

'Festival of Animation' opens eyes, entertains

FESTIVAL OF ANIMATION
NR
Bijou Art Theatres
 ★ ★ ★
 • - Don't bother
 •• - Well to rent it
 ••• - Worth the time
 •••• - A must see

By Peter Cogswell
 Emerald Associate Editor

The fact that there are no real limits on the making of their films makes animators some of the most innovative film makers in the world.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the *Festival of Animation* currently showing at the Bijou Art Theatres.

The festival, which brings together animated films from all over the world, is comprised of 17 short films that range in length from two to 23 minutes.

Nearly all the primary forms of animation are represented, but it's two claymation films — *Grand Day Out* and *Creature Comforts* — that steal the show.

Both films are done by Britain's Nick Park, but this is their only similarity.

Grand Day Out, the longest film of the festival, is the story of a man and his dog, and a trip they make to the moon. *Creature Comforts*, on the other hand, involves animals in a zoo discussing the pros and cons of life in captivity.

Both films, but especially *Grand Day Out*, leave the viewer wondering how long it must have taken Park and his staff to make them. The detail and effects, not to mention the crea-

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tive nature of the stories, are staggering in both films.

One aspect of animated films that can be easily overlooked in the wake of being left in awe by the feats illustrators can accomplish, is the fact that several films have a strong underlying moral message.

One film of this ilk is Bruno Bozetto's *Grasshopper*. Another is *Mother Goose*, done by the American animator David Bishop.

Bozetto's film, which comes to the festival from Italy, traces the battles that have been waged throughout history — from man's earliest days to the present era.

After a battle or a series of battles is fought, Bozetto has a meadow of grass spring up on the site where the last battle took place — only to be built upon and crushed by the next civilization that comes along.

After the last battle, Bozetto uses a kind of surprise ending

to send a very direct message about what he believes people should be doing instead of waging war with each other.

Bishop's short is a rather gruesome film that satirizes fairy tales by taking them literally as they were written.

In this film, the viewer sees the three blind mice massacred

by the farmer's wife, and Robin Hood go on a killing spree with his bow and arrows.

While the film was received by laughter from the audience, it did send the message that maybe fairy tales told by parents to their children are not necessarily appropriate for children of all ages.

The remaining films in the

festival range from a computer-generated landscape presentation to a dragon windsurfing on a jetliner.

Films from the Soviet Union, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia also make up some of the more interesting and enjoyable viewing of the festival.

Even the films that are diffi-

cult to understand and not necessarily visually pleasing to watch, like the British film *Deadsey*, are interesting in their own right. They show some of the more bizarre and innovative techniques being used in this innovative genre.

The festival runs through Jan. 17, with shows nightly at 7 and 9:30 p.m.



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