

Features

# Murphy's latest features lightweight, romantic fun

By Judith Trojan

New York (NC) — Raunch has given way to romance in Eddie Murphy's latest movie, "Coming to America" (Paramount). A directed by John Landis, Murphy's director in "Trading Places," and written by two of Murphy's "Saturday Night Live" writers, "Coming to America" casts Murphy in a new, more gentle role as an African prince in search of a liberated wife.

Prince Akeem (Murphy) is the pampered heir to the throne of Zamunda, a fictional African paradise where everyone seems to wear designer dashikis. On his 21st birthday, his parents (James Earl Jones and Madge Sinclair) present him with a beautiful princess (Vanessa Bell) who has been groomed from birth to be his bride and to serve his every command. A sensitive young man who is tired of being washed, dressed and tended by nubile servants, Akeem rebels and runs off to America with his aide-de-camp Semmi (Arsenio Hall), to locate a bride he can both love and respect.

Most of the film covers their travails in the wilds of Queens (what better place to look for a queen?) as they settle into a rat-infested hotel, mingle with the locals and acquire jobs as janitors in a fast-food restaurant. The restaurant, a McDonald's rip-off, is owned by a middle-class black man (John Amos) who hopes to marry off his beautiful daughter, Lisa (Shari Haddyoff), to her spineless rich boyfriend. When Akeem mops his way into Lisa's heart, however, few will be surprised at the outcome.

Murphy and Hall rise above the contrived Cinderella plot as two very rich young men who pretend to be poor for the sole purpose of finding Akeem a wife for love, not money. Thanks to the makeup wizardry of Rick Baker, Murphy and Hall are virtually unrecognizable in a variety of riotous incidental roles as well.

While Murphy is known for his excessive use of raw language in his comedy act, here he

comes off like a choirboy in contrast to the profanity that swirls around Akeem on the streets of Queens. His one humorous attempt to mimic the street language to ingratiate himself with his neighbors is used merely as a satiric device and does not carry over, in his case, into the rest of the film. Murphy is a well-mannered, romantic hero whom many will find appealing and admirable as a positive black role model.

Director Landis outdoes himself with lush sets and entertaining African production numbers, but the best moments in the film take place in the Queens fast-food joint, as Akeem tries to cozy up to Lisa and her social-climbing father.

"Coming to America" works as a lightweight romantic comedy with high production values and entertaining performances by Murphy and Hall. Due to some nudity and much profanity, however, the U.S. Catholic Conference's classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America's rating is R — restricted.

## 'Short Circuit 2'

Summer audiences will be delighted to greet the return of savvy robot Number Five in "Short Circuit 2" (Tri-Star). Now calling himself Johnny Five, the robot arrives from retirement in Montana to help his friend and co-inventor Ben (Fisher Stevens), get his fledgling toy-robot company off the ground.

Enamored with the big city, Johnny Five takes the town by storm. Seeking input and acceptance as a lovable, human guy, he finds that aside from Ben, humans are still out to exploit and hurt him. This makes for a variety of hearty laughs and sentimental moments as Johnny Five tries everything from a trendy new wardrobe to an interlude in a Catholic confession in his attempt to fit in with modern humanity.

Let's face it, Johnny Five is adorable. Funny, erudite and sensitive, this is no ordinary ro-



NC News

Semmi (Arsenio Hall) and Prince Akeem (Eddie Murphy) plan their search for the prince's as-yet-unknown bride in 'Coming to America.'

bot. His Indian pal Ben, however, has a tough time with the English language, courtship and the world of big business. Basically, he's a likeable nerd who trusts the wrong people (Michael McKean and Jack Weston) and falls for the most unlikely young woman (Cynthia Gibb). Much of Ben's material is dumb and detracts from moments audiences would rather spend with Johnny Five.

As directed by Kenneth Johnson, the scenario has more holes than a wedge of Swiss cheese, but Johnny Five's escapades are worth the price of admission. Young children will love this film, although it does contain some violence and rough language. Since the film explores in simple terms the nature of good and evil, and what it's like to be an outcast in today's society, the movie also has a perspective worth noting by older children.

The U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America's rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

## Capsules

— "The Great Outdoors" (Universal) —

Innocuous summer entertainment with enough laughs to justify a trip to the movies, especially for fans of stars John Candy and Dan Ackroyd. Chronicling the vacation misadventures of Candy and family, including loud-mouthed brother-in-law Ackroyd, the film features slapstick humor, vulgarity and gimmickry. The USCC classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The MPAA of America's rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

— "Red Heat" (Tri-Star) —

Buddy-cop thriller pairing a tight-lipped Soviet cop (Arnold Schwarzenegger) with a loud-mouthed Chicago cop (Jim Belushi) in a manhunt for a Soviet drug smuggler (Ed O'Ross) on the streets of Chicago. Much violence and too much profanity weaken an otherwise fine effort by the lead actors and director Walter Hill. The USCC classification is O — morally offensive. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

# Self-expression can produce leaders rather than 'rejects'

By Christopher Carstens  
NC News Service

You can fit in and still be yourself. It's great to be with friends. Nothing special has to be going on — the real pleasure comes from being one of the gang, whether shopping at the mall, going to the beach or lounging in somebody's living room, complaining that there's nothing to do.

But the healthy pleasure of being with friends develops a problematic side when the "Let's all be the same" mentality sets in. Some groups gradually decide that since they're all friends, they ought to be alike in every way.

So they begin by tuning in the same radio station and soon they're wearing the same type of clothes, combing their hair in the same style and holding the same opinions on almost every topic.

There is nothing wrong with being in style. And any group of people the same age will share the same ideas in many areas. But sometimes being true to yourself means deciding not

## Coming of Age

to go along with the crowd.

That can seem risky because you start thinking things like, "If I don't stick up for 'rap music,' I'm not being loyal to my friends." Or, "If I tell them I like math, they'll think I'm weird and I won't have anybody to talk to at lunch."

Fortunately, expressing yourself rarely leaves you friendless and alone. Most teens want friends who are real people, not Xerox copies of somebody else.

Developing your own style and sticking up for your own principles now and then is really

a lot safer than you might think.

• The pressure to be identical comes from within:

Nobody is telling you that you have to be just like your friends; you're telling yourself. Friendship is very important to teens, and it can feel as if the pressure is coming from outside. Most teens can't really recall a single time when their friends said, "If you don't like the Top 40, you can't be our friend" or "We only like pro-wrestling fans."

• Friendship goes deeper than style: A friend is somebody you like even if you think her new haircut is dumb or his taste in music is dreadful. Those things are superficial — style rather than substance.

• Tastes change and the group may need a little time to catch up with you: Teen preferences change quickly. Last week's MTV top video is ancient by this Tuesday. If you like something the rest of your crowd doesn't care for, perhaps you're a little ahead of them and they'll catch up in awhile.

• You may be ready for a new circle of friends:

It is improbable that your best friend is seventh grade will still be your closest ally in the senior year of high school. Most teens move through several groups of friends as they develop new interests and values.

If you are fascinated by astronomy and your current friends are still into freestyle bikes, you may find yourself with new friends in the Science Club.

On the other hand, your group may go some direction you don't like — some crowds get into fashion design and others get into drugs. If the group's new interest leaves you cold, you probably have started to outgrow them. That's a natural part of teen life.

It feels great to be accepted in a group, but now and then you need to let your individuality show. The risks are smaller than they seem, and the benefits are deeper friendship and greater self-respect.

You can hardly lose.

\*\*\*\*\*

## HOUSE OF GUITARS

Most New Album And Tape Releases Just \$5.98  
CD's From \$8.98 - \$11.98 Each

We received 16 correct entries identifying Benny Goodman as the "King of Swing."

The winner was Carolyn King of Rochester

### MUSIC TRIVIA

**This week's question:**  
What was the name of the bullfrog in "Joy to the World?"


**A:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
School: \_\_\_\_\_

**Rules:**  
Each week, the Courier-Journal, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon, and send it in to the Courier-Journal. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn. If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at the House of Guitars, 645 Third Ave.

All entries must be received within seven days of this paper's issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

**The Courier-Journal Music Trivia**  
1150 Buffalo Rd.  
Rochester, N.Y. 14624



**Team Outfitters**  
Golf - Baseball - Softball - Hockey - Football - Basketball

We received 5 correct entries identifying O.J. Simpson as the NFL player to gain more than 1,000 yards rushing in only 7 games.

The winner was John Powderly of R.I.T.

### SPORTS TRIVIA

**This week's question:**  
What is the color of the center line on an NHL hockey rink?

**A:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
School: \_\_\_\_\_

**Rules:**  
Each week, the Courier-Journal, in conjunction with Zambito's Sport Shop will feature a Sports Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon and send it in to the Courier-Journal. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn. If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a certificate redeemable for \$10.00 OFF towards any purchase at Zambito's Sport Shop, 1350 Culver Rd.

All entries must be received within seven days of this paper's issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

**The Courier-Journal Sports Trivia**  
1150 Buffalo Rd.  
Rochester, NY 14624