U.S.S. Nimitz star multi-million 'Final Countdown'

The biggest star in the history of Hollywood filmmaking was born June 22, 1968; took its first step May 13, 1972; was christened May 3, 1975 and is being introduced to the world during 1980, somewhere around its 12th birthday.

The star, of course, is the U.S.S. Nimitz, the world's largest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, around which revolves one of this year's most unusual films, "The Final Countdown."

"The Final Countdown" is uniquely designed to entertain, titillate, stimulate. However, it also causes consternation to the people who star in it, namely, Kirk Douglas, Martin Sheen, Katherine Ross, James Farentino, Ron O'Neal and Charles Durning as Senator Chapman.

The film, presented by Richard R. St. Johns, is a Bryna Company Production, directed by Don Taylor for producer Peter Vincent Douglas and executive producer Richard R. St. Johns.

Simply put, this largest warship in the world is on a shakedown cruise and carries the cast through a time transition back to the hours immediately before Pearl Harbor. With its awesome nuclear might, it offers them the chance to stop the Japanese invasion, prevent the December 7, 1941, tragedy, blast the attacking air armada out of the skies and thereby, rewrite the last four decades of history.

This film thus poses one question:

"What is the decision?"

But back to the star of the film.

The Nimitz was built by the Newport News Shipbuilding Company, keel laying on the first date above, launching on the second, commissioned on the third. The premiere of "The Final Countdown" finds the giant carrier approaching its teens, one thousand and ninety-two feet long and 252 feet wide (almost four football fields long and one wide).

Commander Don Thurman is Ron O'Neal.

It is more than 30 stories high, has a full load displacement of 91,000-plus tons and its flight deck is four-and-a-half acres. It carries a regular crew of 5,500 officers and men, but can handle 6,100 persons in comfort.

It is powered by two nuclear reactors which run four main engines and it slices through the oceans of the world at more than 30 knots.

When it stops, there are two anchors to keep it still. Each one weighs 60,000 pounds. It has four aircraft elevators, 10 weapons elevators, four catapults which throw a plane into the air at 160 miles an hour from a standing position every 20 seconds and four arresting cables which stop them when they scream in for landings.

This sea-going Goliath carries 10 squadrons of eight different type aircraft: The F-14A Tomcat, jet fighter-interceptor which flies at twice the speed of sound; the A-7E Corsair II, jet light attack bomber; the A-6E Intruder, low-level attack bomber; the EA-6B Prowler, tactical electronic turbojet radar and radio jammer; the S-3A Viking, jet-powered anti-submarine search plane; E-2b Hawkeye, early warning radar defense craft; the SH-3H Sea King gas turbine-powered helicopter used for anti-submarine and cargo transfer and the RF-8G Crusader, supersonic photo reconnaissance plane.

The primary flying sequences involving the F-14s in "The Final Countdown" were coordinated and flown by aircrews from VF-84.

Fighter Squadron Eighty-Four was formed as VF-17 in World War II, flying the F-4U Corsair, and in 16 months became the leading ace squadron, downing more Japanese aircraft than any other combat command.

The Jolly Roger skull and crossbones insignia has emblazoned fighter aircraft in Korea and Vietnam and most recently, the F-14A Tomcat operating from the flight deck of USS Nimitz in the Persian Gulf. To the men of Fighting Eighty-Four, this symbol of the pirates of yesteryear represents supremacy of the seas and the spirit of attack.

The squadron is assigned twelve F-14A fighters with fourteen aircrews, five ground officers, and 220 enlisted technicians trained to maintain the aircraft at peak combat readiness. This unique fighter is a highly complex weapons system capable of employing the long range Phoenix missile in maritime air superiority roles, and the Sidewinder and Sparrow missiles, and 20mm gatling gun in the force projection and tactical air superiority missions.

Once at sea, the Nimitz can be replenished with food and plane fuel either by helicopters or supply ships which come alongside.

It can stay at sea for 13 years before coming in to refuel its nuclear reactors (That's like putting your child in kindergarten the day you leave and going to his high school graduation the day the ship comes back).

This then, is the set for this multi-million-dollar production.

Bill Lane in Hollywood

At the recent Black Music Association convention in Washington, D.C., one startling fact hit the surface. That was the revelation that "black music is carrying the industry."

That has the same meaning as similar statements had back some years ago when Hollywood was making all kinds of black motion pictures or films predominantly cast with black actors and actresses, based however loosely on what is purported (by scriptwriters) to be black life. At that time it was assumed that such pictures were making money for the white-owned industry. It was surely putting a lot of blacks to work. Later, it was admitted by Hollywood moguls that the black films indeed has "saved" the film industry from economic doom.

In the recording industry the story is now the same, but nobody wants to admit it. That's why it was so startling at the BMA confab when speakers tossed off matter-of-fact disclosures that the recorded output of black singers and musicians is now indeed keeping the big record companies in the black. And that's no pun! But you would never know it the way the white bosses of these profiting companies have cut back on employment of black people. As soon as the current depression touched the music business, the first people laid off were black and fewer white rock acts were contracted.

Now it's back to the old game as far as black workers are concerned. It is sad at that BMA meeting the black members of the organization-which looks more and more lately like a black social club — did not emphasize to the white record-company bosses in attendance that the main agenda of any such convention today should be jobs. Especially when you consider that in the record industry today black people hold only one-ninetieth of the jobs.

One of the discussion panels at the affair titled one of its talk meets "The Consumer Press' Obligations to The Recording Arts."

What?

To repeat, again and again, the first thing forgotten by the artist when he or she makes it to the top is the same press — and especially the black press that made the artist newsworthy on his and her way to the top. The same press that indulges pleas from an army of press agents (usually white) hired by the artist andor his recording people to get the press to carry news about the artist. Yes, it's also the same press that writes news about artist when he tears his pants. The bitter with the sweet. I don't believe that junk about a public having a right to know, but when someone is a public cynosure he is always on stage, like a politican. And it's his duty alone not to make it possible for the public to get a chance to know. When anybody becomes a public figure his life becomes publicity three sheets to the wind.

— —

Newly married Stephanie Mills attended the BMA meet escorted by two brothers and a sister. Her spouse, Jeffrey Daniels of the music-vocal group Shalamar, elsewhere doing show dates.

— —

Actor Philip Michael Thomas now in the studios in Hollywood working on a new record album, singing having been his forte before he made it big in motion pictures. Ted Terry, whose "Music Menu" is quite a popular listening item on Stevie Wonder's WJLH radio station here, working on a new promotional idea, his memory still embued with happiness over his recent twinis contest. Terry had staged an airtime call for all twins in his listening audience to drop in. They did. Forty sets of twins, from babyhood to fifty, including the famous Whispers twins, Wally and Scotty.

— —

Irene Stokes saying hello by mail from Michigan where she and LaWanda Page were making personal appearance dates before heading off to Cleveland, Ohio and other points.

— —

And speaking of The Whispers, a member of the group got gloed news from the courts here the other day. Whispers member Leavell Dogres, who had been charged in an indictment with conspiracy to fleck a mail truck with nearly two million dollars in jewels saw the conspiracy count dropped, leaving a charge of simple possession of the allegedly stolen goods. Law officials say through cooperation of Dogres they have recovered almost a million dollars worth of the jewels. Sentencing set for Sept. 10.

— —

Former Detroiter Kar. Klugh who plays some very good guitar, tugged a two-night engagement here at the Greek Theatre. Klugh (pronounced clue) says he got his guitar inspiration by listening to recordings of Chet Atkins and Laurindo Almeida. It was another Detroit musician, Yusef Lateef, who gave Klugh his first bigtime job, with his band.

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Childress 'Salute' closes this weekend

The current production at The Arena Playhouse, "A Salute to Alice Childress," "Mojo," "String" and "Wine in the Wilderness," three short plays that comprise the Arena Players' tribute to this outstanding black female playwright and Sunday, Aug. 3.

Appearing in "String" are Rhonda Lynch, the recipient of the Arena Players 1979 Lorraine Hansberry Scholarship Award, and Kimberly Brooks, a member of The Arena Players' Youtheatre.

Rhonda Lynch, who portrays Maybelle will begin her sophomore year at Howard University. She graduated from Northwestern High School where she was Senior Class vice president, captain of the cheerleaders, a participant in gymnastics, track, drama and the Honor Society.

Miss Lynch won the Gold Medal in the Baltimore NAACP A.C.T-S.O. Competition in the field of drama and went to Portland, Oregon where she received the Bronze Medal in the National NAACP A.C.T-S.O. Competion.

aaaaaaaaa Kimberly Brooks, a member of the Arena Players Youtheatre, is playing Katy in "String." She has appeared in "The Bad Seed" at The Arena Playhouse and in "The Wedding." She is currently filming for "Getting to Know Me," a television show produced by The Children's International Television Network.

...more happenings

Marla Gibbs, the Jeffersons' maid, plugging the Lou Rawls Parade of Stars telethon on San Diego television promoting the United Negro College Fund. The startime promo also features the jolly Alpo giant Ed McMahon.

Actor Roger E. Moseley back from New Orleans where he, along with Watts businessman George M. Smith, sponsored an all-star basketball team from Roosevelt Park here at the AAU national Junior Olympics championship test.

Free films

A youth grabs an elderly woman's pocketbook and pays the consequences in a film version of Langston Hughes' story, "Thank You, Ma'am," to be screened at 6 p.m. on Wed., Aug. 6, at the Kirk Avenue center, 900 east 22nd St.

Harold Lloyd is a shoe clerk in Hawaii who falls in love with a wealthy customer in "Feet First," which will be screened at 6 p.m. on Wed., Aug., 6, at the Light Street Branch, 1251 Light St.

"Hamlet," a filmed performance of Shakespeare's play starring Nicol Williamson, will be screened at 7 p.m. on Wed., Aug. 6 at the Hamilton branch, 5910 Harford Rd.

Alec Guinness is a ferry-boat captain who maintains a separate home and wife in two ports in the hilarious comedy "The Captain's Paradise," to be screened at 8 p.m. on Wed., Aug. 6 at the Central Library, 400 Cathedral St.

At a party in the country one guesses premonition of disaster leads the others to relate their supernatural experiences in "Dead of Night," which will be screened at 6:30 p.m. on Thurs., Aug. 7, at the Pimlico branch, 5601 Park Heights Ave.

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David Garrett: Will the dice role 'One in a Million'?

When actor-singer David Garrett won a small role in "One in a Million: The Ron LeFlore Story," he joined the distinguished company of the film's star, LeVar Burton, and of LeFlore, himself, as a winner in a "one in a million" role of the dice.

...Garrett was chosen in an open audition in Chicago to play LeFlore's best friend in the minor leagues, his only black teammate, and the only one with whom he could discuss his family troubles back in the Detroit ghetto.

"One in a Million: The Ron LeFlore Story" will be rebroadcast on "The CBS Tuesday Night Movies," TUESDAY, AUG. 5 (9:00-10:55 PM, ET) on the CBS Television Network. (Originally broadcast 9-26-78.)

LeFlore was in prison for armed robbery when the then-manager of the Detroit Tigers, Billy Martin, scouted him and later signed him to a contract. After his release, LeFlore became an American League All-Star center fielder for the Tigers, and he is now starring with the National League's Montreal Expos.

LeVar Burton was a sophomore at the University of Southern California and had never acted professionally when a drama professor recommended that he be auditioned for "Roots." He won the starring role of Kunta Kinte in that acclaimed mini-series, and went on to stardom in television and films.

Garrett was a senior majoring in drama at Northwestern University when producer William Graham spotted him. Garrett had starred in college productions, and had done summer stock and some television commercials. And his goal was Broadway.

But his experience making "One in a Million" turned his sights to Hollywood where, after six months in a musical review at the Westwood Playhouse, "Let's Call the Whole Thing Gershwin," he was cast in his second motion picture-for-thcoming "Rage," starring David Soul and James Whitmore.

"As modest as my accomplishments have been so far, compared to Ron and LeVar, I do see a parallel, and I do have my dreams," said Garrett, a handsome, 24-year-old native of St. Louis.

"They both had talent, but they both also had people who believed in them and helped them along," he continued. "Ron had fellow inmates who trained him, counseled him and eventually succeeded in getting Billy Martin to come out to the prison. LeVar had that professor, and so many more people, since, who appreciated his gifts."

And Garrett lists producer Graham, who cast him in "Rage" on the basis of his performance in "One in a Million," and Vincent Price, who took the time to coach David during a tour of "Damn Yankees," among others.

The future? "I want to break out of the stereotypical black roles, as LeVar and the great Sidney Poitier did," he declared. "It's tough, since there are not that many good roles, and plenty of worthy actors.

"But who knows? In this business, you keep training, continue to polish your craft any way you can, and hope that you'll be ready when it's time for another 'one in a million' role of the dice."

David Garrett won his role in "One In A Million: The Ron LeFlore Story".

Weekend TV Watching

By Vanessa Johnson
Friday

Diff'rent Strokes: Drummond's quiet dinner date with a friend is sabotaged by the kids' plans for a coed slumber party. Starring Gary Coleman and Ted Bridges. 8:00-8:30 p.m.-Ch. 11 — —

Benson: A governors' conference is turned into bedlam by Gatling's father, a lecherous invalid who uses his wheelchair as a mobile command post and skirt chaser. Starring Robert Guillaume. 8:00-8:30 p.m.-Ch. 13. — —

Speak Up America: Marjoe Gortner, Jayne Kennedy, and Magic Johnson are the hosts for a public-opinion forum that deals with current issues in a now serious, now humorous vein. 9:00-10:00 p.m.-Ch. 11. — —

Boxing: Join former Welterweight champ and Olympic Gold Medalist Sugar Ray Leonard, boxing analyst Dr. Ferdie Pacheco and host Dick Enberg for a scheduled 10 round battle between former WBC Welterweight champion Wilfred Benitez and slugger Tony Chiaverini. 10:00-11:00 p.m.-Ch. 11. — —

Soundstage: Keyboardist Chick Corea, singer Al Jarreau and vibraphonist Gary Curton Jazz it up "Sicily", "Hot New Blues" and many others. 11:00-12:00 a.m.-Ch. 26. — —

Tonight: Scheduled guests Sammy Davis Jr. 11:30-1:00 a.m.-Ch. 11. — —

Saturday

Fat Albert: The gang learns that size doesn't make the man in this story. HOsted by Bill Cosby. 11:30-12:00 p.m.-ch. 2. — —

Soul Train: Guests performers are Stephanie Mills and Roy Ayeer. 12:30-1:30 p.m.-Ch. 11. — —

Tony Brown's Journal: An examination of the decline of public black colleges and what can be done to save them. 2:00-2:30 p.m.-Ch. 11. — —

Universe: Walter Cronkite examines the controversy over interferon a naturally produced protein that many believe can arrest the spread of cancer, but which is very expensive and in limited supply. 8:00-8:30 p.m.-Ch. 2. — —

Movie: "Claudine", fine acting highlights this richly textured film about a black mother on welfare and her garbageman boyfriend. Starring Diahann Carroll and James Earl Jones. 11:30-1:30 a.m.-Ch. 5. — —

Don Kirshner's Rock Concert: Music by Fleetwood Mac and the Commodores who sing "Wonderland", "Still" and many more. 2:00-3:30 a.m.-Ch. 4. — —

Sunday

Dick Cavett: Boxer Sugar Ray Leonard is the scheduled guest. 10:00-10:30 a.m.-Ch. 22 & 67. — —

Tony Brown's Journal: A look at the role of blacks in the Roman Catholic church. 1:00-1:30 p.m.-Ch. 4. — —

Greatest Sports Legends: A tribute to Henry "Hank" Aaron who hit more home runs (755) than any other player in major-league history. 1:00-1:30 p.m.-Ch. 7.

Movie: "Buck and the Preacher", Sidney Poitier made his directorial debut with this adventure yarn about black pioneers in the post-Civil War Southwest. Starring Harry Belafonte and Ruby Dee. 4:00-6:00 p.m.-Ch. 13. — —

Tony Brown's Journal: The image of blacks on radio and television is examined. 5:30-6:00 p.m.-Ch. 11. — —

The Jeffersons: George needs room to expand his business so he tries to annex Charley's bar without telling Charley. Starring Sherman Hemsley and Isabel Sanford. 9:30-10:00 p.m.-Ch. 2. — —

Mike Douglas: Co-host Barbara Mandrell is joined by actor Carl Weathers and others. 2:30-4:00 a.m.-Ch. 13.

'Everybody Skate'

Gail Blackwell, a former news reporter for a local television station, and a group of area residents have embarked on a project which will undoubtedly bring a lot of fun to Baltimore. Ms. Blackwell is head of "Everybody Skate", an operation which rents skates and provides facilities for those interested in outdoor roller-skating.

She says that a few friends assisted in removing the original wheels from an assortment of skates and replacing them with new polyurethane wheels which are designed to be used outdoors.

There is currently free skating sponsored by Ms. Blackwell with the assistance of the bureau of recreation at Patterson Park every Wednesday through Sunday, from 7:30 to 11:30 p.m.

Skates are available at the Patterson Park rink for a rental fee of $5.00 and an I.D. card, which are returned to the renter when the skates are brought back.

There will also be an opportunity to enjoy outdoor skating at Druid Hill Park in West Baltimore, says Ms. Blackwell.

Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday a section of the park near the reptile house on Greenspring will be cordoned off for skaters. A skate truck will be parked nearby with skates to rent to the public.

For further information contact Gail Blackwell at 255-0444.

CALENDAR

Free events for children

Tues., August 5

Morrell Park Center: Magic showfeaturing Officer Charlie the Magic Cop. 1 p.m.

Edmondson Avenue Branch: Films — "The Wild Ponies of Chincoteague," "The Tap Dance Kid," and "Little Roquefort in the Haunted Cat." 1:30 p.m.

Highlandtown Center: Films — "Delicious Inventions" and "Skating Rink." 3:30 p.m.

Wed., Aug 6

Gardenville Branch: Films — "The Ugly Duckling" and "The Ride." 10:30 a.m.

Lafayette Square Center: Films — "Oliver the Eighth" and "Mirl." 12:30 p.m.

Fort Worthington Center: Magic show featuring Officer Charlie the Magic Cop. 1 p.m.

Hamilton Branch: Films — "Maurice Sendak's Really Rosie Starring the Nutshell Kids" and "Peewee Had a Little Ape." 1 p.m.

Morrell Park Center: Films — "Hoosegow," "The Singing Bone" and "Cicero: The Queen's Drum Horse." 1 p.m.

Pimlico Branch: Films — "People Soup," "Popeye the Sailor Meets Ali Baba's Forty Thieves," and "The Caterpillar and the Wild Animals." 1 p.m.

Walbrook Branch: Films — "Blinkity Blank," "Thoroughbred," and "Science Fiction Highlights." 1 p.m.

Clifton Center: Films — "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi" and "The Dancing Princess." 1:30 p.m.

Dundalk Avenue: Film — "Heidi." 2 p.m.

Broadway Branch: Film — "Go Kart Go." 2 p.m.

Northwood Branch: Films — "The Abbott and Costello Show — The Haunted House" and "Gumbasia." 2 p.m.

Reservoir Hill Center: Films — "Runt of the Litter," "Feast is Not a Ladybug," "The Necklace," and "Closed Mondays." 2 p.m.

Thurs., Aug. 7

Forest Park Branch: Films — "The Golden Fish" and "Free to Be . . . You and Me." 1 p.m.

Kirk Avenue Center: Magic show featuring Officer Charlie the Magic Cop. 1 p.m.

Light Street Branch: Film — "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." 1 p.m.

Waverly Branch: Films — "Rip Van Winkle" and "Very Good Friends." 1 p.m.

Gardenville Branch: Films — "The Rounders" and "King Kong." 3:30 p.m.

St. Paul Street Center: Films — "Riot on Ice" and "Cat's Paw." 3:30 p.m.

Fri., Aug. 8

Hampden Library Center: Magic show featuring officer Charlie the Magic Cop. 10 a.m.

Fells Point Center: Magic show featuring Officer Charlie the Magic Cop. 1 p.m.

Pimlico Branch: Film — "P.J. and the President's Son." 3 p.m.

Canton Center: Book Bingo. 4 p.m.

Sat., Aug. 9

Pennsylvania Avenue Branch: Films — "Paddington Hits Out; A Visit to the Hospital," "Peter and the Wolfe," and "Hog Wild." 2 p.m.

'Marimba Time' and Kids Stuff

Children will get into the rhythm when Marimba Time joins Kid's Stuff at the Inner Harbor's West Shore State, Thursday, August at 7 p.m.

Marimba Time is a unique combination of a marimba and bass duo, originated by accomplished musician Donna DiStefano. Ms. DiStefano is the leader of Charm City Marimba Band, has played the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and freelances with many orchestras and ensembles.

This Kid's Stuff program introduces the marimba to young audiences and focuses attention on the concepts of time and rhythm in music.

The following Kid's Suff on Thursday, August 14 at 7 p.m. will feature the mime duo, Imagimime, on the West Shore Stage.

For more information on this and other free children's series call the Baltimore Office of Promotion and Tourism at 685-TOUR (8687).

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