



Amazing animation in 'The Night Before Christmas'

Venturing where no film has ever gone before, Touchstone Pictures' stop-motion animated musical fantasy, "The Nightmare Before Christmas" combines the power, enchantment and artistry of stop-motion animation with state-of-the-art technology to create a unique and entertaining moving picture.

Opening Friday at metro Detroit movie theaters, this delightful film creates a magical realm where fantastic characters come convincingly to life and set into "stop-motion" a charming and fanciful tale that will capture the imaginations and hearts of moviegoers of all ages.

In much the same way that Touchstone Pictures' "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" revitalized the process of combining live-action and animation, "The Nightmare Before Christmas" brings a new sense of excitement, discovery and wonder to the specialized art of stop-motion animation. The film expands the boundaries of

the art form as never before, weaving elements of traditional frame-by-frame animation with the realism of actual three-dimensional sets built and lit as live-action.

Set in a world where every holiday has its own special land, "The Nightmare Before Christmas" follows the misguided passion of Jack Skellington, Halloween-town's beloved Pumpkin King, who oversees the creation of all the ghouliah delights, fights and surprises that this holiday traditionally exports to the "real world."

Bored with the same annual routine, Jack finds a new purpose in life when he accidentally stumbles upon the entryway to Christmas-town and becomes instantly enraptured with the bright colors, decorations and warm spirit that he discovers there.

He returns home obsessed with bringing Christmas under his control and enlists his loyal townspeople to help him become a substitute Santa on a special "new and improved" version of the holiday. But even the best laid plans of mice and skeleton men can go seriously astray as Jack discovers all too soon.

PREVIEW

Produced by Tim Burton, who conceived the project nearly 12 years ago when he was animator at The Walt Disney Studios, "Nightmare" has finally been brought to the big screen by director Henry Selick, a leading creative force in stop-motion and other experimental forms of animation.

Since no one had ever undertaken a stop-motion animation project on such a massive scale before, a special studio had to be created expressly for the needs of the production. During the course of the two years of actual production, more than 120 animators, artists, camera operators and technicians worked on the film, and at the peak of production, 20 individual stages were simultaneously used for filming purposes.

To me, Halloween has always been the most fun night of the year," Burton said. "It's a night where rules are dropped and you can be somebody else or anything at all. It's where fantasy rules. It's



Holiday happening: The holiday worlds of Christmas and Halloween find themselves on a comic collision course in Tim Burton's "The Nightmare Before Christmas."

all very fun and only scary in a humorous way. Nobody's out to scare anybody to death; they're out to delight each other with their scariness. That to me is the spirit of Halloween and this movie."

"The Nightmare Before Christmas" opens Friday, at these suburban movie theaters: AMC Laurel Park, Novi Town Center, Showcase Dearborn, Showcase Pontiac, Showcase Sterling Heights, Star John R and Star Rochester.

You be the critic. To let us know what you think of a recently released film, call 953-2105 and leave a Voice Mail message for Keely Wygonik, Taste/Entertainment Editor. Include your name and hometown with your comments. Or fax comments to Wygonik at 991-7279.

'Beverly Hillbillies' doesn't disappoint ardent fans

FILM CLIPS

"THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES"

Released by: Twentieth Century Fox

Starring: Jim Varney, Dabney Coleman, Lily Tomlin, Lea Thompson, Cloris Leachman and Rob Schneider

Directed by: Penelope Spheeris

Produced by: Ian Bryce and Penelope Spheeris

Written by: Lawrence Konner, Mark Rosenthal, Jim Fisher and Jim Stahl

Rated: PG-13 (Parental Guidance Suggested, some material may not be suitable for pre-teens)

Running time: 1 hour, 44 minutes

Rating (out of a possible four):

Key: Don't miss it (), Strongly recommended (), Worth a look (), Watch for video ()

JOHN MONAGHAN

Chances are if you're sucker enough to shell out six bucks for "The Beverly Hillbillies" movie, you'll probably like it a lot.

"Sure it's stupid," said Michael Lapsley of Livonia. "But it captures the whole flavor of the old show perfectly."

I have to agree. Despite the critical drubbing it has received, the movie is an admittedly mindless, but often funny tribute to the popular 1960s television show.

You get bewildered hillbillies eating at the pool table, passing pots of hog jowls with cue sticks; Granny mixing up a batch of her special "medicine"; Jethro surrounded by tame bears and raccoons; and horse-faced Jane Hathaway flirting shamelessly with the rock-headed Jethro.

About the only cherished element that doesn't make the transformation is the incidental musical, which is accompanied shots of the luxurious home or its "cement pond."

Director Penelope Spheeris knows what audiences want from these big-screen TV shows, and she proved last year with the monster hit "Wayne's World."

REVIEW

She delivers often idiotic, occasionally hilarious vignettes woven together in the flimsiest of plots.

For the two or three readers unfamiliar with either the series or its theme song, Jed Clampett becomes wealthy overnight when he discovers oil on his Arkansas acreage. He moves his family out to Beverly Hills, California in the hopes of getting hitched and turning his tomboy daughter Ellie May into a lady.

One of the funniest bits occurs upon their arrival on the West Coast, where impatient drivers flip their middle finger at the slow-moving jalopy. The naive Hillbillies, who think they're well-served, start flipping people off whenever they want to say "howdy."

Despite these occasional forays into off-color humor, the Hillbillies are still rooted firmly in the values (and even culture) of the 1960s. Any relevance to the '90s is purely coincidental.

Jethro used to turn the jalopy into a "double-naut" spy car; now he adds big tires and makes it a monster truck. Ms. Hathaway is no stranger to computer dating; she just has a more complex database.

If the movie works at all, thank

the surprisingly apt cast. Lily Tomlin makes a wonderfully efficient Ms. Hathaway, the banker's assistant who handles the Hillbillies' often complicated affairs and painful assimilation into the lifestyle of the rich and famous.

Cloris Leachman has seen better roles but does a letter-perfect impersonation of Granny. Even Jim Varney, the ever-irritating star of appliance commercials and the "Ernest" movies, does justice to the mellow Jed Clampett.

As in "Wayne's World," there are plenty of cameos, including Buddy Ebsen (the show's original Jed) reprising his other television creation, Barnaby Jones. He's on the trail of an unscrupulous gold-digger ("Back to the Future's" Len Thompson) out to marry Jed and bilk him out of billions.

You could wax philosophical about movies like this and how they signal the absolute rock bottom of creativity in Hollywood. Or you set a spell, kick your shoes

"FUN FOR THE WHOLE ADDRESS FAMILY."

It stamps the unmistakable Burton sensibility onto every frame.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, James Mabe

"TWO THUMBS UP!" "It's unlike any movie I've ever seen." SISEL & EBERT, Gene Siskel

"IT'S TIMELESS MOVIE MAGIC..." Dazzling! An animated fun-house for creek freaks of all ages. It has the earmarks of an enduring classic." ROLLING STONE MAGAZINE, Peter Travers

"WONDERFUL, DAZZLING AND BIZARRE!" Tim Burton has created a brilliant gem of movie-making with a knockout musical score." ABC RADIO NETWORK, Bob DeM

"EXPECT THE IMPOSSIBLE. IT'S BLISS!" Tim Burton spins a fun-house fantasy." TIME MAGAZINE, Richard Corliss

TIM BURTON'S THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

'Rudy' tackles odds in heartwarming film

Daniel E. (Rudy) Ruettiger was told that he could not succeed — his father, his teachers, coaches and friends agreed that Rudy could never get into Notre Dame, let alone participate in the most time-honored football program in the nation.

But Rudy Ruettiger, small-town boy from the Midwest, shows enough grit, spirit and will to thrill a nation hungry for real-life heroes in "Rudy," a stirring drama now playing at metro Detroit movie theaters.

Starring Sean Astin in the title role, Ned Beatty, Charles S. Dutton, Jason Miller, Lili Taylor and Robert Prosky, "Rudy" is a THS-STAR Pictures release.

It begins in Joliet, Illinois, in 1960. Rudy is a young boy growing up in a large Catholic working-class family in which the University of Notre Dame is revered and every Fighting Irish football win is a victory for the family.

Rudy's father, however, discourages him from every aspiring to a school like Notre Dame. Daniel Ruettiger (Ned Beatty) knows that his people are workers, salt-of-the-earth types, and that Notre Dame is for rich kids, smart kids, great athletes — kids

in a different league. He also knows that if you chase after unrealistic and unattainable dreams, you're going to get hurt, and Daniel wants to protect his son from disappointment.

Throughout his childhood, however, Rudy insists he's going to play football for Notre Dame, and every time he does his brothers and others deride him. His grades are terrible, he's small, and the best that can be said about his athletic abilities is that he tries hard.

Rudy graduates from high school, and goes to work at a steel mill with his father and two brothers. One day his best friend is killed in an industrial accident, and the grief-stricken Rudy is shocked into action. He knows that if he doesn't move immediately to make his dream come true, he never will, and a part of him will die surely as his friend did.

All his life Rudy listened to and believed his father, brothers, teachers, his fiancée — all those closest to him when they told him what he could and couldn't do. From this day on, he's going to listen to what his heart has to tell him instead.

WHEN PEOPLE SAY DREAMS DON'T COME TRUE, TELL THEM ABOUT RUDY.

"TWO THUMBS UP!"

—Siskel & Ebert

RUDY

NOW SHOWING AND CONTINUING AT

AMC WOODS	SHOWCASE	STAR JOHN R	STAR KILBY
STARTS FRIDAY AT THESE ADDITIONAL THEATRES:	AMC AMERICANA WEST	AMC EASTLAND	AMC LAUREL PARK
AMC BENTLEY	AMC SOUTHFIELD CITY	AMC CANTON CINEMA	AMC SOUTH TOWN CTR.
AMC SOUTHWIND	AMC NOV TOWN	AMC QUO WADIS	AMC SHOWCASE
STAR GRATIOT	STAR UNCOLN PARK	STAR WINCHESTER	
FAIRLANE	LAKESIDE	WEST RIVER	

STARTS FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22

AMC EASTLAND	AMC LAUREL PARK	AMC OLD ORCHARD
STAR NOV TOWN	SHOWCASE DEARBORN	SHOWCASE PONTIAC
SHOWCAST WILSON	STAR GRATIOT AT 15 MIL	STAR JOHN R AT 4 MIL
STAR ROCHSTER HILLS	STAR TAYLOR	NO PAPERS OR COUPONS ACCEPTED