

Holidays mark high point for moviegoers

New releases should make up for 1992's many disappointments



By Gerry Beltz and Anne Steyer
Staff Reporters

Winter break gives students a chance to catch their breath from far too much school work in the fall semester, time to party their brains out, time to celebrate being home with their families for the holidays.

The time off also gives moviegoers a break in entertainment choices as well. Some of the most promising films of the year will be released in the last three weeks of December — in time for the holidays and in time for Oscar consideration.

All in all, the following holiday picks should be a nice respite from all the crap released during the rest of 1992.

"A Few Good Men" Can't-miss director Rob Reiner ("This is Spinal Tap," "The Princess Bride," "Misery") brings Aaron Sorkin's highly successful play to the silver screen, complete with an all-star cast and no-holds-barred publicity.

Starring powerhouse Jack Nicholson as Col. Nathan Jessup and Tom Cruise as hot-shot attorney Daniel Kaffee. They go head-to-head in a courtroom over the murder of a young Marine in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

With Demi Moore as a brash officer from the Judge Advocate General's Office who spurs Cruise on, Kiefer Sutherland as a "my country or death" commanding officer and supporting players Kevin Bacon, Kevin Pollock and James Marshall, this is a can't-miss film.

"Peter's Friends" Kenneth Branagh directs and stars in this dramatic comedy written by stand-up comedian Rita Rudner. Rudner co-stars, as does Branagh's wife, actress Emma Thompson.

The buzz has been really good on this picture, and if one can be judged by previous work — "Henry V" and "Dead Again" stand up well — it should be a great movie.

"Toys" Director Barry Levinson leaves period pieces behind in this semi-contemporary film about a family of toymakers whose father's company has been taken over by an un-fun uncle.

Robin Williams and Joan Cusack star as the silly, but charming siblings, and the "Princess Bride" Robin Wright as Williams' wacky love interest.

Levinson is a wonderful director, always capable of touching the human element in his characters and plucking the emotional strings of his audiences. Williams is continually a delight, and "Toys" should be no exception.

"Hoffa" Jack Nicholson stars in the title role in Danny DeVito's epic about the man behind the name. (Or in the cement shoes, if you subscribe to that.)

The prosthetics on Nicholson make his re-

semblance to the real Hoffa more pronounced. As said before, Nicholson is a powerhouse. Nothing he has done is bad, not even "The Two Jakes" or "Ironweed."

DeVito has shown prowess before with the darker side of life, especially in "The War of the Roses." This film promises a gritty look at organized crime, with a more human look into the character of one of the mob's most infamous players.

"Damage" Jeremy Irons ("Reversal of Fortune") stars as Stephen, a prominent politician in England who is merely a bystander in his dreary life and bland marriage.

He strikes up a torrid love affair with his son's girlfriend Anna (played by Juliette Binoche), and the film's numerous wild (and rough) sex scenes between the two has saddled "Damage" with an NC-17 rating.

Director Louis Malle ("Atlantic City") has brought some wonderful and powerful imagery to the screen in the past, and he looks to do it again.

"Used People" Featuring a potent cast that includes Shirley Maclaine, Kathy Bates and Marcello Mastroianni, "Used People" looks to be the comedic, heart-tugger for the holiday season.

Mastroianni plays romantic widower Joe who has been chasing the cantankerous Pearl (Maclaine) for the past 23 years, but her marriage has halted his efforts.

However, on the day of her husband's funeral, he asks Pearl out on a date, and the two take it from there.

Other impressive cast members in the film include Jessica Tandy, Sylvia Sidney and Marcia Gay Harden as Pearl's gloomy daughter who enjoys dressing up as movie stars from the 1960s.

"Forever Young" A romantic story set in 1939 with a smattering of science fiction thrown in.

Mel Gibson portrays a test pilot suffering from a broken heart because his love (Isabel Glasser) is in a coma after a car accident. He asks a scientist buddy (George Wendt) to put him in a deep freeze, with hopes of seeing her after he is thawed out one year later.

Unfortunately, he doesn't thaw out for 53 years, and he is discovered by a young boy (Elijah Wood from "Radio Flyer"). The boy and his mother (Jamie Lee Curtis) help the confused, freshly thawed man readjust to a new world and search for his lost love.

"Leap Of Faith" Actors who turned down the role of Jonas Nightengale, a con artist/evangelist, included Patrick Swayze and Michael Keaton. However, Steve Martin stepped into the role, and it took off from there.

Jonas Nightengale brings his Gospel choir and handmade miracles to a small town in Kansas to make a quick buck, but finds more than he planned for when his cynical business manager (Debra Winger) falls for the local sheriff (played by Liam Neeson), and Jonas undergoes a virtual emotional rebirth when he bumps into a long-lost girlfriend (Lolita Davidovich from "Raising Cain").

With a talented performer such as Martin in a role like this, it looks to be a hoot.

"Trespass" Originally titled "The Looters" and slated for a summertime release date, it became a victim of the L.A. riots. It was pulled from its May release slot and retitled.

Bill Paxton ("Aliens") and William Sadler ("Die Hard 2: Die Harder") star as two crooked firefighters who unintentionally force two gang members (rappers Ice-T and Ice Cube) into protecting their turf.



Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox

Danny DeVito and Jack Nicholson (above) star in the DeVito-directed "Hoffa." Robin Williams (below) portrays a toymaker who must save his father's factory from his demented uncle in "Toys."

What ensues is a deadly war that tears through an abandoned factory with bullets and explosions galore.

Directed by Walter Hill ("48 Hours"), this looks to be a white-knuckler from start to finish.

"Chaplin" Robert Downey Jr. gets the role of a lifetime as Tinseltown's favorite son, Charlie Chaplin.

Oscar-winning director Richard Attenborough, who brought "Gandhi" to life, fought long and hard to bring this story to the screen, including squeezing the \$30 million dollar budget from Hollywood's tight wallet.

It boasts an all-star cast, including Kevin Kline, Dan Aykroyd, Diane Lane, Penelope Ann Miller and Chaplin's own daughter, Geraldine.

Both "Chaplin" and "Hoffa" have been highly anticipated screen biographies by moviegoers and are sure to be hot box-office draws.

"Lorenzo's Oil" In a serious heart-grabber

from director George Miller, "Lorenzo's Oil" is based on a true story of Augusto and Michaela Odone (portrayed by Nick Nolte and Susan Sarandon), two parents who waged a courageous battle to save their son from a rare genetic disease.

Although it probably won't get to Lincoln until sometime in January, it has had limited release in New York and Los Angeles, and both Nolte and Sarandon could be nominated for Oscars for their roles in the film.

"Scent of a Woman" Screen legend Al Pacino plays a resentful blind man who is left in the dubious care of a 17-year-old (Chris O'Donnell) for Thanksgiving weekend.

During filming, Pacino reportedly endured himself into a hypnotic-like trance for his role, and after filming was complete, told O'Donnell that even though he didn't see O'Donnell's performance, he was sure it was great.

Pacino is also a Oscar nomination hopeful.

Mercy Rule, Ritual Device to perform at all-ages show

concert REVIEW

By Bryan Peterson
Staff Reporter

Two bands will play at the Red and Black Café, 1819 O St., Saturday night in one of several concerts during this busy week.

Mercy Rule will open at 10 p.m. and will be followed by Omaha's Ritual Device.

Tim Moss, vocalist for Ritual Device, said the band preferred playing all-ages shows and would try to play more of them in the future.

"We like playing the bars in Lincoln, but too many people are looking at their drinks," Moss said.

An active singer who often leaps into the crowd during songs, Moss added, "We can't play unless we're having fun."

Ritual Device will have a single available in

late January called "Charlie Jones." The band will be recording at Steve Albini's studio in Chicago after Christmas and hopes to release an album by spring.

Michelle Muhs, a collective member at the Red and Black Café, said the café hosted concerts every weekend.

"On the weekend, a lot of the music played here is alternative and hardcore," she said.

The café also has blues nights and open microphone nights during the week.

Bridget Pilloud-Stricklin, another collective member of the café, said the Red and Black Café did not make a lot of money from the concerts, although alternative bands tended to draw at least twice as many people as folk bands.

"We usually have a younger crowd until the bars close," Pilloud-Stricklin said. "Until then, it is the only place for younger people."

The cover for Saturday's concert will be \$2 or \$3.

Melissa Etheridge tours to promote third album, performs in Music Hall

From Staff Reports

Rockin' blues guitarist/vocalist Melissa Etheridge will shake Omaha's Music Hall Saturday evening.

Etheridge, a Leavenworth, Kan., native, is touring in support of her third Island Records release, "Never Enough."

Her first two albums, "Melissa Etheridge" and "Brave and Crazy," were popular with critics and music fans alike. The self-titled album included such singles as "Bring Me Some Water" and "Like the Way I Do."

"Ain't It Heavy," the bluesy first single off "Never Enough," is full of the searing guitar and provocative lyrics for which Etheridge is known.

Etheridge branches out with her latest release into the areas of danceable rock with the electric "2001" and the hard-edged "Must Be Crazy for Me."

Reserve tickets for the 8 p.m. show are \$18.75 and \$22.75 and available through TicketMaster outlets.



Courtesy of W.F. Leopold Management

Melissa Etheridge