A love-hate relationship endures in tender scene from "A Star Is Born" starring Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson.

Holiday movies range from chases to comedy

By LOUISE SNIDER

From cops and robbers to camp, from slapstick to social satire, there's something for everyone in the holiday offerings at the movies. Sorry, one exception—if you like Westerns, you'll have to stick to late shows on TV.

One more exception—sorry, no war movies.

Come to think of it, still another exception—no sci-fi, or disaster movies (unless you count "Kking Kong"), or historical drama, or . . . what the heck? Here's what's rolling on the sprockets.

THE PINK PANTHER STRIKES AGAIN (PG). Once again Peter Sellers plays the ever-bumbling, but ever-successful French police officer, Inspector Clouseau. In this movie he's been promoted (The Peter Principle?) to Chief Inspector, having driven the previous one berserk.

Ex-Chief Inspector Dreyfus (Herbert Lom) escapes from the funny farm and devotes himself to seeking revenge on Clouseau. He obtains a lethal weapon capable of destroying the world, and he threatens to use it unless Clouseau is delivered to him, dead or alive.

No need to tell you who wins this match, but don't expect the crisp comedy of previous panther movies. David Niven, Capucine and others who kept the comedy sparkling are noticeably absent. Sellers and Lom are good, but overworked, as are the repetitious jokes.

THE ENFORCER(R). This is the third movie in the "Dirty Harry" series. Clint Eastwood, the man with the million-dollar squint, buckles on his holster and .44 magnum.

Still the maverick police officer believing in direct action, Harry shoots it out with a vicious gang that is terrorizing San Francisco under the leadership of a psychopathic killer.

Tyne Daly adds a new twist as a woman police inspector assigned as Harry's partner. Location shots in San Fransisco include a climactic sequence filmed at Alcatraz.

THE SEVEN-PER-CENT SOLUTION (PG). Sherlock Holmes (Nicol Williamson) and Sigmund Freud (Alan Arkin) are brought together by Dr. Watson (Robert Duvall). They join forces to rescue a girl, solve a crime and catch a criminal.

Based on the best-selling novel by Nicholas Meyer, it sounds better than it is. The movie is slow getting started, nevertheless fans of the Baker Street detective should love it. In any case, color tonality and recreation of the Victorian ambience are excellent.

A STAR IS BORN(R). Hollywood seems to be like Narcissus, who couldn't stop staring at his own reflection. This is the fourth remake of this movie about the travails of success and fame, an actor on the skids marries an actress on the way up.

This latest version makes a concession to the times by substituting rock stars for movie stars. Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson are the principals. I haven't seen the movie, but in all honesty, I find it difficult to empathize with superstars and their problems.

SILVER STREAK(PG). Gene Wilder stars in this comedy-suspense thriller that takes place (mostly) aboard a train. He plays the innocent bystander who gets involved in art swindles and murder. En route he makes love to Jill Clayburgh, exchanges shots with Patrick McGoohan, and eludes the police with Richard Pryor.

Chase sequences, exciting photography and excellent casting keep this train on an entertaining track to a spectacular finish.

NETWORK (R). A scathing indictment of television programming and the passive-receptive TV audience, this movie carries a clear message, and yet it's outrageously funny.

Written by Paddy Chayefsky, the dialogue is fierce, caustic and laced with obscenities. Peter Finch plays a flipped-out anchorman on the evening news. William Holden is the news director who wants to help him. Faye Dunaway and Robert Duvall are the network execs who exploit and destroy him in the name of profits and ratings.

NICKELODEON (PG). The opportunistic, madcap early days of movie making provide the background and storyline for his slapstick drama with Ryan O'Neal, Burt Reynolds, Tatum O'Neal and Stella Stevens.

They're all part of a movie crew working for Brian Keith, the beleagured head of an independent studio. Through determination, improvisation and dumb luck, they bring out silent movies while avoiding the goons which rival studios send out to destroy competitors.

KING KONG (PG). Another remake among holiday offerings is the big ape himself, King Kong. Up-to-date technology is responsible for his 40-ft. frame, 6½-ton weight and miles of tubing and electrical wire in his innards.

The new slant is campy and self-conscious. The dialogue abounds with puns and double meanings, and there's a lot of talk about "environmental rape." It's all a bit hairy.

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Ethel Simmons is entertainment editor for the Observer & Eccentric newspapers.

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