

Fire And Ice

(ANIMATED-COLOR)

Frazetta's art says it all.

Hollywood, Aug. 17.

Twentieth Century-Fox release of a Producer Sales Organization presentation. Directed by Ralph Bakshi. Produced by Bakshi and Frank Frazetta. Screenplay, Roy Thomas, Gerry Conway. Characters created by Bakshi and Frazetta. Executive producers, John W. Hyde, Richard R. St. Johns. Animation camera, R&B EFX; music, William Kraft; editor, A. Davis Marshall; production supervisor, Scott Ira Thaler; animation supervisor, Michael Svayko; sound, Bill Varney, Steve Maslow, Gregg Landaker; layout, John Sparey, Michael Svayko; background pictures, James Gurney, Thomas Kincade. Reviewed at 20th Century-Fox, Aug. 17, 1983. (MPAA Rating: PG). Running time: 81 MINS.

Voices:
Juliana Susan Tyrrell
Teegra Maggie Roswell
Larn William Ostrander
Nekron Stephen Mendel
Tutor Clare Nono
Envoy Alan Koss
Defender captain Hans Howes
Subhumans Ray Oliver, Nathan Purdee, Le Tari

Ralph Bakshi's newest animation feature is interesting for two special reasons: (1) the production represents a clear design on Bakshi's part to capture a wider and younger audience than any of his previous films, and (2) the animation marks the film debut of America's leading exponent of heroic fantasy art, Frank Frazetta, who coproduced with director Bakshi.

A 20th Century-Fox pickup from Producer Sales Organization, the feature moves cautiously into the marketplace this weekend, with selected openings. Both kids and a groundswell of older Frazetta and/or Bakshi cult followers could turn a profitable dollar for this latest wrinkle on the sword and sorcery genre. Abetting the film is William Kraft's symphonic score (in Dolby stereo), which enriches the primeval struggle in a world divided between good and evil characters inhabiting volcanic lands and advancing glaciers (i.e., "Fire and Ice").

The film, Bakshi's seventh since his X-rated "Fritz the Cat" in 1972, is the first time Bakshi has sublimated his own control in a feature to accommodate another artist in his own right. Known for his classic comic book and poster art, Frazetta's works some of his famous illustrations into the film, such as his "Death Dealer" painting portraying an axe-wielding figure on horseback. Populating an Armageddon embellished with subhumans and flying dragonhawks are a blond hero, Larn, a sensuous-vulnerable dream girl in distress, Teegra, and an icy sorcerer and his willful mother, Lord Nekron and Juliana (Stephen Mendel and Susan Tyrrell).

Bakshi, as in his last two, and more ambitious films ("American Pop" and "Lord of the Rings"), shot live actors first, to lay the foundation for the animation, in a process called Rotoscope. Action sweeps among ice caverns, steep volcanic cliffs, and moody swamps. Fights are not balletic swordplay but of the hacking, tearing variety.

Bakshi and Frazetta create some nice illusions of depth, never to be taken for granted in animation. But curiously, in a technique that distracts, scenes frequently dissolve and cut through flashy optical wipes that have no place in such a picture.

Story, based on characters created by Bakshi and Frazetta, was written by pair of former Marvel Comics hands, Roy Thomas and Gerry Conway. In an effort to backoff former narrow band demographics, narrative is almost fairy-tale simplistic in its war bet-

ween good and evil. Result represents quite a switch for Bakshi whose previous pics dealt with social criticism ("Heavy Traffic"), polemics ("Wizards" coincidentally also a Fox PG release), and racial controversy ("Coonskin"). —Loyn.

Getting It On

(COLOR)

Warm and winning teen comedy.

A Comworld Pictures release of a William Olsen Production. Executive producer, Michael Rothschild. Produced by Jan Thompson, William Olsen. Written and directed by Olsen. Features entire cast. Camera (TV color), Austin McKinney; editor, Olsen; additional dialog, Timothy L. Bost, Barbara Dixon, Deborah Wakefield; music, Ricky Keller; sound, Bill Shaver, Michael Carton; production manager, Jan Thompson; art direction, James Eric. Reviewed at RKO National 1 theatre, N.Y., Aug. 21, 1983. (MPAA Rating: R). Running time: 96 MINS.

Alex Carson Martin Yost
Sally Clark Heather Kennedy
Nicholas Byers Jeff Edmond
Marilyn White Kathy Brickmeier
Richard Byers Mark Alan Ferri
Principal White Charles King Bibby
Mrs. White Sue Satoris
Mr. Carson Terry Loughlin
Mrs. Carson Caroline McDonald
Jenny Kim Saunders
Chuck Sugar Dan Thompson
Taxi driver Bryan Elsom

Originally titled "American Voyeur" but released as "Getting it On," this North Carolina-lensed teenage comedy nimbly pumps new life into the overdone high school hijinks genre. Though marketed as another raunchy "Porky's" followup, the William Olsen production is a well-acted, sweet and funny picture.

Filmmaker Olsen targets our consumerist and video-obsessed culture for some ribbing in this story of high school freshman Alex Carson (Martin Yost), with a crush on the girl next door, Sally (Heather Kennedy). Devising a video software business to earn money, Alex borrows his startup capital (at 15% interest) from his very businesslike dad, and with the help of his cutup classmate Nicholas (Jeff Edmond) uses the video equipment to record hidden camera footage of Heather and other pretty girls. When Nicholas is kicked out of school by mean principal White (Charles King Bibby), the heroes enlist the services of a friendly prostitute (Kim Saunders) to record footage of White in flagrante delicto.

What makes this material work is a fresh, enthusiastic cast, witty writing and direction by Olsen that bears no hint of malice. Though Alex's parents are caricatures, more interested in getting the latest satellite dish installed in the backyard than in their son's future, they are drawn as ingratiating characters, and even the practical joke directed against the principal turns out to benefit everyone, with no hard feelings. The script even includes a subplot reminiscent of "Tex," concerning Nicholas and his older brother living without parental supervision.

Young, attractive cast members match the teenage role requirements, though the pleasant lead player Martin Yost, an empathetic Timothy Hutton type, is of course older than the virginal 14-year-old in the script. Of special note is Bryan Elsom, very funny in a small role as a loquacious young Southern cab driver.

Tech credits for this modestly-budgeted effort are fine.

—Lor.

Martin Feller will direct a docu on the making of "Secrets Of The Phantom Caverns," for Frankfurt, Germany-based Senator Films.

The Golden Seal

(COLOR)

Boy loves seal. Boy loses seal. Adults foiled.

A Samuel Goldwyn Company production and release. Produced by Samuel Goldwyn. Directed by Frank Zuniga. Features entire cast. Screenplay, John Groves, based on James Vance Marshall novel, "A River Ran Out Of Eden;" camera (Metrocolor), Eric Saarinen; editor, Robert Q. Lovett; music, John Barry, Dana Kaproff; production design, Douglas Higgings; second unit director, Joe Canutt; sound, Larry Sutton; assistant director, Gordon Mark. Review in New York screening room, Aug. 22, 1983. (MPAA Rating: PG) Running time: 94 MINS.

Jim Lee Steve Railsback
Tania Lee Penelope Milford
Crawford Michael Beck
Eric Torquin Campbell
Glady Sandra Seacat
Semeyon Seth Sakai
Alexei Richard Narita

For his first personal production since "Cotton Comes To Harlem" and "Come Back Charleston Blue," Samuel Goldwyn Jr. has turned to the "Wilderness Family" genre with mixed results. Having a small boy befriend and defend a rare golden seal, ostensibly in the Aleutian Islands but actually made in British Columbia (plus a little second unit work), the slim story is only kept alive by the antics of the title character and the evil handiwork of almost all the grown-ups in the film.

Legend has a golden (actually it's a regular seal with a Clairrol-type rinse) seal appear after several years and spends the rest of the film evading assorted hunters, all aiming for a bounty posted years before and, by now, amounting to quite a sum considering the accrued interest — sort of an unclaimed Money Market Account. The small son of one of the hunters finds the seal first, hides it and when the hunt gets hot, fights off the grown-ups, including his own father. Good will prevail and all the nasty adults finally agree that they'd best let such an endangered species go untouched.

Actually, the best performance is given by Michael Beck as a nasty type who only sees the seal as a valuable hide, followed closely by Canadian boy actor Torquin Campbell as the valorous lad (valorous because he has to jump into the icy waters for a romp with the seal that causes ice crystals to form in the audience). Most of the rest of the cast, including Steve Railsback and Penelope Milford as the parents and Seth Sakai and Richard Narita as a pair of Japanese-looking natives, tend to over-react.

Eric Saarinen's camerawork is first-rate with the seal scenes espe-

Lonely Hearts

(AUSTRALIAN-COLOR)

Samuel Goldwyn Co. is launching its Aussie pickup "Lonely Hearts" on Sept. 4 at Gotham's Lincoln Plaza Theatre. Picture was reviewed from the Cannes Film Festival (market) in the May 26, '82 issue of *Variety*.

Dogo said in his notice: "A slowly-developing romance between a fiftyish bachelor piano tuner and a thirtyish spinsterly bank clerk hardly seems the stuff from which viable motion pictures are made. Director Paul Cox's treatment of his own story (in collaboration with John Clarke) is dull, plodding and uninspiring fare which will make 'Lonely Hearts' a tough sell.

"Both (Norman) Kaye and (Wendy) Hughes struggle to make their characters interesting or engaging and the latter, a naturally good looking woman, seems miscast."

cially beautiful, but John Groves' script avoids plotlines too much to give the story much meaning. You never know why people in the film choose to live where they do or what causes the obvious tensions in their domestic lives.

Market for the film, based on its early release, has been in the same area as the "Wilderness Family" product which is, at best, limited.

—Robe.

El Desquite

(The Revenge) (ARGENTINE-COLOR)

Buenos Aires, Aug. 23.

A Yasi release of an Arte 10 production. Produced and directed by Juan Carlos Desanzo. Stars Rodolfo Ranni. Screenplay, Ruben Tizziani, based upon his own novel; music, Baby Lopez Furst; executive producer, Maria Teresa Nieto. Reviewed at the Callao theatre, B.A., Aug. 4, 1983. Running time: 95 MINS.

Cast: Rodolfo Ranni, Julio De Grazia, Silvia Montanari, Hector Bidonde, Ricardo Darin, Gerardo Sofovich, Gabriela Giardino, Lucrecia Capello, Jorge Sassi, Pablo Drichta.

Cinematographer turned director Juan Carlos Desanzo hit the jackpot with his opera prima thanks to a sudden liberalization of the hitherto tight Argentine film censorship, which seemingly looked the other way when the sequences of softcore sex and violence in this gory tale were unspooled for examination in its screening room (just a few days before the censors had banned a scene from Juan Jose Jusid's "Esperame Mucho" which seems rather innocent when compared with the heavier stuff of "El Desquite").

Desanzo's opus sold nearly 150,000 tickets in its first week at 32 theatres of metropolitan and suburban areas, favored by a strong word of mouth generated mainly by the amazement of viewers that could hardly believe what they had seen for the first time in a native pic since the heyday of actress Isabel Sarli in the early '60s. For the Argentine-cinema aficionados in the under-35 age group it was a complete novelty, since this kind of hot material had been allowed only in some offshore attractions during the recent months.

Yarn centers on the experiences of story editor and frustrated novelist Rodolfo Ranni after he meets childhood pal Gerardo Sofovich, now owner of a sophisticated discotheque and lover of sultry Gabriela Giardino. Sofovich is killed by some gangsters but before dying decides Ranni will be the heir of 51% of his estate, the remainder going to Giardino and his cronies Julio De Grazia and Ricardo Darin.

As soon as Ranni decides to keep Sofovich's business going the discotheque is attacked and smashed by the gangsters. One of them is identified, captured and savagely beaten on a dunghill by former boxer De Grazia. Under such pressure he reveals his boss is Hector Bidonde, apparently a rival of Sofovich in another field, drug peddling. Ranni & Co. attack and destroy a warehouse owned by Bidonde, who retaliates with an attempt to kidnap Ranni's family, which leads to accidental death of one of latter's daughters. Afterwards Ranni corners and shoots to death Bidonde and his henchmen. Another goon has been murdered earlier by De Grazia when he found him in bed with a gay partner.

Along these developments Ranni and Giardino have become lovers, first in a low-motion, dimly-lit nude scene in bed, then in a brightly lit encounter in a bathtub.

Story lacks motivations, convincing characters and other essences. (Continued on page 20)

Hercules

(ITALIAN-COLOR)

More pecs than sex.

Hollywood, Aug. 26.

An MGM/UA and Cannon Group release of a Golan-Globus production. Produced by Menahem Golan, Yoram Globus. Executive producer, John Thompson. Directed, screenplay by Lewis Coates (Luigi Cozzi). Stars Lou Ferrigno, Sybil Danning, Brad Harris. Camera (Technicolor), Alberto Spagnoli; editor, Sergio Montanari; music, Pino Donaggio; costume design, Adriana Spadaro; sound, (Dolby) Gerry Humphries, Robin O'Donoghue; director of optical effects, Armando Valcauda; special effects, Fabio Traversari; assistant director, Giancarlo Santi. Reviewed at the Hollywood Piacic, L.A., Aug. 26, 1983. (MPAA Rating: PG). Running time: 98 MINS.

Hercules Lou Ferrigno
Circe Mirella D'Angelo
Arianna Sybil Danning
Cassiopea Ingrid Anderson
King Minos William Berger
King Augias Brad Harris
Zeus Claudio Cassinelli
Hera Rossana Podesta
Athena Delia Boccardo

Almost 20 years ago, there was a picture called "Hercules Against The Moon Men." Now, the ubiquitous Golan and Globus have corralled "The Incredible Lou Ferrigno" to topline in a cheesy epic that could just about be titled "Hercules In Outer Space." Since a lumpy space suit would cover Ferrigno's mighty physique from view, the all-powerful one travels through the universe wearing nothing but his gladiatorial briefs, which is a good thing since b.o. will depend upon those anxious to watch the star flex his pecs at all times.

When imagining a Hercules pic, such as the global b.o. hit of 1959 which starred Steve Reeves, one thinks of swords, sun and sandals, as well as backlot ancient temples and hordes of extras. By contrast, this "Hercules" seems to have no more than two dozen people in it, including extras (the one battle assuredly consists of footage hijacked from an earlier pic), and almost all of it is set in murky, blue and black-drenched studio sets.

A lot of it also takes place on the moon, as Zeus and wife and daughter Hera and Athena toy from above with the fate of mortals. It is Hercules' tasks to try to rescue the Princess Cassiopea from the clutches of her evil kidnappers, and given the changing times, the muscleman doesn't have to battle cardboard monsters, but hi-tech mechanical beasts made of metal and which emit deadly laser blasts from their jaws.

Hercules also possesses a wonderful talent for flinging objects into orbit in outer space. Opening day matinee audience in Hollywood went into seizures of laughter when, finding his father killed by a giant bear, Hercules proceeded to beat up the animal and then, with a mighty heave, to toss it into the stratosphere, where it formed the Ursa Major constellation.

Director of optical effects Armando Valcauda clearly worked overtime filling almost every shot in the picture with visual effects of one kind or another. As in last week's barbarian-of-the-future pic, "Yor," simple clanging swords aren't good enough anymore; due to the "Star Wars" influence, all combat must now be accentuated by electronic zaps and video game-type wipe-outs.

Although dubbed by another, Lou Ferrigno is perfectly affable, and physically (if not physiognomically) more than lives up to his billing. Sybil Danning, Mirella D'Angelo and Ingrid Anderson comprise a fetching trio of femmes.

But, somehow, this isn't the "Hercules" children of the 1950s and 1960s knew and loved. —Cart.