

Film emerges as 'classic'

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As Chuck Jones said when he spoke in Lincoln two weekends ago, the Warner Brothers cartoons were not made for children, or adults, they were made for their creators who were isolated in the studio and rarely got to see a final print before the cartoon reached theaters. Theaters, not Television. Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Pepe LePew and Elmer Fudd were not made to babysit children, but to entertain.

In "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?" Zemeckis and Spielberg capture that spirit nicely, never surrendering to preciousness. When things become unbearably cute, Hoskins is there to scowl or look on the whole animated spectacle as some surreal nightmare from which he must escape at all costs. "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?" is not a kid's flick. Its magic crosses generational boundaries easily. This is possibly the first time that Spielberg has truly succeeded in his task to take the intellectual stigma off of the word "movie." This is the sort of movie one could tout out at Cannes and, with pride, announce it was a "movie," or a "flick," not a "film" or a milestone of "the cinema."

There are some flaws to "Roger Rabbit" that mostly occur to you hours after you've stopped reeling from the initial effect of so much sheer pleasure. Christopher Lloyd's performance is far too melodramatic. It would have made more sense to keep Lloyd three-dimensional in the noir vein, make the villain a Sydney Greenstreet for instance, instead of making him up as a male Witchypoo. A Greenstreet or even John Huston

parody would have played off Hoskins' relatively straight performance beautifully.

Also, and this plagued Industrial Light and Magic's Big Finale in "Howard the Duck" too, the final confrontation between Hoskins and the evil that would level Toontown for a freeway takes place in the garage of ACME, the company that produced enough faulty inventions to keep Wile E. Coyote in a body cast for all eternity. The confrontation is unbearably static and, coming after the Hoskins' miraculous tour of Toontown, is an overly long letdown that cries out for a more inventive culmination to the mystery.

Still, there is invention in "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?" to spare. In the end the magic wins out and an amnesia to the movie's faults sets in. Like the characters in Warner cartoons, any flaws in the movie may drop on you like a ton of bricks or an anvil, but within a second you're ready for the next invention, the next remarkable creation. Like Chuck Jones said, "not everything worked."

Ah, but when it does work, as with Hoskins' trip into Toontown where everything — bullets, trash cans, trees, rocks, the sun, street signs, swords, buildings, ad infinitum — has life, moves, sways, sings and speaks, there is nothing to compare it to. It is art as sure as Van Gogh lost an ear. And it is entertainment as sure as Charlie Chaplin ate a shoe. A country that can put a real, flesh and blood human being into Toontown and have him shake hands with a rabbit is all right by me. Next thing you know they'll put a duck on the moon.

WEEKLONG UPDATE...

Compiled by Ken Havlat

ON CAMPUS
Sheldon Film Theater
Thursday June 30 through Sunday July 3
"The Manchurian Candidate"

Howell Theater
June 30, July 1-2 and 5-9 "Pippin"

BANDS
At Chesterfield's
July 1-2 The Finnsters

At Duffy's
July 1-2 The Return
July 15 Flaming Lips

At the Zoo Bar
June 30 Buddy Guy
July 1-2 The Blue Crew

July 5 Blonde Waltz
July 6 Mark Hummel and the Blues Survivors

SURROUNDING AREA
Omaha
At Civic Auditorium
July 7 Robert Plant with Joan Jett

At the Ranch Bowl
July 5 The Del-Lords

At Howard St. Tavern
July 4-7 Ron Thompson and the Resistors

Kansas City
July 1-2 James Harman Band at Grand Emporium
July 3 Bruce Hornsby and the Range at Starlight
July 4 Brian Ritchie at the Lone Star
July 6 Mutabaruka (reggae-dub artist from Jamaica) at the Grand Emporium
July 10 Monsters of Rock at Arrowhead Stadium



John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan

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