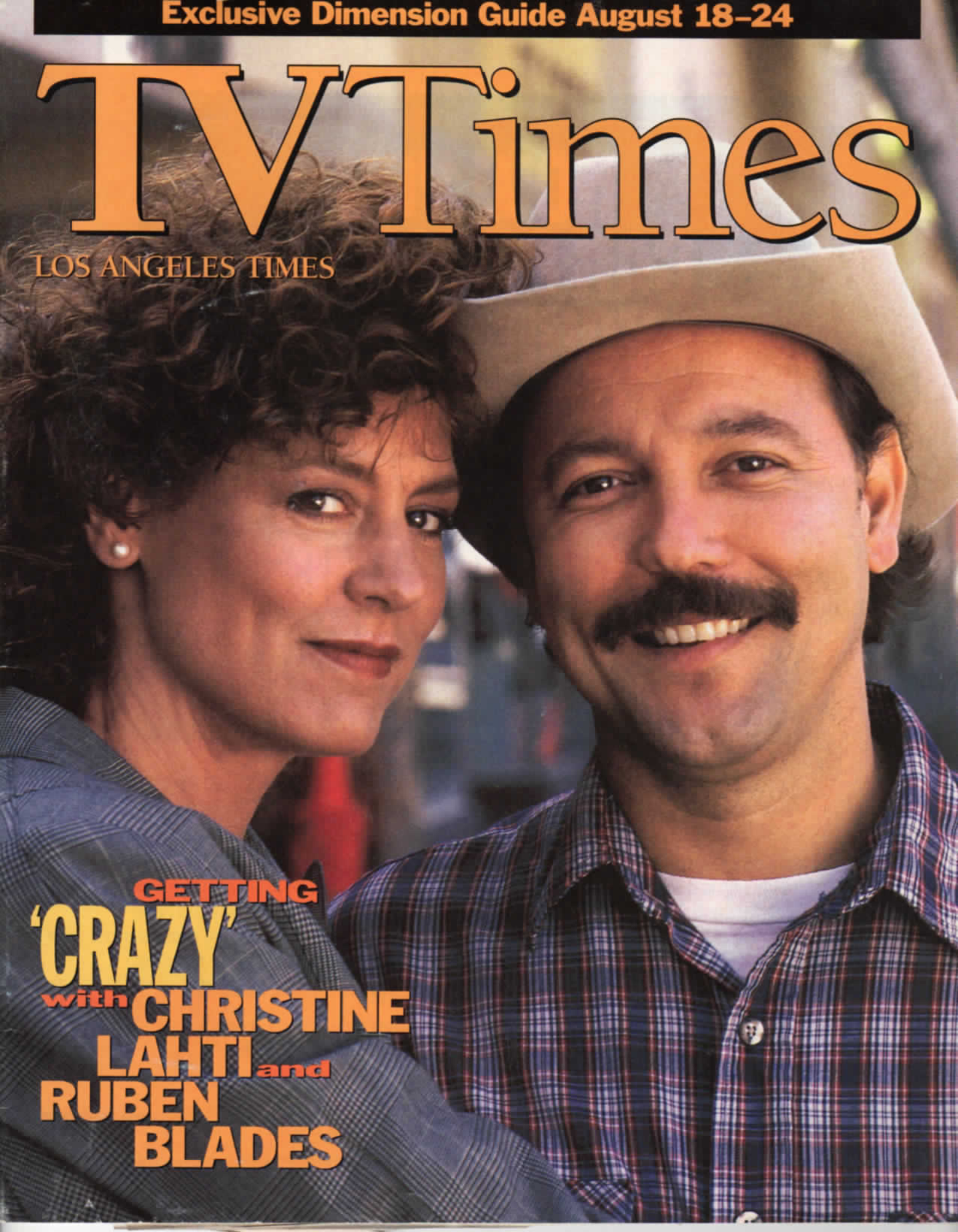


Exclusive Dimension Guide August 18-24

TV Times

LOS ANGELES TIMES

GETTING
'CRAZY'
with CHRISTINE
LAHTI and
RUBEN
BLADES



The Total Viewing Guide August 18-24, 1991

PROFILE **7**

Isabella Rossellini has built an archive to her deceased parents, but their fame continues to cast a long shadow. Rossellini talks about choices and expectations.

FOCUS **8**

The advertising/media think tank of Saatchi & Saatchi offers a network-by-network breakdown of the most promising shows for the fall.

COVER STORY **78**

Christine Lahti and Ruben Blades, for different reasons, are particular about the parts they play. They both are pleased with the TNT film they star in this week.

VIDEO **80**

Joe Saltzman gives credit to little-known directors with important films (on video, of course).

Q&A **81**

If you've ever wanted to be a director but never thought you had a chance, the perfect person to talk to is Kristi Zea.



TNT's "Crazy" couple. Page 78.



Clarence's clan. Page 77.



Fall favorites. Page 8.



Isabella analyzes Isabella. Page 7.

Departments

- TELEVIEW** **9**
- TALKBACK** **9**
- CROSSWORD PUZZLE** **65**
- FAST FORWARD** **83**



Reynolds' wrap. Page 9.

What's On

- HIGHLIGHTS** **4**
- SPORTS LINEUP** **10**
- DAILY LISTINGS** **12**
- MOVIE LISTINGS** **66**
- MOVIE HIGHLIGHTS** **66**
- RETRO** **77**
- CHILDREN'S VIEWING** **82**
- NEXT SUNDAY** **83**

Cover photo by Steve Fontanini

Editor: Sherry Stern **Art Director:** Phil Waters **Assistant News Editor:** Morrie Mazur **Associate Art Director:** Carol Kaufman **Copy Editors:** Bryan Mingle, John Scheibe
Writers: Steven Herbert, Susan King, Steven Liran, Lauren Lipton **Listing Coordinators:** Anne Guenther, Bruce Bean, Howard Alpert, Kathleen Craughwell, Susan Davis Greene, Elizabeth Hansen, Todd Jacobson, Jennifer Lego, Lenore Mohr, David Picchia, Ed Stockly, Frank Torrez **Photographer:** Steve Fontanini **Artists:** Susan Mondt, Helene Webb
Advertising Manager: Deidre Braun, (213) 237-3026. ©1991 The Times Mirror Company. Comments? Call (800) 433-1964.

TNT Movie Built for Two

**CHRISTINE LAHTI:
SHE RELISHES
RETURN TO
COMEDY IN FILM
ABOUT FINDING
LOVE**

BY SUSAN KING
TIMES STAFF WRITER

It was one of those stifling dog day afternoons.

Christine Lahti and Ruben Blades were sitting in an old dusty truck preparing to shoot a scene from "Crazy From the Heart," their offbeat romantic comedy premiering Monday on TNT.

The temperature was hovering around 95 degrees on a barren stretch of road in Valencia; Lahti and Blades were going crazy from the heat.

Director Thomas Schlamme, who also is Lahti's husband, peered into the cabin of the truck and gave the go-ahead for the scene. As Blades drove the truck down the road, a young woman picked up the Schlamme's 3-year-old son, Willie.

"Look," said the nanny. "Wave to your mommy." Willie shyly raised his right arm. But as soon as his mother disappeared from sight, the disheveled towhead wiggled out of the nanny's arms and began scurrying around the set.

Thirty minutes later, Lahti was running her fingers through her short curly hair, cooling off in her air-conditioned trailer. Though gracious, Lahti was a tad antsy during the interview. She just had one more scene to shoot that afternoon and then she was free to take Willie on a promised visit to nearby Magic Mountain.

While pregnant with Willie, Lahti didn't want to take much time off, so she continued working up to her seventh month, starring at the Ahmanson Theatre in a production of Tennessee Williams' "Summer and Smoke."

"Nine months is a long time [to be pregnant and unemployed]," she said with a small smile. "But I wouldn't do that again."

Motherhood has changed her out-



In "Crazy From the Heart," Christine Lahti plays a high school principal who lets life pass her by until she falls in love with a janitor (Ruben Blades) at her school.

look on her career. In fact, Lahti said, she isn't as concerned with her career as she once was. "I am still ambitious and still want challenging, great projects," she said, "but I don't care as much when I don't get them."

Before Willie, Lahti would always sit at home and "obsess" about the roles she didn't get. "It used to be hard for me between jobs," she said. "That's very unhealthy and very selfish and a waste of time. Now when I am not working, I don't think

what I should or could be doing. I think about what I have, which is this amazing family and this child. That's really been a gift."

One of Lahti's other talents is a gift for comedy. She received an Oscar nomination for her comedic turn as Goldie Hawn's best friend in 1984's "Swing Shift," although her lighter side has been overshadowed by her dramatic work in "Running on Empty," "Housekeeping" and currently, opposite

William Hurt in "The Doctor."

"I love doing comedy," Lahti said, enthusiastically. "I do a lot of comedy on stage. I did Noel Coward's 'Present Laughter' and Jules Feiffer's 'Little Murders'—a lot of bizarre, outrageous comedy, but for some reason I guess my last few movies have been very serious, and studio heads think I am in the Meryl Streep mode."

Lahti chuckled and deepened her voice: "They think I am very, very serious. After I did 'Swing Shift' I was known as a comedienne and now I am a tragedienne."

So she jumped at the chance to do "Crazy From the Heart," in which she plays Charlotte, a high school principal in a small Texas town who is "letting her life go by. Everything is status quo."

Charlotte lives with her mother and has been going steady with her boyfriend, the high school athletic coach, for seven years. "She feels kind of dead inside," Lahti said. "You know how you get sometimes when you suddenly wake up and it's 20 years later and you haven't begun to reach your goals and dreams?"

When she learns that her best friend is about to become a grandmother, Charlotte takes action and decides to make her boyfriend jealous by going on a date with Ernesto (Blades), a down-on-his luck farmer working as a janitor at her school. Much to her surprise and the town's dismay, Charlotte ends up falling in love with him. "It's like having a rebirth of her spirit," Lahti said. "She finds this little soul that was almost dried up and starts to grow."

Lahti has very definite ideas about her characters and has backed out of projects when directors didn't agree with her interpretation. "If the director is not willing or able to see the character the way I see it, then we shouldn't work together," she said matter-of-factly.

When she replaced Joan Allen on Broadway in "The Heidi Chronicles," Wendy Wasserstein's feminist comedy-drama, Lahti insisted the whole concept of the production change. "It was my mission to find out what was beneath all that glib banter," she said. "The director, Dan Sullivan, agreed to explore the play on a deeper level."

"Crazy From the Heart" marks the

first time that Lahti and Schlamme have worked together on screen, although she and Willie did a cameo in Schlamme's 1989's "Miss Firecracker." He directed her last summer at a theater workshop at Vassar College.

Being directed by her husband, Lahti said, has been surprisingly easy for her. "We have great shorthand," she said. "He listens better as a director than a husband. He is a lot less defensive as a director and maybe I am a lot less defensive as an actress."

Schlamme was especially beneficial for her during emotional scenes, Lahti said. "He knows me so well that he'll say something very personal about me that he knows will push a button," she said. "Then I am ready for a scene. That's so unusual. I have never been able to have that kind of trust with a director. Usually, I have to go off by myself with my Walkman and my music and prepare."

bserving Christine Lahti and Ruben

joked and laughed with the cast and crew. Despite the relentless heat, he managed to radiate energy and *joie de vivre*.

Blades was just as engaging for a smaller audience in his trailer—rushing to his refrigerator to get refreshments for his visitors and beckoning them to sit next to him on the small sofa.

"It's pretty nice here," he said, smiling. "We do our work and nobody is acting like royalty. I have been very lucky. I don't have bad stories to tell. I think consideration is contagious."

In "Crazy From the Heart," Blades turns on the charm as Ernesto, a farmer who falls in love with the town's uptight high school principal (Lahti).

"This is a nice story with no murders," Blades said. "Some films have violence in them, and I certainly have been in films where there has been some violence, but I really like the idea of having a situation like this—it's just a story about people."

And a story about people who are not playing a "pre-assigned role." Ernesto, Blades said, "is a very human guy, very down to earth actually. I think that it is a very nice opportunity to show that people from a different culture can be as simple and honest and nice and as funny as anybody. Unfortunately, we don't see enough of that, especially in America."

The Panamanian native is a true Renaissance man. He holds two law degrees, from Panama's Universidad Nacional and from Harvard University. He practiced law in the early '70s. Since 1975, he's been working steadily as a best-selling Grammy-winning salsa musician and songwriter; he penned the score to the 1990 Sidney Lumet film "Q&A." He performed all his own

salsa numbers in his first major film, 1985's "Crossover Dreams."

For the last four years, Blades has been acting almost nonstop in such films as "The Milagro Beanfield War," "Predator 2" and HBO's "One Man's War" and "The Josephine Baker Story," which has won him an Emmy nomination this year. His latest feature, "The Super," with Oscar-winner Joe Pesci, opens in the fall.

Despite his success story, Blades acknowledges that most Latino actors have found Hollywood a closed community. "Things have begun to change," he said. "I remember when I was mainly doing music, and I want to stress I still do music—acting is a very nice outlet and it keeps me on my toes—but when I began the only [Latino] name was Raul Julia. Now, you have more names."

But, Blades said, "we are at a disadvantage. When I say 'we,' I am not only talking about Latinos, but anybody else who happens not to have English as a first language."

Blades pointed out Hollywood has no problem hiring an American actor to play a Latino or changing a character from a Latino to an American.

"They don't come to me if they are going to do a Custer movie and cast me as Custer," Blades said. "They say, 'He is not a North American. How can he play Custer?' But there's not a moment's hesitation that someone like William Hurt can play a Latino."

A Latino actor, Blades said, has a better chance at good roles if he looks "closer to the Anglo ideal of a leading man or whatever. My position is just cast the roles in terms of talent and try to make it more representative of what it is all about."

Blades said he also has struggled in Hollywood because he is seen as a

musician. Producers, he said, only began to take him seriously after he won the ACE Award for best actor in a 1989 film for HBO, "Dead Man Out," in which he played an insane convict on death row.

"Now I am getting more interesting job offers," Blades said. "In the case of Jack Nicholson in 'The Two Jakes,' he cast me on his own [as tough guy Mickey Nice] because he wanted me to do it. That was Jack thinking, 'He can do the job.' If he had left it to the attention of the casting director, most likely I would not have been called."

Blades playfully nudged his visitor on the arm: "I can't complain. I am working."

And Blades is eager to go to work on the concert stage. "I really need my music personally, and my band, as happy as they are, they also want to go out and work," he said.

He also doesn't want the people who have supported his music for the past 16 years to believe he has deserted them for Hollywood. "It's a good thing to see someone in a film and then see someone sweating on the stage," Blades said. "It makes you accessible. You are not that far away."

His music, he said, has brought nationalities together, and he hopes his films can have the same affect.

"I like the idea of having integrated groups," Blades said. "And in this particular situation, you have Anglos and Latinos. I think that's important. How long is Hollywood going to pretend that we are not here?"

"Crazy From the Heart" premieres Monday at 5, 7, 9 and 11 p.m. on TNT and repeats Tuesday at 1 p.m., Saturday at 7 p.m., Aug. 25 at 1 p.m. and Aug. 30 at 7 p.m.

RUBEN BLADES: HIS WORK IS A RARE SUCCESS STORY AMONG LATINOS

bserving Christine Lahti and Ruben Blades on the set of "Crazy From the Heart" is a case study in contrasting personalities.

Lahti was quiet and serious. She sat in her chair in the shade and watched bemusedly as Blades

MORE BLADES

Ruben Blades movies available on video:

- Critical Condition** (1986—Paramount)
- Crossover Dreams** (1985—Congress)
- Dead Man Out** (1989—HBO)
- Disorganized Crime** (1989—Touchstone)
- Fatal Beauty** (1987—MGM/UA)
- The Josephine Baker Story** (1991—HBO on Sept. 4)
- The Last Fight** (1983—HBO)
- The Milagro Beanfield War** (1988—MCA/Universal)
- One Man's War** (1991—HBO) available Sept. 11

MORE LAHTI

Christine Lahti movies available on video:

- And Justice For All ...** (1979—RCA/Columbia)
- Funny About Love** (1990—Paramount)
- Gross Anatomy** (1989—Touchstone)
- The Henderson Monster** (1980—International Video)
- Housekeeping** (1987—RCA/Columbia)
- Just Between Friends** (1986—HBO)
- Running On Empty** (1987—Warner)
- Single Bars, Single Women** (1984—Prism)
- Stacking** (1987—Nelson)
- Swing Shift** (1984—Warner)
- Whose Life Is It, Anyway?** (1981—MGM/UA)



Blades is also a noted salsa musician who plans to keep making music while acting.



Lahti says she isn't obsessed by her career as she once was—thanks to motherhood.

ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT



We are at a disadvantage. When I say 'we,' I am not only talking about Latinos, but anybody else who happens not to have English as a first language."

— Ruben Blades

Blades: Opportunities rare for Latino actors

By SUSAN KING
Los Angeles Times

Observing Christine Lahti and Ruben Blades on the set of *Crazy From the Heart* is a case study in contrasting personalities.

Lahti was quiet and serious. She sat in her chair in the shade and watched, bemused, as Blades joked and jived with the cast and crew. Despite the relentless heat, he just radiates energy.

Blades was just as engaging for a smaller audience in his trailer — rushing to his refrigerator to get refreshments for his visitors and beckoning them to sit next to him on the sofa.

"It's pretty nice here," he said, smiling. "We do our work and nobody is acting like royalty. I have been very lucky. I don't have bad stories to tell. I think consideration is contagious."

In *Crazy From the Heart*, Blades turns on the charm as Ernesto, a farmer who falls in love with the town's uptight high school principal (Lahti).

"This is a nice story with no murders," Blades said. "Some films have vi-

ON TV

Program: *Crazy From the Heart*
Starring: Ruben Blades and Christine Lahti
Premieres: tonight, 8, TNT
Airs: repeats tonight, 10 and midnight; Tuesday, 2 a.m. and 4 p.m.; Saturday, 10 p.m.; Sunday, 4 p.m.; Aug. 30, 10 p.m.

olence in them, and I certainly have been in films where there has been some violence, but I really like the idea of having a situation like this — it's just a story about people."

And a story about people who are not playing a "pre-assigned role." Ernesto, Blades said, "is a very human guy, very down to earth, actually. I think that it is a very nice opportunity to show that people from a different culture can be as simple and honest and nice and as funny as anybody."

The Panamanian native is a true Re-

naissance man. He has earned two law degrees, from Panama's Universidad Nacional and from Harvard University. He practiced law in the early '70s. Since 1975, he has been working steadily as a Grammy-winning salsa musician.

For the past four years, Blades has been acting almost non-stop in such films as *The Milagro Beanfield War*, *Predator 2* and HBO's *The Josephine Baker Story*, which has won him an Emmy nomination this year. His latest feature, *The Super*, opens Friday.

Despite his success story, Blades acknowledges that most Latino actors have found Hollywood a closed community. "Things have begun to change," he said. "I remember when I was mainly doing music — and I want to stress I still do music . . . when I began the only [Latino] name was Raul Julia. Now, you have more names."

But, Blades said, "we are at a disadvantage. When I say 'we,' I am not only talking about Latinos, but anybody else who happens not to have English as a first language."