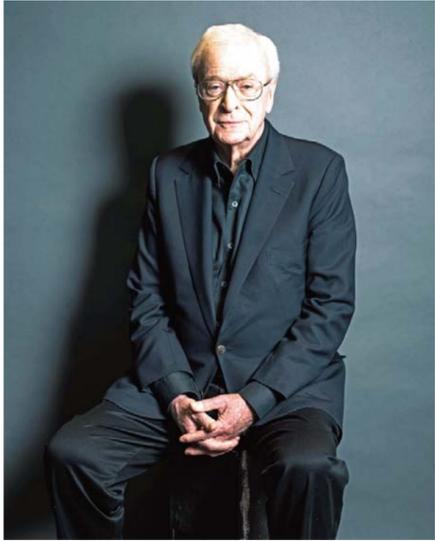


Michael Caine reflects on 'Youth' and old age

Michael Caine sits down for lunch at the St. Regis Hotel in midtown New York clutching a copy of the day's Daily News given to him by the hotel doorman, who's earmarked a photo of Caine and his "Youth" co-star Jane Fonda. "You wonder why I stay here," he chuckles. "I always remember the sort of joke thing in the British paper where the journalist said to the duchess, 'What's the best restaurant in London?' And she said, 'Where you're known, dear.' And I apply that to a lot of what I do." Caine, 82, is known just about everywhere. Some know him as the star of British classics like "Alfie," "The Italian Job" and "Get Carter." Others know him as Batman's butler (and a regular of just about every Christopher Nolan movie). Some might even know him just by the ubiquitous impressions of his indelible cockney accent, like Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon's dueling Michael Caines in "The Trip."



Actor Michael Caine poses for a portrait during press day for the upcoming film 'Youth' at The Four Seasons, in Los Angeles. — AP

In Paolo Sorrentino's "Youth," which opens Friday, Caine puts a capstone on a career that has traveled from working-class upstart to cinema institution. Like most things in life, he's enjoying it. Working now and then, Caine lives relatively quietly, focused on his family; he and his wife, Shakira Baksh, are moving from their updated barn outside London, so their 25-minute drive to their grandchildren can be cut down to 5. But he's also soaking up the adulation for his aged classical composer in "Youth," which some think could land him his sixth Oscar nomination.

"I've been nominated (for best actor) four times and I have never won," he says, smiling. "I fly for 11 hours to clap another actor and then go home. It's a long way! So I'm not exactly clearing shelves. I've got two Oscars, anyway." Sorrentino, the Italian director of the Oscar-winning "The Great Beauty," wanted Caine for his combination of authority and levity—a description that hits on Caine's unique blend of good cheer and gravitas. Caine first struck Sorrentino in Woody Allen's "Hannah and her Sisters": "When I saw that, I thought: I would like to be like Michael Caine in life." Wouldn't we all. Though Caine doesn't share his character's melancholy or regret he's similarly reflective — a two-time memoirist and an eager, colorful storyteller. "They say I'm a raconteur but what are you going to do?" he said. "There are stories to tell."

On retirement

"What am I going to do? Sit around and watch soaps on television all day? That's why I never retired. I retire mentally every time. I regard myself retired now. I don't have another script to do, so I'm retired. I always had this phrase that I said many times to reporters: You don't retire in

movies. Movies retire you. (AP: Yet they're not.) That's the point. I retire and they say, "Oh, no you're not."

On fighting in Korea

"In Korea, I got into a situation where I knew I was going to die. There were four of us. You always worry that you may be a coward. The four of us found out two things that night. One, that none of us were cowards. And that our attitude to life was that we will make this as expensive as possible."

On his breakthrough

"Alfie" was a stage play which I auditioned for and never got. I was the last choice of anybody. I shared a flat with Terence Stamp and he was offered 'Alfie.' I spent two days trying to talk him into doing it. Laurence Harvey, Anthony Newley were offered it. Funny enough, everyone turned it down because there was an abortion sequence in it. It was the first time I was nominated for an Oscar. But I had seen Paul Scofield in 'A Man for All Seasons,' so I didn't even bother to turn up."

On coming to Hollywood

"The first party I went to in Hollywood, Shirley MaLaine gave to welcome me to Hollywood. The first people to walk in were Gloria Swanson and Frank Sinatra. I was dumbstruck. Then she took me to dinner at Danny Kaye's house. There were only two other people there. One was Cary Grant and the other one was Prince Philip. I'm sitting there. I've been in Hollywood for three weeks. I took Shirley home. She lived in the Valley. As we got near to her home, I said, 'Look! Your house is on fire.' She said, 'Michael, that's steam from the pool!'"

On turning down Alfred Hitchcock

"I knew Hitchcock. We were from the same area, Londoners. When I first went to Hollywood for 'Gambit,' my bungalow at Universal was next to his. We became friends. Then when he offered me 'Frenzy,' he asked me to play a sadistic murderer of women and I wouldn't do it. And he never spoke to me again."

On Batman and his grandson

"We have very much a father-and-son relationship. When he was about four, I was watching cartoons with him. And a commercial for 'Batman' came on, and he looked at me and he went, 'You know Batman?' I said, 'Yeah' and he said, 'Wow, that's fantastic.'"

On pool scene of 'youth' with a naked beauty model

"Paolo never told us about that, you know. He said to Harvey (Keitel) and me, 'Get in the pool. There's no dialogue.' He said 'Action!' and Madalina (Ghenea) walked in. Well that's the best acting you've ever seen on our faces because that's absolute reality."

On improvising on 'youth'

"I had this habit of saying another funny line, which is just stupid. It's not going to be in the movie, but just to get a laugh. I'll do anything to get a laugh. But there was one where my daughter (Rachel Weisz) was sitting crying behind me and I couldn't see her. I just said, 'Stop crying.' And he left it in the movie. I like relaxation on a set, so I'm always going for a laugh. I can't act in a tense atmosphere."

On playing older parts

"I had had great success in movies. I had done 61, 62. And I got a script and I sent it back to the producer with a note saying I didn't want to do it, the part was too small. And he sent it back with a note saying, 'I didn't want you to read the lover. I wanted you to read the father.' That's when, as I like to say, you stop getting the girl, but you get the part."

On one similarity with his 'youth' character

"There's a scene at the doctor's where I go to see the results of my exam and he says to me: 'What's it like feeling old?' And what struck me is the line I said to him, which is: 'I don't understand how I got here.' Six years ago I was 35. How the hell have I gotten to be 82? A reporter once said to me, 'How do you feel about growing old?' And I said to him, 'Well, considering the alternative, fabulous.' — AP



Pearl Jam donates \$100,000 to Brazil mine victims

The US rock band Pearl Jam is donating \$100,000 to victims of a toxic mining spill in Brazil that killed at least 13 people and was the country's worst environmental disaster. The group's singer Eddie Vedder interrupted a show last month in Belo Horizonte, capital of the southeast state of Minas Gerais where the disaster occurred November 5 — and called for the mining company involved to be severely punished. "Pearl Jam will donate \$100k to help the communities impacted by the tragedy in Brazil," the band tweeted on

Tuesday, encouraging fans to join in the donation drive. Brazil's government said last week that it will sue mining giants BHP Billiton and Vale for \$5.2 billion in clean-up costs and damages after the deadly collapse of a waste water dam at the iron-ore mine. The deluge swept down the River Doce to the Atlantic, sparking claims of major contamination, although the mining companies insist there is no serious pollution. — AFP

'Star Wars' vs 'Star Trek': Why can't fans just get along?

"May the Force be with you" vs "Live Long and Prosper," lightsabers vs phasers, warp drive vs. hyperdrive. The fan debate over which story, technology, space ships and characters are superior started a long time ago. To casual moviegoers, there is not much difference between "Star Trek," the sci-fi franchise that launched on television in 1966, and "Star Wars," which debuted on movie screens in 1977. Yet to hard-core fans the differences are as significant as those between tribbles and droids.

"Star Trek" fans think "Trek" is better because it portrays a complex, science-based technological future where diverse species unite for the betterment of all. "Star Wars," many believe, is a simple adventure with ray-guns and walking carpets, the good guy wears white, the bad guy wears black, and there's a magic "Force." "Star Wars" fans think "Star Wars" and "The Empire Strikes Back," are "The Godfather" Part I and II of science fiction films — a perfect original followed by an equally great sequel. They can tell you exactly where they were when they first heard "No, I am your father," as a seminal life event. "Trek," for many, is boring techno-babble, everything gets talked to death over tea, Earl Grey, hot, whereas a Jedi with a lightsaber and a rascal with a ship that can make the Kessel Run in less than 12 parsecs will always save the day.

YouTube videos debating and lampooning the rivalry abound. Fan polls from the last few years indicate a fairly even split, and for many Hollywood stars the choice is far from unanimous. Josh Hutcherson of "The Hunger Games" picks "Star Wars," as does "Captain America" star Chris Evans. Reese Witherspoon, and Ryan Reynolds pick "Star Trek," according to a 2012 IGN Entertainment video.

Frequency modulation

Even if the fan base cannot agree, the fathers of the respective franchises admired each other's creations. In the 2013 DVD release of documentary "Trek Nation," George Lucas said that "Star Wars" had "softened up the entertainment arena so that 'Star Wars' could come along and stand on its shoulders." In the same documentary, "Trek" creator Gene Roddenberry said, "I like 'Star Wars.' It was young King Arthur growing up, slaying the evil emperor finally. There's nothing wrong with that kind of entertainment. Everything doesn't have to create a philosophy for you, for your whole life. You can also have fun."

At the box office, "Wars" is to "Trek" what the Death Star was to the planet Alderaan. "Star Wars" has six live action and one animated film cumulatively grossing over \$4 billion worldwide. That's



more than double the take of all "Trek" movies combined, despite "Trek" having nearly twice as many feature films.

But if you're using amplitude and frequency modulation (the colloquial term is television), then "Star Trek" dominates. With five live-action, one animated TV series, and a new streaming series coming in 2017, there will have been at least one "Trek" series in each of the last six decades. Is there anyone who can settle this debate? Someone who has attained Kolinahr, with the wisdom of a Jedi Master, who can unemotionally, yet boldly, make this decision?

Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson is perhaps the closest geeks have to a rock star-type hero. Here's his verdict from an October 2015 Rolling Stone interview: "I'm 'Star Wars' fluent, but I'm a bigger 'Trek' fan. There's a promise of actual science going on in 'Star Trek' but not so much in 'Star Wars.' When all the fibin cards are down, for most fans resistance is futile. There's usually something about the other franchise they actually like. And just like 'The Force,' it appears this debate will be with us, always. — Reuters



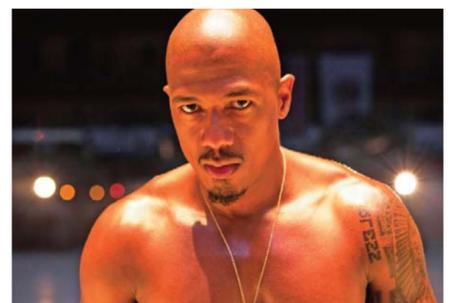
John Cusack, left, and Spike Lee attend the premiere of 'Chi-Raq' at the Ziegfeld Theatre. — AP photos



Nick Cannon, left, and Spike Lee attend the premiere of 'Chi-Raq'.



Filmmaker Spike Lee (left) and the Reverend Al Sharpton lead a march through the streets of Manhattan calling for an end to gun violence.



This photo provided by Roadside Attractions and Amazon Studios shows Nick Cannon as Chi-Raq in Spike Lee's film, "Chi-Raq."

Spike Lee rips Rahm Emanuel on 'Chi-Raq' orange carpet

Kind words were in short supply for Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel at the premiere of Spike Lee's "Chi-Raq" on Tuesday night. Emanuel fired the city's police superintendent Tuesday after tensions flared over the release of a graphic video that showed a black teenager, Laquan McDonald, being shot 16 times by a white police officer. Lee predicted at the premiere, held before he and cast members participated in an anti-gun violence march, that "some more heads are gonna roll."

The police superintendent "is not going to be the only one," Lee said. Lee's satire is based on the ancient Greek play "Lysistrata" by Aristophanes. This modern adaptation is about the murder of a child hit by a stray bullet in Chicago's South Side, and the group of women that organize a unique way of dealing with the ongoing violence; they hold back sex. Chicago actor John Cusack, who appears in the film, said the shootings and killings in Chicago each year are "unacceptable," and cited political motives.

He said the police officer involved in shooting the 17-

year-old wasn't charged or the superintendent fired until the city's election had passed. Emanuel won a second term earlier this year. The shooting took place in 2014. "It's very tragic that information was suppressed for an election cycle," Cusack said. The Rev Al Sharpton, who walked the film's orange carpet before the premiere, said the power of the satire can send a message to young people about gun violence more than Tuesday's announcement in Chicago.

The movie's kickoff segued into the anti-gun violence march. Lee, Sharpton and members of the film's cast joined about 150 people who marched from a midtown theater to Times Square. Actor John Turturro, who isn't in the movie, marched with them. Activists wore orange beanies with pom-pom tops. The color was chosen from the vests hunters wear as a "don't shoot me sign," said Cleo Pendleton, whose 15-year-old daughter, Hadiya Pendleton, was killed in Chicago in 2013. Lee even wore orange-framed glasses. Actor Nick Cannon, who portrays Chi-Raq in the movie, said the march was being held "for the right reasons." "We've got

to get out here and express our pain the right way," he said. The Rev Michael Pfleger, a Catholic priest and social activist from Chicago who is the basis for Cusack's character in the movie, urged the crowd to pledge to end gun violence.

"Are we going to save our babies or are we going to close our eyes and sit down?" he said before making the crowd repeat an oath: "I make a pledge to stop violence in my home, on my block and in my city." Lucia McBath, whose son Jordan Davis was killed in 2012 in Jacksonville, Florida, called for the mothers of other shooting victims to stand next to her. "We are members of a club no one wants to belong to," said McBath. "We are the faces of everyday violence. It doesn't have to be this way." George Willborn, who plays Tereus in the film, said he was born in Englewood on Chicago's South Side, but he wasn't supposed to make it out of his neighborhood. "I was supposed to die, go to jail or get on drugs," he said. "But I'm standing with people who believe in hope." — AP



Al Sharpton, from left, Teyonah Parris and Spike Lee.