

ENTERTAINMENT

# Holy Man far from divine

By Tammy McMahan

Eddie Murphy (The Nutty Professor, Dr. Doolittle) probably has more natural wit than Chris Rock and Chris Tucker combined. So why did he get involved in such a weak, predictable comedy as Holy Man?

In Holy Man Eddie Murphy portrays "G" who is a supremely, serene guru of spiritual enlightenment. Murphy's G character, in a chance meeting on a Miami highway, encounters greedy, womanizing television executive Ricky Hayman portrayed by Jeff Goldblum (Independence Day) and Kate Newell, a humorless, beautiful media analyst portrayed by Kelly Preston (Jerry Maguire).

The Goldblum and Newell characters work for a sinking home shopping television network. Goldblum's Hayman is desperate to increase sales.

Newell came aboard along with the new network head

McBainbridge portrayed by Robert Loggia (Lost Highway).

G's inner peace makes an immediate impact on Newell. When McBainbridge demands that Hayman up ratings or else, a desperate Hayman gets the unconventional G to hawk products when it dawns on him that G's "Gandhi" bit may be the next new thing the public is seeking.

G agrees to help Hayman and the innocent is thrown into the corrupt world of showbiz.

However, G is not corrupted. Instead, he touches all, television crew and viewers alike, for good.

For example, G makes a point of travelling from set to set to spread his philosophy of the importance of love and enjoying the simple things in life like your lawn over the fleeting joy of buying a mixing bowl. G even facilitates the up and down romance between Hayman

and Newell. Despite G's message of truth, sales go through the roof and this perpetuates the movie's plot device: which is more important, material success or love?

Murphy seems colossally bored with his character. If Murphy had been given a better script he could have portrayed an inventive guru with attitude.

Murphy has the talent to shine and sparkle when given the right stuff as seen The Nutty Professor and the first Beverly Hills Cop.

Instead, Holy Man diminishes Murphy's strength which lies in strong comedy both verbal and physical. Likewise, Goldblum, Preston and Loggia give very predictable performances because their characters are so conventional. Goldblum's Hayman is the materialistic workaholic with the heart of gold that just needs to beat again.

Preston's Newell is the

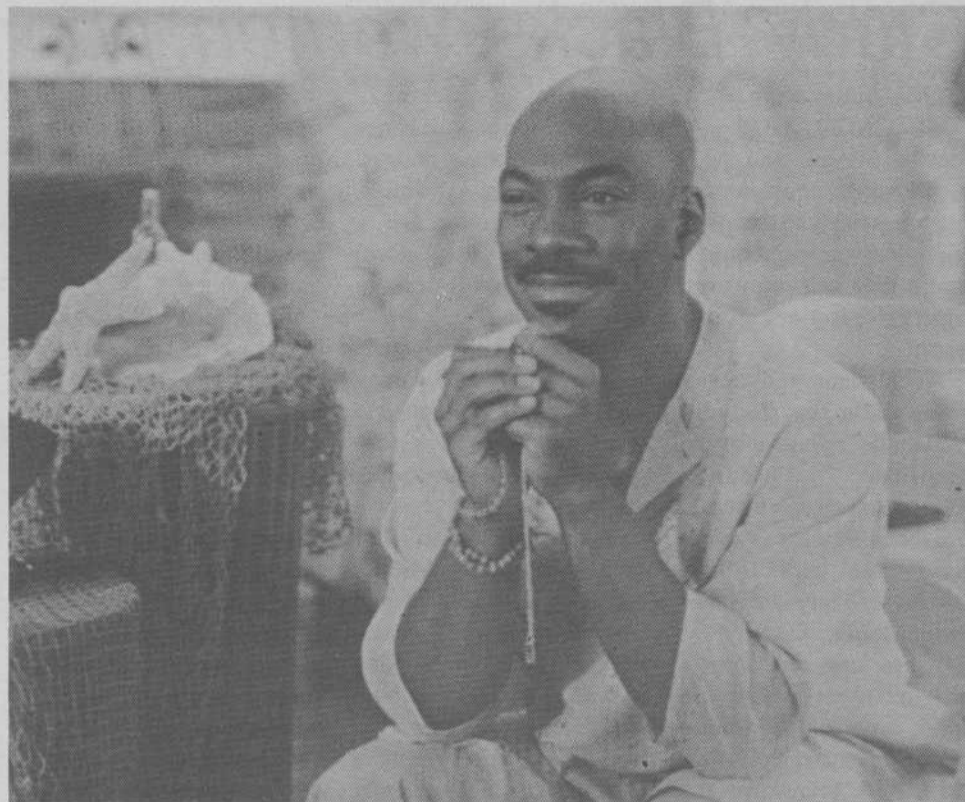


Photo special to Sentinel-Voice

In Holy Man, Eddie Murphy portrays "G", who is a supremely serene guru.

lonely career woman who just needs a good man to come alive.

Loggia's McBainbridge is the unforgiving boss who only concerns himself with the bottom line and not people.

Holy Man could have been a hilarious and scathing knock at the rampant materialism promoted on television and

in society at large.

It might have been interesting to see some role reversal here. Murphy as a clever, high ratings-or-else television executive who encounters, after a traumatic event, a guru portrayed by Goldblum may have been a unique comedy.

Unfortunately, screen-

writer Tom Schulman gave the viewers a movie that presents no challenges.

If you are looking for an "Eddie Murphy Funny" film, Holy Man is not that film.

If you are looking for lightweight entertainment with a wholesome message, Holy Man will provide a saccharin treat for your soul.

## The Robertson treatment:

### The many faces of Queen Latifah

Special to Sentinel-Voice

During her career in the spotlight, Queen Latifah has made nary a false move in her transformation from celebrated rap star, to bonafide superstar. Having excelled in every area of entertainment from A to Z, Latifah has continued to evolve into a personality who dose it all well. With successful careers in music and business already established, Latifah has in recent years, embarked on an acting career.

Best known for the role of Khadijah on the long running Fox TV show "Living Single," Latifah has made her foray into films with supporting roles in "Jungle Fever," "Hoodlum" and "Set It Off". In the new adult comedy "Living Out Loud" she delivers her most impressive performance to date, starring opposite Danny Devito and Holly Hunter as Liz Bailey, a New York City jazz chanteuse on the wrong side of love.

"Doing this film was a great opportunity for me," says the diva during a recent interview in a posh New York City hotel. "Playing Liz was a lot of fun, and it gave me the chance to showcase my



QUEEN LATIFAH

growth as an actress and singer. This film deals with a very contemporary subject matter which allowed me to present another side of myself as an actress."

Music plays an integral part of this film, and what Latifah does is completely arresting. Performing such great jazz classic like Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life," and "Be Anything" by Irving Gordon, Latifah proves herself as a music performer of the first order. Latifah says that what they hear and see might surprise some of her fans.

"I was thrilled when the producers offered me the chance to sing material which allowed me to completely step away from hip-hop. Jazz is a great genre that you can interpret your own way. I've

been looking to expand my musical repertoire and show my growth as an artist for some time and this project gave me that opportunity."

Although music remains her first love, nowadays Latifah's in high demand as an actress. Having recently wrapped production on the long awaited project "Mama Flora's Family," (based on Alex Haley's final novel) she's currently in Up-state New York making a new film with Denzel Washington. "I've been extremely blessed to have a career which has given me the opportunity to grow as an artist," Latifah says about her career.

"Both film and music are incredibly powerful mediums and I'm just glad that the public has continue to support my efforts."

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