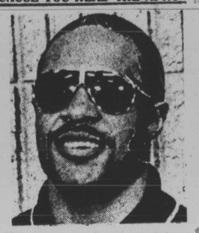
'A Soldier's Story' nominated for best picture of 1984

"A Soldier's Story" nominated for Oscar as best movie of 1984.

Adolph Caesar nominated.

Howard Rollins Jr. missed.

Charles Fuller nominated for "A Soldier's Story" screenplay.



Stevie Wonder's "Just Called to Say I Love You" nominated.

Ray Parker Jr.'s "Ghostbusters" nominated.

Norman Jewison's production of Charles Fuller's Pulitzer Prize winning drama, a murder mystery set among black soldiers at a World War II camp has been nominated for best picture of 1984 along with "Amadeus," "The Killing Fields," "A Passage to India" and "Places in the Heart."

The 57th Annual Academy Awards presents Oscars in 23 categories to be telecast March 25 from the Los Angeles Music Center. The 4,100 active members of the Academy nominated their five choices for best picture and then voted in their respective crafts... actors for acting and writers for writing.

"A Soldier's Story" won an Oscar nomination for Adolph Caesar as best supporting actor and Charles Fuller for best screenplay adaptation.

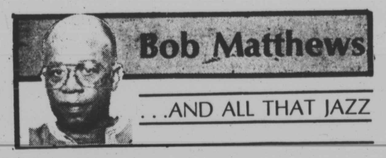
Ignored in the voting were Howard Rollins whose performance in "A Soldier's Story" was expected to get an Oscar nod as Larry Riley and Norman Jewison.

Biggest surprise is that Eddie Murphy was overlooked entirely for his "Beverly Hills Cop" which has made millions at the box office making him the 1984-85 box office champ.

Also overlooked was Francis Ford Coppola's $50 million plus "The Cotton Club" which only managed mentions for art direction and film editing.

Stevie Wonder collected a nomination for best original song "I Just Called to Say I Love You" from "The Woman in Red" and Ray Parker, Jr.,'s "Ghostbusters" was also nominated.

Johnny Carson has been replaced by Jack Lemmon for the 1984 telecast as Academy governors strive to make the ceremonies less tiresome and attract new viewers.



Bob Matthews

...AND ALL THAT JAZZ

'Octette'...excellent with minor flaws

"The Octeette Bridge Club" a play which had its official opening at the Mechanic Theatre Tuesday, heads directly to Broadway following its Baltimore run, which continues through February 23.

By then, the minor flaws which slow the pace of this excellently acted comedy drama will have been doctored to the extent that a lenghthy Broadway run is certainly possible.

The basic premise of the piece is the delineation of innerouter familia relationships of eight sisters, ranging in age from 37 to 54 at the beginning of the play, set in 1934.

Every two weeks, they gather at one of the sister's homes to play bridge—hence the title. Bridge players, however, should not expect to see any bridge playing take place — it doesn't, except for a couple of bidding sequences.

Bridge is the peg on which the playwright hung the meeting of the sisters on a regular basis, with their self-introductions puportedly for a news story, the vehicle by which terse backgrounds of the players were inserted.

In a nutshell, P.J. Barry's play is a recitation of problems within a family circle, that are usually ignored or pooh-poohed, rather than coped with.

It takes two acts and four scenes for this to be accomplished, by which time about four strong characters emerge. Betsy, the youngest of the sisters, hints at emotional upset before the intermission.

In the concluding act, which is set 10 years later, she has survived a sojourn in a mental hospital—a matter her traditionalist New England sisters cannot understand.

The role of Betsy is played by Gisela Caldwell, who was brought in after the original lead, Roberta Maxwell, became ill.

Some of the best lines in the play went to Nancy Marchand, familiar to most as Miss Pynchon in the TV series "Lou Grant", who was brilliant in the portrayal of the acidulous Connie.

To her fell the task of breaking the family tensions with wry asides, albeit a couple of them seemed thrown away. Her role was established early on, as she pointed out during the introductions: "I'm the only one of the sisters to marry a Protestant."

This brought about the empathetic response from those theatregoers who were staunch Catholics from large families.

The play could conceivably seem far fetched to those completely unfamiliar with large families, where fear of ridicule keeps deepseated emotions from surfacing.

This was the case all during the first act of the play, so that its direction was never quite clear. The tendency is to say: "That's nice..." but niceness is not particularly memorable.

The well defined conflict, attendant in most works, is missing here, and therein we feel is the basic flaw. Not until the final scene does the focus and intent of the author make itself known.

The ending too, seemed of the "Lady or the Tiger" stripe, with the character of Martha—eldest of the sisters—stonily unwilling to confront the realities of sex, mental illness or nudity.

Martha, played by Anne Pitoniak, forcibly stood out in our estimation, since the basic New England stoniness and stubborness remained—nay escalated—through the life of the play.

Everyone has an "Aunt Martha" somewhere who is unflexible in belief and unchangeable in outlook.

The casting of this comedy drama ranges from the superb to the brilliant, with the excellent direction by Tom Moore evident in the timing—worthy of a Broadway production.

Phillip Michael Thomas...has energy of Whirling dervish

Watching Philip Michael Thomas on the set of NBC-TV's "Miami Vice" can be invigorating or just plain enervating, depending on whether you've had your Wheaties for breakfast.

Both on and off camera, Thomas - who plays Detective Ricardo Tubbs on the critically acclaimed series (Fridays, 10-11 p.m.NYT) - radiates enthusiasm. Even late in the day, after a strenuous shoot that usually involves him and fellow star Don Johnson, he can be seen chatting with the local gawkers, posing for pictures, mugging for children, finalizing details for that night's charity event, prancing about or just plain having a ball.

Of course, for Thomas to have the energy that would shame a whirling dervish, he must have sleep - somewhere, he claims, between two and four hours a night.

"I respond to my environment and what is going on," says Thomas. "In that way, an actor is like an undercover cop. I plug into what's around me. I'm always open and respectful. If you close the door, it might not be open tomorrow. Yesterday's a cancelled check, tomorrow's a promisory note and today is cash in hand."

Thomas was born in Columbus, OH. His family relocated to Southern California and he studies theology in college before deciding to pursue acting as a career. He appeared in the musical "Hair" in San Francisco and later co-starred in the feature film "Sparkle." He did some episodic television guest spots before getting his big break in the innovative "Miami Vice" - and he feels he is now on the way to one of his four goals.

"E.G.O.T. is my game plan," he says. "I intend to win an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony award. Everything that's happened to me is a continuation of leaps and bounds toward success. It's not the destination but the journey that matters most. I see every day as a step."

Thomas and Johnson are in demand for most charity events in Miami, where they are treated as Princes of the City. They've even been awarded keys to the city and have been invited to appear in the Orange Bowl Parade.

Thomas relishes his newfound status and opportunities. "I do get tired, though," he admits. "It's more a physical exhaustion than a mental or spiritual thing. Like when Don and I were both sick a few months ago: I wanted to leap and jump. I wanted to push it; but somehow there was no kick. If I had my way, I wouldn't sleep. Getting by on the two-to-four hours I do now means no longer accepting the limitations that once bound me.

I do the drug called life, which is so abundant. I'm just letting the light shine in."

In the meantime, Thomas has his eyes on a possible future Emmy, and he continues to hone his perceptions of the Tubbs character. "I started Tubbs at zero in the pilot. Every week I will put the essence of something new in that will push me toward the 'E' of E.G.O.T."

Philip Michael Thomas on TV's "Miami Vice."

'Love Boat Party'

Baltimore sweethearts are invited to join the "Have A Heart for the Homeless" Love Boat Party aboard the Port Baltimore on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14 from 7 to 11 p.m.

This romantic evening in the Inner Harbor will culminate a week of fund-raising events in Baltimore to benefit Project Shelter, a United Way charity that provides financial support to 30 Central Maryland shelters for the homeless.

Love Boat partygoers will enjoy an entertaining night of dancing to the contemporary sounds of one Baltimore's popular local bands.

"The Sweethearts of Baltimore," costumed characters depicting famous women of Baltimore including Zelda Fitzgerald and the Duchess of Windsor, will be greeting party guests and recounting tales of Baltimore's vestervear. In addition, Love Boat couples will be charmed by a special visit from Cupid.

Romantic sweetheart packages, including getaway weekends and dinners for two at some of Baltimore's favorite restaurants, will be given as door prizes throughout the evening.

A delicious Valentine buffet featuring caviar and cheese wheels, chicken l'oragne, beef teriyaki and French pastries will be served courtesy of Overlea Caterers. A cash bar will also be provided for guests.

Tickets for the "Have a Heart for the Homeless" Love Boat Party are $25 per person. This tax deductible contribution will benefit Project Shelter. Tickets may be purchased from the Baltimore Office of Promotion and Tourism at 110 W. Baltimore St., for information call 837-INFO (4636).

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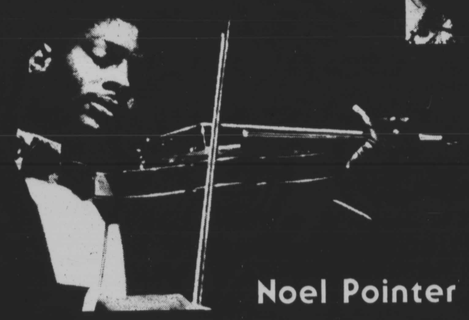
FEBRUARY 8, 1985

Roy Ayers

Tom Browne



Noel Pointer

The New York Jazz Festival

Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall
Baltimore, Md.

Saturday, February 16th
8:00 p.m.