

‘Zootopia’ might be more for adults

BY KATIE WALSH
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Who are animated feature films for these days? Traditionally seen as children’s entertainment, the higher quality entries in this genre have hit a sweet spot with enough sophisticated jokes for parents to enjoy, coupled with cute-sy animation to delight children. Disney’s latest film, “Zootopia” achieves this, though it seems to skew more adult in its content, if not its characters. Some-

FILM REVIEW how, Disney has managed to pull off a hard-boiled police procedural thriller about political corruption starring an adorable, large-eyed bunny. As strange as this combination might seem, it works. Who knew bunnies could make such intrepid rookie cops?

Within the world of “Zootopia,” Judy Hopps (Ginnifer Goodwin) knows this to be true all along. She’s a plucky bunny from a humble carrot-farming family, who sets her sights on life in the big city of Zootopia, making the world a better place as a police officer. In Zootopia, the predators and prey live together in peaceful harmony — civilized, clothes-wearing city-dwellers.

Judy struggles with the typical problems of any recent graduate in a new city — dumpy apartment, entry-level job, disapproving boss (Idris Elba), over-protective parents. But Judy is a “try-er,” as her



A scene from Disney’s “Zootopia.”

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mom says. A bright-eyed overachiever, she strives to leave her mark on the police department and do the right thing.

So Judy throws herself headlong into an investigation of missing mammals, specifically one Emmet Otterton, with the aid of wise-cracking fox Nick (Jason Bateman). Their search leads them through the seedy underbelly of Zootopia, tangling with the diminutive mole Mr. Big — a “Godfather”-esque mob boss surrounded by polar bear thugs. This leads them to questioning his jaguar limo driver, discovering a secret prison for predators gone savage, and uncovering a grow-house/drug operation run by rams (including two named Walter and Jesse — the little ones probably won’t pick up on that “Breaking Bad” reference).

All the dark, crime-themed material is balanced out with a heavy dose of cute furry friends, and the incongruous pairings are often quite funny

(especially a tiny bat-eared fox with a voice much larger than his stature). And as the heart of the story, Judy’s boundless enthusiasm and can-do attitude keep the story properly on message.

As in most Disney movies, the subtext never remains below the surface, spelled out in cheery truisms and lessons.

One of the strongest messages is about discrimination and not judging someone by a stereotype like “sly fox” or “dumb bunny.” The “predator” fear could also easily be extrapolated to real world discrimination.

There’s some heavy-duty psychological exploration into the ways childhood bullying can affect an individual.

While the ramifications of youthful trauma are a Disney staple, there’s also a perhaps unintended connection to current events with the story of “good cops” doing the right thing to help fix a “broken” world — a political undercurrent that one

wouldn’t necessarily expect.

But for all the substantial themes throughout “Zootopia,” the film maintains a lighthearted and entertaining tone. Bateman is a standout voice performer as the sly-talking hustler Nick, running a popsicle scam, who is eventually softened by the earnest goodwill of Judy. The animation is top notch too, combining cute and cartoonish character design with lifelike realism. Ultimately, all audiences can find something to enjoy in “Zootopia,” though adults may find more to sink their teeth into, which is always refreshing.

‘ZOOTOPIA’

3 stars out of 4

Cast: Ginnifer Goodwin, Jason Bateman, Idris Elba, Jenny Slate, Nate Torrence, Bonnie Hunt, JK Simmons
Directed by Byron Howard, Rich Moore and Jared Bush
Running time: 1 hour, 48 minutes
Rated PG for some thematic elements, rude humor and action.

DeRay

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which detailed more than 100 police shootings of unarmed black people.

In September 2015, McKesson returned to Bowdoin to speak to students about his work and to urge them to use “white privilege” to promote justice and disrupt government and social systems that institutionalize inequality based on race and ethnicity.

“I can name white privilege, I can see white privilege and I can see its impact,” he said. “[But] somebody who has it has to use it to disrupt it.” McKesson was twice

president of Bowdoin Student Government. He then worked for schools in New York City, West Baltimore and Minneapolis.

DuBois is a New York-based composer, computer programmer, filmmaker and installation artist. His exhibition was organized by the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida, and will open at Bowdoin’s Shaw Ruddock Gallery on March 31.

“We are proud to bring ‘R. Luke DuBois - Now’ to Bowdoin College, which is made all the more meaningful by DuBois’s groundbreaking portrait of DeRay McKesson,” Bowdoin College Museum of Art co-director Anne Collins Good-year said in a news release. “As a Bowdoin

alumnus making an international impact on contemporary society through his political activism, the commission is doubly important as both a witness to our present moment as a nation and as a part of Bowdoin’s legacy, and we’re honored that it will remain here at the BCMA as part of our permanent collection.”

The work “will draw from online networks and social media to create a reflection of both McKesson and the activist’s most influential modes of communication,” according to the release. “Footage of McKesson addressing topics crowdsourced from the Bowdoin student body will be interspersed with data and language drawn from

McKesson’s own online presence through Twitter and other social media channels. This time-based portrait will be generative, evolving over time, continually incorporating new material generated by McKesson’s communication about the issues that motivate his own activism.”

Film

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“We’ve heard from past filmmakers that have shown their films here that the word is definitely getting out about Emerge,” Greenlaw said. “As they’ve gone to other festivals across the U.S. and the world, they’ve spread the word and shared what a great experience it is to screen their films in Lewiston-Auburn.”

Movies filmed in Maine also will be featured during the four-day event. A film that Greenlaw said should be of great interest to the Twin Cities could get a prime viewing slot.

Organizers are looking to winnow the list down to about 30 to 40 films to showcase at various venues in the Twin Cities. Among the expected sites are the Franco Center, Community Little Theatre and Bates College’s Olin Arts Center and Schaeffer Theatre.

“This community has been tremendous at supporting our organization and welcoming our filmmakers,” Emerge board President Laura Davis said in a statement. “We’re delighted to be expanding the festival events out over more of the community this year and highlighting some new spaces.”

One of the new features planned for this year is to showcase the best films selected during Saturday night’s award ceremony and show them again on Sunday.

Organizers are planning to hold sneak-peak events in April to give people a preview of what to expect. A highlight video from last year’s festival is available on YouTube.

Tickets for the festival are expected to go on sale later in March.

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Acclaimed cellist Inbal Segev will perform as a soloist with the Bangor Symphony Orchestra at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 6 at the Collins Center for the Arts.

Cellist

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“Three Pieces for Cello and Orchestra” in May 2013 with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, which was also under the direction of Richman.

The Sunday program will begin with “Dumbarton Oaks” by Igor Stravinsky, a work for chamber orchestra, and will be followed by Tchaikovsky’s “Variations on a Roccoco Theme,” on which Segev will feature as soloist. The performance will conclude with Brahms’ “Symphony No. 2.”

In addition to her performance, Segev will lead two events for the community, including a master class at 4 p.m. on Friday at Minsky Recital Hall, during which she will work with four high school cellists; and a performance and documentary screening of her recording of the Bach Cello Suites at 7 p.m. on Saturday at COESPACE in Bangor. Both events are free to the public.

Tickets to the “Brahms and Tchaikovsky” performance are available at bangorsymphony.org or at 800-622-TIXX.

Museum

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been placed in settings that depict the lifestyles in Passamaquoddy history. The Waponahki Museum,

open April to October, also has on display Maine Native tools, baskets, beaded artifacts, historic photos, and arts and crafts.

For more information on the tribal museum, call 853-2600 ext. 227.



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