a record high of \$4.1 billion at U.S. and Canadian box offices. That will top the previous peak of \$4.03 billion in 1984. Last year's total was \$3.78 billion.

## Chuck Berry writes about rock and roll

By TIM O'BRIEN  
Collegian Arts Writer

Chuck Berry: *The Autobiography* — (Harmony Books)

"Someday your name will be in lights / And you will be the leader of a big old band" — prophetic words from Chuck Berry's famous song "Johnny B. Goode."

In one of the most important books written about rock and roll, Berry divulges all the details of his famed career in *The Autobiography*.

What puts this book a cut above the rest is that Berry wrote it himself — no ghost writers or sensationalist hype is present in these pages. Instead, Berry gives an inside view to his life as "The Father of Rock and Roll."

There isn't any chest pounding or pompous self-congratulation in this rock and roll opus either. Berry gives full credit where it is due.

For example, Berry relates how he approached his idol Muddy Waters for advice on a recording connection. Waters advised him to go to Leonard Chess at the Chess Record Company.

He cut his first single and hit record "Maybellene" (changed from "Ida May") for Chess in 1955. The disc jockey Allen Freed had his name attached to it as co-writer even though he had no hand in it. Berry had his first taste of how big business operated. In turn Freed gave "Maybellene" a lot of airplay and helped propel it up the charts. Freed also pocketed a bundle in royalties.

Berry recounts the origin of his famous "duck walk" along with other anecdotes. He doesn't gloss over any of his downfalls, like his three sentences served in prison. Everything bad that could happen to a musician seems to have happened to him. He made it through it all, never turning to drugs or drink as many people in the limelight have. At least he doesn't admit to using drugs if he did.

Besides writing a very readable book, Berry comes across as a man honestly baring his soul to the public. He includes how it was (and still is) like to be a black man in a white world. All the details of his affairs with white women are outlined.

He credits all the people that have helped him manage his career and money wisely. Berry was devoted to his parents and was brought up well by them. He names the people that manipulated and used him early in his career when he was naive. You find yourself rooting for him to win.

He does sound as if he is a musician just for the money. He rarely rehearsed and seems more caught up in getting as much money as possible. Surprisingly, this attitude didn't carry over into his performances or music. Even without rehearsals or his own band he is concerned with delivering a quality product and having fun while doing it.

The music itself is skimmed over. More emphasis is placed on recounting his career year by year. A very readable and informative book.

The book's release date coincides with his 61st birthday. His brand new movie *Hail, Hail, Rock and Roll* was released Oct. 9. The soundtrack was released November 4.



True blue, they're through

Singer/actress Madonna has filed for divorce from actor Sean Penn, ending speculation about the state of their two-year union.

## U2 to cool charity activities

By MARY CAMPBELL  
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U2 is a quartet whose lyrics illuminate social consciousness, political protest and Christian sensibility and whose music and performances rock out.

But now the Dublin-based band is trying to cool its benefit activities.

Last year U2 was on the benefit Amnesty International tour, with Joan Baez, Jackson Browne, Bryan Adams, Peter Gabriel, the Neville Brothers, Lou Reed, Sting and the Police. It also played a Self Aid show in Ireland with other Irish performers and is currently on the second American leg of an 18-month world tour.

"Music has to be music again for awhile. If it keeps getting caught up in side projects, even though they're great causes, it eventually gets used up as a power," said guitarist the Edge before an recent concert at Madison Square Garden.

"I don't think we can have Band Aid or Live Aid every year. I think it has to be once in a while. The Amnesty tour was great. It was an idea we'd been wanting to put together for years."

"Self Aid was designed to raise consciousness about the problem of unemployment in Ireland and to gain a few jobs. It was a gesture of solidarity more than a plan to solve the problem, which is very difficult."

Edge was born David Evans. He said the nickname was given to him because of the shape of his chin. "I was about 15, the age of no sense. I'm still part of the age of no sense. I'm 26."

Edge rejects the description of U2 as musical do-gooders. "We're a great rock 'n' roll band. We never set out to change the world; we set out to write some good songs and overturn a few stones with our lyrics. We've got a lot of unanswered questions, like everyone else."

"Now we've decided to do no benefits — with the exception of things we

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— The Edge

cannot possibly turn down." Those include recording a track on a tribute record to Woody Guthrie with proceeds going to the fight against Huntington's Disease, which killed Guthrie. In October, *A Very Special Christmas* was released by A&M Records, with tracks by U2, Bruce Springsteen, Bon Jovi, Whitney Houston and others. Proceeds are to go to Special Olympics Inc., which runs sports programs for the mentally handicapped.

U2's latest LP, *The Joshua Tree*, has remained at the top of the charts for more than 30 weeks. The single, "Where the Streets Have No Name" was also moving up. It's the group's third U.S. hit, following "With or Without You" and "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For."

U2's first hit single in 1983 from its third album, *War*, was "Sunday, Bloody Sunday," about the conflict in Northern Ireland. But the group never asked Americans to take sides, the Edge said.

"I don't think anybody outside the situation is qualified to judge what is going on inside. Dublin is 100 miles south. Sometimes I feel like, how can I comment on this because it's not in my backyard?"

"To become a player in the politics in another country, you've got to be very sure of your ground."

Yet U2 protested Arizona Gov. Evan Mecham during the first leg of its American tour there last February.

"It is a bit of a contradiction," the rocker acknowledged. "We objected to the position we'd been put in. The governor had rescinded the Martin Luther King holiday. We weren't trying to get him impeached; we were making a stand on that." U2's song "Pride (in the Name of Love)" is a tribute to the late Nobelist and civil rights leader.

"We were dealing with (the Rev.) Martin Luther King rather than the politics of the situation. We felt we had to comment; we couldn't be seen to be doing nothing. Had we known in advance, we might have decided it was a bad idea to play in Arizona at all."

Edge and his wife, Aisling, and their two small daughters live in Dublin. When not touring and recording, he pursues photography, plays with his children, writes songs and practices guitar.

"On guitar, I try to do a lot with as few notes as possible. That's my technique," he said. "I've been writing a lot of folk songs on acoustic guitar since this tour started. I haven't figured out what I'm going to do with them. I'm used to writing with electric guitar."

U2 started in 1976 after drummer Larry Mullen, 14, stuck a note on Dublin's Mount Temple public high school bulletin board asking for rock musicians. He rounded up singer Paul Hewson, known as Bono, guitarist the Edge and bassist Adam Clayton. Edge went to college for one term, dropping out when U2 signed with Island in 1980.

The only frustrations now, Edge says, "are not being as good as we want to be. We're always pushing to improve the whole thing. Performance is not really a problem. It is songwriting and getting together the album we want. I think U2 has been on a journey and is only getting to where it wants to be musically, now."

## EWB connects with danceable new LP

By CHARLES PATTERNINO  
Collegian Arts Writer

*Touch The World* — Earth Wind and Fire (Columbia)

I suspected trouble when I looked at the inner sleeve of *Touch The World*, Earth Wind and Fire's first album in four years.

The inner sleeve not only listed a different songwriter for each song, but also a different producer and set of musicians. Albums that are put together like this usually don't have much more in mind than a quick buck, especially ones that purport to be "reunion" albums.

However, what counts is what's on the vinyl, and as soon as the needle hits "System of Survival," the opening cut and first single, my suspicions evaporated. The song opens with snippets of news reports about the Iran-Contra scandal. President Reagan's voice stutters, "I have never lied to the American people; I'll leave that to others," then the song begins. Earth Wind and Fire has not been known for voicing its politics; this opening montage indicates a more tough-minded band than the one that did "After The Love Has Gone."

"System of Survival" has much of the trademark Earth Wind and Fire sound: infectious funk-pop groove, Phillip Bailey's voice overdubbed into massed falsetto choruses, Maurice White prodding the verses with his tart, clipped singing. The song's stripped-down groove, reminiscent of Cameo, is funkier than their string of singles in the mid-1970s.

The next tune, "Evil Roy," demonstrates that Earth Wind and Fire is aware of the latest innovations in funk and soul. The ghosts of Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis (the production team that sculpted Janet Jackson's string of hits last year) float through the rhythm track, a cousin to Jackson's "What Have You Done For Me Lately." The song describes a man trapped into drug dealing by his circumstances, but the lyrics, like the rest of the songs, just kind of float by without sinking in. With a dance song this kinetic, that's a minor problem.

"Touch The World" is the closest to the Earth Wind and Fire sound of old. The song is a call for universal peace and global understanding, much like they used to do. The horns bob and



Phillip Bailey

### record review

weave in and out of the chanted chorus, sung by the Hawkins Family.

*Touch The World* has its share of ballads, which gives Phillip Bailey the opportunity to show off his celestial falsetto. Best of the lot is "You And I," a midtempo groove with a lovely chorus. It's one of those songs that will forever be in rotation for slow dances, like "After The Love Has Gone."

The most experimental cut is "New Horizons," an instrumental written and produced by Bill Meyers. It begins with a sound montage, then cuts to an off-kilter fusion groove laced with pulsing sequencers.

The real delight of this album is its consistency. With a few notable exceptions (Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Prince), most R&B and soul albums contain two killer singles and six songs of filler. Earth Wind and Fire has a reputation for making well-crafted, thoughtful LPs; this one upholds that reputation. Even the lesser cuts only fall slightly below the standard of "Evil Roy" and "You And I."

Even if *Touch The World* was assembled by committee, it's still a terrific contemporary soul record. Maurice White and Phillip Bailey, the mind and heart of Earth Wind and Fire should get together more often to make albums. *Touch The World* is not better played and sung than most current R&B records, it beats the tar out of most other records too. Let's hope we don't have to wait another four years for the next one.

## 'Red Noses' an infectious black comedy

By KERRY FORD  
Collegian Arts Writer

The University Resident Theatre Company will open its second production of the season on December 4 with *Red Noses*.

Written by British playwright Peter Barnes, the play tells the story of Europe's Black Plague and one man's efforts to alleviate the suffering of its victims. Although it sounds like a tragedy, *Red Noses* is actually a black comedy that focuses on a character named Father Flote and the comic troupe he assembles to raise the spirits of the afflicted.

But this is no ordinary band of comics — it features a blind juggler, two one-legged dancers and a stuttering storyteller. "They can't change the situation, but they try to bring some happiness to the lives of the plague's victims," said Helen Man-

full, a professor in Penn State's theatre department and director of *Red Noses*.

Barnes, who is best known to American audiences for his play and film *The Ruling Class*, has a strong reputation for theatrical eclecticism. "He takes everything that the theatre has ever been, puts it in a big pot, shakes it all up and sees what comes out," Manfull said.

"You have all this wonderful medieval history and then in one scene you have a reference to a straw man, a tin man and a little girl with ruby slippers," she explained.

*Red Noses*, which premiered in this country at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago in October, is also historically accurate. It depicts the terror the plague caused as brother turned against brother, mother against child, priest against parish in a de-

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