

# 'Roger Rabbit,' 'America' spur on box office record

There's very little new product this week as the summer film season draws to a close with new box-office records in virtually every category.

The 1988 take is running \$500 million ahead of 1987's record \$42 billion, led by "Who Framed Roger Rabbit," "Coming to America" and "Crocodile Dundee II." Each grossed more than \$100 million. "Big" at \$90 million has contributed its fair share, while a half dozen others are running in the \$30 to \$50 million bracket.

Controversy and good box office continue to swirl around Scorsese's "Last Temptation" with the squabble losing out as curiosity feeds the turnstiles.

As of Aug. 21 the film grossed \$11.8 million while playing at 18 theaters. However, 2,600 theaters have refused to show it.

## RECENT RELEASES:

The Maple Theater features a double-bill as "Bagdad Cafe" teams up with Southfield filmmaker David Lee's 27-minute "Curtains Baby Blues."

Filmed in New York City last year, "Curtains" testifies to the abundant young talent on the contemporary movie scene. Lee's work is complemented by Skip Roscoe's cinematography and William Rothlein's acting in a thoughtful comment on creativity.

"Bagdad Cafe" (B) (PG) 91 minutes. Except for a confusing opening, this is a wonderful comedy about friendship, love and understanding. Jasmine (Marianne Sagebrecht) leaves her husband in the middle of the Mojave Desert and winds up in Bagdad where she rents a room from Brenda (C.C. Pounder), who has kicked her husband out. The two women, who start out with nothing in common, form strong bonds. Jack Palance also appears. Reviewed by Jennifer Morse.

## SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

The Detroit Film Theatre presents the latest (1987) in the Eric Rohmer ("Pauline at the Beach") cycle of comedies and parables. "L'Ami de Mon Ami" ("My Girlfriend's Boyfriend") at the Detroit Institute of Arts 7 and 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 9-10, and 4 and 7 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 11.

## STILL PLAYING:

"Bambi" (A) (PG) 70 minutes. Short but good animated story of young lawn growing up. Great for kids, and for adults on a nostalgia trip.

"BETRAYED" (A) (R) 115 minutes.

In the best Costa-Gavras ("Z" and "Missing") tradition, this tense film combines political thriller and personal poignancy. FBI agent, Cathy Weaver (Debra Winger) goes undercover to track murderers of controversial radio talk-show host. However, loosely based on the murder of Denver broadcaster, Al Berg, and the subsequent expose of white supremacist groups, this film will make you nervous about fascism and about personal involvement versus commitment as Winger becomes emotionally attached to the man she's investigating, Gary Simmons, (Tom Berenger).

"Big" (A) (PG) 95 minutes.

A shy 12-year-old boy's wish is granted when he wakes up one morning in a man's body. Tom Hanks skillfully captures the innocent, childlike qualities and gestures of 12-year-old trying to live in an adult world. Reviewed by Cathy Guyer.

"The Big Blue" (D+) (PG) 110 minutes.

Despite attractive Aegean photography, nice music and elaborate underwater scenes, you can forget this display of macho intensity as diving men test their strength and will against one another. If you do see it, let me know whether the hero ended up with Rosanna Arquette or the dolphin.

"Big Top Pee-wee" (B) (PG) 80 minutes.

Kids and Pee-wee Herman fans will love this — talking farm animals, dumb jokes, a circus and Pee-wee in love. Reviewed by Kathy Guyer.

"The Blob" (D) (R) 90 minutes.

This remake just doesn't cut it. Horror film fans may love the blob with an '80s touch, but too much blood and guts and too little story. But don't worry, Kevin Dillon and Shawnee Smith save the day. Reviewed by Jennifer Morse.

"Bull Durham" (A-) (R) 105 minutes.

Wonderfully wacky, but slightly overdone summer in the minor leagues. Veteran catcher Crash Davis (Kevin Costner) is brought in to steady hotshot young pitcher Nuke LaLoosh (Tim Robbins). Susan Sarandon and Jenny Robertson complicate matters. Film is as explicit as possible while remaining an "R."

"Clean and Sober" (C-) (R)

Maudlin soap opera has Daryl Poynter (Michael Keaton) on the lam and hiding out in a 21-day detoxifica-



the movies  
**Dan Greenberg**

tion program. So-so PR for your local chemical dependency center.

"Cocktail" (C-) (R) 110 minutes.

Adolescent fantasy, populated with overdone, soapy melodrama about a high concept bartender, Brian Flanagan (Tom Cruise) and assorted "chickies" led by Jordan Mooney (Elisabeth Shue). Some clever lines by Bryan Brown but only Cruise addicts will sail on this one.

"Coming to America" (B-) (R) 120 minutes.

Hollywood and sexist view of Africa, but Prince Akeem (Eddie Murphy) rebels against an arranged marriage and visits New York City to find his own bride. The good news is Murphy plays a character instead of playing Eddie Murphy and has some touching scenes with his American girl, Lisa (Shari Headley). The bad news is, despite some funny stuff, there's too much adolescent humor.

"The Dead Pool" (B-) (R) 95 minutes.

Clint Eastwood is back in Dirty Harry's fifth adventure. This time he multiple celebrity deaths. Action-packed with quite a few bloody scenes. Dirty Harry fans will appreciate their hero's usual endurance.

"Die Hard" (P) (R).

Bruce Willis and Bonnie Bedelia in story of hostages trapped in L.A. building seized by terrorists on Christmas Eve.

"A Fish Called Wanda" (A) (R) 110 minutes.

A very funny film with the wackiest gang in town. Principals include Jamie Lee Curtis as Wanda, the wonderful, jewel thief extraordinaire. Among her colleagues are Kevin Kline in an absolutely inspired performance as a berserk American in London, John Cleese in a proper bar-ter, but... The whole thing is beyond words. The only solution is to see the movie.

"A Handful of Dust" (C) (PG) 110 minutes.

A boring story of marital problems between Tony (James Wilby) and Brenda (Christine Scott Thomas). Brenda has an affair and Tony goes to South America. Cameo appearances by Angelica Huston and Sir Alex Guinness are the only bright spots. Reviewed by Jennifer Morse.

"Hero and the Terror" (B) (R) 100 minutes.

Cop Danny O'Brien (Chuck Norris) nabbed killer Simon Moon (Jack O'Halloran) three years ago and now O'Brien's worst nightmare comes true — Simon escapes. Hero must come to terms with his fear and catch the Terror once more. This time around Danny has his girl Kay (Bryan Thayer) and unborn child to protect. Chuck Norris does well in this suspense thriller as tough guy with a tender side. Reviewed by Jennifer Morse.

"Hot to Trot" (P) (PG)

Comedy about insecure stockbroker and his friend, Don, the talking horse.

"The Invisible Kid" (PG)

Juvenile up-date of the old "Invisible Man."

"Mac and Me" (P) (PG)

A young boy in a wheelchair and a kidnapped alien.

"Married to the Mob" (B) (R) 110 minutes.

Unforgettable and cute film; as Angela (Michelle Pfeiffer) is widowed when mob boss Tony "The Tiger" Russo (Dean Stockwell) loses her hit man hubby, Frankie (Alec Baldwin). She figures that's her ticket out of the mob but Tony wants her and so does FBI agent, Mike Downey (Matthew Modine). In more than one way. Reviewed by Jennifer Morse.

"Midnight Run" (F) (R) 115 minutes.

An absolute disappointment, wasting two acting talents in weak script. Bounty hunter Jack Walsh (Robert DeNiro) suffers through overly familiar chase scenes, the FBI and the Mob to bring accountant-embezzler Jonathan Mardukas (Charles Grodin) back to L.A. Reviewed by Jennifer Morse.

"Nightmare on Elm Street Part 4 — The Dream Master" (C) (R) 90 minutes.

Looks like Freddie's power is weakening and so's the series. Storyline is developed, but the expected suspense and gore is lacking. Even "Nightmare" fans will be disappointed. Reviewed by Jennifer Morse.

"Pascall's Island" (A-) (PG-13) 101 minutes.

Excellent photography and fine characterizations in this classic portrayal of loyal civil servant forgot-

## Grading the movies

A+	Top marks - sure to please
A	Close behind - excellent
A-	Sell in running for top honors
B+	Pretty good stuff, not perfect
B	Good
B-	Good but notable deficiencies
C+	Just a cut above average
C	Mediocre
C-	Not so hot and slipping fast
D+	The very best of the poor stuff
D	Poor
D-	It doesn't get much worse
F	Truly awful
Z	Reserved for the colossally bad
*	No advanced screening

ten by home office. For 20 years, Basil Pascall (Ben Kingsley — "Ghandi"), faithful servant of the Ottoman Empire, has reported to Constantinople from his station on the Greek island of Nial. No one answers. British adventurer Anthony Bowles (Charles Dance) is catalyst for tragedy as Pascall searches for meaning in his life.

"A Summer Story" (B+) (PG-13) 100 minutes.

Well-done, tragic love story. After 18 years Frank (James Wilby) returns to the farm where he met his true love, Megan (Imogen Stubbs). He recalls their romance and learns some shocking things. Reviewed by Jennifer Morse.

"Stealing Home" (C+) (PG-13) 100 minutes.

Convoluted story of failure in the heartland of America's privileged class, the well-to-do. Billy Wyatt (Mark Harmon) with help from William McNamara and Thatcher Goodwin as the 10- and 16-year-old Billys must disperse cremated ashes of best friend, Katie Chandler (Jodi Foster). Motivation for so much failure is weak. Goodwin and McNamara have more screen time than Harmon and much-needed poignancy is missing.

"Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (A) (PG)

Excellent production that really



A decidedly odd couple, Fred Chaney (Bob Goldthwait) and his talking horse, Don, share comic misadventures in Warner Bros.' new comedy "Hot to Trot."

looks like the '40s. Soft-focus filters and lots of dusty old shots make this story of Ypsilanti machine tool shopowner, Preston Tucker (Jeff Bridges), and his dream of the car of the future. Bridges, Joan Allen as Mrs. Tucker and Martin Landau as his financial adviser deliver fine performances. Entire supporting cast adds production. Too bad Mr. Tucker tried to take on the Big Three.

"Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (A-) (PG) 110 minutes.

Pure entertainment in this technically amazing combination of live action and animation. Private eye

Eddie Valiant (Bob Hoskins) saves the day by helping Roger Rabbit beat a bum rap. Hoskins' acting is super in a tough situation where he had to work with blank walls and imagine cartoon characters, which were inserted later. Reviewed by Jennifer Morse.

"A World Apart" (B+) (PG) 110 minutes.

Intense, true story of Diana Roth (Barbara Hershey), the first woman in South Africa to be jailed under its 90-Day Detention Act for her anti-apartheid activism. She suffers psychological tortures for her political

stand and her daughter, Molly (Jodi May), struggles to understand her mother's activism. Reviewed by Jennifer Morse.

"Young Guns" (D) (R) 90 minutes.

This film wouldn't have been so long and boring if they'd cut the slim footage. It added absolutely nothing to this dull and dumb story of Billy the Kid (Emilio Estevez) leading a gang of young outcasts out to avenge murder of their mentor (Terrence Stamp). The evil Mr. Murphy (Jack Palance) caused all the trouble. Despite help from Charlie Sheen, and others, this is a loser.

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