

I plan to take my little sister

Fantasia: images and music together

By EUGENE CATHARSIS

I attended the special screening of *Fantasia* along with other representatives of university papers. *Fantasia* was made in 1940 by Walt Disney at a cost of \$2.5-million and would have cost \$15-million today.

It was the first movie made with stereo sound. It opened in Toronto at the Royal Alex as a road show with the whole theatre filled with a multiplicity of speakers. Unfortunately, the present version is not in stereo.

It bombed all over the world and it has returned only sporadically for short engagements.

It was completely forgotten until it came to a small theatre in New York last year. All of a sudden, lines of freaks stretched round the block, so Toronto has been chosen as a test site to see if the same success can be duplicated.

The idea behind *Fantasia* is music accompanied by visual images. It starts off with a Bach piece to which violin bows and geometric figures fly around over a field of clouds — this is just an introduction.

The next piece is Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*. The images in this are ones of fairies flying through the woods and the changing the seasons.

The animation is explicit with gorgeous colors which make one consider Disney animation as a forerunner of psychedelic art.

The beautiful images are so together with the music that they really become one.

The *Nutcracker* is followed by Stravinsky's *Rites of Spring*. You start out in empty space and are zoomed into our galaxy and eventually to earth where life is just struggling to begin.



All-American centaurs.

Again, a triumph of animation and we are sure that it is all scientifically accurate.

Unfortunately the Walt Disney cuteness, which had been minimal up to this point, starts to set in. The next vignette features Mickey Mouse as the sorcerer apprentice.

I enjoyed it when I first saw the movie, but I was about six-years-old at the time.

Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, *Pastorale*, is accompanied by Walt Disney animation at its worst. The idea is a day in the life of ancient Greek mythology and is completely saccharine perversion of the original myth.

It's a freaky movie

Walt Disney's film experiment still original

By LLOYD CHESLEY

I've been waiting for *Fantasia* to come back ever since I thought back on it and realized what a trip it had to be. And what can I say? *Fantasia* is a freaky movie.

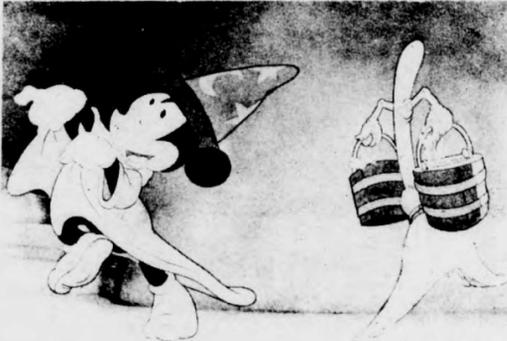
But what can you expect from a movie that tries to visually interpret music? Isn't that what we try to do?

The interpretations were planned solely on the imaginations of the artists, not the composers, in response to the music. Thus the *Nutcracker Suite* can have nothing to do with Christmas and toy soldiers, but *Night on Bald Mountain* is a witches' Sabbath as surely as Moussorgsky intended it. The music dictates that.

Walt Disney had one of the finest animation studios ever. He almost single-handedly invented the art. All his cartoons show a mastery of a medium of delight and wonder. All this points to the fact that *Fantasia* was bound to happen and he was best suited to make it happen.

So he took a few pieces of classical music, got Stokowski to conduct it (I've heard that the film was made as a tribute to and to use the talents of the maestro) and set out to devise a series of animated scenes to illustrate the music. It was an experiment in cinema, perhaps surprisingly daring, from the father of Mickey Mouse.

The episodes achieve a nice balance. All are delightful, some are exciting. The *Night on Bald Mountain* was the obvious climax as was the *Nutcracker* the obvious opening, forging a path from delight to excitement.



The Sorcerer's Apprentice

classics, like *Snow White*, are masterworks of cinema, truly serious cartooning on its most profound level.

Fantasia is the culmination of his serious animation work. It is a subject that fits the technical and creative ability that he had tried to exploit many times before on subjects where the excellent style seemed almost incongruous to the material.

On top of that, *Fantasia* is a freaky movie.

Filling in are more delight in things like *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and more excitement, like in the

At the end of this part the Goody-goody cherubins, who brought true love to a bunch of all-American centaurs, draw the curtains on a lovely equine couple.

Then a leering cherub flies up and while parting the curtains to take a peep, his bare ass forms a perfect heart.

Next Leopold Stokowsky and the Philadelphia Symphonic Orchestra strike up the *Dance of Hours* from *La Joconda*, which is popular classical music at its worst. However the sequences are certainly funny as ostriches and hippopotami twirl around as ballerinas.

The ending of the film is a combination of Moussorgsky's *A Night on Bald Mountain*, and Mozart's *Ave Maria*, presented as a confrontation between good and evil.

Unfortunately, the crew had run out of ideas and the whole sequence lacks imagination.

At times the movie made a really profound impression upon me, but the ambitious task of putting images and music together was only realized occasionally.

In *The New York Times*, *Fantasia* was compared to an acid trip and the reviewer claimed that it represented the talent of the greatest collection of naturally-stoned people ever to get together.

I don't know, but when it opens at the Capitol Theatre on Feb. 6 I plan to take my little sister.

All you who missed chafed elbows, the absolutely-insanely hilarious film by Robert Downey can catch his first above-ground offering Putney Swope, with the same incredibly unique and comic style.

creation of the world set to *The Rites of Spring* (the segment with the dinosaurs is a highlight of the movie).

So a nice balance is achieved throughout. There is even a segment of ballet starring elephants and hippos that is much better than I would have expected.

A lot of people are really hassled as to what 'pure cinema' is. It's a tough concept. Ideally, to be pure it must contain nothing of other mediums, ergo no story, actors, prose, etc. But these elements are so good and exciting in cinema that it becomes ridiculous to discount them just because they are borrowed from other media.

Many people jump on the Fellini and Godard band-wagons because they seem to hide the fact that they are using stories and performers, but that is a pretty absurd basis for viewing. All Godard's sequential philandering can be found in Joyce. Fellini is often pure theatre.

Fantasia borrows from music and from painting. You could even say it borrows from cartoons, for its animation and tone is a whole new area of film cartooning.

The composers represented are masters of colour and tone in music. The Disney workshop was a master of color and tone in cartoons. His cartoons, in comparison to Warner Brothers (e.g. *Bugs Bunny*) and Jay Ward (e.g. *Bullwinkle*) seem simple to us, but his

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