

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

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Film Studios Offer Seasoned Mixture of Holiday Movies

BY DEAN HAIR
ARTS EDITOR

Films this holiday season are filled with sugar and spice and things not so nice. Movie studios are pulling out all the stops in an attempt to make millions of dollars with some of the year's most promising films. However it is up to America to decide the financial fate of these movies. Crime and comedy films seem to have plagued the fall season, and winter appears to offer a lot of the same.

COMEDY

"Toy Story" Disney's first full-length computer-animated film has already grossed over \$65 million at the box office. With dazzling effects and the voices of Tim Allen, Tom Hanks and Jim Varney, "Toy Story" is destined to be another Disney classic. However, "Toy Story" is not a musical and lacks the Oscar-winning soundtracks of previous animated films.

"Jumanji" Robin Williams stars in a film packed with super special effects by director Joe Johnston ("Honey, I Shrank the Kids"). Williams has been trapped in a jungle board game for 26 years and is finally freed, but his jungle friends follow him into the real world. His last kid-oriented film, "Toys," bombed at the box office, but "Jumanji" seems promising from the trailers.

"Father of the Bride Part II" How they are going to make a sequel to this film, I don't even know. But it stars Diane Keaton, Steve Martin and the always stupid Martin Short. Expect some major cheese from this film, so be sure to bring some crackers with you to the theater.

CRIME

"Heat" Michael Mann, creator of "Miami Vice," directs Al Pacino and Robert De Niro in the rough urban areas of Los Angeles. Val Kilmer stars as a psychopath, while Pacino and De Niro have their first ever on-screen showdown. The film is geared against Scorsese's "Casino" and has a running time of nearly three hours.

"Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead" Andy Garcia and crew portray criminals who mess up a job and then find themselves the target of the always excellent Christopher Walken and hitman Steve Buscemi. This film will probably not last long against the powerful performances in "Heat" and "Casino," not to mention the long title.

"Goldeneye" The latest James Bond installment is being pushed to the top as one of the best 007 films ever. Six years since the disastrous "License to Kill," James Bond has returned not quite shaken or stirred with Pierce Brosnan lending class to the film. Brosnan has already signed a deal for three more Bond films.

ACTION

"Sudden Death" Jean-Claude Van Damme uses his classic "acting" abilities in his latest action thriller. Terrorists have taken over a hockey rink packed with fans who have threatened to kill his daughter within two hours. The script is lame as always, and Van Damme still poses no threat to powerhouse Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"Cutthroat Island" It's the first version of "Waterworld." Geena Davis' latest film has been filled with controversy from the

beginning since she signed on as a swash-buckling pirate. The movie's budget has soared past \$70 million and is already running the risk of not staying afloat.

"The Crossing Guard" Sean Penn steps behind the camera as writer and director with a grim melodrama. Jack Nicholson stars as a man out to kill a drunk driver (David Morse) who ran down his daughter. Buzz around Penn is that his acting is as great as ever, but he needs to take a few writing classes.

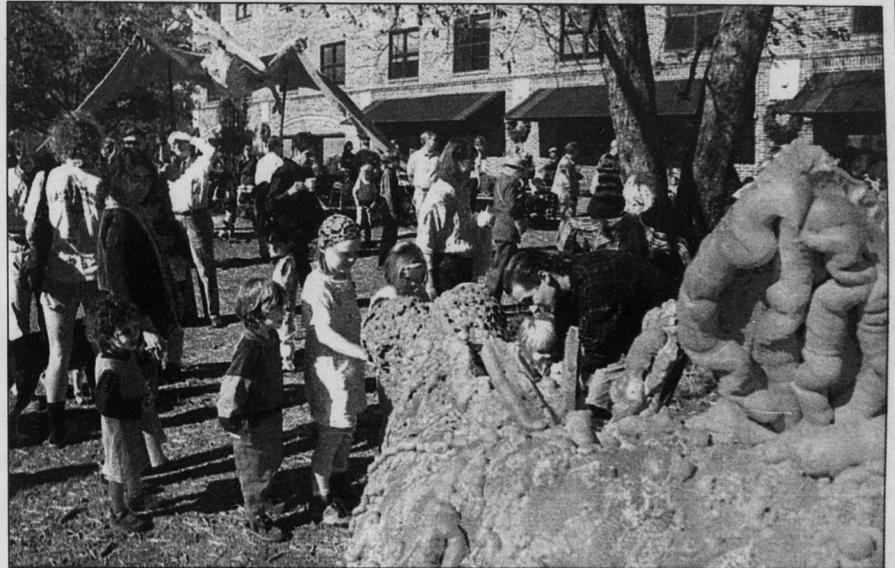
CLASSICS

"Sense and Sensibility" Emma Thompson portrays a 19th-century English single woman who is admired by Hugh Grant. This adaptation of Jane Austen's comedy may fall short of her previously released and highly acclaimed "Persuasion." This film should be a winner if it reflects the charm and appeal of director Ang Lee's "The Wedding Banquet."

"Cry, The Beloved Country" Alan Paton's 1930s novel which centered around black-white relations under apartheid in South Africa is rumored to have at least one Oscar performance. James Earl Jones and Richard Harris star.

"Othello" How many films will Kenneth Branagh direct or star in based on William Shakespeare's plays? Starring with Irene Jacob and Laurence Fishburne, Branagh may be able to use his frustration from real-life break-up with Emma Thompson to catch another Academy Award nomination. However, over 70 percent of the Bard's dialogue was left on the editing room floor. Die hard Shakespeareans may find this change unforgivable even for one of England's greatest actors.

Floating Along



DTH/ERIK PEREL

After the Chapel Hill/Carrboro Christmas parade ended Saturday, organizers parked the floats on the lawn of Weaver Street Market in Carrboro. Local children gawked at the floats and played on them.

MUSIC THURSDAY, DEC. 7

MIKE GARRIGAN with SOLSTICE. The Skylight Exchange, 405 1/2 W. Rosemary St., Chapel Hill. 933-5550.

JOE WILLIAMS. The Cave, 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.

KNOCKED DOWN SMILIN'. Cat's Cradle, 300 E. Main St., Carrboro. 967-9053.

GILD THE LILLY with MOTHRA. The Lizard and Snake Cafe, 110 N. Columbia St., Chapel Hill. 929-2828.

Calendar

FRIDAY, DEC. 8

THE ACCIDENTALS. The Cave, 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.

DUKE ELLINGTON'S "THE NUTCRACKER SUITE" performed by the North Carolina Jazz Repertory Orchestra at 8 p.m. Memorial Hall,

UNC-CH, Chapel Hill, N.C. For information, call 962-BACH.

JACK and PATTIE LESUER. Ninth Street Bakery, 776 Ninth St., Durham. 286-0303.

PURPLE SCHOOLBUS. Cat's Cradle, 300 E. Main St., Carrboro. 967-9053.

YETI with EAGLE BRAVO and BATTERSHELL. The Lizard and Snake Cafe, 110 N. Columbia St., Chapel Hill. 929-2828.

SATURDAY, DEC. 9

PAJAMA DON. Ninth Street Bakery, 776 Ninth St., Durham. 286-0303.

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