

Flintstones' movie rises above the hype

By JOHN MONAGHAN
Special Writer

Despite what some critics predicted, "The Flintstones" movie has not gone the way of the dinosaurs. After breaking box office records for two straight weekends, it has the potential of becoming this summer's "Jurassic Park."

And despite all of the hype, it's not bad at all. Sure, it's stupid, but if Hollywood insists on making these big screen homages to old TV shows, they might as well look like this.

In a movie where look is everything, "The Flintstones" doesn't disappoint. Steven Spielberg (called Spielberg in the credits) and company have come remarkably close to capturing with live actors the essence of the Hanna-Barbera animated series.

Fred Flintstone's modern stone-age family was the first to break into prime time television in 1960. The animation sometimes sunk to the level of cave drawings, but the wacky gags and likable characters made it popular with both kids and adults.

The movie replicates the now-legendary opening and closing credits for the show. It's a quipping time at the quarry. Faster than he can say "yabba dabba doo," Fred slides down the tail of his dinosaur steam shovel and lands smack in the driver's seat of his

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foot-powered auto.

The enjoyably flimsy plot (did you really expect anything else?) finds Fred promoted to junior executive at Slate and Company. Actually, he's a patsy who signs documents that allow an evil co-worker to embezzle money. Soon he has fired his old quarry compadres without even realizing it.

Surprisingly, there are some genuine emotions in the silly thing, especially when Fred betrays best friend Barney Rubble. The live-action friendship is the one thing that works much better than it did in television.

Everyone knew that John Goodman could play Fred Flintstone. He has the right mannerisms, certainly the right build, and he mimics Fred's gruff voice — loud, sandpaper, with a touch of a New England accent — to a tee.

More surprising is how perfectly

cast everyone else is. Rick Moranis, forgettable in most of his other movies, makes a likable and funny Barney. No actor is shaped like the blocky no-necked neighbor, but Moranis hits the mark with his impossibly skewed mouth.

Comedian Rosie O'Donnell has the hair, but her beefy Betty Rub-

ble is the only stretch from the original show. She and Elizabeth Perkins (as Fred's wife Wilma) get a chance to snicker with each other just like the old days and yell "charge till!" during a shopping spree in the prohibited mall. Some might say that all of Elizabeth Taylor's roles have been campy, but she plays it to the hilt here in an extended cameo as Fred's nagging mother-in-law. Insisting that Fred has never provided her daughter with anything but shade, the old battle-axe begs Wilma to dump her husband and marry Harvey Firestone, the inventor of the wheel.

Much has been made over the 30 or so writers who contributed to "The Flintstones." To me, this makes perfect sense. The creative genius behind most television comedy is by committee, so why not here? What the movie lacks in continuity, it makes up for in clever sight gags and punny one-liners.

The sign on the local Rockwell's reads "over 18 dozen served." Fred's sexy new secretary is named Sharon Stone. The neighborhood playground is called (you guessed it) Jurassic Park. When Fred and Barney have a falling out, Fred consoles himself by saying, "There's four thousand people in this world. I'm sure we can make new

friends."

As far as the sets are concerned, there's no illusion of anything here but painted rubber and styrofoam. At the bowling alley, crab-like creatures are lowered down to retrieve pins, which, like the bowling balls, have a wonderfully chiseled look. The Flintstone house is decorated in oversized '50s kitsch.

The music is surprisingly clever. When Fred's nemesis at work (Kyle MacLachlan of "Twin Peaks") hatches a scheme, the soundtrack offers some Mancini-style jazz with lots of horns and percussion. The B-62s (here the B-62s) perform the hokey theme song twice in the movie and make a memorable appearance as an after-dinner party band at the swanky Cavern on the Green.

After so many good, but depressing, movies released last year, maybe I'm especially susceptible to the goofiness of "The Flintstones." It's hard to criticize the movie's lack of original ideas when you're having such a "gay old time."

If you have a comment for John Monaghan, call him at 953-2047, mailbox 1866, on a Touch-Tone phone, or write to him care of Street Scene, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.



In 'Motion': 13 Engines — Mike Robbins (from left), Jim Hughes, Grant Ethier and John Critchley — play Franklin Street Brewing Co. (B.C.'s) June 10 during Detroit Grand Prix festivities.

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with Detroit-based Nocturnal Records on which they put out two albums — 1987's "Before Our Time" and 1989's "Byram Lake Blues." Between the release of the albums, the four members of 13 Engines made Hamtramck their base.

"We lived for a couple of months in Hamtramck. It was OK. We weren't there that long. It was kind of a weird time for us. It wasn't bad or anything," he said.

One of the "weird" events was the delayed release of "Byram Lake Blues." While awaiting the release, the band lugged gear around town playing clubs like Lili's and Psyche's in Hamtramck, not realizing that the Detroit area would soon become one of their biggest markets. Frustrated, 13 Engines packed up and returned to Toronto.

In 1991, 13 Engines landed a U.S. deal with SBK and released

"A Blur to Me Now." When SBK became a part of EMI Records Group, 13 Engines jumped ship to Atlantic Records. So far their stint with Atlantic has been a successful one. Their 1993 release of "Perpetual Motion Machine" has garnered numerous awards in Canada while the videos for two singles — "More" and "Smoke & Ashes" — became hits on Canada's "Much Music" national video outlet.

In late summer 13 Engines will begin recording their fifth album hoping to replicate the success of "Perpetual Motion Machine."

13 Engines performs at Franklin Street Brewing Co. (B.C.'s) 1560 Franklin, Detroit, at 9 p.m. Friday, June 10, as part of BC's Grand Prix celebration. Must be 21 to enter. For more information, call (313) 568-0390.

SCREEN SCENE

A sampling of what's playing at alternative movie theaters across metro Detroit as reviewed by John Monaghan.

DETROIT SCIENCE CENTER
5020 John R. (at Warren), Detroit. Call (313) 577-8400 for information. (\$10)

"Rolling Stones at the Max" (USA — 1990). Weekends through June (call for show times). The "world's greatest rock band" captured live during their European Steel Wheels tour. What makes this different from the other half dozen Stones films is that it was filmed for the all-encompassing OmniMax screen.

KINOTEX
Capitol Theatre and Arts Centre, 121 University Avenue W., Windsor. Call (519) 971-6160 for information. (\$4)

"WR: Mysteries of the Organism" (Yugoslavia — 1971). 9 p.m. June 12-13. A truly bizarre experimental film tries to cinematize the late Dr. Wilhelm Reich's theory that atypical sexuality is the root cause of political and social repression. Directed by Dusan Makavejev.

MAGIC BAG THEATRE
22918 Woodward, Ferndale. Call (810) 544-3030 for information. (\$4)

"Reservoir Dogs" (USA — 1993). 9 p.m. June 8-9; 8 p.m. 10-11. Quentin Tarantino's latest, "Pulp Fiction," just won the top prize at Cannes. Before it gets here, check out his debut feature, a violent story of a bank robbery gone way wrong. Harvey Keitel, Tim Roth and Michael Madsen star in this modern cult classic.

MAIN ART THEATRE
118 N. Main St. at 11 Mile, Royal Oak. Films play through last Thursday. Call (810) 542-0180 for information and show times. (\$6.50; \$4 students; \$3 twilight/matinee)

"Little Buddha" (USA — 1994). Bernardo Bertolucci ("The Last Emperor") directed this sto-



Cowgirls: Uma Thurman (left) and Lorraine Bracco are the stars of "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues."

ry of an American family en route to an exotic world where the past and present meet. Keanu Reeves, Bridget Fonda and Chris Isaak star.

"32 Short Films About Glenn Gould" (Canada — 1993). Stratford actor Colin Firth creates a believable Gould, the real-life concert pianist. The short vignettes by director Francois Girard present him as eccentric, inspired and thoroughly unpredictable.

"Even Cowgirls Get the Blues" (USA — 1994). Catch quick, if at all, this much-discussed adaptation of Tom Robbins' modern western novel. Uma Thurman sets out on a journey to find a place in the world. Gus Van Sant, who directed "Drugstore Cowboy" and "My Own Private Idaho," may have a tougher time finding an audience.

"Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Britain — 1994). From Mike Newell, the director of "Enchanted April," an engaging story about a confirmed bachelor who runs across the same woman at the numerous weddings he attends. Hugh Grant and Andie Mac-

Dowell star.

MAPLE THEATRE
4135 W. Maple Road, Bloomfield. Films play through at least Thursday. Call (810) 555-9090 for information. (\$5.75; \$3.95 matinee; \$2.95 twilight)

"Widow's Peak" (USA — 1994). Mia Farrow stars in this comedy/mystery set in 1920s' Ireland about a gossiping group of well-to-do widows and one young, glamorous widow who comes to town and stirs up trouble.

"Kika" (Spain — 1993). Word isn't good on the latest from wild-man director Pedro Almodovar ("Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown"). This one features an over-optimistic makeup artist and her lover Ramon, who is obsessed with the death of his mother. Among the controversy here is a comic rape scene, the kind of touch the director has become famous for. Victoria Abril and Peter Coyote star.

"Four Weddings and a Funeral" (See Main Art Theater listing)

REDFORD THEATRE

17360 Lahser, Detroit. Call (313) 572-2560 for information. (\$2.50) "The Longest Day" (USA — 1962). 8 p.m. June 10; 2 and 8 p.m. June 11 (organ overture begins a half hour before show time). A timely Hollywood salute to the Allied invasion of Normandy, more commonly known as D-Day. John Wayne, Rod Steiger, Henry Fonda, Robert Mitchum, Sean Connery and Sal Mineo only scrape the surface of the all-star cast.

STATE THEATRE
2115 Woodward, Detroit. Call (313) 961-5450 for information. (\$1)

"Reality Bites" (USA — 1994). 9 p.m. June 6. Winona Ryder and Ethan Hawke play neo-beatniks in a movie that has divided the Generation X audience it was made for. Some find it an insightful take on modern life with a great soundtrack. Others consider it a perpetuation of annoying slacker stereotypes. Ben Stiller, who directed, also plays the music TV producer who woos a confused Ryder.

On the Town



Enter our Sunflower Growing Contest! The tallest flower with the largest seed head grown in the 1994 season through July 28, will win!

Your sunflower's height should be measured from the soil level to the base of the head where the stem connects to the flower. Measure the head diagonally—from seed edge to seed edge. Deadline to enter is Friday, July 29, 1994 at 5:00 p.m.

If you are raising a super sunflower, let us know: Call, FAX, or write us.

313-953-2047, ext 1859 or
810-901-2569
FAX: 810-644-1314

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JAY STEINBLA
The Ark, 637½ S. Main St., Ann Arbor. (country). (313) 761-1451

Saturday, June 11

ZZ TOP
With George Thorogood at The Palace of Auburn Hills, 1-75 and Lapeer Road, Auburn Hills. (rock). (810) 477-0100

ROSS BROWDER BRASSADE
Old Woodward Grill, 555 S. Woodward Ave., Birmingham. (blues). (810) 642-9400

MATT WATKINS AND ROBERT JONES
The Ark, 637½ S. Main St., Ann Arbor. (blues). (313) 761-1451

HOLEY BROTHERS
With Bobby Womack at Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. (R&B). (313) 305-7800

CITY LIMITS BLUES BAND
Doc Frocks, 7935 W. Maple, West Bloomfield. (blues). (810) 624-7200

THE STRAIGHT-A-ROUNDS
Barney's, 806 Biddle Ave., Wyandotte. (country). (313) 852-0615

GURRY WILKINSON
Bird of Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Ar-

bor. (blues)

(313) 662-8310

BLUES BART

Jimmy's Next Door, 35323 Ford Road, Westland. (blues). (313) 722-8883

THE 3 OF US

Ted's Pub and Cafe, 38 S. Main St., Clawson. (blues). (810) 432-4755

SKYTIM CORPS

With The Tee Party, Verve Pipe and Catfish at River Road, 673 Franklin, Detroit. (rock). (313) 259-6670

JAMES WALKER

Mokey Dey's, 5452 Schaefer Road, Dearborn. (blues). (313) 581-3650

NEW MOONS AND THE BLUE EXPRESS

Sports, 156 Maple, Wyandotte. (blues). (313) 285-5060

BLA CHIMNEY

Carriage House, 2400 Grand River, Detroit. (blues). (313) 635-3440

THE ALLMATTER

At Loc's, 18118 Mack Ave., Detroit. (blues). (313) 882-1700

TWISTED TARTANULAR

Griff's Gr., 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. (rock/blues). (810) 334-9292

THE LOOK

Augies, 31660 John R., Madison Heights. (rock). (810) 568-3120

THE SMOOVE COLLECTIVE

The Majestic, 4140 Woodward Ave., Detroit. (groovy). (313) 963-7680

BLUES

Oxford Lounge, 38730 Harper, Mount Clemens. (rock). (810) 463-2051

BANISTER FUN

With Tension Splash at the Blind Pig, 208-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. (ska/blues/rock). (313) 995-8553

BLUE COLLAR BLUES BAND

Q Club, 29 S. Saginaw St., Pontiac. (blues/rock). (810) 334-7411

HONEYBEE

New Place, 22723 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. (rock/blues). (313) 277-3035

PARTY HEAD CLUB PRIDE

Greenleaf, 6000 Park, 5990 Grange Hall Road, Holy. (Jimmy Buffett music). (810) 726-0499 or (313) 342-2995

WORLD CUP USA LEGACY TOUR

Featuring Linda Weller and the Buddy Hudson Band, Jody Ranchers, The Happy Accidents, Spiral Dance, Higher, Jason McCauley Berry and the All-Night Fish-

marker, 3rd Nature, Hand Me Down, The Pretty Green and Sometimes Why at the Southfield Civic Center, 26000 Evergreen Road, Southfield. Andrew Shue of "Melrose Place" will make an appearance. (television). (810) 354-1000

Sunday, June 12

BLUES BROWDER BRASSADE
Max & Erma's, 31205 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. (blues). (810) 855-0900

SOUNDGARDEN

With Tad and Eleven at Pine Knob Music Theatre, 1-75 and Sashabaw Road, Glastonbury. (rock). (810) 377-6200

THOU'ST FISHING IN AMERICA

The Ark, 637½ S. Main St., Ann Arbor. (acoustic). (313) 761-1451

ALLISON BOWEN

St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. (pop). (313) 951-MELT

ALEXANDER ZORNIC

Harmony House, 2781 Woodward Ave., Detroit. (rock). (810) 544-1700