

Oscar hopefuls

Winter films brighten the season

By Frank Sanello



**IN
HOLLYWOOD**

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HOLLYWOOD (NEA) — The films coming out this fall and winter look great — on paper: top actors, Oscar-winning directors, adult themes.

Producer-writer Barry Sandler ("Crimes of Passion") says the November and December releases are "probably the most provocative and promising collection of films that have been offered in a long time."

"On the other hand, every year around this time we say that and end up disappointed," Sandler continues. "By Jan. 1, we may be looking to next year's films with the great hope that they will be better than last year's."

Hollywood insiders say the two films to beat for awards are "Nuts," starring Barbra Streisand and Richard Dreyfuss, and "Ironweed," with Meryl Streep and Jack Nicholson. Oscar nominations are already being

ry and the Hendersons"; and the more ambitious "Empire of the Sun"

Here are some of the movies that studio executives hope will lure people away from a cozy fireplace and the glow of the TV, and out into the cold, cruel world of films that make you — gasp! — think:



"NUTS" stars Barbra Streisand in her first film appearance since 1983.

touted for all four principals.

Both of those moves are typical of the fare released at this time of year — cold, wintry themes for cold, wintry weather.

Teenagers still go to the movies, even when it's snowing — so some winter releases will keep them entertained.

Steven Spielberg has two entries: "Batteries Not Included," which sounds like another cutesy-poo fantasy ala last summer's disastrous "Har-

NOVEMBER

Housekeeping — Two orphan girls worship their aunt — a sleazy street person played by Christine Lahti.

Nuts — Based on the hit play about a strong-willed woman (Barbra Streisand) who battles to prove her mental competence to stand trial for manslaughter. Also stars Richard Dreyfuss. Directed by Martin Ritt ("Norma Rae").

The Running Man — Arnold Schwarzenegger competes as a contestant in a deadly game show of the future.

Barfly — Gritty comedy about a struggling writer (Mickey Rourke) whose discovery by a beautiful editor causes problems in his romance with a fellow lush (Faye Dunaway).

Death Wish IV — The world's most famous vigilante returns to clean up the mean streets of Los Angeles and take on a major drug pusher.

Cinderella — The seventh release of the 1950 Disney animated classic.

Hello, Again — After choking to

death on an egg roll, Shelley Long returns to earth to help out her husband ("L.A. Law" star Corbin Bernsen).

Shy People — A New York journalist (Jill Clayburgh) returns home to write an article about her rural Louisiana family and clashes with cousin Barbara Hershey.

Planes, Trains and Automobiles — Steve Martin and John Candy have major transportation problems as they attempt to make it home in time for the holidays.

Broadcast News — A romantic comedy about the people who bring us the network news, starring William Hurt and directed by James L. Brooks ("Terms of Endearment").

Walker — A 19th century American soldier of fortune declares himself president of Nicaragua with the help of mercenaries and American businessmen. A black comedy based on a real figure. Oscar winner Marlee Matlin ("Children of a Lesser God") co-stars.

Batteries Not Included — Tenement residents are about to lose their home to a wrecking ball when extraterrestrial visitors intervene. A Steven Spielberg production.

Throw Momma From the Train — Danny De Vito labors under the false belief that he will kill Billy Crystal's ex-wife if Crystal will kill De Vito's mother. A comic remake of the 1951 Hitchcock classic "Strangers on a Train," and De Vito makes his directing debut.

Wall Street — "Platoon" director Oliver Stone takes a searing look at insider trading and corporate raiders. Michael Douglas, Charlie Sheen and Daryl Hannah star.

Punchline — Aspiring standup comics Sally Field and Tom Hanks struggle with life and love.

Good Morning, Vietnam — Robin Williams is an irreverent disc jockey broadcasting from Saigon just before the war heats up. Directed by Barry Levinson ("Diner").

Empire of the Sun — Steven Spielberg directs the story of a young boy caught in Japanese-occupied Shanghai during World War II.

Overboard — A spoiled heiress (Goldie Hawn) suffers amnesia and ends up living with a rural carpenter (Kurt Russell) who fools her into believing she's his wife.

Moonstruck — Cher accepts a marriage proposal from a stuffy older man only to fall in love with his tempestuous younger brother (Nicolas Cage).

Sunset — Director Blake Edwards' nostalgic comedy about silent film star Tom Mix (played by Bruce Willis). James Garner co-stars.

Ironweed — Meryl Streep and Jack Nicholson play Depression-era hobos. Based on William Kennedy's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel. Directed by Hector Babenco ("Kiss of the Spider Woman").

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