

Young Einstein ★½

Year of Release: 1988

Review by Randy Parker

Country: Australia

Verdict: Skip It

Young Einstein is embarrassingly lame, but that didn't stop it from becoming a phenomenon in Australia, where it became the third largest box office hit of all time. In the U.S., Warner Brothers is hoping the movie will follow in the footsteps of Paul Hogan, INXS, and shrimp on the barby to become the latest rage from down under. Personally, I'm hoping Americans everywhere will rise to the occasion and make *Young Einstein* a box office bomb.

Young Einstein sprang from the twisted mind of Yahoo Serious, who not only wrote, produced, edited, and directed the film but also starred and did his own stunts. His creation is about as stupid and contrived as you'd expect from someone named Yahoo.

The movie takes substantial historical liberties in recreating Einstein's youth. Whereas the scientist actually hailed from Germany, the film finds him still living with his parents on Tasmania, a remote Australian Island. In addition to deriving the formula for energy and the theory of relativity, Albert invents surfing, bubbles in beer, and the electric guitar. Yahoo plays Einstein as a naive and unrefined country hick—a clown with an insatiable curiosity. Although Yahoo's performance is at first endearing, the one-dimensional characteriza-

tion loses its novelty faster than you can say $E=mc^2$.

Yahoo has created a charming family for Albert, and the scenes on Tasmania are often clever. But after the first twenty minutes, the movie quickly plummets and degenerates into a poor excuse for a comedy. *Young Einstein* is hampered by its lethargic pace and inane plot.

Yahoo must be an MTV addict because his movie features an omnipresent soundtrack; unfortunately, the music is altogether gratuitous and quickly becomes overbearing. Almost every other scene includes a blaring rock song that leaves you wondering whether you are watching a movie or a music video. The instrumental score, on the other hand, is generally playful; Yahoo uses such classics as the "1812 Overture" and the theme from *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* to great comic effect.

Halfway through *Young Einstein*, I knew for sure the movie was a stinker. But it wasn't until the very end that I finally put my finger on why: the comedy takes its roots not from whimsical film fantasies (such as *Young Sherlock Holmes*) but from cheesy prime-time sitcoms. In fact, *Young Einstein* might have been more at home on network television, where its sophomoric humor wouldn't raise any eyebrows.