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Tyler Perry's hit parade

BY MICHAEL GILTZ

T Tyler Perry's "Meet the Browns" opens today, but it wasn't screened for critics. Why bother? The movie, about a single mom (Angela Bassett) raising her kids and finding

a good man, was made for audiences, not critics.

Perry turned Hollywood on its head with the smash hit "Diary of a Mad Black Woman" in 2005. Soon, the 38-year-old New Orleans native was everywhere: on best-seller lists; on the "chitlin" theater circuit, where he'd made his name; on TV, where "House of Payne" received an unprecedented

100-episode order (the largest in history), and, of course, at the movies.

Perry's films — they're usually promoted with his name in the title — may have broad comedy but they also have strong messages of faith and family. Here's a look at his first four hits.



DIARY OF A MAD BLACK WOMAN (2005)

The story: Helen (Kimberly Elise) has it all — a handsome husband and a mansion on the right side of the tracks — until the no-good dog shows up with another woman and sends Helen packing. "I'm not bitter," she says at one point, "I'm mad as hell!"

The moral: Be strong! Helen learns to be strong with the advice of her momma (Cicely Tyson) and a few less noble comments from gray-haired matriarch Madea (Tyler Perry). Soon she has a good man by her side.

MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION (2006)

The story: Victoria (Lynn Whitfield) is engaged to the handsomest man in town. The catch? Blair Underwood is a no-good dog who beats her. When Madea is asked what they should do, she says, "Before or after his funeral?" Cicely Tyson returns as Myrtle and Maya Angelou adds to the starry supporting cast.

The morals: "No matter who you are, there's always one thing you can count on: family." A man who beats you can take some counseling but that doesn't mean you should take him back.

DADDY'S LITTLE GIRLS (2007)

The story: In a major switch, this one's about a man who's been done wrong. Monty (Idris Elba of "The Wire") is a terrific dad until his no-good ex-wife takes custody of his little girls and limits him to one day a week, while her punk lover will be around them all the time. That ain't right.

The moral: "Having kids made him a daddy. Taking care of them will make him a man." Finding a super-hot divorce lawyer (Gabrielle Union) to take on the case helps your love life, too.



WHY DID I GET MARRIED? (2007)

The story: A weekend getaway for some married friends exposes the shaky foundations of their relationships. Janet Jackson, Malik Yoba and Richard T. Jones head the cast. Singer Jill Scott as the overweight Sheila has to decide if she deserves to be loved after her no-good dog of a husband reveals a secret.

The moral: "Whoever fate brings you, wherever life takes you, whatever faith shows you, love is what matters most." Especially when love comes in the shape of a strapping, sensitive sheriff (Lamman Rucker).



Tyler Perry's latest movie ...

A review of "Meet the Browns," starring Angela Bassett, will appear later today at

NYDailyNews.com/entertainment/movies