

## To Eve or not to Eve: that is the option

### TV offers safety, variety on Dec. 31

By Steven Alan McGaw

Once upon a time (say, in Rob and Laura Petrie's heyday), it was almost de rigeur for New Year's Eve to be a Big Night Out, a dressed-up, party-down, pull-out-all-the-stops event. Even moms and dads (like Ward and June Cleaver) would join the smart set for a gay evening and maybe a lamp shade or two atop their heads. The point is, or was, on Dec. 31, one had to live it up, get on with it, do it up right and see the year out with a bang.

Nowadays, economics and justified concerns about safety have altered New Year's Eve practices and expectations. One way to mark the year's passage is simply to stay at home, and television increasingly offers a variety of inducements to do just that. This year, especially, television seems to have something for everyone.

PBS begins the evening in style, airing "New Year's Eve With the Berlin Philharmonic." Claudio Abbado conducts an all-Beethoven program featuring soloists Cheryl Studer and Evgeny Kissin.

Mainstream TV viewers will likely tune in "The Tonight Show New Year's Eve Special," but don't

expect Johnny Carson has opted not to mark a final New Year's on the air. Incoming host Jay Leno will man the desk and welcome several special guests.

Popular music will be amply represented. Hammer serves as host for MTV's year-end blowout, a hard-edged showcase featuring EMF, Marky Mark and the Red Hot Chili Peppers. CBS aims to shake the rafters with "The Hard Rock Cafe's 20th Anniversary New Year's Eve Special." (Midnight may arrive before they finish with that title.) ABC plays it safe with "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve '92." Stephen Baldwin and Shannen Doherty are the hosts, and musical acts include Simply Red, DJ Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince and, no foolin', Barry Manilow.

Country fans should catch TNN's "New Year's Citrus Eve '92," live from Sea World in Florida. Travis Tritt and Tanya Tucker headline the all-star show. VH-1 presents holiday and party music videos in its "New Year's Eve Countdown Party."

Looking for laughs? Try A&E's "New Year's Eve Comedy Fest," with Frank Gorshin fronting a new installment of "An Evening at the Improv" and a repeat of "Late Night With David Letterman's" acclaimed "360 Degree Show."

Movie fans should note three night-long marathons. USA takes the low road, offering the full complement of "Porky's" films, while AMC pulls out the comedic stops with a Marx Brothers marathon including "Horse Feathers" and "Duck Soup." Sophisticates likely won't budge from The Movie Channel's showing of all six "Thin Man" movies, starring William Powell and Myrna Loy as elegant detectives Nick and Nora Charles. (And don't forget Asia.)

Happy New Year!

**SATURDAY**



Earl Holliman, Connie Sellecca and Greg Evigan star in the romantic adventure series *P.S.I. Luv U*, set in Palm Springs and airing Saturdays on CBS.

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