

## THE WEEKEND

### FRIDAY



To most people, Joe (left) is a myth and a legend. To his only friend, Jill (Charlize Theron, center) he is a protector and companion. Zoologist Gregg O'Hara (Bill Paxton, right) thinks he's the most amazing creature on the planet in "Mighty Joe Young," opening today at metro-Detroit movie theaters.

### SATURDAY



Booth Colman leads a cast of 35 in Meadow Brook Theatre's annual holiday spectacular, "A Christmas Carol," at the theater on the campus of Oakland University. Tickets \$25 for 2 p.m. show, \$36 for 6:30 p.m., call (248) 377-3300.

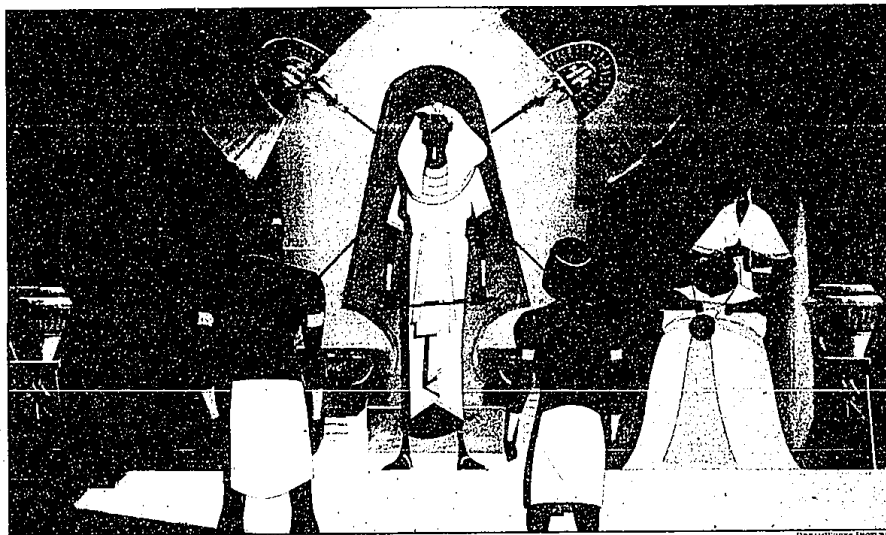
### SUNDAY



See Santa Claus before he leaves town at the "Radio City Christmas Spectacular" starring the Rockettes, at the Fox Theatre, 2111 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Performances 1 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$10 to \$52.50, call (248) 433-1515.



You'll find collectible dolls, bears, and toy trains at Toy & Hobby Expo '98, Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 26-27 at the Novi Expo Center, 1-96 at Novi Road. Call (248) 348-5600 for more information.



Duty first: Pharaoh Seti (Patrick Stewart, center) lectures Rameses (Ralph Fiennes, left) and Moses (Val Kilmer) for their irresponsible behavior as the Queen (Helen Mirren, far left) and the court magicians Hotep (Steve Martin) and Huy (Martin Short) look on in "The Prince of Egypt."

## 'The Prince of Egypt'

### Animator enjoys developing characters

BY KEELY WYAGONIK  
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Animators draw characters, but to be really good, they have to know something about acting too. "An animator is an actor with a pencil," said Kurt Culotta, one of 350 animators who worked on "The Prince of Egypt," the story of Moses, now playing at metro-Detroit movie theaters. "It helps to feel the characters when you're drawing them."

Culotta worked on the character Pharaoh Seti for whom Patrick Stewart of Star Trek fame gives voice, but he is proudest of two minor characters he designed himself—a young Hebrew girl and her grandmother. "They first appear in the Exodus scene," said Culotta. "The grandmother slips, and the little girl

takes her by the hand and says, 'come on, let's go.' You see them crossing the Red Sea. The little girl is afraid, and the grandmother takes her by the hand. When they cross the sea, you see them hugging each other."

A 1978 graduate of Plymouth Salem High School, Culotta grew up in Plymouth and dreamed of one day becoming an animator. "I can't remember not drawing," he said. "My earliest memories are of drawing. I've wanted to be an animator since I was 9. I always watched Disney cartoons and the Disney show every Sunday night." He earned a bachelor of fine arts degree from Michigan State University and worked for an adver-



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Kurt Culotta  
Animator

of 1995 he began working at DreamWorks Pictures in Glendale, Calif., which produced "The Prince of Egypt."

For a long time I worked as a clean-up artist," he said. "That's the person who cleans up the drawing, puts in buttons and other details. An animator figures out the motions."

Before beginning work on "The Prince of Egypt," he attended an

extensive training program at DreamWorks that included acting and drawing classes. "I didn't quite have the tools an actor has," said Culotta. "It helps to try and understand motivations of actors. The class helped me understand how to look for more subtle ways of expressing emotion. Sometimes in trying to figure out the acting we will act out the scene and watch it on videotape. Sometimes real actors do it, it helps, it might add some natural elements. You find yourself saying 'I didn't realize I breathe that way or had that expression on my face.'"

Because he didn't know any little girls, Culotta watched the movie "Annie" to see how little girls ran. This attention to detail is what makes "The Prince of

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## POPULAR MUSIC

### ROCK 'N' ROLL ALL NIGHT

## Loyalty brings Kiss to The Palace New Year's Eve

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO  
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For the rock band Kiss, playing The Palace of Auburn Hills on New Year's Eve is all about loyalty.

"Detroit really took us to heart earlier than any other city; even before New York. And we're very serious about stuff like loyalty and not forgetting our friends," said bassist Gene Simmons, who affectionately calls himself "Uncle Gene."

"We never turn our backs on people and places that were there for us. We will be there for them. Things like loyalty are very important words for us. We have a song called 'Detroit Rock City.' We don't have one called 'New York Rock City.'"

New York, he said, turned its back on rock 'n' roll, instead opting to support "disco bands," he said.

"Name a major rock band that came out of New York. There's the New York Dolls," they never made it. The Ramones, they never made it. Nobody.

But there's a lot of disco bands, a lot of R&B and this and that," he said.

"Out of Detroit there was Grand Funk Railroad, Ted Nugent, Bob Seger, some very important stuff, real meat and potatoes kind of music. Detroit's a city that was more about content than style. Style, it's OK to have, but style is like a dog chasing its own tail. It moves, but it goes nowhere fast."

Simmons said when Kiss plays live, the band makes it feel like the first time for everyone. Kiss's 1998-1999 jaunt, "The Psycho Circus 3-D Tour," is the first 3-D concert. Simmons swims over the audience, Peter Criss taunts fans with drumsticks, guitarist Ace Frehley pokes his instrument at the audience, and rhythm guitarist Paul Stanley spits guitar picks from in between his red-painted lips. It's true, in-your-face rock 'n' roll.

And what would a Kiss show be without Stanley's trademark screeching. "We don't (care) about the Rock 'n'

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Ringling In New Year: Kiss—Ace Frehley, Peter Criss, Gene Simmons, and Paul Stanley—brings its "Psycho Circus 3-D Tour" to The Palace of Auburn Hills.