

MOVIES

'Time Code' a challenge for the eyes

BY JON KATZ
STAFF WRITER

Time Code isn't one of the worst movies of the year so far. It's four of the worst movies of the year so far.

You'll hear that it's a breakthrough and is greatly innovative (and it is), but you'll also be intimidated by the warning that if you don't like it, you don't "get it." But most people stop calling each other chicken around the fourth grade.

Time Code is an ambitious gimmick, for worthier of discussion than its plot. Shown as a continuous four-way split screen, Time Code goes against the traditional filmmaking grain in numerous ways. Director Mike Figgis (*Leaving Las Vegas*), bringing his musical background to bear, literally arranged the basic screenplay on music paper as a string quartet, with bar lines indicating minutes. There was no script as such.

His 88-minute concertina was then shot in real time with four hand-held digital video cameras rolling simultaneously in different (and sometimes identical) locations. Movies have played out in real time before (Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope*), but could never be shot in one unbroken and unedited take because of the limitations of 10-minute film magazines.

Over two-dozen actors were given story outlines and rehearsed hitting exact marks at exact times. Much of the rest, according to press releases, was improvised. Figgis, as one of the four camerapersons, could control only his own setup once they were shooting.

He shot the film 15 times - a total of 60 individual versions - and used the final day's work, complete with four fortuitous earthquake aftershocks that occurred while the cameras rolled.

Only the sound levels were manipulated to nudge your attention to a specific quadrant. The viewer, in effect, becomes the film's editor, selecting which corner of the screen to concentrate on at the moment.

So why be down on such an apparently important work? For one thing, the story stinks. Something about a small Hollywood movie company auditioning for a new project, Salma Hayek (*Dogma*) is a bisexual actress who does a Monica Lewinsky on Alex the producer to get hired. Meanwhile, her jealous lesbian lover, Jeanne Tripplehorn (*Mickey Blue Eyes*), who is also Alex's mistress, is outbidding in a limo listening to the wireless microphone she planted on Salma.

Saffron Burrows (*Deep Blue Sea*), Alex's wife, is somewhere across town crying to her therapist. And while this is going on, a performance artist is pitching an idea to the rest of the company's staff: a film shot in real time with digital cameras. They laugh her out of the office.



One-quarter time: Saffron Burrows stars in "Time Code."

As a result of this boorish plot, the four-way split is pretty much one part storytelling and three parts tedious filler. Look in the lower left, there's a close-up of a clock. And up there on the right, there's Jeanne Tripplehorn chewing gum, snorting coke or playing with a cigarette lighter for minutes on end. And down there in the lower right, a security guard stands around, maybe waiting for the next aftershock, which is the most action in the film anyway.

Time Code has its place as a film school project or a demo tape for Sony's digital video cameras. It is a technical achievement in that the idea proved functional.

When they find a story that's even one-fourth watchable, they may have something.

GUIDE TO THE MOVIES

National Amusements Showcase Cinemas Showcase Asheville 1001 S. 10th 2150 N. Oyster Rd. 248-373-2669 Bargain Matinee Daily All Shows Until 4 pm Continuous Show Daily Late Show Wed-Thurs, Fri, Sat NO DENOTES NO PASS NP GLADIATOR (R) NP I DREAMED OF AFRICA (PG-13) FREQUENCY (PG-13) FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS (PG) THE ROAD TO EL DORADO (PG) LOVE AND BASKETBALL (PG-13) NP U-571 (PG-13) NP BATTLEFIELD EARTH (PG-13) NP HELD UP (PG-13) NP SCREWED (PG-13) NP CENTER STAGE (PG-13) NP FINAL DESTINATION (R) EDM BROCKOVICH (R) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	One Vodka Warren & Wayne Rds. 313-425-7700 Bargain Matinee Daily All Shows Until 6 pm Continuous Show Daily Late Show Wed-Thurs, Fri, Sat NP BATTLEFIELD EARTH (PG-13) NP HELD UP (PG-13) LOVE AND BASKETBALL (PG-13) FINAL DESTINATION (R) NP SCREWED (PG-13) ALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Star Rochester Hills 200 Burtch Circle 833-2350 No one under 18 admitted for PG-13 & R rated films after 6 pm NP BATTLEFIELD EARTH (PG-13) NP SCREWED (PG-13) NP CENTER STAGE (PG-13) NP GLADIATOR (R) NP I DREAMED OF AFRICA (PG-13) WHERE THE HEART IS (PG-13) FREQUENCY (PG-13) THE FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS (PG) NP U-571 (PG-13) KEEPING THE FAITH (PG-13) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	KEEPING THE FAITH (PG-13) RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (R) RETURN TO ME (R) EDM BROCKOVICH (R) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Birmingham Theatre 211 S. Woodward Downtown Birmingham 248-646-3456 NP Denotes No Pass Engagements Order Movie tickets by phone Call 644-3456 and have your VISA or MasterCard ready. A \$1.50 surcharge per transaction will apply to all telephone sales. NP BATTLEFIELD EARTH (PG-13) KEEPING THE FAITH (PG-13) WHERE THE HEART IS (PG-13) THE FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS (PG) RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (R) HIGH FIDELITY (R) NP I DREAMED OF AFRICA (PG-13) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Maple Art Cinema III 4135 W. Maple, West of Telegraph 248-435-9950 DISCOUNT SHOWS THE LAST SEPTEMBER (R) UP AT THE VILLA (R) EAST IS EAST (R) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Oakland Cinema, LLC Downtown Oakland Laper Rd. (424) (248) 628-7100 Fax (248) 628-1100 DETROIT'S LOWEST FIRST RUN PRICES INCLUDING THURSDAY PRICING \$10.00 4.5 MIL NOW OPEN CALL THEATRE FOR FEATURES AND TIMES	AMC Uptown 20 Hollywood 6 & 7 Mile 734-543-9999 \$1.00 Ford Tel. \$1.50 313-561-7200 310141 pm After 6 pm: \$1.50 Ample Parking - Telford Center Free Refill on Drinks & Popcorn Please Call Theatre for Showtimes SCREEN 3 (R) TUT STORY (G) AMERICAN BEAUTY (R)	MGR THEATRES Brighton - Cinema 9 146 E. Grand Ave. 810-227-4700 Call 77-Film Tel. 548 NP BATTLEFIELD EARTH (PG-13) NP GLADIATOR (R) NP I DREAMED OF AFRICA (PG-13) FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS (PG) WHERE THE HEART IS (PG-13) FREQUENCY (PG-13) U-571 (PG-13) KEEPING THE FAITH (PG-13) 28 DAYS (PG-13) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Waterford Cinema 16 2501 Highland Rd. S.E. corner 16-59 & Williams Lake Rd. 248-666-7999 CALL 77 FILMS 1551 WE'VE TURNED OUR LOGO AND ADDED FIVE NEW SCREENS. THE ONLY THEATRE IN GRAND COUNTY WITH THE NEW DIGITAL DOLBY DIGI SOUND SYSTEM AND MORE. CHECK US OUT! OUR EXTENDED HOURS: 10:15 PM NOW OPEN FREE REFILL ON POPCORN AND POP NP BATTLEFIELD EARTH (PG-13) NP SCREWED (PG-13) NP CENTER STAGE (PG-13) NP GLADIATOR (R) NP I DREAMED OF AFRICA (PG-13) FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS (PG) WHERE THE HEART IS (PG-13) FREQUENCY (PG-13) U-571 (PG-13) KEEPING THE FAITH (PG-13) 28 DAYS (PG-13) RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (R) RETURN TO ME (R) EDM BROCKOVICH (R) FINAL DESTINATION (R) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	United Artists Theatres Bargain Matinee Daily for all films starting before 6:00 pm Some day advance tickets available. NV - No VCB tickets accepted United Artists West River 9 Mile 2 Blocks West of I-496/56 248-788-6572 BATTLEFIELD EARTH (PG-13) NV CENTER STAGE (PG-13) NV HELD UP (PG-13) NV GLADIATOR (R) NV I DREAMED OF AFRICA (PG-13) NV WHERE THE HEART IS (PG-13) NV FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS (PG) NV FREQUENCY (PG-13) NV U-571 (PG-13) LOVE AND BASKETBALL (PG-13) NV CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	United Artists Commerce Commerce 14000 Located Adjacent to Home Depot Just North of the Intersection of 14 Mile & Haggerty Rd. 248-968-5861 All Screen Seating High Back Reclining Seats Two Day Advance Ticketing BATTLEFIELD EARTH (PG-13) NV CENTER STAGE (PG-13) NV SCREWED (PG-13) NV GLADIATOR (R) NV I DREAMED OF AFRICA (PG-13) NV WHERE THE HEART IS (PG-13) NV FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS (PG) NV FREQUENCY (PG-13) NV U-571 (PG-13) NV CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Maple Art Theatre III West - 11 Mile Royal Oak (248) 542-9180 TIME CODE (R) THE VIRGIN SUICIDES (R) ROMAN TRAMP (R) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES
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MUSIC

Travis lands headlining U.S. tour

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
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For a band that's got two Brit Awards under its belt but had been relatively unknown in the States, Travis couldn't have asked for better luck than snagging the opening slot for Oasis' recent trek through the country. One listen to the band deemed Britain's favorite makes it easy to see what all the buzz is about.

From humble beginnings in 1996, singer-songwriter Fran Healy, guitarist Andy Dunlop, bassist Dougie Payne and drummer Neil Primrose have risen from the ashes of art school and various bartending and shoe store clerk jobs. With the long-awaited American release of their sophomore album on Epic Records, *The Man Who*, Travis is finally getting the attention they have so long deserved.

"It's been brilliant," said guitarist Andy Dunlop, in a telephone interview from Atlanta May 5. Nabbing the opening slot of Oasis' tour was surely an important career move for Travis, whose British success has only begun to trickle into U.S. territory. "We knew it was important," he said of the exposure.

But Detroit got a taste of Travis two years before the recent, sold-out Oasis show. On tour with Chapel Hill's prized trio Ben Folds Five, Travis performed at The Shelter, below St. Andrews Hall. "I remember the loud metal show (upstairs)," said Dunlop in an accent as thick as fog on a dreary Glasgow day. But Travis is moving up, literally; up the charts and up the stairs to St. Andrews main stage.

The Man Who has garnered enough attention to cause quite a stir on either side of the Atlantic. The title of the album was taken from Oliver Sack's book *The Man Who Mistook His*

Wife for a Hat. Dunlop considers it to be quite an ambiguous title, allowing listeners to come to their own conclusions about its meaning.

But the title also offers an answer to all the journalists who considered the band's first album, *Good Feeling*, too much a mix of emotions. "The press kept saying we were a schizophrenic band," explained Dunlop. "While he maintains that the album was meant to be true-to-life rather than a reflection of psychosis, *The Man Who* offers a much more even flow, both musically and stylistically. But Dunlop said that it was "purely by accident."

Fran Healy writes the band's songs on his guitar in his room, then brings them to the attention of his bandmates. "At any stage you can sort of ruin it as a band," said Dunlop. "So many bands over-play." Travis' motto would be something like, "Keep

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