

The Toy

a fun-filled, fast-speed flick

by TERRY DUPUIS

Last year at this time Hollywood went heavy for the Christmas season with serious, thought-provoking and dramatic films.

The result was one of the most disastrous commercial seasons for moviemakers in recent memory. Evidently Hollywood has learned a lesson from all of this. There will be several serious dramas playing theatrically this month such as *Gandhi* and the new Paul Newman starrer *The Verdict*.

But the trend this season is definitely towards humorous light-hearted entertainment for the holiday season.

The first movie of this batch was released last week. It is called *The Toy*, and it is a promising indication of a good month for screen comedy. The plot is original and odd-ball in concept. Its story deals with a spoiled arrogant 11-year-old boy who is the son of a multi-millionaire Southern tycoon.

The boy, Eric, has a mansion full of toys to play with, including kid-sized sports cars which are capable of doing up to 50 miles an hour, indoors or out. He also has a very realistic train set which comes complete with avalanches, rainstorms and volcanoes.

Yet with all of these things which his overindulgent father has provided him with, Eric is completely bored. Then one year on a return home from boys military school, Eric asks his father to buy him a human toy, who turns out to be an out-of-work black journalist. After much financial persuasion, the tycoon succeeds in buying this new "toy" for his son.

This story outline may sound dumb and even a little offensive, but what makes this movie palatable and work well as a comedy is its casting together of two original comic talents, Jackie Gleason and Richard Pryor.

Gleason stars as the filthy-rich Southern tycoon U.S. Bates who has spoiled his son

rotten and is not used to being turned down. He is so wealthy that he feels he can buy anything. U.S. has even bought himself a third wife, a dumb blonde named Fancy. U.S. Bates also has an English butler named Barkley whom he won in a high-stakes billiard game.

Gleason is ideally cast in *The Toy* as the blustery millionaire. It is a part which he is ideally suited for and one which he brings off to perfection. He goes a long way towards making *The Toy* a satisfactory comedy. The other contributing factor is his co-star Richard Pryor who portrays "the toy".

Pryor's comic performance as the out-of-work journalist is a role to which he brings his own special brand of zaniness. Putting Gleason and Pryor together for a comedy was an inspired idea.

Each of these comics has developed his own screen persona over the years: Jackie Gleason with his pompous, slow-burning fuse which takes a long time to explode, and Richard Pryor with his fast-speed spon-

taneity, always being put-upon. Both of these comedians has his own sense of comic timing, and putting the two of them together makes for worthwhile entertainment.

The director of *The Toy* is Richard Donner who has made *The Omen*, *Superman*, and *Inside Moves*. *The Toy* is his first attempt at slapstick comedy and screwball farce. He is fortunate to have had two experienced farceurs like Gleason and Pryor involved in this latest movie venture.

Some safety hints

At Christmas, most Canadians still prefer to decorate their homes with the traditional, natural tree. Today, however, with increasing concern about conservation of our forest resources, many people believe they are depleting our forests by buying natural young conifers at Christmas.

The fact is that most Christmas trees sold by dealers are not grown in productive forests, but on special plantations using land that might otherwise be unproductive. Others are cut from natural forests, but are obtained by thinning dense stands, thereby allowing better growth for commercial species.

Christmas tree cutting creates jobs and extra income for farmers and other rural people in winter, and the plantations often provide scenic green belts, prevent land erosion, give sanctuary to wildlife and help reduce air pollution.

Fire Safety Hints

By using care and common sense, a natural tree can be as safe as any other. Here are some important points to remember when buying and installing your tree:

Buy a tree that is fresh, since it will contain more moisture. The twigs should be flexible, and the needles should not fall off when the butt is knocked on the ground.

Before you bring it indoors, the tree can be safely stored outdoors, sheltered as much as possible from wind and sun.

When you are ready to bring your tree indoors, saw about an inch off the butt to increase water absorption. Put the tree in a stand with a good water container, and make sure it is kept filled. Plain water is best, and the use of any additives claimed to be "fire retardant" should be avoided. These could actually reduce water absorption by the tree. Fire-retardant sprays should also be avoided.

Depending on the species, and on temperature and humidity of the room, trees will consume varying amounts of water indoors. A tree about 2m high could absorb up to a liter in 24 hours.

Keep your Christmas tree away from fireplaces, radiators and other sources of heat, and be sure it doesn't block an exit from the room.

MOVIE GUIDE

ROXY THEATRE MIDLAND 526-5791

Starts Fri. Dec. 17
BURT REYNOLDS &
GOLDIE HAWN

Best Friends

Sat. Matinee 1:30 SCROOGE
Santa will give out Free Treats

PENTWIN PENETANG 549-2953

PEN 1 Wed. Dec. 15 to Sat. Dec. 18 7:15

JACKIE CHAN in *THE BIG BRAWL* also *The Greatest Bruce Lee Hit Of Them All!*
Bruce Lee in *Enter the Dragon*

Sat. Matinee 1:30—"Santa Claus"—Tin Can Show Admission: one tin of food.

Sun. Dec. 19 to Tues. Dec. 22 7:15

ILSA, SHE WOLF OF THE S.S. also
ILSA HAREM KEEPER OF THE OIL SHEIKS

PEN 2 Wed. only Dec. 15 12 noon and 7:30

LES PLOUFFE

Starts Thurs. Dec. 16 7 and 9

E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL P.G.
Starts Wed. Dec. 22 AIRPLANE II

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PHELPSTON TAVERN
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December 16, 17, 18
Pete King & Medonte
December 22, 23
Leo & The Moonlighters

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December 15, 16, 17 **Lisle**
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359 First St. 534-7301
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A variety of dancing Girls
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HEY KIDS! DON'T MISS THE TIN CAN SHOW

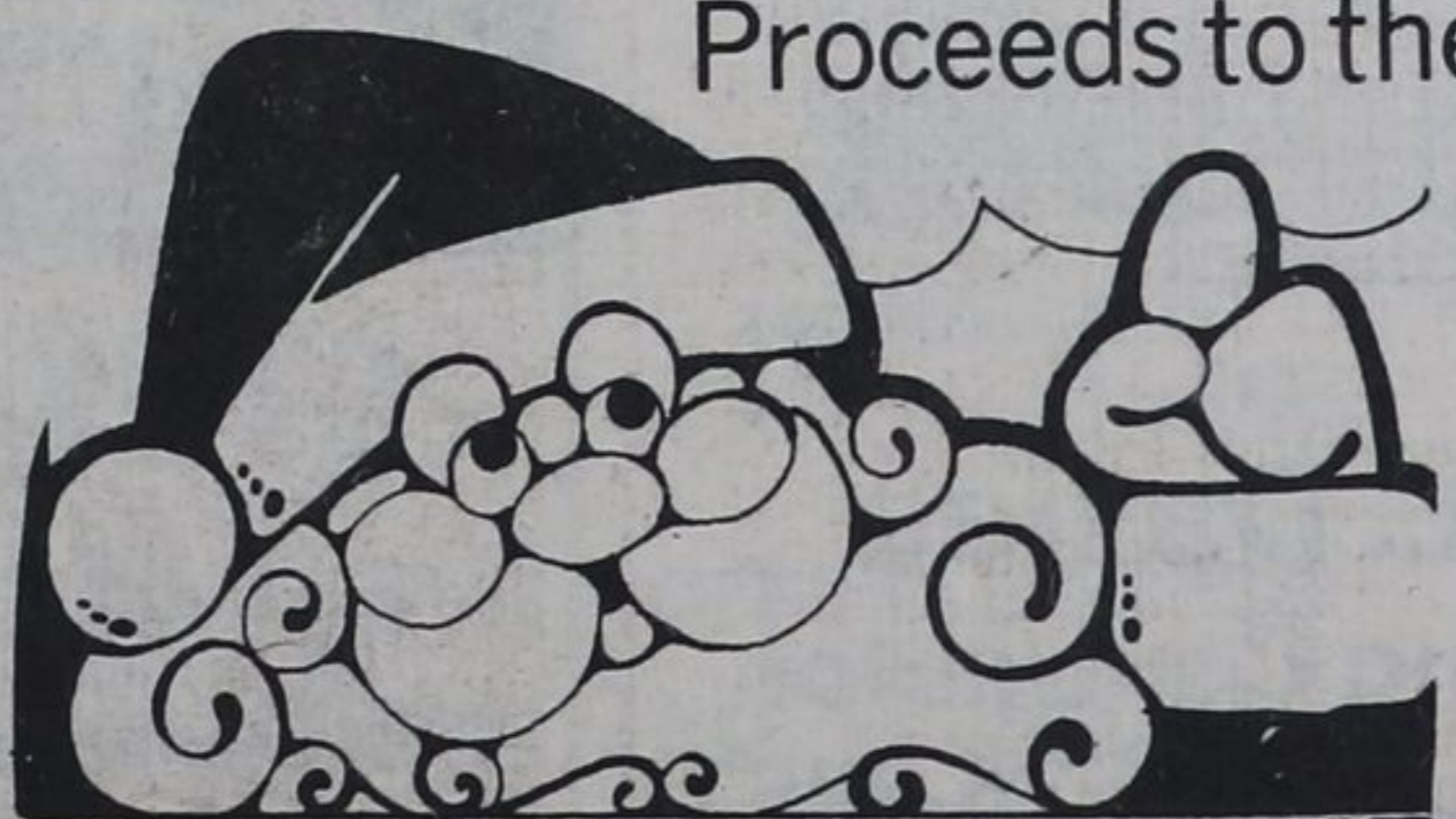
Dec. 18, 1:30 p.m. at the

PEN THEATRE

Robert St., Penetang

★ Film Feature - 'Santa Claus'

Admission: 1 Tin of Food
Proceeds to the Salvation Army



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