

Holiday flicks hope for boffo bucks

By Ward W. Triplett III
Daily Nebraskan Senior Editor

Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the theater. Just when you thought you had heard the last of Joe Piscopo. Just when it seemed George Lucas had oversaturated the market of space adventure...along comes the Christmas movie season of 1984. The movies that will appear in the year's second biggest studio bonanza (early summer is the first) range from a purposely insightful story of two Vietnam veterans to a sprawling science fiction tale, make that two science fiction epics, that have been in the works for years.

"2010" is our only release of the season," said a spokesman for United Artists. "It's big enough for any studio."

The motion picture is a continuation of the early 1970s cult hit "2001." This version stars Roy Scheider and John Lithgow and was directed by Peter Hayams.

The other big deal is "Dune," which finally reached the screen after having its images "purloined" by Lucas for his Star Wars series. So says, anyway, producer Raffaella DeLaurentiis and director David Lynch.

"Dune" was first published in 1965. According to production notes, it not only delineated an extraordinary universe from the future, but created a life-affirming metaphor in which positive human potential ultimately prevails against evil.

"Dune" began principal photography in Mexico City last March and was wrapped up by September. However, post production and special effects lasted until February of this year. The cast

holds 39 speaking parts but over 20,000 extras.

Among the people you may recognize are Linda Hunt, academy award winner for "The Year of Living Dangerously," Sean Young, who appeared in the forgettable "Young Doctors in Love," Jose Ferrer from "Enter Laughing," "The High Cost of Living" and "A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy."

Police bassist Sting also has a role of a villain and veteran Max Von Sydow plays a kindly doctor. The real stars, however, are unknowns Francesca Annis and Brad Dourif. The 2:10 picture is rated PG-13 and will open Dec. 14.

Tri-Star — from the company that gave you "Supergirl" and "Breakin'" comes yet another "Breakin'." Shabadoo Quinones, Michael Chambers and Lucinda Dickey return to join forces with their rivals from "Breakin'" in an all-out neighborhood dance battle. "Electric Boogaloo" will open Dec. 28.

"Runaway" is Tom Selleck's new film about a bunch of defective robots that programmed to turn against their masters. Selleck is the good guy of course. Gene Simmons of Kiss is the bad guy. "Runaway" will make it's run before Christmas.

"Birdie" is Tri-Star's serious release, as it covers the friendship of two boys through childhood, Vietnam, and beyond. Matthew Modine and Nicholas Cage star, and both are labeled as being part of the new Hollywood sex symbol movement with Tom Cruise and Eric Roberts, and so

on. Cage has been in "Racing with the Moon" and "Valley Girl."

Twentieth Century Fox — Matt Dillon stars as a teenager working at a Flamingo Club with dreams of the "big time" in "The Flamingo Kid." The coming-of-age story is set in 1963. It will open Dec. 21, and is rated PG-13.

"Johnny Dangerously" also opens at Dec. 21. But before you dismiss it as a gangster film, consider that it is gangster film starring Michael Keaton ("Night Shift," "Mr. Mom") and Joe Piscopo (Saturday Night Live).

Keaton plays the debonair crime boss Johnny Dangerously, while Piscopo plays his rival Danny Vermin, who says Johnny should step aside because he is "too soft on innocent bystanders." The film also stars Marilu Henner ("Taxi"), Peter Boyle (The monster of "Young Frankenstein"), Maureen Stapleton ("Reds") and Danny DeVito ("Taxi," "Romancing the Stone").

Universal/MGM — While "Dune" is the only Universal film over Christmas, "The River" will open Jan. 11. It is Mel Gibson's first American film, and co-stars Sissy Spacek. It's story is along the same lines as "Country" and "Places in the Heart" as Spacek and Gibson attempt to save the family farm from poverty, nature and themselves.

Columbia — The summer's biggest winner with "The Karate Kid" and "Ghostbusters," Columbia's Christmas releases run the gamut of romantic comedy to science fiction.

"A Passage to India" is said to

be an emotional story of love and class conflict in 1928 India, and features the return to filmmaking of David Lean. It will premiere in three cities Dec. 14, and open in the rest of the country in January.

"Starman" is the company's surest hit vehicle, as John Carpenter (The Thing) directs Jeff Bridges and Karen Allen in a story about an alien (Bridges) who comes to earth and clones the form of Allen's recently deceased husband. "Starman" also

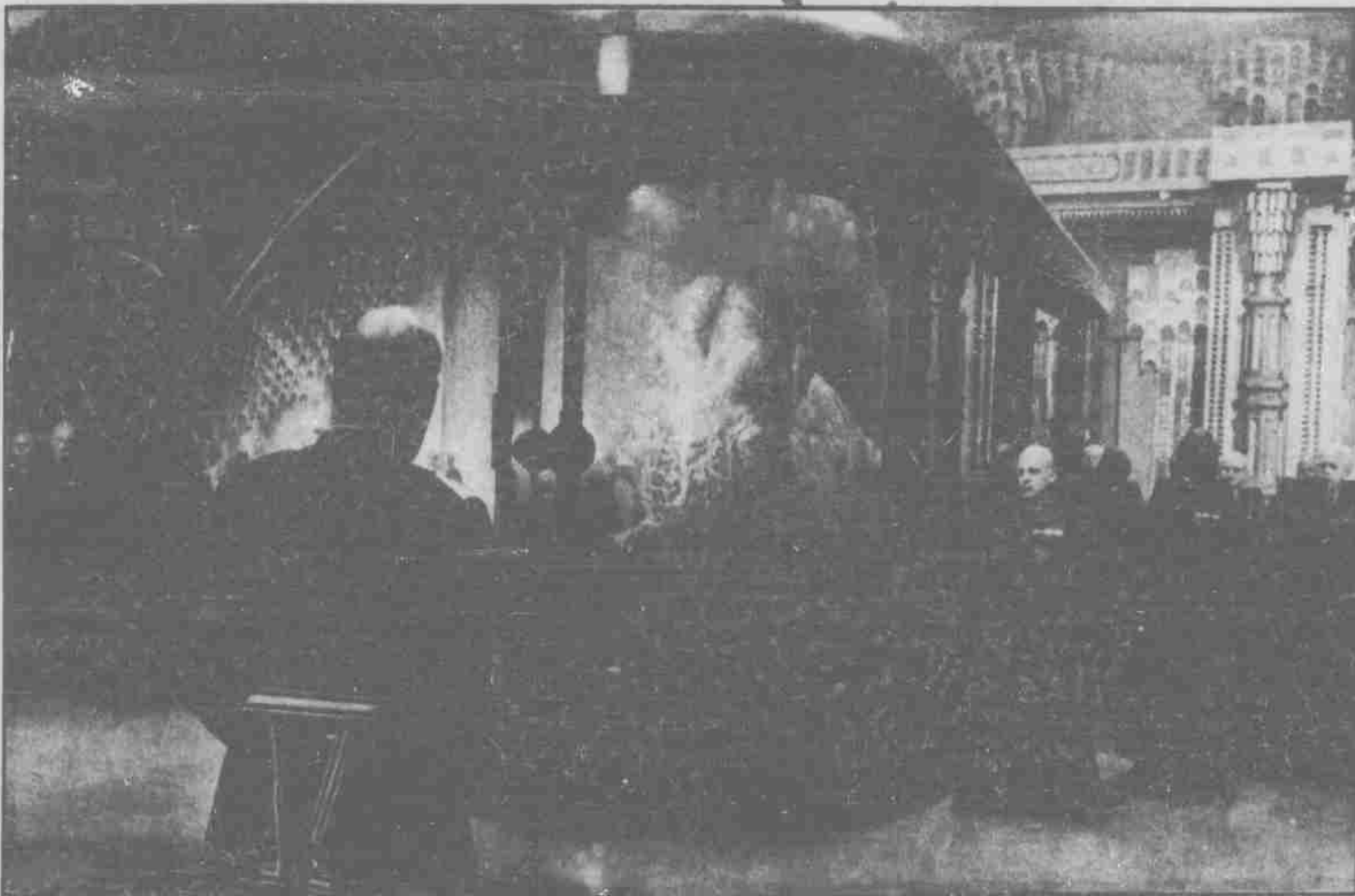
opens Dec. 14.

On Dec. 21, Columbia will release "Micki and Maude" with the once bankable Dudley Moore in the lead role. Amy Irving (Yentl), is Maude, who ends up marrying Moore regardless of the fact that he's already married to Micki, played by Ann Reinking. The film also stars former "Soap"-ian Richard Mulligan, but its best point is that Blake Edwards, producer of Moore's biggest (and only) hits "10" and "Arthur" is in control.

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The Padishah Emperor (Jose Ferrer) has an audience with the Spacing Guild Navigator, enclosed in his case.

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