

# Excerpts from musicals offer fine family fare

NEW YORK (CNS) — The following are capsule reviews of movies recently reviewed by the U.S. Catholic Conference Office for Film and Broadcasting.

## 'That's Entertainment! III'

(MGM) Yet more excerpts from MGM musicals, this time featuring the studio's gallery of stars in offbeat and unusual production numbers as well as some musical routines that landed on the cutting room floor. Bud Friedgen and Michael J. Sheridan's compilation of less-familiar footage from the golden age of Hollywood musicals is lively and engaging family fare with special appeal for nostalgic adults. The USCC classification is A-I — general patronage. The MPAA rating is G — general audiences.

## 'PCU'

(20th Century Fox) Witless, brain-dead comedy about a politically correct university whose shrewish president (Jessica Walter) overlooks protesting radical groups while seeking to expel a party-minded pack of students (led by Jeremy Piven) plotting her downfall. Instead of topical satire, director Hart Bochner has little to offer but a feeble collection of sophomoric students and their lame shenanigans. Fleeting vio-



(From left) Jake Beecham is Dave #1, Darin Heames is Dave #2, Chris Young is Tom, Jeremy Piven is Droz and Alex Desert is Mullaney in *PCU*.

lence, some sexual references, brief recreational drug use and an instance of rough language. The USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cau-

tioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

## 'Being Human'

(Warner Bros.) In each of five vi-

gnettes ranging from the Bronze Age to today, Robin Williams portrays a man struggling to overcome a personal crisis that proves a turning point in his life. Writer-director Bill Forsyth's quintet of minor anecdotes on major themes of survival, freedom and the importance of family demonstrates William's versatility as an actor but provide little insight on the human condition. Brief violence, a discreet sexual encounter and minimal rough language. The USCC classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

## 'Kika'

(October) Strained sex farce about a hairdresser (Veronica Forque), her lovers, a rapist, a talk show host (Victoria Abril) and a serial killer. Director Pedro Almodovar never strays far from the sexual eccentricities of his surreal characters in this tiresome send-up of rape and mass murder. Subtitles. Some graphic sexual encounters, flippant treatment of rape, much nudity, several gory murders and rough language. The USCC classification is O — morally offensive. Not rated by the MPAA.

## Book chronicles atrocities of raging war in Guatemala

*Massacres in the Jungle*, by Father Ricardo Falla; Westview Press (Boulder, Colo., 1994); 215 pp.; \$16.95.

Reviewed by Laurie Hansen  
Catholic News Service

U.S. newspaper headlines have reported the news of the "dirty war" in Argentina, the repression in Gen. Augusto Pinochet's Chile, and the assassination of an archbishop and priests in El Salvador. But the massacres of thousands of Guatemalan Indians seldom have gotten much ink.

With *Massacres in the Jungle*, Jesuit Father Ricardo Falla hopes to change that and also to contribute to a healing process in his native Guatemala, where during the worst years of the Guatemalan army's counterinsurgency campaign some 50,000-75,000 Guatemalans were killed and more than 400 villages destroyed.

To gather data for his book Father Falla worked five years with Guatemalans living in the northern Ixcán region. Ixcán was home to many land-starved people who previously had been seasonal migrant farm workers on large coffee, sugar cane and cotton ranches along the Guatemalan coasts. When portions of the jungle began to be cleared, Ixcán was seen as an economic alternative for agriculture, and the peasants moved there.

Their move to Ixcán coincided with a brutal escalation of warfare between the Guatemalan army and Guatemalan rebels. Father Falla explains that the peasants soon found themselves in the middle of the conflict and later, accused of being guerrilla sympathizers, they became targets of the army themselves.

Using the surviving peasants as his sources, the author, who has a doctorate in social anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin, puts faces on the numbers of Guatemalan dead.

There's Micaela Gaspar, wife of Diego Juan, and their children, Lorenza Juan, and Gaspar Juan. There's Lorenza's daughter Merchora, 6, and Gaspar's wife Maria Francisco, and their three daughters, Isabela Gaspar, 5, Isabela Segunda, 2, and Angelina Gaspar, 3.

All were Catholics active in the charis-



matic movement. The soldiers entered their home while they were singing and praying, a witness told Father Falla.

"The soldiers seized them, forcing them to cross the Xalbal River, and killed them on the river bank. They were made to lie down on the river bank. The soldiers made cudgels and beat them as if they were beating corn cobs. They killed them off, one by one," reports the author.

Unlike books that have revealed government-approved death campaigns in other countries, Father Falla's book has been published at a time when atrocities continue in Guatemala. While the numbers of individuals killed or obliterated by the Guatemalan army has decreased significantly, the killings have not come to an end.

It's not surprising, then, that the clearly written *Massacres in the Jungle*, published in 1993 in Spanish by the University of San Carlos in Guatemala City, angered Guatemalan government and military leaders.

Like the peasants he interviewed, the 61-year-old priest-author has been accused by Guatemalan authorities of guerrilla involvement, a charge that Father Falla, his Jesuit superiors and the Guatemalan bishops have denied vehemently.

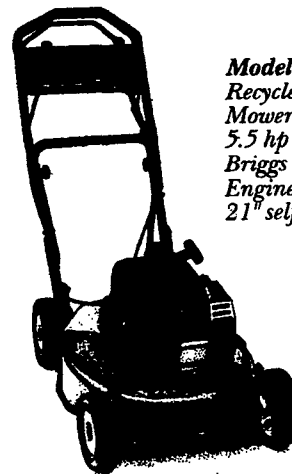
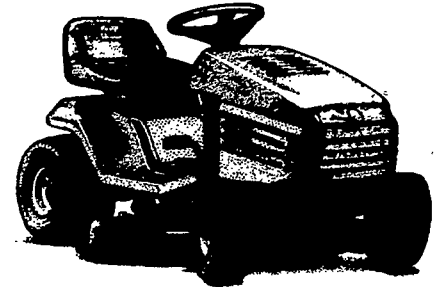
*Massacres in the Jungle* takes an unusually honest, personal look at the brutal atrocities that continue to plague Guatemalans.

Hansen, a reporter for Catholic News Service from 1986-93, has written extensively on U.S. Hispanics and has a strong interest in Latin America.

Available at your bookstore or order prepaid from Westview Press, 5500 Central Ave., Boulder, Colo. 80301-2847. Add \$2 for shipping and handling.

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