

# 'Cherry Moon': Princely invention; not-so-princely acting

By RHONDA BRANNON  
Special To The Chronicle

## A movie review.

I am a Prince fan. I really am. Honest.

I enjoy his music; it's innovative and exciting. I just wish the same could be said for his movies.

OK, so maybe the movies are innovative. But exciting? Nahhh. Doing a motion picture in black-and-white in the '80s is innovative. Mixing themes from the '30s with those of the '80s is also innovative. Allowing Prince to direct and star in it is neither innovative nor exciting.

Before Prince steps before or behind another camera, he needs to take some classes somewhere. Just because you're a good musician, it does not necessarily follow that you are a good director or actor. Also, while casting for the role of a leading lady, one would assume that a director would choose a female who possesses some acting abilities.

Such, apparently, was not the case with this movie or the previous one. Emmanuelle Sallet is as bad in "Under the Cherry Moon" as Apollonia was in

"Purple Rain," but, then again, so was Prince.

Yet, there is one saving grace. Remember Jerome Benton, the guy who stole the show in "Purple Rain?" Well, at least Prince was smart enough to cast him again. Benton portrays Tricky, friend and straight man to Christopher Tracy (Prince). Benton is good. His comedic timing is superb. Unlike Prince, Benton gets better with each movie. I would enjoy seeing him in a film that pairs him with a real actor, under the direction of a real director.

Maybe Jerome will do as Morris Day did and break away from the Purple Kingdom. He's got the talent to do it. With some acting lessons and a good agent, he probably could be a great comedic actor.

Prince releases the soundtrack albums to his movies months before the movies appear. They get a lot of airplay, and they should, because the songs are good. They also make you want to see the movie, so you can see how each song relates to the storyline.

Well, let me tell you, the next time that I hear that Prince is starting another movie, and that



Prince: Acting lessons might help a little.

he's going to direct and star in it, and that he's signed some no-talent bimette for the female lead -- and that Jerome Benton will not be appearing in it, I will stay at home and listen to the soundtrack.

This movie is so bad, I don't even care where the songs fit in the storyline.

Thankfully, "Under the Cherry Moon" didn't last long here.

## Brown plans trip

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look at capitalism as something that is bad for them. This is an attitude that we are going to change."

Brown traveled to South Africa last year with a group of black educators. The tour resulted in a U.S. program to help improve black South African schools.

As for what seemed to be a sure-fire ambassadorship until last weekend, Brown was matter-of-fact. "I never wanted to be ambassador anyway," he said, leaning back in his chair.

However, Brown told reporters two weeks ago that he would accept the job if it were offered.

The Washington Post reported that the Reagan administration abandoned Brown's nomination after a White House meeting. Officials questioned Brown's involvement with a Small Business Administration contract and opposition from labor leaders.

Congressional hearings in 1977 examined Brown's role in a partnership that received an \$892,000 contract from the Department of Defense in 1972 to handle food-service operations at a California Marine base. The contract was earmarked for disadvantaged minority businesses.

"That was a legitimate contract," Brown said. "There was nothing illegal or improper about that."

Union leaders maintain that Brown's company sought to persuade black workers not to unionize or complain to federal agencies about their working conditions.

Brown's firm provides management advice to several textile companies and other white-owned corporations in the state. His clients include The Hanes Group, RJR Nabisco Inc. and Cannon Mills Co.

Brown denied that any of his firm's activities are anti-union. "I don't know why people will say things they know will hurt you," he said.

Brown also denied charges that he held a meeting of black workers at his house in 1979 during an attempt to unionize millworkers at J.P. Stevens & Co. in High Point.

"I have never represented J.P. Stevens," Brown said. "That is an outright falsehood. There was no meeting at my house."

Brown challenged the union leaders to take a lie-detector test. They won't pass the test because it is not true," he said. "I would give ... \$500 to the ones who passed the test. I would guarantee they would not pass the test because it is not true."

As for Brown's own company, he will continue to do business with companies that do business

in South Africa, Brown said.

"We have been doing business with them for 26 years and we are not going to stop now," he said.

If he had been selected as ambassador, he would have ended his personal involvement with his firm to avoid any charges of conflict of interest, he added.

Career diplomat Terence A. Todman, a black U.S. ambassador to Denmark, is now reportedly being considered for the South African ambassadorship. "He is a fine man," Brown said, adding that he has not discussed Todman's possible appointment with White House officials.

A black ambassador can be effective in South Africa, Brown said. "It would be a symbol of hope for the black South Africans and for people around the world," he said. "It would show a serious commitment on the part of this country to end apartheid."

Brown said he doesn't oppose economic sanctions against South Africa and that they should include other nations that do business there, such as West Germany, Japan and Israel.

"Those countries have to cooperate for any sanctions to work," Brown said. "The threat of sanctions is the biggest stick we have."

"Our policy has to have teeth in it and let people know that we are serious," Brown said. "It has to be a hard-line policy that tells the South African government, the blacks and the world that we are ready for a change."

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