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Select a budget: Thursday, January 14, 2010 Go

BC-MCT-ENTERTAINMENT-BJT — entertainment, wire (3050 words)

McClatchy-Tribune News Service
Entertainment Budget for Thursday, January 14, 2010
Updated at 6:00 p.m. EST (2300 UTC).
Adds [KASZTNER-MOVIE-REVIEW:LA](#), [MOVIE-BIGPICTURE-COLUMN:LA](#) and [TV-GOLDENLOBES-FALCO:LA](#)

TOP STORIES

Pee-wee Herman is back at the playhouse

[STAGE-PEEWEE:LA](#)—For anyone old enough to have come into pop cultural consciousness in the mid-'80s, Pee-wee Herman casts a long shadow — albeit, an almost transcendently nerdy shadow, one most often recalled dancing atop a bar to the Champs' jaunty instrumental "Tequila" in his 1985 breakthrough movie "Pee-wee's Big Adventure."

The impish man-child with an outsized laugh and an undersized grey suit became an improbable icon, graduating from guest appearances on "Late Night With David Letterman" and cameos in Cheech & Chong movies to his Saturday morning children's show, "Pee-wee's Playhouse."

The show enjoyed cult-like popularity with grown-ups and kids alike, thanks mainly to the man behind the character, Paul Reubens. The character's run continued with "Big Top Pee-wee" (1988) and hit its apogee with the release of his own talking doll, a kitschy toy that brays Pee-wee's adenoidal catchphrase — "I know you are, but what am I?"

Until 1991, when everyone stopped laughing with him and Pee-wee became a national punch line. That year, Reubens was busted for indecent exposure at a Florida adult movie theater. CBS unceremoniously dumped his show; late-night comedians and op-ed writers feasted on his predicament and Reubens retreated from the public.

The upshot: Pee-wee went into unofficial retirement for nearly two decades. But a funny thing happened on the way to cultural oblivion.

1850 (with trims) by Chris Lee in Los Angeles. [MOVED](#)

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#) | [PHOTO](#)

Nortec Collective mashes its electronic music with classical

[MUS-NORTEC:LA](#)—On a Pacific Ocean-cooled Sunday night last October, a crowd of 25,000 people thronged the streets outside the Tijuana Cultural Center to witness a startling musical experiment.

Packed two- and three-deep on the outdoor stage near the Avenue of Heroes, members of the Baja California Symphony Orchestra, led by conductor Ivan del Prado, conjured lush melodies more suited to a concert hall than a gritty urban thoroughfare. Overhead, a screen flashed Pop Art graphics and images of border fences, scowling tough guys in cowboy hats and other Tijuana emblems.

Standing directly behind the violinists and woodwind players, Ramon Amezcua and Pepe Mogt — better known as Bostich and Fussible of the electronic music ensemble Nortec Collective — tapped out metronomic tempos on hand-held computers, alternately merging and body-slammng their beats with the rich orchestral harmonies.

The free, open-air concert was a welcome diversion for this sprawling border city of 1.5 million, which has suffered a months-long spate of brutal drug-related killings and kidnappings that has demoralized locals and terrified U.S. tourists.

But for the Grammy-nominated duo of Amezcua, 48, and Mogt, 40, the concert also marked the latest shift in a subtly evolving career. After more than a decade of remapping techno's DNA by splicing electronic beats with Mexican regional folk music, touring with Los Lobos and remixing songs for the likes of Morrissey and Lenny Kravitz, the tandem has added yet another chromosome to its sonic gene pool: symphonic musicians and orchestral arrangements.

1250 (with trims) by Reed Johnson in Tijuana, Mexico. [MOVED](#)

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#) | [PHOTOS](#)

Denzel Washington is a revelation in 'Book of Eli'

[MOVIE-ELI-WASHINGTON:LA](#)—For a guy who's just seen the end of the world, Denzel Washington is surprisingly upbeat.

The actor projects a studied, scowling quiet for much of his new post-Armageddon thriller "The Book of Eli," which makes it a little jarring to meet the actor and find him in an altogether different mode: gregarious, charismatic, Denzel-ish. As he talks about his new role while sipping camomile tea in the lobby bar of a Beverly Hills hotel, he stages a charm offensive — a unique Denzel campaign designed to melt anything in his path.

He jokes about razzing one of the film's directors, an atheist who's making a movie with religious themes. He indulges an overly excited stranger who stops by the table to gush about a house she once helped Washington's mother rent. And then he segues into a story about how his mother offered suggestions to Donald Trump on how to handle his business as Trump gave them a ride on his jet from Florida to New York.

"You know how New York mothers are. She takes charge. I said 'Ma, it's his plane, be quiet,'" he says, giving that trademark Denzel laugh.

1150 (with trims) by Steven Zeitchik in Beverly Hills, Calif. [MOVED](#)

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#) | [PHOTOS](#)

TELEVISION

The funny side of Edie Falco

[TV-GOLDENLOBES-FALCO-CORRECTION:LA](#)—When Edie Falco got word last month that she had been nominated for a Golden Globe for her performance in Showtime's "Nurse Jackie," the actress assumed her competition included other

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The Golden Globes

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dramatic actresses such as Glenn Close.

So when her manager, Richie Jackson, told her that she was up for best comedic television actress, Falco was dumbfounded.

"It's the craziest thing I've ever heard in my life," she said.

The Globe nomination, followed two days later by a Screen Actors Guild nod for best comedic actress, marks new territory for Falco. If she wins Sunday, it will be her third Globe—she won two for her performance as Carmela Soprano in the iconic HBO series "The Sopranos"—but her first accolade for her work in comedy.

1350 (with trims) by Matea Gold in New York. [MOVED](#)

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#) | [ARCHIVE PHOTOS](#)

Bruce Dern shows a dangerous streak in 'Big Love'

[TV-BIGLOVE-DERN:LA](#)—Bruce Dern needs to be at the top of his game to play Frank Harlow, the omery, manipulative, possibly demonic polygamist the veteran actor plays on HBO's "Big Love." It's not a role for the faint of heart.

The father of the show's protagonist Bill (Bill Paxton) and a lifelong member of the Mormon sect at the Juniper Creek compound, Frank kicked his son out at age 14 and they've been bitter enemies ever since. The rascally Frank also has a love-hate relationship with Bill's mother, Lois (the equally off-the-wall Grace Zabriskie), the second of his five wives.

"The first two years they were trying to kill me," says the lanky 73-year-old Dern, his blue eyes dancing. "In the first episode I was poisoned and in the third year, Lois tried to put a bag over my head and asphyxiate me. This year it's a little bit more risky, dangerous and honest."

1050 (with trim) by Susan King in Los Angeles. [MOVED](#)

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

Food Network admits use of stunt produce in White House episode

[TV-WHITEHOUSE-VEGGIES:TB](#)—For months, the Food Network ran ads about a forthcoming episode of "Iron Chef America," its flagship chefs plus secret ingredient versus time competition. The show would take place at the White House garden, with Michelle Obama making a cameo and plugging her responsible-eating initiative. The network promised it would be its biggest episode ever.

Except for one thing: As first reported on AOL's Politics Daily blog, the fruits and vegetables used on the show weren't from the White House. They were stunt produce. Ringers.

300 by Kevin Pang in Chicago. [MOVED](#)

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

Change? Not on 'Children' or in real life

[TV-PRESSTOUR-NOTES:PH](#)—ABC celebrated the 40th anniversary of "All My Children" Tuesday with a scene from the show as it played exactly 40 years before, Jan. 12, 1970.

Susan Lucci, as a teenage version of "Children's" perennially difficult Erica Kane, played opposite Agnes Nixon, still spry at 82. Nixon, who created "Children" and "One Life to Live," took the role of Erica's mother, Mona.

800 by Jonathan Storm in Pasadena, Calif. [MOVED](#)

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

Note to NBC: Free Conan, and focus on the content

[TV-RYAN-COLUMN:TB](#)—NBC has a chance to hang on to one shred of dignity in all this. They could set O'Brien free with a minimum of fuss.

Then executives could start working on a much bigger and more important task: rebuilding the network's credibility in the eyes of the viewing public, not with reinventions and radical innovations, but with well-crafted, entertaining television.

That approach wouldn't end NBC's troubles, but it would be a start. And it would be preferable to everything else the network has tried in the last decade.

550 by Maureen Ryan in Chicago. [MOVED](#)

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

Shots of adrenaline: '24,' 'Human Target'

[TV-BARNEY-COLUMN-ADV17:CC](#)—Sunday release—Want a stark alternative to the hoity-toity glitz and glamour of the Golden Globe Awards? Fox has your back with a full night of high-octane, he-man action.

It kicks off with the new drama "Human Target," starring Mark Valley as a masochistic bodyguard/private detective who smiles in the face of peril. And it culminates with the return of everyone's favorite terrorist-buster, Jack Bauer (Kiefer Sutherland) in "24."

650 by Chuck Barney in Walnut Creek, Calif. [MOVED](#)

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

New season of '24,' premiering Sunday and Monday on Fox

[TV-24-PREVIEW:ND](#)—There is much, much to savor over these four hours, especially New York — luminous, beautiful, and even dowdy when the circumstance dictates. (A shame what's going to happen to it.) Jack is still Jack, or maybe Michael Corleone, because — by God — just when he thought he was out, they pull him back in again. (How many times have we heard that one before?)

The familiar "24" tropes are all here — the CTU agents with secrets, squabbling presidential aides, CTU bosses who mistrust Jack, presidents who do a double-take when they hear his name. Best of all is Renee Walker (Annie Wersching), who turns up Monday. Gone is the fresh-faced FBI agent, replaced by an embittered, depressive, borderline homicidal knuckle-breaker who's just looking for true love. Like Jack last season.

400 by Verne Gay. [MOVED](#)

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

The smart list

[SMART-LIST-ADV17:LA](#)—Ricky can handle the truth.

350 by Denise Martin.

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

Around the remote

[TV-REMOTE-ADV17:CC](#)—Sunday release—Television picks for the week of Jan. 17-23.

500 by Chuck Barney. [MOVED](#)

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

MOVIES

'About a Boy's' Nicholas Hoult is all grown up in 'A Single Man'

[MOVIE-SINGLEMAN-HOULT:MCT](#)—According to fashion designer turned film director Tom Ford, the character of "Kenny" in the new film "A Single Man," which is blazing a trail across the current year-end prestige film season, is supposed to be "a kind of angel" for the story's bereaved college professor protagonist George, played with sincerity and sensitivity by Colin Firth. Ford said that Kenny was meant to "rescue George both emotionally and literally," on the fateful day on which the

film is set, as George, mourning a soul-crushing loss, gets his affairs in order and plans to exit this world.

The beautiful Kenny is played with an otherworldly innocence by the English actor Nicholas Hoult, who most audiences will remember from his sharp turn in the 2002 film “About a Boy,” though Hoult has been acting since the age of 3.

It is surprising to watch the handsomely angular, very grown-up Hoult’s sensual, intelligent turn in “A Single Man” and think that only a few years ago he was playing a heartbreaking adolescent misfit opposite Hugh Grant.

2300 (with trims) by Matt Mazur in New York. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#) | [PHOTO](#)

The Golden Globes: Hollywood’s ultimate guilty pleasure

[MOVIE-GOLDENGLOBES-COMMENTARY:LA](#)—No one can lay a glove on the Golden Globes. It’s the award show that has survived so many crazy incidents and outrageous behavior over the years — remember the time a Hollywood Foreign Press Assn. member was suspended for selling a photo of Tom Selleck to a tabloid? — that it has developed an almost absolute immunity to criticism.

Showbiz journalists have penned detailed exposes, columnists (me included) have mocked the HFPA’s picks, TV critics have panned the show, but nothing, not even the infamous choice of Pia Zadora as new female star of the year, has been able to stop the Globes from motoring along as one of Hollywood’s most unlikely institutions.

1000 by Patrick Goldstein in Los Angeles. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#) | [PHOTOS](#)

‘The Messenger’ reminds us he’s Woody Harrelson, not Woody Boyd

[MOVIE-HARRELSON-COMMENTARY:LA](#)—With critical notice for Woody Harrelson’s performance as Capt. Tony Stone in “The Messenger” stacking up — Screen Actors Guild and Golden Globe nominations thus far and Oscar buzz, well, buzzing — the role also serves as a reminder that Harrelson is one of the most underappreciated actors of his generation. It is the reason, as well, for my lament that richly demanding characters like Tony, ones that would keep Harrelson top of mind, don’t come his way more often. Perhaps “The Messenger” will change that.

1700 (with trims) by Betsy Sharkey in Los Angeles. MOVED

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Movies have lost the connections that make plays — and good TV shows — so much more satisfying

[MOVIE-STAGEVSFILM-COMMENTARY:KC](#)—After 20 years as a theater critic, there’s no other art form I’d rather cover. Theater is alive. Film, on the other hand, is for all practical purposes dead.

When I was a kid you could see a movie, or even a double feature, for less than \$1. Even when the movie was bad — and often you knew it was going to be bad when you pushed your buck beneath the box office window — you got a few hours of entertainment for a reasonable price.

Now, when you’re expected to fork over \$12 to \$15, how can you not feel mugged by movies that rarely live up to the hype?

1100 (with trim) by Robert Trussell in Kansas City, Mo. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

For Tobey Maguire, there’s a lot to ponder

[MOVIE-MAGUIRE:LA](#)—There’s been a lot of speculation about who might replace Tobey Maguire as the new Spider-Man (Joseph Gordon-Levitt seems like a no-brainer). But almost as interesting a question is what happens to the man who’s been playing him.

After all, Sam Raimi will go back to, one can assume, the horror-suspense movies of earlier in his career (the rightly lauded “A Simple Plan” and the underrated “The Gift,” to name two). (At least we’re hoping he does; it’s likely he takes on the bigger-budget video-game adaptation “Warcraft” first.) But Maguire is a trickier question.

He’s been associated with—and in some ways tethered to — the “Spider-Man” franchise for nearly a decade, and the scrapping of the superhero character opens up a new outlet of possibilities.

450 by Steven Zeitchik in Los Angeles. MOVED

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How Beatty’s ‘Star’ was born

[MOVIE-BIGPICTURE-COLUMN:LA](#)—Peter Biskind’s new biography, “Star: How Warren Beatty Seduced America,” has the kind of eye-popping tales that get people to read books these days.

Biskind spent untold years trying to persuade Beatty to cooperate with him on his new biography after meeting him in the late 1980s.

At some point around 2000, Biskind says Beatty phoned him and told him he was ready to participate in a full-scale biography.

But that decision, like so many Beatty decisions in his film career, was immediately undone by a new set of hesitations and back-pedaling.

1300 by Patrick Goldstein in Los Angeles. MOVED

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‘Killing Kasztner: The Jew Who Dealt With Nazis’

[KASZTNER-MOVIE-REVIEW:LA](#)—If you know the name Rezso Kasztner, you won’t need any encouragement to see “Killing Kasztner: The Jew Who Dealt With Nazis.” If you don’t, that is even more reason to see this documentary on the strange and compelling life and death of one of the most morally complex figures to come out of the Holocaust.

700 by Kenneth Turan in Los Angeles. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

‘The Spy Next Door’

[SPY-MOVIE-REVIEW:ND](#)—Shabbily made but passably entertaining, thanks to Jackie Chan’s action scenes and a few cheeky jokes.

250 by Rafer Guzmán. MOVED

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Capsule reviews of feature films

[MOVIE-CAPSULE:PH](#)—Capsule reviews of feature films.

2200 by Carrie Rickey and Steven Rea. MOVED

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MUSIC

As a sex symbol, Teddy Pendergrass was romantic, not explicit

[MUS-PENDERGRASS-APPRECIATION:FT](#)—It was once told of Levi Stubbs — the late, great lead vocalist for the Four Tops — that he sang like his lungs were on fire. The same could be said of Teddy Pendergrass whose soulful, swaggering baritone possessed a similar gospel-fueled intensity.

But Pendergrass — who died Wednesday from colon cancer at the age of 59 — was always about more than sheer raise-

the-roof vocal power. He seasoned it with a rugged romanticism, sly sensuality and tender masculinity that set him apart from so much of his R&B competition during his '70s heyday. It was no accident that his nickname was not something majestic like the Godfather of Soul or King of Pop but Teddy Bear.

450 by Cary Darling in Fort Worth. MOVED

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Elvis fans will have much to glean from the 'Dim Lights' series of vintage country hits

[MUS-HILBURN-COLUMN:LA](#)—"Country & Western Hit Parade: Dim Lights, Thick Smoke and Hillbilly Music" is the second half of an invaluable album project from Bear Family Records that enables pop fans to step back in time to listen to music on the radio just like Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan and Ray Charles did more than half a century ago.

Each of the single discs released in the "Dim Lights" series contains 25 to 30 of the most popular country songs of a given year, from 1945 to '55—and you have to go only seven tracks deep into the 1945 album to hear a song that hard-core Presley fans will recognize.

750 by Robert Hilburn in Los Angeles. MOVED

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VIDEO GAMES

Blockbuster's Top 10 video game rentals

[VID-TOPGAMES:MCT](#)—The Top 10 renting video game titles at U.S. BLOCKBUSTER stores for the week that ended Jan. 10.

100. MOVED

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POKER COLUMN

Seif plays it safe

[POKER-ADV17:TB](#)—Sunday release—Steve Rosenbloom's poker.

(EDITORS: Column sold separately; not included in your MCT News Service subscription.)

650 by Steve Rosenbloom. MOVED

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