

MOVING PICTURES



Tom Hanks plays Joe Banks and Meg Ryan is Patricia, one of the roles she plays, in "Joe Versus the Volcano."

'Joe Versus the Volcano' romantic fairy tale to see

If you think they don't make romantic fairy tales any more, you're wrong. "Joe Versus the Volcano" (B+, PG, 102 minutes) is just that — a fairy tale for all ages — and parents can feel comfortable taking their children to see Tom Hanks' latest film. There's no nudity, no foul language and none of the unpleasant, unrelenting violence so prevalent in today's films.

The film opens with a fairy tale setting. "Once upon a time there was a guy named Joe who had a lousy job." There's no doubt from that point on that we're in for an otherworldly romantic fable from Spielberg, a delightful comic adventure.

Joe Banks (Tom Hanks) is a super hypochondriac, a dinky, frazzled sort of guy who works for a manufacturer of surgical tools ("Home of the Rectal Probe"). His dink, seamy office features cold coffee, fluorescent lights that buzz and a generally drab outlook — no future whatsoever.

Couldn't be any worse, right? Wrong. Joe's trip to Dr. Ellison (Robert Stack) reveals that he has a rare disease, a brain cloud — and only six months to live. Joe now has a physical cloud joining the psychological one that's been hovering over him for years.

One of the nice things about "Joe Versus the Volcano" is the symbolic use of visual patterns — the indirect paths people walk in the physical world represent Joe's tortured, indirect paths through life.

WHY WASTE the last six months of his life in a dingy office for \$300 a week. Why not follow the age-old Faustian fantasy and sell yourself for a brief but beautiful moment?

No sooner said than Graynamore (Lloyd Bridges) turns up with a fist full of gold cards to offer Joe three weeks of high living. In return, Joe must jump into a South Pacific Island volcano to appease their native gods. That will make the Wapponis tribe happy and their chief (Abe Vigoda) will then grant Graynamore mineral rights he needs to produce super-conductors.

Live like a man and die like a king! Everybody's fantasy, particularly when there are pretty girls to send Joe on his way.

Only in a fairy tale are all those pretty girls one and the same: DeDe, Joe's office sweetheart, plus two half-sisters, Angelica and Patricia, who encounter Joe on his round-the-



the movies
Dan Greenberg

Grading the movies

A+	Top marks - sure to please
A	Close behind - excellent
A-	Still 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
F	It doesn't get much worse
F	Truly awful
Z	Reserved for the colossally bad
.	No advanced screening

world, high-living trip on the way to jumping into the volcano. All three dramatically different roles are extremely well portrayed by Meg Ryan.

So there you have it, a romantic, comic fable — fantasy and adventure for all ages.

"Bad Influence" (B, R) lumbers along for the first 30 minutes or so but stay awake because when it finally finds its feet, the film is an effective thriller.

The problems with "Bad Influence," however, are too big to allow it to be the intense psychological rollercoaster it might have been.

ROB LOWE is excellent as the slimy Alex, a man without values or conscience who insinuates himself into Michael Bell's (James Spader) staid but successful life. Spader delivers a powerful performance in the role on which this film hinges.

Despite some insipid dialogue — "You want to know why I took your stuff? To show I could." or "Things like this never happen to me." —

"Bad Influence" is well-plotted and nicely directed by Curtis Hanson.

The audience is left breathless trying to figure out if Bell will learn the first lessons of being a player in Alex's league. Can you out-think, out-scheme and outwit your opponent?

"Bad Influence" misses the mark when it tries to tell of the internal, psychological changes in Spader's character — but still manages to be interesting and stylish. Reviewed Susan Finckham.

"Body Chemistry" (C) (R), "House Party" (R) and "The Last of the Finest" (F) (R) promise various aspects of the worst human experience — erotic danger, parodying as life's ultimate goal and, of course, violent drug wars. No one much sings in the rain anymore.

"The Last of the Finest" stars Brian Dennehy as Frank Daly, head of a suspended, undercover narcotics squad that takes matters into its own hands. "House Party" is about a grounded teenager sneaking out to his friend's house party while "Body Chemistry" is billed as "an erotic journey into the sexual danger zone." The geography is not at all clear.

STILL PLAYING:

"All Dogs Go to Heaven" (B+) (G) 90 minutes.

Well-known voices back this animated story about Charlie the German Shepherd and Ichy the Dachshund.

"Always" (B) (PG) 110 minutes.

Sometimes poignant, sometimes sappy story of airborne fire fighter who returns from death as a spirit.

"Back to the Future Part II" (B+) (PG) 90 minutes.

All your favorite time-travelers are in other dimensions once again.

"Blood of Heroes" (B) (R).

Savage combat in post-apocalyptic times.

"Born on the Fourth of July" (A) (R) 144 minutes.

Touching, graphically disturbing, poignant, frightening autobiography of Ron Kovic (Tom Cruise), a paraplegic Viet Vet.

"Courage Mountain" (A+) (PG) 100 minutes.

Hill's story retold in an exciting, entertaining film.

"Crimes and Misdemeanors" (A+) (PG-13) 100 minutes.

Woody Allen at his best in this romantic comedy about family life with all its joy and sadness.

"Driving Miss Daisy" (A) (PG) 100 minutes.

Fine acting highlights personal drama of Jewish widow (Jessica Tandy) chauffeured by a black man (Morgan Freeman) set against southern changes from 1948-1973.

ALTERNATIVE VIEWING

Michigan premieres 'Kite'

By John Monaghan
special writer

With "Don't Let Them Shoot the Kite," Ann Arbor's Michigan Theatre offers its biggest film booking coup this year. The 1989 drama, Turkey's first-ever entry into the Academy Awards race, marks its United States premiere this Saturday night.

Simply put, often movingly directed by Yilmaz Guner, "Don't Let Them Shoot the Kite" focuses on Baris, who spends the first few years of his life in jail. Strange but true, in Turkey, children are often incarcerated along with their criminal parents.

Baris is amazingly bright and inquisitive. His mother, arrested for drug peddling, loves the boy but treats him with little emotion. It is with a political prisoner named Inel that he finds a true bond.

One afternoon, Baris sees a kite flying over the walls of the prison. He coos with excitement until the warden shoots it down (Not the subtlest of messages, but effective just the same). Inel assures the boy that they too will fly kites as soon as they are released.

MUCH OF the film focuses on the day-to-day routine in this maximum security prison, a common subject in Turkish films and books. Instead of the violence and masochism that you'd expect from a woman's prison picture, the film handles its subject with understatement and occasional moments of joy.

Fights often erupt, usually stemming from eagerness and boredom more than anything else. The prison is broken up into two units. On the one side, educated political prison-



Young Ozan Bilgin plays a young boy incarcerated with his mother in a Turkish prison in "Don't Let Them Shoot the Kite."

ers. On the other, petty thieves, many of whom can't read or write and whose speech consists mostly of subtitled profanity.

Though not a message film, "Don't Let Them Shoot the Kite" vividly captures the political climate of the early '80s, when a Turkish military crackdown imprisoned countless artists and intellectuals.

And while bleak, the film is also an affirmation of life. In another not-so-original sequence, one of the women gives birth behind bars. The bitchy, bun-haired prison matron offers little help, so the inmates boil water, rip clothing for towels and deliver the child themselves.

The performances border on remarkable. As Inel, Nur Surer has very little dialogue, but is both playful and calming — certainly more

maternal than the boy's own mother. Screenwriter Feride Cirkoglu based the film on her own four years as a political prisoner, when she met a young boy very much like Baris.

YOUNG OZAN Bilgin, who was four when the movie was shot, is rarely cloying and amazingly at home in front of the camera. Most of his dialogue comes in the form of questions, as he learns about life in the most unusual setting.

This isn't an easy film to watch. The dreary locals and slow pacing quickly lose their existential appeal. As in recent films from South Africa or the Soviet Union, however, the once-repressed emotions behind "Don't Let Them Shoot the Kite" almost outweigh the heavy-handed symbolism.

SCREEN SCENE

DETROIT FILM SOCIETY, 5201 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 533-4048 for information. (\$25 membership, \$25 students and senior citizens.)

"The Plot Against Harry" (USA — 1969/89), 7 and 9:30 p.m. March 16 and 5, 7 and 9:30 p.m. March 17. Ex-onc Harry Plotnik finds himself in a peak of trouble in this unusual black comedy, shot in New York in 1969, but only recently edited and released.

"Carnival of Souls" (USA — 1962/89), 7 and 9 p.m. March 18. In this psychological horror film — shot on an extremely low budget in Lawrence, Kan. — a woman awakes from a car accident to take up a life in a small town. Only recently given wide release, shown in director Herk Harvey's original cut.

HENRY FORD CENTENNIAL LIBRARY, 16301 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. Call 492-2330 for information. (Free.)

"Playboy of the Western World" (Ireland — 1952), 7 p.m. March 12. When a rebellious young man kills his tyrannical father, he becomes the hero of his small Irish village. Staged, cheeky satire based on a play by J.M. Synge.

LIVONIA MALL, Seven Mile at Middlebelt, Livonia. Call 476-1166 for information. (Free.)

"Waterloo Bridge" (Britain — 1940), 10 a.m. March 13. Vivien Leigh and Robert

Taylor play the soldier and ballerina who fall in love during a London air raid. Part of the mall's monthlong tribute to Robert Taylor.

MICHIGAN THEATRE, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Call 668-8397 for information. (\$4 general, \$3.25 for students and senior citizens.)

"Apocalypse Now" (USA — 1979), March 14, 16 and 17 (call for show times). Francis Ford Coppola's epic Vietnam War film, based on Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness." Martin Sheen plays a special agent assigned to "terminate the command" of lunatic officer Kurtz (Marlon Brando).

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1:30 P.M. Afternoon	Wednesday, March 28, 1990	▶ Ringside Ends (Rows 1-9)	\$800	\$475	
	Sunday, April 1, 1990	▶ Ringside (Rows 1-9)	\$800	\$700	
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