

Film faithful to family comedy

Eddie Murphy finds his calling as a man of the cloth in "Holy Man."

DAVID OSBORN
THE SAGINAW NEWS

It's hard to remember a movie in which Eddie Murphy did not play someone loud or even more than one character.

In "The Nutty Professor" of a couple of years ago, he pulled off an entire family and other characters.

He hit his movie career stride in the "Beverly Hills Cop" films, starting as a cursing, obnoxious but funny Detroit police officer.

Murphy takes on a refreshingly different role in "Holy Man." He plays a white-clothed man named G, who walks along freeways and sneezes to kiss the grass and pavement.

MOVIE REVIEW

"Holy Man"
Fashion Square Cinemas
Cinema Hollywood
Midland Cinemas
★ ★ 1/2

Walking along the road is where Ricky (Jeff Goldblum of "Jurassic Park" and "The Usual Suspects") and Kate Kelly Preston of "Jerry Maguire" find G. A flat tire sidelines the Ricky and Kate, who work for the Good Guy Shopping Network.

He's an executive who needs two weeks to turn his job around or lose it. She's an Ivy League media analyst hired to turn around the net-



Kelly Preston, left, boogies with Holy Man Eddie Murphy.

work and help Ricky.

G offers to help the two, and Kate encourages the wayward traveler. Ricky rejects his new friend, who faints when he nearly backs into him.

They take G to a hospital, and Ricky lets him live with him until he recovers. Ricky throws a party, and learns that G possess special powers that may help him on the shopping show.

Ricky and Kate see that G comes across as crude and honest, something home shopping viewers rarely see. G reviews sagging ratings, as

his appearance helps to sell products and keep the boss, McRainbridge (Robert Loggia), happy.

The newfound success helps to bring Ricky and Kate closer together, but it also works to bring them apart as Ricky must decide how far he will go to exploit G.

Murphy isn't himself in "Holy Man," but that's good. He plays a powerful man of God whose faith can move mountains of doormats, chairs and laundry detergent.

The film exposes the obsession some have with buying things they don't need.

Director and Producer Stephen Herek ("The Mighty Ducks") never goes overboard in creating outlandish scenes.

And writer Tom Schulman, who was a 1990 Best Screenplay Academy Award winner, provides a romantic comedy starring a serene Murphy. The humor is simple, and the love scenes never reach the bedroom.

Viewing the film requires a leap of faith, because G's character remains a mystery throughout.

Sadler's Wells reopens with new look

GRAHAM HEATHCOTE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON — Sadler's Wells, the second-oldest working theater in London, reopened today with a dance program and an entirely new look after an \$80-million modernization.

The low-key building of 1930, the sixth theater on the site, has been almost totally demolished except for the steel framework and bits of the auditorium.

The 1,300-seat theater is also capitalizing on the natural asset that gives it half its name — water from springs beneath the building is being bottled for sale to patrons and to supply the air conditioning

via a new 650-foot deep borehole. The old well itself has been made a visible feature of the theater.

It used to be under a gangway carpet, and you could feel the floorboards wobble when you walked over it. Now it's a spot patrons will toss money into it.

Richard Sadler founded the theater in 1663. From the 1920s onward, through the efforts of Lilian Baylis and Dame Ninette de Valois, it became famous for drama, dance, opera and lyric theater despite being in isolation, nearly two miles northeast of Leicester Square, the hub of London's theaterland.

The rebuilding project has creat-

ed a landmark by extending the fly tower used for moving stage sets and displaying the theater's name on in bold letters.

The auditorium has big screens so that films can be mixed with opera, dance and drama. It has a proscenium arch, but also a maneuverable platform, doubling the stage area and permitting theater-in-the-round performances for the first time.

The first scheduled in-the-round work is "On the Road to Baghdad" from a picaresque novel by Turkish-born Gunel Gun, who lives in Oberlin, Ohio. It will be staged in March.

"It really is a performance space for the next millennium," said

chief executive Ian Albery. "We wanted to be able to welcome the best companies in national and international dance and lyric theater."

The bulk of the cost of the new building, \$60 million, came from the National Lottery. The theater had to raise the rest and has still to find \$6 million.

Sadler's first theater was a "Music House" opened 20 years after the Theater Royal opened in Drury Lane. Then Islington — now densely urbanized — was a place of green fields, orchards, mansions and gardens.

Sadler discovered a well in the garden of his first theater, and turned it into a medicinal spa.

Cowboy legend Bob Allen dies

KARA BLOND
NEWSPAPER

They say he lived the part. Bob (Tex) Allen, silver-screen legend who starred in more than 40 movies and made his name as one of the first Hollywood cowboys, was the same dignified gentleman off-camera as he played under the hot lights.

With his crystal blue eyes, jaunty smile and snow-white Stetson hat, Allen — whose real name was Theodore Baehr — was an original, virtuous, honorable and a good guy to the end, said his family.

At age 92, Allen died at his sleep Friday in Oyster Bay, N.Y., after a four-week battle with cancer.

His death came only three months after Roy Rogers passed away at age 86 and just a week after singing cowboy legend Gene Autry died at 91. The three were sons of a past era, a time when determination went hand-in-hand with the certainty that the black-clad villains always finished last.

"There was something about those old days in Hollywood — the characters were too good to be true," said Theodore Baehr Jr., the actor's son, who now lives in

Camallo, Calif. "My father was just as good off-screen as he was on. He wasn't righteious. He was naturally kind and gentle."

Born Aug. 9, 1906, Baehr had three older brothers who diligently followed their father into his import-export business. But after graduating from New York Military Academy in 1924 and Dartmouth College in 1929, he caught the attention of a talent agent with whom he had grown up despite his disapproving father. Baehr headed for Hollywood.

As with other emerging stars of his era, the young actor needed a name to fit his new status. Just as Leonard Slye of Cincinnati metamorphosed into the gun-slinging Roy Rogers, Baehr's agent picked out his client's new name. It was down-home American and easy to pronounce: Robert Allen.

Still Ted to friends, he moved out to Los Angeles in the 1930s under contract to Columbia Pictures and 20th Century Fox. He played the juvenile lead and starring roles in more than 40 movies, including "Perils of Pauline" (1934), "Crime and Punishment" (1935) and "Winter Carnival" (1935). Allen also starred in the "Bob Allen Ranger" series in the

early '30s, making him one of the most popular Western actors.

One night in 1934, the dashing bachelor tried to pick up his date at a nearby apartment in Los Angeles. He couldn't help but notice her enchanting younger sister, the actress Evelyn Peirce. Soon after, Allen married the woman who Florence Ziegfeld once pronounced the prettiest woman in the world.

Together, they struggled through the Depression years, eventually having two children, 10 years apart.

And when money was tight, when the parts were few and far between, Allen kept his family's spirits high.

In 1942, he moved his family to Middle Neck, and then to Westbury and eventually to Oyster Bay.

Back in New York, he acted in several Broadway shows, TV programs, movies and commercials. His wife died in 1960.

Most recently, he played a grandfather in a hot cocoa commercial on TV. "In the end, that picture captured him best: tender yet strong," his son said. "A true family man."

He is survived by his two children, seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

CBS News trims 100 positions

DAVID BAUDER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — CBS is the latest network to cut costs by eliminating jobs, trimming 100 positions in another sign of retrenchment in the broadcasting industry.

The cuts were made without firing on-air personnel or closing bureaus, although CBS News facilities in Dallas, Miami, Tel Aviv and Moscow will be downsized.

CBS News is consolidating its management in New York, Washington, Los Angeles, London and Tokyo. It will also cut management within New York's technical staff and expand the duties of many producers.

Instead of being assigned to individual CBS shows, many production teams will now do work for several different broadcasts, CBS News President Andrew Heyward said.

"We've taken weeks and involved a lot of people to make sure we have a plan that retains our competitiveness and maintains our ability to do distinctive, origi-

nal reporting," he said.

CBS's plan does not involve consolidation with CNN, though both organizations have acknowledged they have talked about sharing resources and haven't ruled out some sort of merger.

Heyward said there are no talks going on now with CNN. While the idea of sharing resources is intriguing, "there are also significant obstacles to making things work," he said.

Cutbacks have come at the same time as salaries have inflated for many of broadcast news' biggest stars. CBS, for example, signed Bryant Gumbel last year to a contract that reportedly pays him \$3 million a year but took Gumbel's newsmagazine off the air last month.

"I accept the need to reduce our costs," Heyward said. "All of the news divisions and all of the other works are going through this. This is the environment we're working

in."

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CINEMA
RICKY WOOD PG
12:3, 4:15, 7:00, 9:30
11:45, 3:10, 5:10, 7:10, 9:10
What's New: Holy Man, PG-13
10:1, 12:1, 3:25, 7:35, 9:45

A Night At The Rink PG-13
12:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30
When I'm Gone PG-13
12:30, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:40
11:5, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15

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ROUNDS
1:00, 4:15, 7:05, 9:30
12:00, 3:30, 5:00, 7:25, 9:50

PERMANENT MIDWINTER
1:15, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15

WHY DO FOOLS FALL IN LOVE?
12:00, 2:30, 4:40, 7:10, 9:30

YOUR FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS
7:30, 9:25

AIR RIBS
12:30, 3:00, 5:30

SNARE EYES
12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 7:15, 9:15

JACKIE CHAN CHRIS TUCKER

RUSH HOUR
PG-13
1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00

EDDIE MURPHY

HOLY MAN
JEFF GOLDBLUM
12:00, 2:30, 4:50, 7:20, 9:40