



WINONA RYDER, ALEC BALDWIN
AND OTHER STARS TAKE A JAB AT HOLLYWOOD

Famous

november 2001 volume 2 number 11

canada's entertainment lifestyle magazine

STEVE MARTIN ON *NOVOCAINE*
ADAM BEACH TALKS *WINDTALKERS*
LORD OF THE RINGS FACTS, STATS AND DATA
SPOTLIGHT ON: BRAD PITT, JET LI & HILARY SWANK

STRONG WILL

WILL SMITH TALKS ABOUT BREAKING CHARACTER,
AND ALMOST BREAKING HIS BODY, TO STAR IN *ALI*

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Opening night for *The Fellowship of the Ring* is so close you can almost hear the Black Riders approaching. Here we give you 54 facts about next month's big flick and the rest of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy

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You know him as that good-looking guy from just about every Canadian production that has anything to do with native people. Soon the whole world will know him as Nicolas Cage's co-star in the World War Two drama *Windtalkers*. We dive into the psyche of Adam Beach
By Sean Davidson

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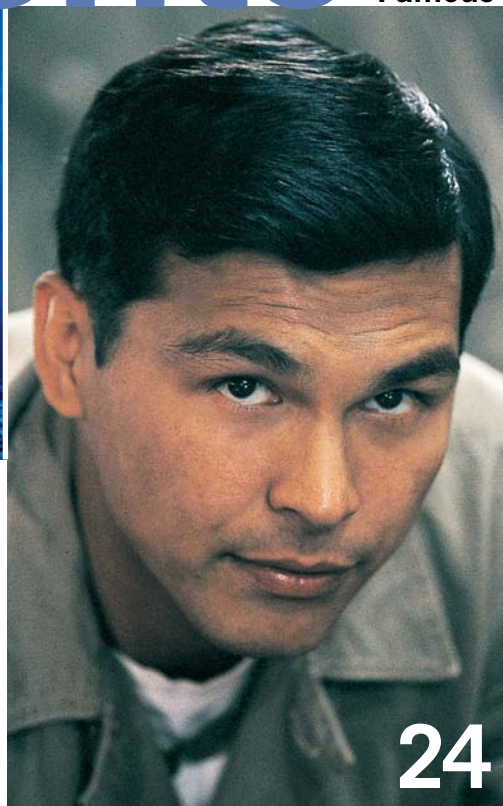
Joking about the perils of low-budget pics, rumours that he's gay and co-star/former flame Helena Bonham Carter, Steve Martin had journalists eating out of the palm of his hand at a press conference for his new dentistry thriller *Novocaine* By Marni Weisz

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Why did Will Smith get the role of Muhammad Ali over Oscar-winners like Cuba Gooding Jr. and Denzel Washington? Because Muhammad Ali said so. The star of *Ali* talks about transforming his body, and his approach to acting, to play the boxing great By Earl Dittman

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Since most of this year's big holiday releases are filled with mystical creatures, magic and sorcery — *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *Monsters, Inc.* — those who prefer their cinema to be anchored in the real world will have to do a little searching. Here's a tip: No picture will be more "real" this season than *Ali*.

The Muhammad Ali bio-pic will follow the scrapper from his humble beginnings in Louisville, Kentucky, through his oft-troubled ascent up professional boxing's



ranks. For "Lord of the Ring," page 34, *Ali* star **Will Smith** explains that accuracy and dedication to the facts, even if that meant revealing some of the boxer's less admirable qualities, were paramount to the film's success. Smith's muscles were also real. The filmmakers offered to use tricky camera angles to help the formerly wiry Fresh Prince look more pumped, but he'd have none of it and spent nine months in the gym instead.

Quick, name a native actor. Betcha said Graham Greene. But everyone's favourite Oneida Indian (*Dances with Wolves*, *The Green Mile*) will have to make room for a new aboriginal face in movieland — fellow Canadian

Adam Beach. The Manitoba-born Saulteau has been a mainstay of Canadian TV and film for years — *The Rez*, *Dance Me Outside*, *North of 60* — and, next summer, will go Hollywood in the Nicolas Cage World War Two drama *Windtalkers*. Before then, though, he'll appear in two Canadian indie films — *Now and Forever* and *The Art of Woo*. Read "The Beach Boy," page 24, to find out why Beach thinks native actors from this country fare better than their American counterparts.

This year's Toronto International Film Festival had been up and running for just four days when terrorist strikes on the U.S. crippled the event. Screenings limped on but all parties and most press conferences were cancelled — the celluloid world having suddenly become trivial. But in one of the few press conferences to take place before the attack, **Steve Martin**, promoting his new dentistry thriller *Novocaine*, put on a hilarious one-man show, cracking jokes about everything from his love life to future projects. Read all about it in "Tooth and Consequences," page 31.

And on page 22 we offer all those Tolkien fans who've been scouring the net for tidbits about next month's *The Fellowship of the Ring* (and the two ensuing *Lord of the Rings* movies) all the info we've culled so far.

— Marni Weisz

Famous

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BOXING HELENA

I loved *Famous's* lovely profile of Helena Bonham Carter as Ari in the *Planet of the Apes* remake! But please don't swallow all the family political propaganda.... About her "upper class" or "aristocratic" lineage, as Canadian foreign minister John Manley has aptly said in connection with our common monarchy — it ill befits robust Canadian long-forged nationality to be so undemocratically deferential.... You do not have to fawn!

Larry Iles — Montreal, Que.



HE WILL ROCK YOU

Just went to see *Rock Star* and found it to be a great film. Both Mark Wahlberg and Jennifer Aniston were amazing. Wahlberg is the most talented actor to come along and I have enjoyed his films throughout the years. I hope he makes many more, and wins an Oscar this year for his performance.

Natalia Furtado — Cambridge, Ont.

HUNT FOR ADDRESS

I have just rented *Return to Me* and really enjoyed the movie. It was funny, and very touching. Bonnie Hunt directed this wonderful movie and had a starring role. Could you please let me know where I can reach her to let her know how much I enjoyed the movie and that I'll be looking forward to her next one?

Belle Fiamelli — Hamilton, Ont.

You can write to Bonnie via her publicists, PMK Public Relations, 955 Carrillo Dr., Los Angeles, CA, 90048-5400, U.S.A. And if you really loved Return to Me, for \$6 you can order a back issue of our March 2000 Famous, in which we interviewed Hunt all about the making of the film. (She also wrote the script, ya know.)

STAR BORES

I have a memory of a TV special featuring Bernadette Peters as a host. I think it was a *Star Wars* Christmas Special. She spent Christmas with the Wookies. They called it Commerce Day (instead of Christmas). Is there any way to confirm this? I tell people about it but no one has heard of it. Can you help remove the cobwebs in my brain?

Joe Wilson — Sudbury, Ont.

One of the most punishing two hours in TV history, The Star Wars Holiday Special, aired on November 17, 1978, and hasn't officially been seen since. It's set on the Wookie home planet and — in between song and dance numbers, a cartoon and has-been celebrity walk-ons — is about Chewbacca's efforts to get home to his family for Life Day. Even diehard fans have a difficult time sitting through this cornball atrocity. And George Lucas has vowed that it will never be broadcast or released again. But multiple-dub copies still exist and are passed around by masochistic fans and sometimes rented out by alternative video shops. Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill and Harrison Ford make appearances but as for Bernadette Peters, sorry man, we think you must have dreamed that part.

MIGHTY SONG

I am hoping you may be able to help me. My children have the Disney movie *Mighty Joe Young* and I really like the song that the mother sings to her daughter at the start of the movie and the daughter later sings to Joe. I have tried, unsuccessfully, to find this music.... Can you tell me where I might be able to get it?

Lee Ann Ouimet — Orleans, Ont.

The friendly folks at Disney Online inform us that the tune is called "Windson" (music by James Horner, lyrics by Will Jennings — the team behind Titanic's "My Heart Will Go On"), and it's available from Hollywood Records. The reference number is HR-62172-2, and it's track number 12. Or you can order a choir arrangement and sheet music by calling 1.800.524.4425.

FAMOUS WELCOMES YOUR COMMENTS

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CARLA COLLINS ON MIRA SORVINO'S SHOCKING DISCLOSURE, TOM SIZEMORE'S SHOCKING NEW GIRLFRIEND AND SEAN PENN'S SHOCKING CAREER MOVE

Penn's State

Variety reports that Sean Penn is set to make a guest appearance on *Friends* as the boyfriend of Phoebe's twin sister Ursula. Isn't this the same Sean Penn who's spent the past few years bitch-slapping Nicolas Cage for being a sell-out? Next thing you know he'll replace Whoopi as the centre square.



Unnatural Booty

Country diva/one-time actress Dolly Parton refused to take part in a piece *Jane* was pulling together on "natural beauties" due to the fact that she's about as real as a WWF pay-per-view. Parton was approached by the magazine to be photographed in minimal makeup to show today's teens that natural can sometimes be best. *Jane*, however, received a rejection letter from Parton's management saying, "Ms. Parton wanted me to let you know that she is definitely not a natural beauty and would not want to be photographed as one." I love Dolly, but come on, what were the editors at *Jane* thinking? Between her breasts, face, hair, nails, eyelashes, etc., it's a safe bet that she was created in a Petri dish somewhere in Nashville.



Hey Baby, Would You Like Fries with that Shake?

The New York Post reports that *Die Hard* star Bruce Willis is planning to buy a restaurant in the Hamptons with former U.S. president Bill Clinton. I wonder if anyone already owns the copyright for "Planet Hooters."



A Grim Fairytale

Pamela Anderson is insisting on a fairytale wedding when she marries badboy rocker/boyfriend du jour Kid Rock. The former *Baywatch* beauty married ex-husband Tommy Lee wearing just a skimpy bikini on a Mexican beach, but Pam says she wants this wedding to be different. She tells *Us* magazine, "I really want a proper wedding this time 'round. And I want to wear more clothes! I want to feel like a fairy princess this time." It makes sense, then, that she's marrying a man with Rapunzel's hair and more hot air than the Big Bad Wolf.

Easy as American Pie

American Pie 2 cutie Tara Reid's been busy — and I'm not talking about acting. She recently spent 12 hours in a London airport waiting for a connecting flight to Paris where she met up with Aussie hunk Heath Ledger. *The New York Post* reports that "by the time they got to Paris and checked into the same hotel they were all over each other. For three days the two barely came up for air." Talk about your layovers. Tara's recently been linked to MTV's Carson Daly, a couple of her *American Pie* co-stars, and some older investment banker dude. Girlfriend, slow down! You're becoming easier than a hundred dollar question on *Millionaire*.



There's a Sucker Porn Every Minute

According to *Ananova*, Oscar winner Mira Sorvino has shocked Hollywood by insisting that movie stars really do have sex on film. Sorvino, best known for her role as a prostitute in Woody Allen's *Mighty Aphrodite*, says, "It rarely happens that actors have proper sex in films. But it does, though — now and again. And other actors tell me that it does." Other actors like who? Ron Jeremy? Maybe Mira should put her glasses on when she signs to do a movie. It's easy to get confused. *Nurse Booty*, *The Godfather II* and *Pearl Harbor* look legitimate, but the only theatres they play don't admit anyone under 18.



Saving Ryan's Privates

Tom Sizemore has found love with former Hollywood madam Heidi Fleiss. *World Entertainment News Network* reports that the Hollywood hooker-upper has been dating the actor for the past 10 months and has moved into his Beverly Hills home. "People have preconceived notions about who she is, but it's all bull," says the star of *Saving Private Ryan*. "I didn't bargain for it, but you know, it's when you least expect it that it happens — falling head over heels like this." Or head over red pleather stiletto heels, as is often the case when a call girl is involved. I hope they don't get hitched, because Madame Sizemore is either the worst porno name of all time or a delicious candy bar.

Carla Collins is a world-renowned comedian/supermodel/astronaut/actor. She currently appears as Rusty Sinclair on the Showcase soap *Paradise Falls* and hosts *Carla and Company* on Toronto's Mix 99.9 FM.

Kandahar



Visionary event

There was no way organizers of **Edmonton's Global Visions Festival** could have known how prophetic they were being when they chose *Kandahar* for this year's event (**November 8 to 11**). Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Makhmalbaf's desolate depiction of life under Afghanistan's Taliban regime was added to the schedule long before the events of September 11, 2001 splashed

that country across the pages of the world's newspapers.

But *Kandahar* is the kind of film the event's been showing for 20 years — although not always under the banner of Global Visions. It existed as the Third World Film Festival from 1980 until the money ran out in 1997, and was resurrected in 1998 with the new name but same purpose.

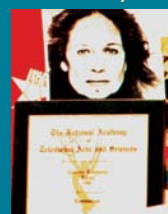
"Our mandate has always been to raise awareness of quality-of-life issues globally and to encourage positive vision," says festival director Shelaine Sparrow. "We create a meeting place for people to come and share ideas about how we can make things better."

Sparrow says they probably won't plan anything special in the wake of September's terrorist attacks and the ensuing fallout because their films and programs already speak to global issues of war and justice. "I think what's going to change is that people will pay more attention to what we're doing," she says. "I think it's going to be more relevant to the general public than ever before."

Yet war isn't the only issue explored at Global Visions. Among the other films on this year's bill are *A Compassionate Rage*, about Australian Moira Kelly, who has alternately headed an AIDS clinic for Romanian children, worked in India with Mother Theresa and nursed crack babies in the Bronx; and *Honour the Crown*, about Francois Paulette, a negotiator trying to force the Canadian government to make good on a deal made with the Chipewyan people more than 100 years ago.

■ Screenings take place at the Citadel Theatre and the Stanley A. Milner Public Library. For more info call 780.414.1052 or check out their website at www.globalvisionsfestival.com. Tickets are available through Tix on the Square, 780.420.1757. —MW

LIGHTS, CAMERA, AUCTION



Memorabilia once belonging to late Montreal-born actress Colleen Dewhurst will be auctioned off by Doyle New York on November 7. Candid photographs, letters and awards connected to

the woman best-known to young Canadian audiences as Marilla Cuthbert of *Anne of Green Gables* fame will be among the lots. But her older fans will probably be more interested in annotated scripts from the Eugene O'Neill plays which first earned her fame on Broadway — like *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Long Day's Journey into Night* and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. Dewhurst, who died August 22, 1991, was twice married to the late George C. Scott, and several items belonging to the irascible American actor will also be on the block.

It's a mad mad mad mad festival

There are few topics more fascinating than madness, so it makes sense that the malfunctioning human brain has inspired many a great film. So many, in fact, that each year Toronto hosts the **Rendezvous with Madness Film Festival**, strictly devoted to movies dealing with mental health issues.

This year's edition takes place from **November 14 to 18**, with approximately 30 features and shorts on the subject, plus panel discussions and question-and-answer sessions with filmmakers.

Festival director Lisa Brown expects around 1,600 people to show up this year. "It's an eclectic bunch," she says,

"people from all over the world of mental health — recipients, care providers, family members. Plus filmmakers, actors, academics and cinephiles."

Among this year's films are the Dutch feature *Long Live the Queen*, about a little girl obsessed with a chess set in which the pieces come to life; and *The Picnic*, a South Korean short about a father who takes his son into the forest and tries to poison him. Brown describes the latter as an "elegant, spare film that will resonate with viewers long after they have left the theatre."

■ Screenings take place at the Joseph Workman Theatre. For more info call 416.583.4339

or check out www.rendezvous-withmadness.com. For tickets call 416.583.4606. —MW



now in theatres

SHALLOW HAL WEIGHS IN, HARRY POTTER MAKES MAGIC AND DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE BREAKS OUT

Paltrow and Black in *Shallow Hal*



NOVEMBER 2

DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE

Who's In It? John Travolta, Vince Vaughn
Who Directed? Harold Becker (*Mercury Rising*)
What's It About? Vaughn was tossed in jail and co-star Steve Buscemi was sent to hospital with stab wounds after they got into a fight with locals outside a North Carolina bar part-way through shooting this picture. Both were back on the job after a week though, and finished shooting this thriller about a father (Travolta) trying to save his kid from a psychotic stepdad (Vaughn).

THE ONE

Who's In It? Jet Li, Delroy Lindo
Who Directed? James Wong (*Final Destination*)
What's It About? Okay, pay attention. An evil criminal (Li) who can travel between parallel universes has been killing off alternate versions of himself, and gaining superhuman powers in the process. When he arrives in our world it's up to the last one, a tough cop who has gained the exact same superpowers (Li, again), to stop him. Wrestler The Rock was supposed to play the lead, but pulled out to concentrate on the *Mummy* movies.

MONSTERS, INC.

Who's In It? John Goodman, Billy Crystal
Who Directed? Pete Docter,
David Silverman (debuts)
What's It About? Crystal made the mistake of turning down a voice role in *Toy Story*, but was quick to sign on for this latest of Pixar's computer-animated kids movies. Crystal and Goodman provide the voices of one-eyed monster Mike and big furry beast Sullivan, both of whom work at a "scare factory" and spend their shifts crossing into our world, jumping out of closets and scaring little kids. But when a three-year-old girl follows them back to the monster world, the beastly pair have to find a way to take care of her.



NOVEMBER 9

LIFE AS A HOUSE

Who's In It? Kevin Kline, Kristin Scott Thomas
Who Directed? Irwin Winkler (*At First Sight*)
What's It About? Kline plays a terminally ill man trying to build his dream house, with the help of his ex-wife (Scott Thomas) and son (Hayden Christensen), before he dies.

AMELIE

Who's In It? Audrey Tautou, Mathieu Kassovitz
Who Directed? Jean-Pierre Jeunet (*Alien: Resurrection*)
What's It About? A young woman secretly helps needy and deserving people fix problems with their lives. In French with subtitles.

SHALLOW HAL

Who's In It? Jack Black, Gwyneth Paltrow
Who Directed? Peter Farrelly, Bobby Farrelly (*Me, Myself & Irene*)
What's It About? Hal (Black) is a lonely, average-looking guy quickly approaching middle age. Problem is, he's only interested in dating women who are young and beautiful. Until, that is, he meets a mysterious man (Tony Robbins of infomercial fame) who hypnotizes him so that he can only see women's inner

Kline in *Life as a House*



beauty. He soon falls for a wonderful obese woman (Paltrow) who, to him, looks like, well, Gwyneth Paltrow.

NOVEMBER 16

NOVOCAINE

Who's In It? Steve Martin, Helena Bonham Carter
Who Directed? David Atkins (debut)

What's It About? Martin plays a mild-mannered dentist living a boring life and planning to settle down with his squeaky-clean hygienist girlfriend (Laura Dern). But when a mysterious Demerol-loving patient (Bonham Carter) walks into his office, the dentist starts down a dangerous path that will destroy his domestic dream and may even lead to his own demise. See Steve Martin interview, page 31.

HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

Who's In It? Daniel Radcliffe, Richard Harris
Who Directed? Chris Columbus (*Bicentennial Man*)
What's It About? The first of what will likely be several movies based on J.K. Rowling's books rolls into theatres, with unknown Radcliffe in the lead and, seemingly, every British and Irish actor on the planet filling out the supporting cast. Joining screen veteran Harris in the magical children's adventure are John Cleese, Robbie Coltrane, John Hurt, Alan Rickman, Maggie Smith and Julie Walters, to

name a few. Shooting took a whopping 130 days because, in England, child actors are only permitted to work four hours a day.

THE NEW GUY

Who's In It? DJ Qualls, Eliza Dushku

Who Directed? Ed Decter (debut)

What's It About? A high school loser (Qualls) gets expelled and somehow winds up in prison, where his cellmate teaches him how to reinvent himself as a cool kid.



Radcliffe as Harry Potter

NOVEMBER 23

SPY GAME

Who's In It? Robert Redford, Brad Pitt

Who Directed? Tony Scott (*Enemy of the State*)

What's It About? The tempestuous relationship between a veteran CIA agent (Redford) and his young protégé (Pitt) is recounted in a series of flashbacks as the latter awaits rescue from a Chinese jail.

BLACK KNIGHT

Who's In It? Martin Lawrence, Tom Wilkinson

Who Directed? Gil Junger (*10 Things I Hate About You*)

What's It About? Lawrence, taking over for last-minute drop-out Chris Tucker, plays a fast-talking hustler sent back in time to the Middle Ages, where he teams up with a knight and peasant girl to bring down an evil king.

NOVEMBER 30

AFFAIR OF THE NECKLACE

Who's In It? Hilary Swank, Jonathan Pryce

Who Directed? Charles Shyer (*Father of the Bride*)

What's It About? Swank stars in the true story of Jeanne De La Motte Valois, an 18th-century French noble who, stripped of her title and station, conspires to get back into high society.

TEXAS RANGERS

Who's In It? Dylan McDermott, Robert Patrick

Who Directed? Steve Miner (*Halloween H20*)

What's It About? No, it's not about the baseball team. McDermott (*The Practice*) and Patrick (*The X-Files*) star in this western about the early days of the gun-slinging lawmen who patrolled the Lone Star state in the 1800s.

DECEMBER 7

ALI

Who's In It? Will Smith, Jon Voight

Who Directed? Michael Mann (*The Insider*)

What's It About? And in this corner, wearing the black trunks, Big Willy takes another swing at serious drama as boxing great Muhammad Ali. The actor previously known as *The Fresh Prince* bulked up and grew his hair out for the role, and from what we can see from the trailer, has done a pretty good job of capturing Ali. See Will Smith interview, page 34.

All release dates are subject to change.
Some films play only in major markets.

CHECK WWW.FAMOUSPLAYERS.COM FOR SHOWTIMES AND LOCATIONS

AFFAIR OF THE NECKLACE



Swank in *Affair of the Necklace*

HILARY SWANK

Now appearing in... *Affair of the Necklace*, the basically true story of 18th-century French countess Jeanne De La Motte Valois (Swank), who was stripped of her title by the country's royal family.

Bio bits: This gamine thespian of Spanish and Native American descent was born on July 30, 1974, but there's some dispute as to where. At some point in the audition process for *Boys Don't Cry* — the true tale of gender-identity-crisis poster boy/girl Brandon Teena that earned Swank an Oscar — the actress told director Kimberly Pierce that she was born in Brandon's hometown of Lincoln, Nebraska. Swank also claimed this lineage in the April 2000 issue of *Interview*: "You want to hear something really amazing? I was born in the same hospital that Brandon was born in, in Lincoln, Nebraska."

But according to the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com), Swank was born in Bellingham, Washington and made the whole story up to help get her the part. According to this version, when Pierce confronted her about the lie, the actress smiled and said of her fibbing character, "But that's what Brandon would do."

Swank has at least one thing in common with her *Boys Don't Cry* character. Both grew up poor. Raised by her single mother, Swank lived in a trailer park and was often teased by

the other kids at school. But she knew early on that she wanted to act and, at nine, some early gender-bending casting gave Hilary her first starring role — as the orphan boy Mowgli in a local production of *The Jungle Book*.

When she was 16, Hilary and her mom picked up and moved to L.A. because mom needed a major life change and Hilary was determined to make it as an actor. Living in their car for a while, Hilary quickly began to pick up roles on TV shows like *Harry and the Hendersons* and in movies like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *The Next Karate*

Kid. But it was as Steve Sanders' single-mom girlfriend on the 1997/1998 season of *Beverly Hills 90210* that she first became a recognizable Hollywood entity. To avoid being bundled together with the Jennie Garths and Tori Spellings of Tinseltown, though, Swank left after one season.

Interesting tidbits: Was an athletic kid, swimming in the Junior Olympics and ranking fifth among Washington's gymnasts. • Auditioned for the role of Lucy Hatcher on *The Practice*.

Sample roles: Valerie in *The Gift* (2000), Brandon Teena in *Boys Don't Cry* (1999), Sylvia in *Heartwood* (1998), Lolita in *Quiet Days in Hollywood* (1997), Michelle in *Sometimes They Come Back...Again* (1996), Julie in *The Next Karate Kid* (1994), Kimberly in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1992)

Love life: Met actor Chad Lowe (brother of Rob) at a "rock-and-jock ball game." They married on September 28, 1997.

On Chad: "I know it could sound sickening, but it was love at first sight. We've been together ever since. I never imagined myself meeting someone so early in life. I'm so fiercely independent, and I grew up alone, so I was fine being alone. But Chad and I have been together for seven years now and married for two. I couldn't imagine life without him." — *Interview*, April 2000

JET LI

Now appearing in... The sci-fi action pic *The One* as two battling versions of the same person — supercop Gabriel and, from an alternate universe, the arch-criminal Yulaw.

Bio bits: Making movies was a second career for Li Lian Jie following his retirement, at age 17, from the top ranks of Chinese professional sports. He'd been winning gold medals in wushu, an acrobatic martial art and China's national sport, since he was 11, and had already toured across 45 countries, even traveling to Washington D.C. where he met and performed for then-President Richard Nixon. But even in the dour atmosphere of 1970s China, the nascent film industry was eager to cast the country's top athlete in a movie.

The human tornado who would later adopt the screen name Jet Li was born on April 26, 1963 in Beijing and, after the death of his father in 1965, joined a wushu class at a local sports school. Training, which provided students with free education and clothes, took some financial strain off his family and Li proved to be an astonishing athlete.

After multiple national championships and a few years spent coaching, Li made his film debut in 1979's *Shaolin Temple* — a high-



Li in *The One*

aring in... ONE

kicking martial arts picture that so excited students across China that they started dropping out to join the titular monastery. Many kung fu movies followed through the 1980s and 1990s, most notably his very popular portrayal of Chinese folk hero Wong Fei-hung in 1991's *Once Upon a Time in China*, and its two sequels.

By that time Li had relocated to Hong Kong, riding that territory's wave of filmmaking, and, like his countrymen Chow Yun Fat and director John Woo, soon moved again to Hollywood.

But unlike Jackie Chan, who made a huge splash in North America with re-releases of his previous films, Li did not immediately grab the attention of Western audiences. Until 1998, that is, when he got a chance to beat the bejeezus out of Mel Gibson as the villain in *Lethal Weapon 4*. His impressive turn in an otherwise thankless part impressed producer Joel Silver, who pulled strings to get Li his first starring role in 2000's *Romeo Must Die*. Li has since been tapped to appear in both sequels to *The Matrix* and has struck a deal with his sparring partner Gibson to make an action TV series.

Li now lives in Los Angeles with his wife Nina and their one-year-old daughter Jane.

Sample roles: Liu Jian in *Kiss of the Dragon* (2001), Han Sing in *Romeo Must Die* (2000), Wah Sing Ku in *Lethal Weapon 4* (1998), Tsui in *Black Mask* (1996), Chen Zhen in *Fist of Legend* (1994), Wong Fei-hung in the *Once Upon a Time in China* series (1991, 1992, 1993)

Love life: Married actress Qiuyan Huang in 1987. They had two daughters and divorced in 1990. • Married long-time girlfriend Nina Li Chi in September 1999.

Trivia: Studies English with a tutor for four hours every day. • Turned down the lead role in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

On getting injured: "This last 10 years is okay, but I think in the beginning, every movie I made I broke one piece. Sometimes it's my leg, sometimes it's my arms. I have seven big pieces broken before. Before, when people made movie in Hong Kong they just went crazy! You just jump from the second floor and you jump on the ground and you do it yourself." — *Mr. Showbiz*, July 2001

SPY GAME

BRAD PITT

Now appearing in... *Spy Game* as a CIA operative thrown in jail after trying to free a prisoner from a Chinese jail. Robert Redford plays his former partner who recalls their adventures and once-close friendship through flashbacks.

Bio bits: Brad Pitt — pretty face or fine actor? Depends who you ask. If you're talking to young females, chances are it's Brad's sky-blue eyes and chiseled abs that first spring to mind. If you're talking to anyone else, inspired performances like the criminally insane environmentalist in *Twelve Monkeys* (for which he got an Oscar nomination) or the incomprehensible Gypsy scrapper in *Snatch* might tip the balance toward serious thespian.

Whichever, there's no arguing that some agreeable DNA has helped Pitt join Hollywood's elite. That DNA emerged into this world on December 18, 1963, in Shawnee, Oklahoma under the name William Bradley Pitt. His father Bill managed a trucking firm and his mom Jane was a high school counselor. Their strict Baptist family (which included brother Doug and sister Julie) soon moved to Springfield, Missouri. Pitt was a real joiner at Kickapoo High School where he signed up for the golf, tennis and swim teams, appeared in school plays and sat on the student council. Then it was off to the University of Missouri's School of Journalism, but he dropped out two credits short and moved to L.A.

Never having been farther west than Wichita, Kansas, the first things that struck Brad about L.A. were the smog and the realization that he didn't know a soul. While making ends meet by driving strippers around in a limo and dressing up like a giant chicken to promote a Mexican restaurant, Pitt took an acting class where he met a woman who asked him to read opposite her at an audition. He got a part, she didn't. Early TV roles on *Growing Pains*, *Dallas* and *21 Jump Street*, and a handful of TV movies, led to his big breakthrough as the gentleman thief in *Thelma & Louise*. Pitt has spent much of his time since frustrating the media by answering questions in as few words as

Pitt (right) and Robert Redford in *Spy Game*



possible. One has to wonder what kind of journalist he would have been.

Sample roles: Jerry in *The Mexican* (2001), Mickey in *Snatch* (2000), Tyler in *Fight Club* (1999), Joe Black in *Meet Joe Black* (1998), Heinrich in *Seven Years in Tibet* (1997), Michael in *Sleepers* (1996), Jeffrey in *Twelve Monkeys* (1995), David in *Seven* (1995), Tristan in *Legends of the Fall* (1994), Louis in *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), Early in *Kalifornia* (1993), J.D. in *Thelma & Louise* (1991)

Love life: Had a three-year relationship with Juliette Lewis whom he met while making the 1990 TV movie *Too Young to Die?* • Dated *Thelma & Louise* co-star Geena Davis, and Mike Tyson's ex Robin Givens. • Was engaged to *Seven* co-star Gwyneth Paltrow. • Married *Friends* star Jennifer Aniston on July 29, 2000.

Interesting tidbits: Posed for a campus calendar in college. • Is an architecture aficionado. He and Jennifer are restoring an old Craftsman-style house in the Hollywood Hills.

On *Spy Game* co-star Robert Redford: "Hell, I grew up on his movies. I remember seeing *Butch Cassidy* at a drive-in. I cried at the end, when they died. I just remember that so vividly. I was really embarrassed and I didn't want my parents to see me crying, so I ducked down in the back seat and pretended I was asleep." — *Details*, August 1998



Hobbit making

54 FACTS ABOUT THE LORD OF THE RINGS

Height of the average hobbit: **three-foot-six**
Height of Elijah Wood, who plays hobbit Frodo Baggins: **five-foot-six**

Time it took John Ronald Reuel Tolkien to write the three books (*The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, *The Return of the King*) that comprise *Lord of the Rings*: **11 years**

Time it took Peter Jackson to film the three adaptations: **18 months**
Number of days in those 18 months they were actually shooting: **274**
Books Elijah Wood read during those 18 months: *American Psycho*, *High Fidelity*, *I Am Legend*

Number of previous times three modern-day films have been shot at the same time: **0**

Date *The Fellowship of the Ring* book was released: **August 26, 1954**
Date that the movie version will be released: **December 19, 2001**

Birthplace of J.R.R. Tolkien: **Bloemfontein, South Africa**
Birthplace of Peter Jackson: **Pekeura Bay, New Zealand**
Country where *Lord of the Rings* was filmed: **New Zealand**
New Zealand's leading exports: **beef, mutton and wool**

Number of copies of *Lord of the Rings* sold worldwide: **50 million**
Number of languages in which it is available: **25**
Number of languages invented and used by Tolkien in his books: **37**
Number of languages in which you can read the movie's official site: **9**
How you say "Lord of the Rings" in Norwegian: **Ringenes Herre**

Number of sites that a Google search returns for "Fellowship of the Ring": **31,500**
Time it takes Google to perform that search: **0.1 seconds**
Number of people who downloaded the first snippet of the movie that was posted on the internet, in the first 24 hours: **1.7 million**
Movie that *Fellowship's* first theatrical trailer appeared before in North America: **Thirteen Days**
Movies that *Fellowship's* first theatrical trailer appeared before in Australia: **Little Nicky and Bring it On**

Number of books by J.R.R. Tolkien: **34**
Number of movies by Peter Jackson: **9**
Number of diary entries actor Ian McKellen posted to his website during shooting: **14**

Previous page, from left: Elijah Wood, Billy Boyd, Sean Astin and Dominic Monaghan. This page, top: attacking orcs. Bottom: Hugo Weaving and Liv Tyler



Budget for the trilogy: **\$270-million (U.S.)**
 Terabytes of computer storage used by special effects team: **10**
 Cost of coffee consumed by cast and crew each month: **\$86,500**
 Cost of alcohol consumed after a single location shoot on New Zealand's North Island: **\$6,400**
 Cost of building the set of the fortress Cirith Ungol: **\$86,500**
 Number of nails it took: **30,000**
 And litres of paint: **2,040**
 Material used to build "wooden" sets: **polystyrene**
 Length of time before filming started that the vegetable and flower gardens were planted on the Hobbiton set: **1 year**
 Approximate number of hand-made suits of amour used: **1,200**
 Approximate number of pairs of prosthetic feet and ears used: **1,600**
 Number of orc heads used: **200**
 Kind of hair used on those heads: **yak**
 Approximate number of horses used: **250**
 Type of horse used to play Gandalf's mystical white steed: **Andalusian**
 Number of props that were rented for the shoot: **0**

Number of rings made by the *Lord of the Rings* prop jeweller: **40**
 Number of rings made by the villain Sauron: **20**
 Number of those rings intended "to rule them all, to find them...to bring them all, and in the darkness bind them": **1**

Number of people on the *Lord of the Rings* payroll: **1,700**
 Percentage of them who are New Zealanders: **98**
 Number of characters who comprise the "fellowship": **9**
 Number of those nine actors who were born in the U.S.: **3**
 Number of those nine actors who were born in the U.K.: **5**
 Number of speaking parts: **77**
 Character who is completely computer generated: **Gollum**
 Most prominent character from the book that did not make it into the movie: **Tom Bombadil**

Cast member who appears on the cover of Paul McCartney's 1973 album *Band on the Run*: **Christopher Lee**

The Beach Boy

Beach in *Windtalkers*

With a starring role in the World War Two drama *Windtalkers*, and two Canadian indie films, Winnipeg's Adam Beach is the new face of natives on screen

BY SEAN DAVIDSON

Watch any of the zillion movies about World War Two and it's clear that Hollywood has tried, with mixed results, to make all those bomber squads, boat crews and platoons of dogfaces look multicultural. Or, at least, not entirely lily white. You'll see Goldberg, the rabbinical student turned medic; Watson, the bookish WASP from the Midwest; Kowalski, the demolitions man from the Bronx; Jackson, Gambino, O'Hare, Sanchez.

A real melting pot, with at least one notable exception — a fact not lost on Canadian native and Hollywood rising star Adam Beach.

"I don't know man, it kinda baffles me," he says on the phone from his house in Ottawa. "We were there in the war and they don't mention it. They just don't ever, y'know, think that we're anything other than [the bad guys from] back in the western days."

At 28, Beach wasn't around to fight the Axis powers, but grew up hearing stories from the older generation about the often overlooked wartime efforts of native Canadian and American servicemen — guys like Tommy Prince, the Devil's Brigade, and, most significantly, the Navajo "codetalkers" who used an encrypted version of their language, unbreakable to the Japanese, to protect U.S. forces in the Pacific.

Native veterans he's met feel like they've been mistreated or ignored, he says. "They are proud of being in that war and there's no regret for what they did. But I can sense a little bit of —," here he stops and chooses ►►

►► his words carefully, “They need support.” He hopes his movie *Windtalkers*, filmmaker John Woo’s ode to Navajo cryptography, will help by raising the profile of natives in both history and Hollywood. Originally slated to hit theatres this month, the movie’s release date was recently pushed back to the summer of 2002.

Beach (*Dance Me Outside*, *Smoke Signals*) stars as a codetalker stationed in the South Pacific in 1943, who’s partnered with a bitter, battle-scarred marine, played by Nicolas Cage (*The Family Man*, *Gone in 60 Seconds*). Between combat scenes, the movie follows their uneasy friendship — uneasy because Cage is under orders to kill his top-secret sidekick if he’s at risk of being captured by the enemy.

Preparing for the role meant the Manitoba-born Saulteau — who has somehow picked up the rudderless, laid-back drawl of a California surfer — had to learn part of the “unbelievably complex” Navajo code. “Yeah, that’s crazy,” he says, “I only learned, like, two pages from an 80-page book. And two pages is hard enough, man.” He also, as is increasingly common with war movies nowadays, spent a week at a pseudo boot camp with the rest of the cast, learning to walk, talk and shoot like a real soldier. “We lived as military guys, as marines,” he says, groaning at the memory of 5:30 a.m. reveilles and cold showers. “And in the marines you all work as a unit so nobody’s higher than anybody else.”

Unless you’re Nicolas Cage, apparently, who skipped training to finish shooting his other World War Two movie *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin*. But Beach says he still learned a lot from his Oscar-winning co-star. “I’ve never felt so much trust with another actor,” he says. “Nic has this amazing timing that nobody I’ve ever worked with has.”

When we talked back in September, Beach was about to leave for the Toronto International Film Festival to promote two other movies, both Canadian and awaiting release within the next couple of months. He’ll be seen with MuchMusic’s Sook-Yin Lee in the love story *The Art of Woo* and was also paired with Mia Kirshner for the sentimental drama *Now and Forever*, which follows the lives of a lonely young woman and her lovestruck best friend.

Told that the publicist sent *Famous* a copy of *Now and Forever*, he just about jumps through the phone. “You’ve seen it? Ohmigod. I can’t even get a tape, dude. Wow. Sweet,” he exclaims, adding, “Ohmigod! Duuuude!”



Beach with Mia Kirshner in *Now and Forever* (top) and with Nicolas Cage in *Windtalkers*

“Nic has this amazing timing that nobody I’ve ever worked with has,” says Beach

Clearly, he’s happy with his work. “I love that movie,” he says. “It’s about the strength of unconditional love. That love is forever. I hope people get a message from this movie to be open-minded and caring.”

Caring, about people and issues, seems to be important to Beach, who is active with several native causes. Like many, he worries that the decline of native languages such as Navajo, aggravated by poverty and all-English schools in Indian communities, is a big problem for indigenous culture in North America. “Kids have no participation in their own language,” he remarks. “The focus is just on survival, from where I grew up anyway. There’s like this gap in a generation that’s been numbed.... It’s a generation that was very, y’know, taken away and stripped of their pride and culture and language.”

Raised near Dog Creek Reserve outside Winnipeg, Beach is just now learning the Saulteau tongue which his folks, both native, never spoke. “It was always English.”

He was eight when both of his parents died in separate accidents, and he and his two brothers moved to Manitoba’s capital to live with an aunt and uncle. Later, when

he wasn’t banging out Metallica and Ozzy Osbourne tunes in a garage band, a teenaged Beach took up acting. It was fun, kept him off the street and out of trouble. And though times were rough, it’s obvious he has a lot of fond memories and feelings about his family (“We stuck together,” he says proudly) and the friends who supported his nascent dream of being an actor.

“I had pretty good friends,” he says. “You know how friends are supposed to support you? That’s what I had. I lucked out.”

Before long he had made TV appearances on CBC’s *North of 60* and the CBS miniseries *Lonesome Dove*. The “noble savage” lead in Disney’s *Squanto: A Warrior’s Tale* got him on the big screen in 1994 and was followed that same year by a starring role in Bruce McDonald’s Genie-winning drama *Dance Me Outside*, about life on an Ontario reserve.

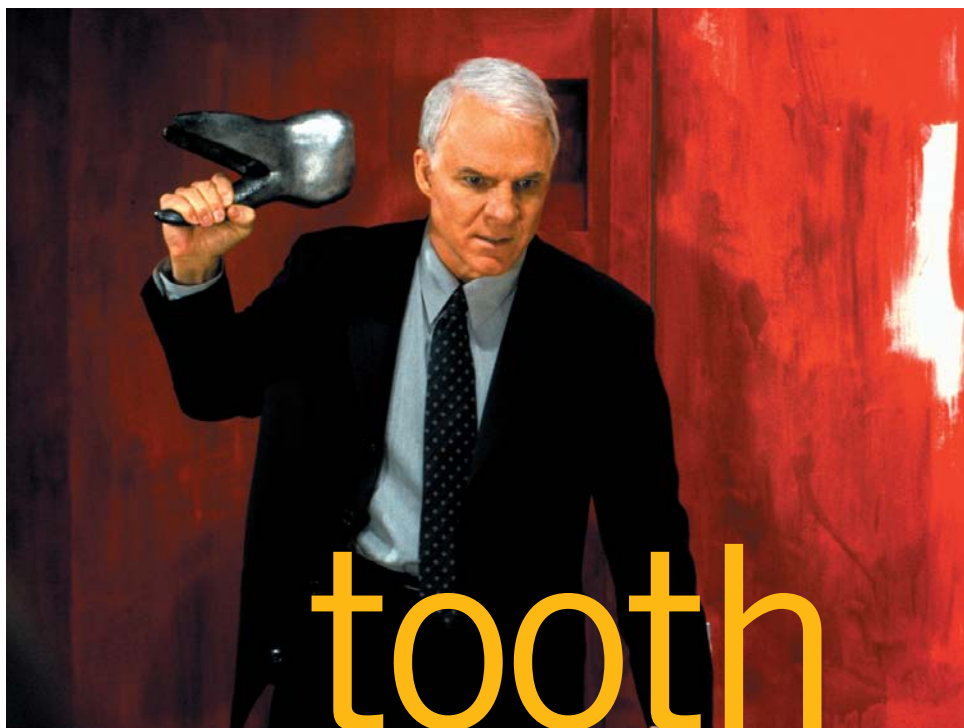
He undoubtedly owes his success as much to his remarkably good looks as his talent. But being Canadian helped too. He says Canucks — like his recurring co-stars Graham Greene and Gary Farmer — sometimes have an easier time getting the scant native roles in Hollywood than their U.S. counterparts because, as his American director on the 1998 indie hit *Smoke Signals* (the first all-native movie made in the U.S.) confided to him, Canadians tend to be better at playing realistic, modern-day natives.

“Canadian film and cinema has allowed us to express ourselves as native people,” says Beach. “On *North of 60* I played a guy dying of AIDS, a street hustler. Then I played a gay military dude in Vancouver. And you don’t get that in the States ever — especially for an Indian guy.”

As his career took off, Beach reluctantly started going to conferences and speaking to kids in the community, even though he was just a “punk kid” and didn’t give much thought to native issues. It was an encounter with a 10-year-old boy unable to answer Beach’s question “What’s your dream?” that inspired him to get serious about helping out. “He was so emotionally lost,” Beach says. “And I was like, ‘Ohmigod man.’ I said, ‘Dude, just think harder, you’ll find something’ and I lept out of that room.”

That’s when he said to himself, “That’s it. I’m changing my view on these conferences. I’m going to put my time into really teaching people that there’s a lot of younger kids out there who need our support.”

As for his latest philanthropic endeavour, Beach and a cousin who’s head of a native veteran’s association are trying to organize a benefit screening of *Windtalkers*. **F**



AND CONSEQUENCES

STEVE MARTIN CRACKS WISE ABOUT PLAYING
A DENTIST ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE LAW IN *NOVOCaine*,
AND HIS RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEADING LADIES

BY MARNI WEISZ

Steve Martin has been a lot of things in his career — a magician, a writer, a stand-up comedian, an actor. But when asked whether there's an area of show business he still has a yen to explore he pauses, then, "Hmm, let me see.... Uma Thurman?"

That would be funny enough on its own, but there's a subtext that's not lost on the crowd of journalists who've come to the Toronto International Film Festival to hear Martin talk about his new film *Novocaine*. You see, sitting to the eclectic comic's left is co-star Helena Bonham Carter, with whom he had an off-screen affair while shooting the dark, comedic thriller. In an *America's Sweethearts*-esque twist, the former couple must reunite to promote their film.

But there isn't a *Hard Copy* reporter in the bunch, and these journalists are far too serious



to ask about something so personal. So the topic just floats above the cameras and microphones like a bloated thundercloud as Martin makes quip after quip eluding to his Hollywood relationships (which also include Anne Heche, Victoria Tennant and Bernadette Peters). When asked which historical figure he would most like to play

Martin responds, "Warren Beatty." About a rumour that he's gay, "I've been trying to disprove that one at every opportunity." And when a reporter begins a question with the observation that Martin has always had great chemistry with his leading ladies, the actor breaks in with "How much do you know?"

Bonham Carter, who sits slunk down in her chair with a scowl on her pale, delicate face for most of the interview, laughs sardonically at each of these perfectly delivered punchlines and gets in a zinger of her own when someone asks Martin how he's managed to look exactly the same for the past 15 years: "He lives in a freezer and we only bring him out for press conferences."

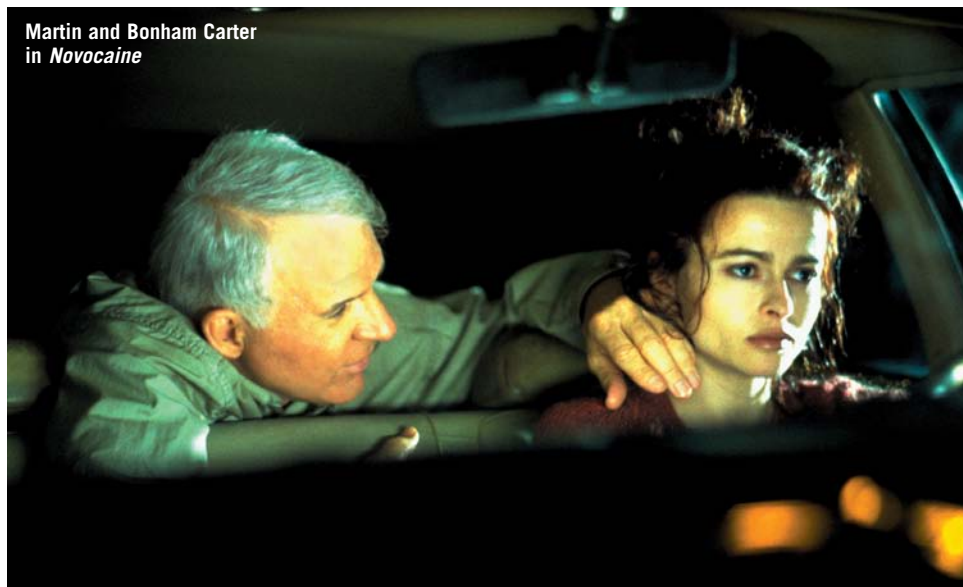
On-screen, the attraction between the pair seems to be instantaneous. But, as with much of what happens in *Novocaine*, things are not as they appear.

Bonham Carter plays sexy femme fatale Susan Ivy, who shows up at the office of dentist Frank Sangster (Martin) complaining of a toothache and pleading for Demerol. Sangster can see that she's just after the drugs but, having already fallen under her spell, prescribes them anyway. When Susan shows up for a root canal the next day, she seduces the dentist, they defile the dentist's chair in a most unsanitary way, and the good doctor is hooked.

What Sangster doesn't know is that Susan's psychotic drug-dealing brother is also involved, and when all the medication in the office goes missing the doctor gets trapped in a chain of events that lead to murder — and all evidence points to him as the trigger man.

First-time director David Atkins, also at the press conference, wrote the screenplay based on his own experiences. "My dad's a dentist and my two brothers are dentists so I had a dental story brewing inside me for a long time," he explains. Atkins also grew up hearing about a certain drifter con man who would harass his dad in an attempt to get drugs. "It's a very interesting collision of the American Dream success story and the underbelly of America," says Atkins. "So I just went from there." His father and brothers also acted as professional consultants on the film.

Although there's a vein of black comedy running through the thriller, it's not funny in the typical Steve Martin way, making the low-budget (\$10-million U.S.) film somewhat of a departure for the 56-year-old Hollywood mainstay ("Let's put it this way, if it doesn't work, I'm going to have to depart," he retorts). ▶▶



Martin and Bonham Carter
in *Novocaine*

“WHEN I READ THE SCRIPT I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS A COMEDY, AND I REALIZED AS I WATCHED THE FILM UNFOLD WHY I THOUGHT THAT — BECAUSE THERE ARE NO FUNNY LINES. ALL THE HUMOUR COMES FROM DIRECTORIAL STYLE,” SAYS MARTIN



Director Atkins (left)
with Martin on set

There are no funny voices à la *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* nor are there the sappy smile-inducing moments typical of *Father of the Bride*. “When I read the script I didn’t think it was a comedy, and I realized as I watched the film unfold why I thought that — because there are no funny lines. All the humour comes from directorial style,” says Martin. “And when we did try a couple of things that were ‘acting funny’ it didn’t work and was cut out.”

But, truth is, as the wild and crazy comic has matured into a sage essayist, playwright (*Picasso at the Lapin Agile*) and novelist (*Shopgirl*) over the past decade, his film choices have veered toward brainier low-budget pieces. Last year he played a book publisher in the little Stanley Tucci drama *Joe Gould's Secret* and a few years before that

a mysterious millionaire in David Mamet’s *The Spanish Prisoner*. Martin says part of the reason for the shift is that as you get older creativity becomes more important than ambition — not that he would exclude the mass appeal flicks like *L.A. Story* and *Bowfinger* from his schedule.

“You say ‘I really want to do a low budget movie,’ and then they say how much you’re going to get paid and you go, ‘WHAAAT?!!,’” he cracks.

Martin’s next challenge is to adapt his novella *Shopgirl* — about a young Neiman Marcus counter woman and the much older man she captivates — for the big screen. When asked whether he also plans to star in the film Martin says that, no, they’ll probably cast a woman. “Oh, the other role,” he feigns confusion.

Still skirting around the issue of the affair, a journalist gingerly inquires whether Martin and Bonham Carter would want to work together again. Helena shakes her head “no” as everyone laughs. “It doesn’t really work that way,” says Martin, with Bonham Carter adding, “Nobody calls up and says, ‘Tell us who you want to work with.’”

But what if the opportunity did arise?

“Yeah, for a very short time,” Bonham Carter concedes.

“With a lot of therapy,” adds Martin. **E**

famous trivia

- 1 The *Harry Potter* movie will have a different title in the States than in the U.K. and Canada because the book was renamed for its U.S. release. Here, we'll get *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. What will the movie be called in the States?
- 2 John Goodman voices a big blue beast in Pixar's new animated comedy *Monsters, Inc.* For which animated comedy did he voice a llama shepherd just last year?
- 3 Peter and Bobby Farrelly's latest off-beat comedy, *Shallow Hal*, comes out this month. What was the first big film the brothers did together?
- 4 Robert Redford and Brad Pitt team up for this month's buddy flick *Spy Game*. The pair have worked together only once before. Name the movie. Clue: Only one of them appeared on screen.
- 5 *Windtalkers* star Christian Slater has unusual eyebrows because, as a kid, he shaved them off to dress up as which *Star Trek* character for Halloween? (They never grew back properly.)
- 6 In which film did *Black Knight* star Martin Lawrence make his big-screen debut?
- 7 On the set of which 1989 comedy did *Domestic Disturbance* star John Travolta meet his wife Kelly Preston?
- 8 TV stars James Van Der Beek (*Dawson's Creek*), Dylan McDermott (*The Practice*) and Ashton Kutcher (*That '70s Show*) star in the new cowboy flick *Texas Rangers*. Which of their three TV shows debuted first?

ANSWERS

- 1 *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*
- 2 *The Emperor's New Groove*
- 3 *Dumb and Dumber*
- 4 *A River Runs Through It*
- 5 *Spook*
- 6 *Do the Right Thing*
- 7 *The Experts*
- 8 *The Practice*

Lord of the Ring

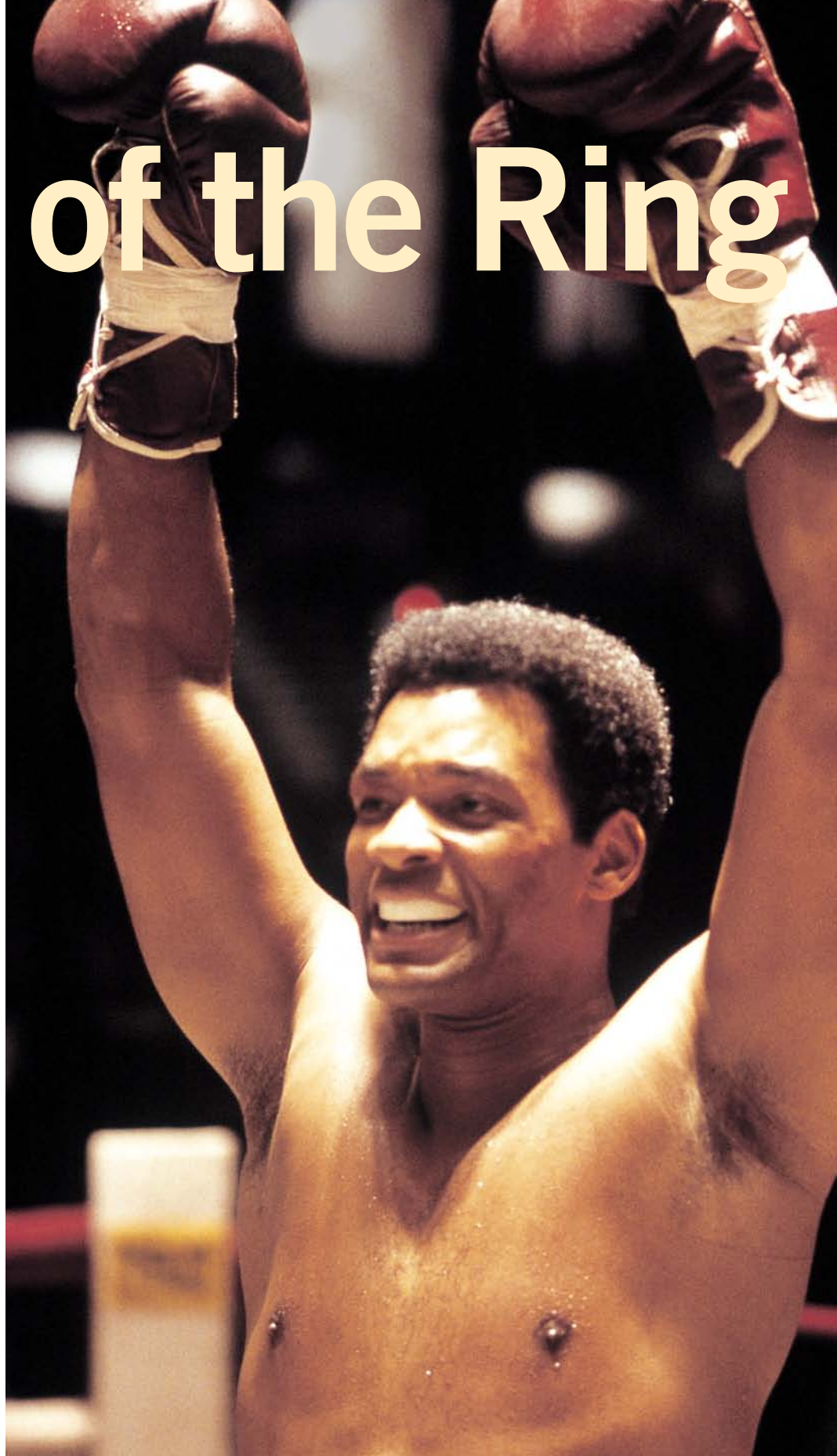
To play boxing legend Muhammad Ali, **Will Smith** had to K.O. his slick image, battle fears that he's a bad actor and completely transform his body. But he had a lot of help from someone who knows a bit about "The Greatest"

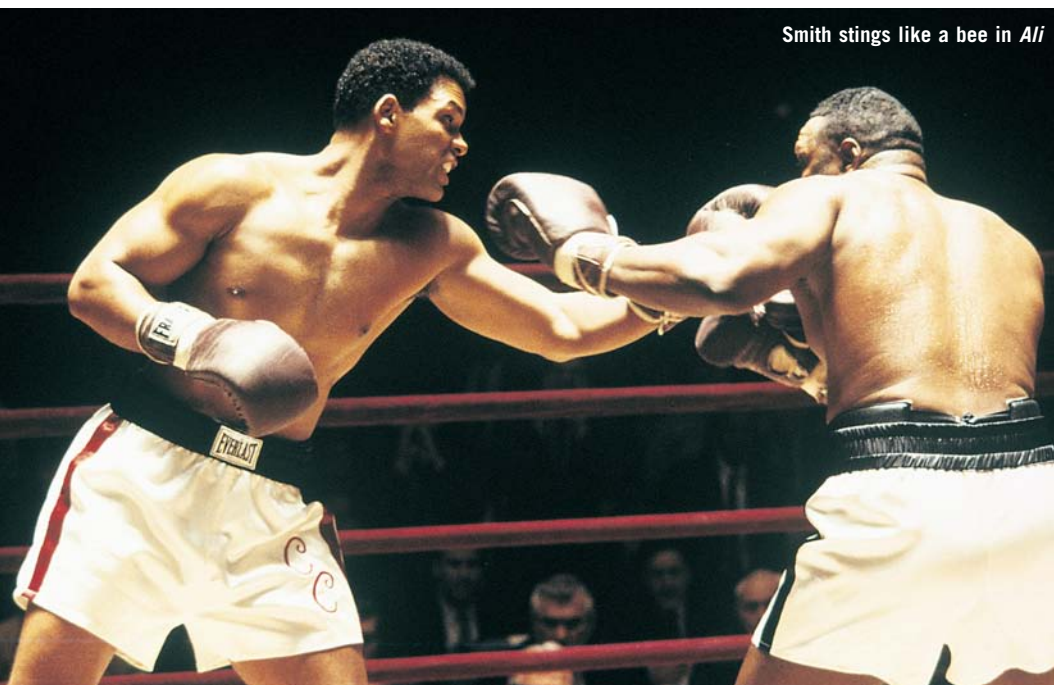
BY EARL DITTMAN

From Robert De Niro packing on more than 50 pounds for *Raging Bull* to Tom Hanks dieting to the point of emaciation for *Philadelphia* and *Cast Away*, tales of actors adopting drastic regimens to transform themselves into their celluloid alter egos are legendary. Will Smith can now consider himself a member of this elite group.

With the well-sculpted body of a professional weightlifter, the formerly thin and lanky Fresh Prince is almost unrecognizable as he strolls into his elegant New York hotel suite sporting a '60s-style Afro and dressed in dark pants and a tight, black T-shirt that barely contains the bulk of his upper torso. And while the 33-year-old rapper/actor never compromised his health while preparing to play boxer Muhammad Ali in director Michael Mann's bio-pic *Ali*, he admits there were times he felt like his 6' 2" frame was rebelling against him.

"I worked my butt off so hard that sometimes my whole body felt like one big ache and pain," recalls the Philly-born father of three, feigning discomfort as he flexes his biceps. "But I was determined to look the best I could. I mean, I'm supposed to be playing the greatest boxer of all time. If I looked like a wimp, nobody would buy the





Smith stings like a bee in *Ali*

“IT’S NOT A PUFF PIECE. YOU GET TO SEE THE *REAL* MUHAMMAD ALI, WARTS AND ALL,” SAYS SMITH

fact that I was Ali. There was some talk about using some camera tricks to make my muscles look bigger, but I wasn’t going to have any of that. I owed it to Muhammad Ali to look like I could kick ass, so I literally lived in the boxing gym and weight room for nine months to make sure I could.”

Ali’s former trainer Angelo Dundee was enlisted to train Smith so that his body would look just like the legendary boxer’s did in the 1960s. That meant four hours in the ring and up to six hours pumping iron. And, much to Smith’s delight, Dundee wasn’t the only person hanging out at the gym.

“Ali would come out and watch me train a lot, and he loved it as much as I did,” Smith fondly recalls. “He would just come down and have a great time. And the most amazing thing is, even after all this time, he was most amazed by himself. He’d watch me train, and then he’d call me over and go, ‘Man, I used to be great, wasn’t I?’”

But initially, Smith didn’t even want the role. The box-office champ repeatedly turned down offers to play the heavy-weight champ because he wasn’t sure he had the acting ability necessary to portray the larger-than-life character.

“It just seemed too big, too huge for me to tackle,” he says. “I mean, not only did I

have to learn how to fight, but I had to look like and move like Muhammad Ali. And even if I pulled that part off, I had to then worry about portraying Ali the man. I had to be able to show that he was more than just this giant of the boxing world. I had to be the Ali that looked himself in the mirror every day — the good and the bad. And, honestly, I didn’t know if I could do it.”

Even after Michael Mann (*The Insider*) signed on as director and assured Smith he was the perfect man for the job, the Grammy-winner was unconvinced. It took a phone call from someone even closer to the project to convince Smith he could do it.

“One day, out of the blue, Ali called me and said, ‘I want you to play me, nobody else!’” Smith beams. “He said he had talked to his family, and his daughters told him I was ‘the guy.’ But more than anything else, he said I reminded him of himself at my age. ‘You’re just like me when I was taking on the world. You know what it’s like, so you’ve got to do it,’ he said to me. With an endorsement like that, I couldn’t say no.”

The film — which is scheduled to be released December 7 — focuses on the 10 most eventful years of Ali’s life, tracing his beginnings as the cocky, smart-talking fighter Cassius Clay in 1960s Louisville,

Kentucky, through his defeat of George Foreman in 1974’s infamous “Rumble in the Jungle” bout in Zaire. The film also examines the boxer’s conversion from Christianity to Islam, the dropping of his “slave name” Clay and his lengthy legal fight with the U.S. government over his refusal to fight in Vietnam. Smith’s wife Jada Pinkett co-stars as one of Ali’s wives and Jon Voight plays late sportscaster Howard Cosell.

“This isn’t one of those ‘based on a true story’ kind of movies, this is what really happened,” insists Smith. “It’s not a puff piece. You get to see the *real* Muhammad Ali, warts and all.... If we had strayed away from the truth, even in the smallest way, people would know it and think we were just trying to paint a pretty picture of his life story. He did some great things, but he was also human.”

Smith and Mann’s obsession with detail also spilled into the boxing sequences. Spending countless hours studying tapes of Ali’s title fights, Smith became adamant about recreating each bout accurately, insisting every punch and “rope-a-dope” move appeared exactly as they had occurred.

“Our generation hasn’t seen many of his fights, maybe just the Rumble in the Jungle, so I felt like it was up to me to show what made him great as a boxer by making my moves real,” says Smith. “And that really helped get into the role. A lot of times, I felt like I was Muhammad Ali.”

Which includes, it seems, a confidence bordering on cockiness. Smith says being so buff gave him insight into how most pugilists must feel both in and out of the ring. “When I look around a room, I know I can kick everyone’s ass.... It’s a confidence thing,” he says. “So most real boxers don’t have to act tough and bad. They don’t need to. That’s something amazing I learned from bulking up. Mr. Ali got a kick out of that when I told him what I had learned. I went up to him and said, ‘Now I know what made you tick and act the way you did.’ He just looked at me and laughed.”

Unfortunately, stricken with Parkinson’s disease, Muhammad Ali is no longer the same fast-moving, jive-talking man who took down Sonny Liston, Joe Frazier and George Foreman. But, mentally, Smith says Ali is as sharp as ever.

“The image of the trembling, slow-talking Ali that people now see happens later in the day, after he hasn’t eaten the right foods,” Smith explains. “The public usually sees him around eight at night. But, if you



▶▶ see him at nine in the morning, he's 60 percent the Muhammad Ali we all remember. He's really clear. Sure, the disease has affected his body, but his mind is still there. He does magic tricks and all kind of things. One day, he came to the gym, got into the ring and even hit the speed bag. He's still the man!"

Apparently, so is Smith. Whatever anxieties he had about his acting abilities are now a distant memory. He credits Ali's immense courage in his battle with Parkinson's, and Michael Mann's uncompromising faith in his talents, for helping him face his fears.

"This is the first time in my career that I completely surrendered all my instincts," Smith explains. "I completely surrendered all of my natural desires to bend scenes into the 'Will

Smith Thing.' I just completely gave myself as a tool to Michael Mann to create the film that he wanted to create. But it's a really scary place. It's frightening to do a scene where the persona that you've created is in you, trying to crawl out, dying for you to do something or say something that is funny or something that will shake up a scene and say, 'Hey, notice me!' I was finally able to become someone else for a change."

Surprisingly, it was director Steven Spielberg — someone Smith has never even worked with — who helped him realize he could be an actor and not just an over-hyped Tinsel Town commodity. Asked why he had never been hired by the celebrated director, Spielberg told Smith, "Because you're too big for my movies." Smith laughed it off but later gave it some thought.

"He was saying that the persona I had created was too big for the stories he wanted to tell. It would overshadow them because everybody would be saying 'Oh, look, it's Will Smith.' So *Ali* was an opportunity for me to just turn it off.... In a lot of ways, I not only built up my body, but I exercised my mind to the point where I can now play other characters. Not just Will Smith, Mr. Fourth of July."

Smith hasn't completely abandoned his trademark action comedies, though. He and Tommy Lee Jones just finished filming the sequel *Men in Black 2*, for which he reportedly took home a hefty \$25-million dollar paycheck. But it wasn't the money that convinced him to return to familiar alien territory. There are times, he insists, when he simply chooses films to repay his legion of fans for their loyalty.

"With *Ali*, I wanted to do something that was different — to flex my acting muscles," he says with a smile. "But now I've lined up a few things where I will be giving audiences the 'Will Smith Thing' again. There is a certain relationship that I have with movie audiences. *Independence Day* and *Men in Black* were 'that thing.' But *Six Degrees of Separation*, *The Legend of Bagger Vance* and *Ali* are *my* thing. If nothing else, doing *Ali* has taught me I have the strength to do films that make both audiences and myself happy. And, if I can just keep that balanced, then I've won the fight." **E**

Earl Dittman is an entertainment journalist based in Houston, Texas. He interviewed Cate Blanchett and Kevin Spacey for the last issue of Famous.



COMING SOON

Vanilla Sky >>DECEMBER

Stars: Tom Cruise, Penélope Cruz

Director: Cameron Crowe (*Almost Famous*)

Story: Crowe and Cruise's first project together since *Jerry Maguire* stars the latter as a womanizer who dumps his girlfriend (Cameron Diaz), prompting her to drive them both into a tree. She dies, he's horribly disfigured, and all looks pretty grim. But then his good friend's girlfriend (Cruz) falls in love with him and doctors figure out how to restore his pretty little mug. If you think they live happily ever after, though, think again. This is a remake of the 1997 Spanish thriller *Open Your Eyes*, which starred Cruz in the same role.

A Beautiful Mind >>DECEMBER

Stars: Russell Crowe, Jennifer Connelly

Director: Ron Howard (*The Grinch*)

Story: Crowe plays real-life Nobel Prize winning mathematician John Forbes Nash Jr., who managed to develop the Game Theory of economics while battling schizophrenia. Connelly, who you may remember from *The Rocketeer*, plays his young wife and Ed Harris is an intelligence officer. Security was tight on this set, as the flick was shot right about the time Crowe started getting those death threats.

Gangs of New York >>DECEMBER

Stars: Leonardo DiCaprio, Daniel Day Lewis

Director: Martin Scorsese (*Bringing Out the Dead*)

Story: Based on the non-fiction book of the same name, this lavish period piece whisks you back to mid-1800s New York City when Italian and Irish gangs were first taking root. DiCaprio, who makes his first big-screen appearance since *The Beach*, plays Amsterdam Vallon, the son of a murdered gang leader. Daniel Day Lewis plays his father's killer.

40 Days and 40 Nights >>JANUARY

Stars: Josh Hartnett, Shannyn Sossamon

Director: Michael Lehmann (*Heathers*)

Story: Not sure if this is a good sign, but Ashton Kutcher was originally supposed to star as a guy who breaks up with his girlfriend and then swears off women for the titular 40 days and 40 nights, but dropped out to do *Dude, Where's My Car?*, leaving the role for *Pearl Harbor*'s Hartnett. Sossamon steps in as the jilted ex trying to get her boyfriend back. This is just her second film, after playing Heath Ledger's love interest in last summer's surprise hit *A Knight's Tale*.

The Panic Room >>FEBRUARY

Stars: Jodie Foster, Dwight Yoakam

Director: David Fincher (*Fight Club*)

Story: Foster plays a recently divorced woman who moves, with her daughter, into a New York brownstone rumored to house hidden treasure. When three burglars break in looking for the goods the women have to hide in a "panic room" that was designed for just that scenario and features a closed-circuit TV system on which they can keep tabs on the crooks.

MADONNA ESCAPES ZOO, STONE IN LOVE TRIANGLE AND DAMON MIGHT WEAR TIGHTS

BY SEAN DAVIDSON



MADONNA GETS BESTIAL

Will she play the lion, the zebra, the giraffe or the hippo? **Madonna** (*The Next Best Thing*) has agreed to lend her voice to *Madagascar*, an animated adventure about wayward wildlife — the latest project from DreamWorks and the makers of *Shrek*. **Chris Rock**, **Ben Stiller** and **Jason Alexander** will join the Material Mom behind the mic, voicing four zoo animals from New York who escape to the African island. Production will likely take a back seat to *Shrek 2* however, meaning *Madagascar* might not hit theatres until 2003.

LIOTTA, DUCHOVNY GET STONED

Fading star **Sharon Stone** (*The Mighty, Gloria*) will hop into the sack with **Ray Liotta** and **David Duchovny** this month on the set of *In the Lake*. The drama follows the sordid details of a middle-aged love triangle, with Stone as a married woman who steps out on her husband (Duchovny) with a local ne'er-do-well (Liotta). **Jon Amiel** (*Entrapment*) directs. Stone's next project was to be the Lana Turner bio-pic *Stompanato*, with **Antonio Banderas**. But that film is apparently stalled in development hell and not expected to get underway until the New Year.



CROWE TURNS GREEN

As if World War Two hasn't eaten up enough celluloid, Oscar-winner **Russell Crowe** (*Gladiator*, *A Beautiful Mind*) will make his directorial debut with *The Long Green Shore*, the gruesome story of Australian troops shooting it out with the Japanese in 1945. Crowe is expected to appear in the film and is also making his debut as a screenwriter, having rewritten the original script. The cantankerous Aussie sets off for the South Pacific in spring 2002 to start filming. No word yet on who will fill out the rest of the cast.

DAMON TAKES A DARE?

Math geniuses, golf pros and homicidal sociopaths are one thing — but does pretty boy **Matt Damon** have what it takes to jump and twirl around the screen in a bright red body suit? The star of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and *The Legend of Bagger Vance* is the frontrunner for the lead in *Daredevil*, an action-adventure adapted from the long-running Marvel comic book about a blind acrobatic superhero. **Mark Steven Johnson** (*Simon Birch*) has written a script and signed on as director, and **Screamer** **Neve Campbell** is set to play the devilish do-gooder's girlfriend. Shooting starts in Vancouver this spring.



WALKER VS. THE PLAGUE

Taking his cues from **Heath Ledger** (*A Knight's Tale*), hunk of the moment **Paul Walker** (*The Fast and the Furious*) will try his hand at jousting and other feudal-era perils as one of several time-travelers in the action-adventure *Timeline*. Yet another adaptation of a **Michael Crichton** (*Congo*, *Jurassic Park*) novel, the movie gets going when a gang of grad students, clearly desperate for extra credit, use a time travel experiment to rescue their professor who's trapped in the 14th century. *Lethal Weapon* director **Richard Donner** starts work in March.

B R I E F L Y

David Hyde Pierce (*Frasier*) and **Catherine Keener** (*Being John Malkovich*) will star in *How to Survive a Hotel Room Fire*, **Steven Soderbergh's** sequel to his 1989 breakthrough project *Sex, Lies and Videotape*. ■ **Rory Culkin**, youngest brother of Macaulay and Kieran, co-stars with Mel Gibson in *Signs*, the new thriller by *Unbreakable* director **M. Night Shyamalan**. ■ **Steven Seagal** (*Exit Wounds*) will play an FBI agent working undercover in a prison in *Half Past Dead*. ■ **Nicole Kidman** (*The Others*) will take to London's stage for two as-yet-unannounced plays — one by Shakespeare and the other by Chekhov. *American Beauty's* **Sam Mendes** will direct.

RADIO ACTIVE

AFTER 15 YEARS DJ CHRIS SHEPPARD STILL RULES, ANNOYS AND LOVES THE CANADIAN DANCE SCENE BY MICHAEL WHITE



If an artist's success can be gauged by the number of people who wish he would disappear, Toronto's Chris Sheppard may be the most successful Canadian artist of his generation who isn't Celine Dion or Bryan Adams.

Equally renowned and reviled for his parallel careers as DJ (radio and club), producer, remixer, songwriter and performer, the 39-year-old Sheppard has deftly navigated his career through more than 15 years of rapid-fire pop culture trends. His weekly four-hour dance music program, *Groove Station*, is the highest-rated syndicated radio show in the country; the two dance-pop groups for which he writes, produces and plays keyboards — BKS and Love Inc. — have gone platinum; he continues to turn out popular club-mix compilation CDs (the latest, *Club Cutz 505*, was released September 25), with combined sales over 1.5 million; and he can claim to be one of the few Canucks whose calls to Moby, The Beastie Boys and The Prodigy will almost always be accepted. (He was an early champion of, and continues to be a friend to, all of these artists.)

Yet Sheppard remains proof that nothing inspires contempt in the hearts of others quite like good fortune, and acknowledges that commercial prosperity has murdered his credibility in the eyes of the possessive dance music community's movers and shakers.

"Some people are complaining, 'Oh, [dance music] isn't underground anymore,'" he muses. "Well, the minute it stopped being underground is the minute that those people who are

complaining about it, got into it. That's the minute it became commercial. Being underground is more than paying \$40 for a rave ticket and dressing a certain way."

But the man who litters his radio program and CD commercials with the sort of plastic declarations ("brothers and sisters," "bay-bee") that are the antithesis of underground dance music's earnest anonymity, does confess, "It's probably been very difficult for someone to follow me through my whole career, because of the way that I radically change and sort of leave things when I reach the plateau."

Sheppard began his career in the early '80s as an on-air personality at Toronto's CFNY-FM (now The Edge 102.1), where he was arguably the first DJ at a commercial station to introduce listeners to British post-punk groups such as New Order and The Smiths. When the alternative rock he helped expose began crossing over to the masses, he became seduced by the burgeoning rave scene in Europe and, in the early '90s, became a campaigner for that movement's musical offspring, including then-unknowns Moby and The Prodigy.

"I'm a music fan, first and foremost," he explains. "I love music, and when I became an artist, I wanted to expose it. What put me in my position is that I was — and still am — one of 'the people.'"

Indeed, Sheppard is one of the few successful club DJs, Canadian or otherwise, who doesn't avoid performing in small cities. "[Other DJs] are missing half the fun when they do that," he says. "I do a lot of touring here in Canada. It's 2001, and I still hit certain cities where I'm the first guy that's ever DJed there."

Ultimately, the secret to why Chris Sheppard has thrived despite yanking his followers in so many directions is something he picked up from one the bands he helped popularize.

"I never underestimate the intelligence of the audience," he offers. "That's why I'm successful. It's not like I'm any great rocket scientist. It's a strategy I learned from The Beastie Boys. They would create music that was a little obscure, but they always felt, 'Hey, if we like it, there's gotta be a lot of other people out there that are gonna like it, too.' It sure works."

Michael White is the music editor at The Calgary Straight.

out THIS MONTH

Artist: Baby Blue Soundcrew
Title: Old School
Label: Universal

Artist: Creed
Title: Cuban Linx 2: The Mini Bar
Label: Epic/Sony

Artist: Cypress Hill
Title: Stoned Raiders
Label: Columbia/Sony

Artist: Eagle Eye Cherry
Title: Present Future
Label: MCA/Universal

Artist: Enrique Iglesias
Title: Escape
Label: Interscope/Universal

Artist: Mick Jagger
Title: Goddess in the Doorway
Label: Virgin

Artist: Jewel
Title: This Way
Label: Atlantic/Warner

Artist: B.B. King
Title: A Christmas Celebration of Hope
Label: MCA/Universal

Artist: Natalie Merchant
Title: Motherland
Label: Elektra/Warner

Artist: Nas
Title: Stillmatic
Label: Columbia/Sony

Artist: Shaquille O'Neal
Title: Presents his Superfriends, Vol. 1
Label: Trauma/Universal

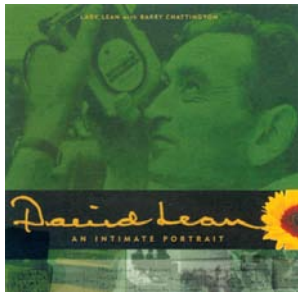
Artist: S Club 7
Title: Sunshine
Label: Polydor/Universal

Artist: Smash Mouth
Title: Smash Mouth
Label: Interscope/Universal

Artist: Timbaland & Magoo
Title: Indecent Proposal
Label: Black Ground/Virgin

Artist: Rob Zombie
Title: The Sinister Urge
Label: Geffen/Universal

IMAN SPEAKS | DAVID LEAN REMEMBERED | TORONTO'S OLD MOVIE HOUSES



David Lean: An Intimate Portrait

By Lady Sandra Lean and Barry Chattington

Rizzoli, \$65

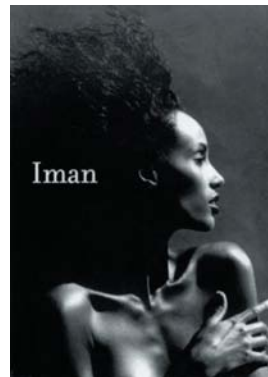
Never mind the fact that David Lean directed some of cinema's classic films — *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Doctor Zhivago*, *Bridge on the River Kwai* — the man was married an astounding six times, which should provide more than enough fodder for a biography. Especially when it's written by one of those wives — Lady Sandra Lean. David Lean died in April 1991, seven years after directing his final film, the Oscar-nominated drama *A Passage to India*. But Lean was more than a director. He also co-wrote the screenplays for many of his films, including *Passage*, which he adapted from the E.M. Forster novel, and the script for his 1946 version of *Great Expectations*, both of which earned him Oscar nominations. More than 300 photographs, many of which have never been published before, letters and memorabilia combine to tell the story not only of Lean's films but also his extensive travels.

Iman

By Iman

Rizzoli, \$66

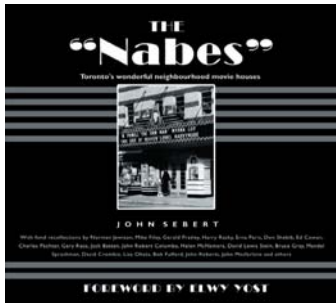
It's been 25 years since Somalia-born Iman was "discovered" by a photographer while studying at a Nairobi university. One would like to say that her indelible impression on the world of modeling — she is widely considered to have been the first black supermodel — changed the industry forever. But the truth is, although Iman was responsible for a substantial cultural shift in the fashion industry, black models still complain about the lack of opportunities, discrepancies in pay and lack of publicity. Now 46 years old, Iman criticizes the fashion industry that made her a star and recounts her life from her childhood in Africa, through her marriage to rock star David Bowie — who, by the way, wrote the foreword. Friends like Sandra Bernhard, Isabella Rossellini and Isaac Mizrahi also contributed essays, but it's the pictures, more than 200 of them, that speak the loudest — including shots by Ellen Von Unwerth, Helmut Newton, Herb Ritts and Annie Leibowitz.



The Nabes: Toronto's Wonderful Neighbourhood Movie Houses

By John Sebert

Mosaic Press, \$25



What's a nabe? The term of endearment used to describe neighbourhood cinemas long before the days of super-chains and megaplexes. Photographer John Sebert pays homage to the velvet-ensconced, gum-floored meeting places of Toronto's yesteryear with this nostalgic 160-page photo collection. Sebert began by tracking down photos of about 80 old theatres, and then went back and shot what stands on that ground today. In some cases, you can still see remnants of the old movie palaces, in others there's nothing left but the memories. Text is provided by a number of prominent former Torontonians who share rose-coloured recollections of their favourite nabes — like *Traders* star Bruce Gray who recalls watching Betty Grable triumph against adversity time and time again at *The Runnymede*. "That was where you learned what it took to be a hero," Gray writes. Or director Norman Jewison's memories of *The Family on Queen St. East*. "It was downstairs from a pool hall," Jewison writes, "and every time there was a dramatic silent pause in the movie you would hear the click, click, click of the billiard balls. It sure killed the drama."

—Marni Weisz

out THIS MONTH

Peepshow: 1950s Pin-ups in 3-D

Introduction by Bunny Yeager

You get your own pair of 3-D glasses with this 92-page collection of shy, winking girls and buxom sweater bunnies, all captured in full-colour stereoscopic images from the 1950s.

Starlet: Photographs from the Hollywood Front Lines

By Nancy Ellison

Yet another collection of photos depicting beautiful people (we must be nearing Christmas-shopping season), this one focuses on the quarter-century (1970-1995) Hollywood photographer Ellison spent shooting starlets.

Sepia Dreams: A Celebration of Black Achievement through Words and Images

By Dionne Bennett

African-American celebrities give you little lessons about the characteristics they believe helped them make it in show biz. For Samuel L. Jackson it was endurance, Lena Horne living with grace and Gregory Hines places joy above all else.

Random Acts of Badness: My Story

By Danny Bonaduce

The former *Partridge Family* star is pictured reading a mock tabloid festooned with stories about his sordid slide on the cover of this autobiography. So you can assume he isn't going to shy away from tales of his addictions and criminal dabblings. Why should the tabloids be the only ones to make money off his misery?

"Live from New York": An Oral History of Saturday Night Live

By Tom Shales and Andrew Miller

Yes, there was a big glossy history of the sketch-com pioneer released about seven years ago, but this new tome claims to be the definitive account of the show's 25-year reign. Really. Stories include Bill Murray beating up Chevy Chase and Norm MacDonald's campaign to infuriate NBC honchos.

The spliceman cometh

How an unknown movie fan remade *The Phantom Menace*

BY SEAN DAVIDSON

Two years after the film arrived in theatres, it seemed that the agonizing, *ad nauseum* debate about *The Phantom Menace* was finally dying down. After months of back-and-forth about the lacklustre plot, Jake Lloyd, Jar Jar Binks and that weird business with the midi-chlorians, even the most obsessive movie nerds eventually grew tired of arguing whether the 1999 *Star Wars* film was a worthy addition to the series. Fan sites went quiet and fans went back to watching their well-worn tapes of *The Empire Strikes Back* and cleaning their mint-condition Snow Walkers.

"It's much, much better," says Mark Oakley, a Toronto-area fan who found a copy online. "The original had certain scenes that I thought were beyond repair but they're now among the strongest."

The re-do even got a nod from *Chicago Tribune* film critic Michael Wilmington who wrote that it was "slicker, occasionally more exciting but, most of all, more in tune with the faster tempos modern audiences are used to." Peter Howell at *The Toronto Star* was also "impressed" and opined that the edit "seamlessly tidies up some of Jake Lloyd's dialogue, making him less precocious and more like the youth who will grow to become the fearsome Darth Vader."

In all, 20 minutes were snipped from the 133-minute original, the most noticeable loss being the entire underwater travel sequence on the planet Naboo.

On the project's unofficial web page (<http://members.onecenter.com/hollywood/phantomedit>) fans compare notes about the many changes and exchange addresses and passwords for FTP sites where anyone with great patience and, presumably, high-speed access can download the 1088 MB of .mpeg files. Copies have also cropped up on file-sharing networks like Gnutella and are being sold on eBay for \$20 a pop. In June, Hollywood-area fans even started doling out free CD-ROM copies in front of Mann's Chinese Theater.

Which is when the Lucasfilm lawyers finally spoke up, albeit with uncharacteristic restraint, posting a "reminder" on www.starwars.com that copying any version of their movie is illegal. Copies are, of course, still circulating.

But more significantly, *The Phantom Edit* has put George Lucas in a difficult public relations position. His much-pronounced love of digital filmmaking and the internet has finally collided with his zealous efforts to protect the *Star Wars* brand. And industry watchers are wondering if the man, who just last fall launched an official *Star Wars* "fan



But a fresh can of gasoline was thrown on the fire this past summer when copies of something called *The Phantom Edit* appeared on the internet. Working from the VHS version of the sci-fi prequel, some anonymous fan had done what appeared to be a professional re-edit of the entire movie — trimming dialogue and characters, cutting entire scenes and touching off a heated debate about digital filmmaking and intellectual property in the process.

Many hail the unauthorized revision, apparently done on a home computer, as a significant improvement on the original, not just for cutting the screentime of a certain Creole amphibian, but for streamlining the story and muting some of the wooden dialogue.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY VADIM MOSCOTIN

FAN FARE

Fans now have the technology to re-edit or, as below, shoot their own movies. And sometimes, if they've been good, they're not immediately sued into the ground by a platoon of lawyers.

Park Wars

www.parkwars.com

Who among us hasn't dreamed of remaking *Phantom Menace* with all the characters from *South Park*? It's just 11 minutes long, so don't download it expecting to see every single scene. But Cartman looks pretty funny painted green like Yoda.

TFN FanFilms

www.theforce.net/theater

The top-ranked site for *Star Wars* news and rumours also hosts fan films, including the slick six-minute short *Duality* and *Bounty Trail*, a slightly longer made-for-pennies adventure featuring under-used bad guy Boba Fett in a fight with the Empire.

Star Wars Fan Film Network

www.starwars.atomfilms.com

Approved and even, *gasp*, encouraged by George Lucas, the official fan film site hosts a selection of short and very short works — from the two-minute cartoon knock-off of Lewis Carroll *Jabber Wookie* to *Star Wars or Bust*, a mini-documentary about the weird, obsessive behaviour of sci-fi fans. Gee, where'd they get the idea for that one?

film" network, and provided rookie filmmakers with a library of proprietary sound effects including Darth Vader's raspy breathing and the *zwoosh* of lightsabers, will risk further alienating his fans by trying to stomp out the same do-it-yourself moviemaking he so actively promotes.

It is generally believed that Lucas released *The Phantom Menace* DVD earlier than planned, on October 16, to placate his grumbling fans. But the disc, far easier to edit than a VHS tape, might just make the problem of unauthorized splice jobs even worse. With film editing software now easily available for the home user, displeased or ambitious movie buffs are far less likely to play with licensed toys and far more likely to tinker with a copyrighted movie.

"When the DVD comes out I expect there's gonna be a rash of these things," says Oakley.

Sean Davidson is the deputy editor of Famous.

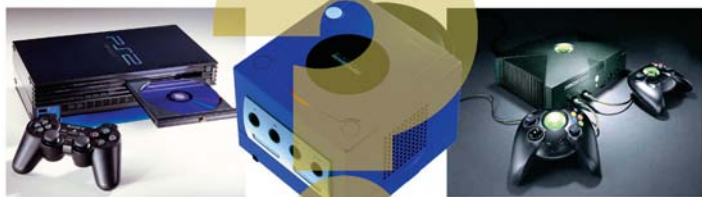
THREE'S A CROWD

PlayStation 2? Gamecube? Xbox? Marc Saltzman helps you decide

When it comes to picking the right videogame system, one thing is for sure — it's never been so hard.

While the Sony PlayStation 2 (\$450) is the only "next-generation" platform already on the market (besides the Sega Dreamcast, which ceased production of its hardware a few months back), two new contenders debut this month, just three days apart — the Nintendo Gamecube (\$300) on November 18, and the Microsoft Xbox (\$460) on November 15.

I've had the privilege of testing both, so here's my two cents:



NINTENDO GAMECUBE

■ My regular readers know I was never much of a fan of their Nintendo 64 system, but it's hard to deny that this 20-year veteran has created some of the best games in the industry. And I challenge anyone to name a videogame company with better-known characters than Mario, Donkey Kong and Pikachu.

The new Gamecube will feature lots of titles starring these old heroes, and so will appeal more to a younger audience. Top launch games will be the *Ghostbusters*-inspired *Luigi's Mansion* and the cute puzzler *Pikmin*.

That said, a small but impressive handful of Gamecube titles will appeal to an older demographic, such as *Star Wars Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron II*, an aerial/space combat simulation (and my top launch title pick), *Wave Race: Blue Storm*, a sequel to the best-selling jet ski racing game, and the mature-themed action/adventure epic *Eternal Darkness*.

But keep in mind that the cheaper price tag means there are fewer bells and whistles.

Unlike PlayStation 2 and Xbox, you can't use the system to play DVDs or CDs.

MICROSOFT XBOX

■ Without a doubt, Microsoft's first foray into videogame hardware has more power under the hood than PlayStation 2 or Gamecube, including a hard drive for fast-loading games and faster load times.

But, as everyone knows, it boils down to how much fun the games are, and the Xbox line-up is quite impressive — whether we're talking heated action shooters like *Halo*, more traditional 3D console action/adventure games like *Oddworld: Munch's Odyssey* or fast-paced fighting games like *Dead or Alive 3*.

In my humble opinion, these titles come in a close second to Gamecube's, but will appeal to hardcore audiences because of their complexity and mature content (save, maybe, for *Munch's Odyssey*). Plus, I've already seen some second-generation games for Xbox (due out in 2002), and they look even better.

While the Xbox will have the ability to play DVDs, unlike with PlayStation 2, you'll have to buy a remote to "unlock" this feature (price has yet to be determined). Sheesh. Another beef — the Xbox controller. It's big and cumbersome, and I suspect it'll turn many gamers off.

SONY PLAYSTATION 2

■ Don't expect Sony to take these new systems lying down. While the company has yet to outline its marketing strategy (a drop in price?), the games — like *Gran Turismo 3* — keep getting better and better.

Expect a handful of incredible titles to be released about the time you're reading this, such as Konami's eagerly anticipated tactical action game *Metal Gear Solid 2* and the horror sequel *Silent Hill 2*. Then there's Capcom's *Devil May Cry*, a mature action game with guns a-plenty and SquareSoft's *Final Fantasy X*, the latest instalment in the company's block-

out THIS MONTH

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone >> Game Boy Advance, Game Boy Color, PC, PlayStation, PlayStation 2

For every kid who's fantasized about enrolling at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, this is the closest you're gonna get. Step into the skin of the boy conjurer himself and become a master Quidditch player, learn how to cast spells and try to find your way around the ever-changing halls of the academy, no easy task when staircases and classrooms keep moving around.

Okage: Shadow King >> PlayStation 2

Perhaps the only role-playing game ever to feature an evil demon named Stan. Here's the story: Ari, a young boy living in the remote village of Tenel, is forced to become Stan's slave after the demon saves his sister's life. Stan then makes Ari join him on a quest to destroy all the other demons who are draining Stan of his powers. Lots of spells, weapons and odd characters to be found in 20 colourfully rendered landscapes.

Microsoft Zoo Tycoon >> PC

No, you don't have to clean the animals' cages, but you do have to hire a zookeeper to scoop the poop. Pick from more than 40 animals and upwards of 175 building materials to make your zoo a haven for both your critters and human guests. Oh yeah, and try to make lots of money.

buster role-playing game series.

Plus, Sony will launch its hard drive and snap-in modem (supporting both dial-up and high-speed) this month, and has inked alliances with AOL, Sun, Real and Macromedia to help the console become a viable internet appliance by year-end.

Historically, three systems have not been able to survive on store shelves at the same time, and only time will tell which of the big three will prevail. Just remember, regardless of which platform you choose, be sure to "try before you buy" so you can get a feel for the system, its controller and its games.

Marc Saltzman is a Toronto-based high-tech journalist, and a regular correspondent for CNN and CTV's Canada AM.

new RELEASES

GET **MADE**, DIG INTO **TOMB RAIDER**, BRING HOME **BABY BOY** OR CONQUER **PLANET OF THE APES**

Witherspoon in *Legally Blonde*



NOVEMBER 6

LEGALLY BLONDE

Stars: Reese Witherspoon, Luke Wilson

Director: Robert Luketic (debut)

Story: When the seemingly bubble-headed Elle (Witherspoon) gets dumped by her political-minded boyfriend for being a "Marilyn" instead of a "Jackie," she decides to follow him to Harvard Law School, where she proves that blondes really ain't so dumb. **DVD**

BABY BOY

Stars: Tyrese Gibson, Ving Rhames

Director: John Singleton (*Boyz n the Hood*)

Story: Writer-director Singleton returns to South Central L.A., but this time the focus is on a 20-year-old unwed father and the conflict between his desire to be a good dad and his inability to stand on his own two feet. **DVD**

THE GOLDEN BOWL

Stars: Uma Thurman, Kate Beckinsale

Director: James Ivory (*Surviving Picasso*)

Story: Merchant-Ivory, the Kings of the Costume Drama (*Howards End*, *Remains of the Day*), deliver yet another high-brow period piece. This time, the story centres on a poor gold-digger (Thurman) who convinces her lover to marry her fabulously wealthy friend

(Beckinsale). Also starring Anjelica Huston and Nick Nolte. **DVD**

NOVEMBER 13

TOMB RAIDER

Stars: Angelina Jolie, Jon Voight

Director: Simon West (*Con Air*)

Story: The iconic videogame comes to life. The plot (something to do with the Illuminati and a time-controlling clock) is pretty silly, but Jolie is perfectly cast as the voluptuous, gun-toting Lara Croft, and the action flies fast and furiously. The very definition of a popcorn movie. **DVD**

AMERICA'S SWEETHEARTS

Stars: Julia Roberts, John Cusack

Director: Joe Roth (*Coupe de Ville*)

Story: When a popular Hollywood on- and off-



Zeta-Jones and Cusack in *America's Sweethearts*



Rhames in *Baby Boy*

screen couple (Cusack and Catherine Zeta-Jones) calls it quits, the studio's wily publicist (Billy Crystal) tries to save their final movie from the box-office garbage heap by convincing the press that they're still together. Unfortunately for him, the now-single leading man has fallen in love with the starlet's subservient sister (Roberts). **DVD**

OSMOSIS JONES

Stars: Chris Rock, Bill Murray

Directors: Bobby Farrelly, Peter Farrelly, Piet Kroon, Tom Sito

Story: A nasty infection has taken over the body of a sloppy zookeeper (Murray), which means it's up to a mouthy white blood cell (Rock) and his uptight cold capsule partner (David Hyde Pierce) to save the day in this half-animated/half-live-action tour of the human body. Think of it as a buddy cop version of *Fantastic Voyage*, with an (un)healthy dose of *South Park*-lite humour. **DVD**

NOVEMBER 20

PLANET OF THE APES

Stars: Mark Wahlberg, Helena Bonham Carter


Director: Tim Burton (*Sleepy Hollow*)

Story: Those damn dirty apes are back in this heavily retooled version of the 1968 sci-fi classic. This time around, the human (Wahlberg) rallies the other homo sapiens in an attempt to defeat the nefarious General Thade (Tim Roth) and his army of chimps. **DVD**

DR. SEUSS' HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS

Stars: Jim Carrey, Jeffrey Tambor

Director: Ron Howard (*Apollo 13*)

Story: The classic children's tale about a mean-hearted Grinch's plan to steal Christmas from Whoville is given a live-action update. The rubber-faced Jim Carrey (under a whole lot of makeup) stars as the green-furred grouch. 

NOVEMBER 27

MADE

Stars: Jon Favreau, Vince Vaughn


Director: Jon Favreau (debut)

Story: A low-rent boxer (Favreau) is given the chance to prove that he's got what it takes to be a low-rent gangster, but his chatterbox buddy Ricky (Vaughn) can't seem to stop getting them both in hot water.

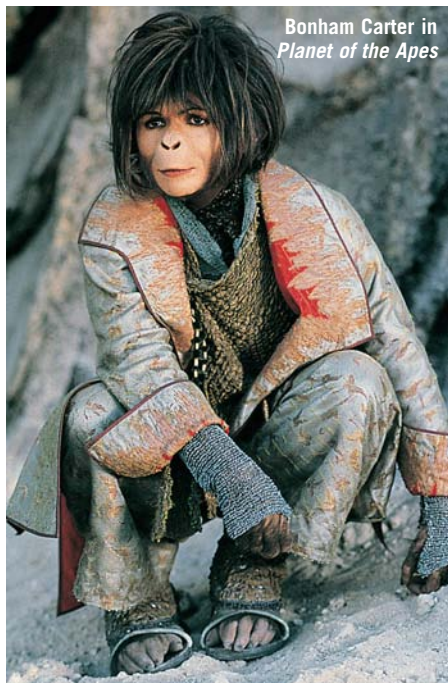
POOTIE TANG

Stars: Lance Crowther, Jennifer Coolidge

Director: Louis C.K. (*Tomorrow Night*)

Story: Who's the jive-talking black superhero that's a sex machine to all the chicks? Pootie Tang! The blaxploitation films of the '70s get parodied by producer Chris Rock, who first featured the unlikely crime fighter on his now-defunct television show. 

 indicates movie is available on DVD.



Bonham Carter in
Planet of the Apes

stargazing

BY DAN LIEBMAN

SCORPIO

October 23–November 21

Your circle of friends expands as a recent acquaintance gets much closer, or you find a soulmate at a midmonth party. Work hassles ease up, thanks to a new colleague who's in your court.

SAGITTARIUS

November 22–December 22

Thanks to your influence, a romantic partner is both more gregarious and more forgiving. An older relative is willing to help you out in a non-monetary way.

CAPRICORN

December 23–January 20

It's as though a weight's been lifted off your back. Suddenly, you're more relaxed and ready to take on exciting challenges. Naturally, it's a good time to send out résumés, and be sure to include recent accomplishments.

AQUARIUS

January 21–February 19

It's a good time to plan shared arrangements (travel, accommodation, business partnerships) with Librans. Time is getting tight, so book your holiday vacation and don't put off shopping for hard-to-please types.

PISCES

February 20–March 20

At the start, November seems like a month-long disaster movie: horrendous hours,

neighbourhood disputes and fussy partners. But you can look forward to a bonus, a reconciliation or a romantic getaway by the time the month's closing credits roll.

ARIES

March 21–April 20

An emotionally vulnerable streak surfaces around the 15th. If you can, surround yourself with solid, supportive types. Prepare for a late-month windfall, then try your hardest to sock most of the loot away.

TAURUS

April 21–May 22

Use your cheery demeanour — yes, you make even the resident grump upbeat these days — to convince your boss of your worth. And keep your ears open for potentially useful information.

GEMINI

May 23–June 21

Socially, you're back on everyone's A-list after a recent sabbatical. Gear up for the holiday season by getting into the best shape you've been in all year. And review your gift-giving carefully, you could be making a serious omission.

CANCER

June 22–July 22

If you and a significant other have reached an impasse, then somebody'd better budge by the 30th. And it may as well be you.



KATIA SMIRNOVA

LEO

July 23–August 22

If you made any gaffes over the past year, then this is the best time to rehabilitate your reputation. Expect more than an average number of cancellations throughout November.

VIRGO

August 23–September 22

A wacky approach can help get a relationship back on track. If, on the other hand, you're looking for a partner, don't do anything to scare away prospects.

LIBRA

September 23–October 22

It could be a colleague, or it could be a companion — but it's one of those rare times when working with an egomaniac is worth the trouble. The final results of your collaboration are exciting.

10

STARS ATTACK HOLLYWOOD'S MOVIE BUSINESS

BY SUSAN GRANGER

DREW BARRYMORE “Hollywood men get away with far more than Hollywood women. Take Christian Slater and Robert Downey Jr. These are adult men doing drugs and breaking the law. I was a 13-year-old girl who was experimenting, so it was different. I see a tremendous lack of gratitude in these two gentlemen. They have tremendous careers, but they didn’t appreciate what they had.... The weird thing is that all through their screw-ups people were still hiring them. I think if a woman were behaving like these men, not only would she not get hired but she would also be considered a junkie scumbag.”

DAVID DUCHOVNY “Most Hollywood adventure movies don’t have an idea to begin with. They explode things trying to find an idea. It’s like, ‘If I blow up this building, maybe I’ll find an idea.’ If they’re lucky, they find one.”

KIM BASINGER “I was never given the right opportunity to be who I really am. My persona went out in front of me — it began to lead. I was very resentful against the movie business, against Hollywood, during a period of problems I had.”

WINONA RYDER “I never fitted in when I lived in Hollywood. It’s such a fake society. You get the feeling that everybody is scamming everybody else. You can’t tell if people are being nice because they like you or because they want to use you. Nothing is genuine. Everything runs on rumour and gossip. It’s really sick.”



EWAN MCGREGOR AT THE 54TH CANNES FILM FESTIVAL, PHOTO BY EVAN AGOSTINI/IMAGEDIRECT

EWAN MCGREGOR “All they talk about in Hollywood is meetings and budgets. The last thing anybody seems to be worried about is the movie.... When I met with agents in Hollywood they told me you had to do one movie for yourself and then two for the business. No, you don’t. You do every film because you want to do good work, because you’re interested in making good movies with good people.”

JONATHAN TAYLOR THOMAS “Some actors in Hollywood think that in order to be taken seriously you have to be some sort of tortured person on Prozac, but I’ve always been comfortable in my own skin.”

JACK NICHOLSON “I’m always a little concerned about middle-aged men having an obligatory love interest in movies. I find it a little offensive.”

ALEC BALDWIN “Nothing is worse than the movie business. The political game in Washington is just like the Boy Scouts compared to the movies.”

JULIANNE MOORE “Drama school left me utterly naïve about the reality of Hollywood. Nobody prepares you for what a machine it is, what an industry. It’s a machine that often demands — of actresses — that they bare one’s all for art and commerce, and then you’re unfairly criticized for having done what you were told you had to do.”

KATE WINSLET “Actors in Hollywood who go for the plastic surgery and breast implants are fantasy figures suited to a fantasy world. It’s so goddamn safe. Everything’s done for you when you’re working. Then the shoot is over and, suddenly, you have to wash your own knickers on the weekend.”