





 Search **6300+** DVD titles: 
ORDER NOW and SAVE!
What's new pussycat?

digitally OBSESSED!
 dare to be... DIFFERENT
 





SCENES DVD Movie Guide: [news](#) [revie](#)

Facets presents

The American Astronaut

(2001)

Samuel Curtis: So I take the girl to Jupiter, trade her for the boy, bring the boy to Venus, trade him for Johnny R, bring Johnny R back to Earth, and I get rich.

The Blueberry Pirate: That's it.

- Cory McAbee, Joshua Taylor

Review By: [Rich Rosell](#) 

Published: February 21, 2005

Stars: [Cory McAbee](#), [Rocco Sisto](#), [Greg Russell](#)
Cook

Other Stars: [Joshua Taylor](#), [Peter McRobbie](#), [James Ransone](#), [Annie Golden](#), [Bill Buell](#), [Joseph McKenna](#), [Mark Manley](#), [Ned Sublette](#), [Tom Aldredge](#)

Director: [Cory McAbee](#)

Manufacturer: Factory 515

MPAA Rating: Not Rated for (language)

Run Time: 01h: 32m: 24s

Release Date: February 22, 2005

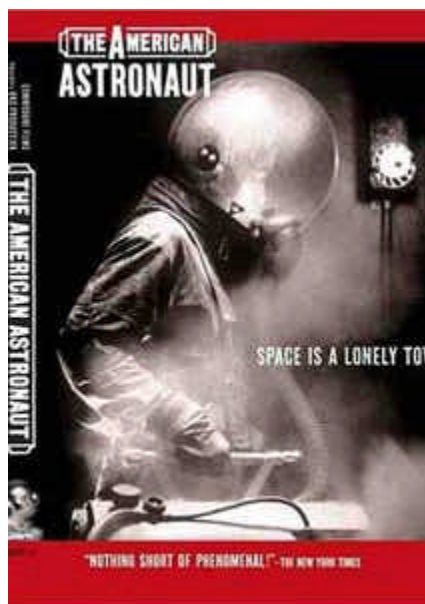
UPC: 782891001198

Genre: comedy

[Find other reviews in this genre](#)

[Printable Version of this review](#)

Send This as a dOc Postcard!



[BUY FROM AMAZON.COM >>](#)

[OR YOU CAN COMPARE PRICES >>](#)

Style Grade	Substance Grade	Image Transfer Grade	Audio Transfer Grade	Extras Grade	Member Comments
A+	A+	A-	B+	A-	0

DVD Review

For a reviewer, there are few things in life as undeniably rewarding as coming across a film that literally reverberates with raw creativity and inventiveness, one that can cross art school hipness, genre predictability, and just plain weirdness.

My ilk (the whole reviewer subculture) have to watch a lot of lifeless and mundane trash along the way, so when something ridiculously new and exciting comes along it is cause for all sorts of high hosannas and fluttery praise.

The American Astronaut—from writer/director/actor/musician/artist Cory McAbee—is one of those certainly deserving all of the lusty accolades I can dish out.

Yes, **The American Astronaut** is that good. Weird, but good.

Top Amazon

- Get Up to Discount
- [Alexandre Disc Spec Cut](#)
- [Lost in Space](#)
- [Unfaithful Collection Hide and Edition](#)
- [Hercules Journeys The Complete Gilligan's Complete Fantastic Animated The Duke Complete Prozac N](#)

[More Future](#)

Amazon

- [What the Sopranos](#)
- [The Sopranos Fifth Season Star War Edition](#)
- [The Eagle Live From The Daily Stewart - Firefly - Hitch \(W Chappell Seinfeld Fourth Se](#)

COMPARE

Recent F

- [Space Station Violent F Record: L](#)
- [Ice Princess Cry-Baby Hercules Journeys- A Very Loud Nick Frosts Volts!](#)
- [The Crow Up and I Huckle Charlie Admissio](#)

A thumbnail description would categorize this as a black-and-white sci-fi/western/rock musical, and if that doesn't whet your appetite you're either not adventurous enough to take the journey or maybe you missed that I said "black-and-white sci-fi/western/rock musical." Now that's a specialized genre, no doubt sparsely populated, and **The American Astronaut** can probably easily lay claim to being the definitive black-and-white sci-fi/western/rock musical out there, but I don't want to cheapen the moment or diminish the luster by pigeonholing McAbee's film into such a finite realm.

Scruffy interplanetary trader Samuel Curtis (McAbee, sporting some bushy Wolverine sideburns) accepts a convoluted mission from his old pal and intergalactic fruit trader, the Blueberry Pirate (Joshua Taylor), that has him traipsing across the solar system, bounding from desolate asteroid bar to shadowy mining camp on Jupiter to idyllic all-female Venus—on a daisy-chained series of events that will either kill him or make him rich. There aren't a lot of women in deep space, so Samuel's main goal is to transport the appropriately named "The Boy Who Actually Saw a Woman's Breast" (Greg Russell Cook) to Venus for stud service, and to stay one step ahead of the murderous Professor Hess (Rocco Sisto), a prissy villain who can only kill someone if he doesn't have a reason to.

Made for less than \$2 million, McAbee's film is understandably low-budget, especially for a film set in space. There are no big CG effects shots, and he actually goes the other direction by using still paintings to show a spaceship traveling across the stars. Hardly traditional, but those brief transitional sequences are just segues between scenes that move in beautifully strange directions, and McAbee has shot the entire film in a monochromatic black-and-white palette, full of deep black shadows, that gives it a real 1940s noir feel, something that allows his budgetary constraints to come across as stylish as opposed to skimpy. There's the all-male dance contest, treated with the same kind of cheering normally reserved for a boxing match, or the neo-western flashback scene in a desolate space barn (yes, a space barn) shot completely in silhouette.

That's all well and good for a quirky sci-fi tale, but this is a musical, too. Songs pop up unexpectedly, and when the first tune kicks in—a pair of stern-faced men with a phonograph perform an oddly threatening number in a men's room—McAbee forcibly pushes **The American Astronaut** from simply being a low-budget sci-fi film into something entirely new. The guitar-driven songs come from The Billy Nayer Show—another McAbee side project—and have elemental hints of Devo in the way some of the choruses are structured (tracks like *The Girl with the Vagina Made of Glass* seems to borrow from *The Day My Baby Gave Me a Surprise*). But that's a good thing, because all the songs are propelled by a neatly disjointed meter that makes each one unique. The odd thing, if there are any nitpicks about the music, is that Annie Golden (former vocalist for early 1980s new wave band The Shirts) has a supporting role, but doesn't get to sing at all.

There's a whole lot going on here—a cloned girl made from the DNA of a male bartender, ray guns that turn people to dust, a leatherclad man named Bodysuit—and Cory McAbee makes it all fit together somehow.

Do I go as far as to call this brilliant?

Yes, I think I do.

Rating for Style: A+
Rating for Substance: A+

Dvd Film

Quality new and used items. Find dvd film now!

Dvd Film

Dvd Film & More! 200,000 Stores. Deals. Reviews.

Ads by Google

Image Transfer

	One
Aspect Ratio	1.85:1 - Widescreen
Original Aspect Ratio	yes
Anamorphic	no

Image Transfer Review: It might have been shot for less than \$2 million, but the nonanamorphic 1.85:1 widescreen transfer has the look of something far more costly. There is a real art to filming in black-and-white, and Facets has treated McAbee's deliberate retro-stylized work with great care, and the result is a remarkably solid print that falls between film noir and a 1940s serial. Shadows are wonderfully deep and black, and contrast and image details are razor sharp. The only negatives are a few instances of specking, most noticeable during the opening credit sequence.

- [More Rec](#)
- [Related](#)
- [Nick Fro](#)
- [Volts!](#)
- [Dodgeba](#)
- [Story \(Un](#)
- [Freaked](#)
- [Diary of](#)
- [Hexed](#)
- [Georgy C](#)
- [Unfaithfu](#)
- [Be Cool](#)
- [Heaven C](#)
- [A Dirty S](#)
- [Worth W](#)
- [D.E.B.S.](#)
- [Current](#)
- [Director's](#)
- [DVD Give](#)
- [Ends: Aug](#)
- [Dukes of](#)
- [DVD Give](#)
- [Ends: Aug](#)
- [Evel Knie](#)
- [Giveaway](#)
- [Ends: Aug](#)
- [Three NFI](#)
- [Ends: Aug](#)
- [The Jerk](#)
- [Ends: Aug](#)
- [The Thin](#)
- [Set Givea](#)
- [Ends: Aug](#)
- [X-Files: B](#)
- [Giveaway](#)
- [Ends: Aug](#)
- [Remingto](#)
- [DVD Give](#)
- [Ends: Aug](#)
- [Mary Tyle](#)
- [Two DVD](#)
- [Ends: Aug](#)
- [Gilligan's](#)
- [DVD Give](#)
- [Ends: Aug](#)
- [3rd Rock](#)
- [One DVD](#)
- [Ends: Aug](#)
- [Xena The](#)
- [Anniversz](#)
- [Ends: Aug](#)
- [Greatest](#)
- [DVD Give](#)
- [Ends: Aug](#)
- [Quicklin](#)
- [dOc! Sho](#)
- [dOc! Recc](#)
- [DVD Com](#)
- [Anime Pa](#)
- [dOcumen](#)
- [Telesior](#)
- [Internatic](#)
- [Sci-Fi Pag](#)
- [Special C](#)
- [dOc Postc](#)
- [dOc! Ther](#)
- [Games](#)
- [Downloac](#)
- [Users Pag](#)
- [Feedback](#)
- [Partners](#)
- [Webmast](#)

Image Transfer Grade: A-

Audio Transfer

	Language	Remote Access
Mono	English	yes
DS 2.0	English	yes
Dolby Digital 5.1	English	yes

Audio Transfer Review: There are three English language audio choices here: mono, 2.0 stereo and 5.1 Dolby Digital surround. All three are good in their own right, depending on your mood. The mono track adds the right amount of noir flatness to the presentation, while the 2.0 stereo fattens the soundstage a bit, especially during the musical numbers. No surprise that the 5.1 track is the house favorite, offering a real punch to the songs, and an notably expanded dynamic range.

Audio Transfer Grade: B+

Disc Extras

Full Motion menu with music
 Scene Access with 24 cues and remote access
 Subtitles/Captions in English, French, Spanish with remote access
 1 Original Trailer(s)
 Storyboard
 1 Feature/Episode commentary by Cory McAbee
 Packaging: Amaray
 Picture Disc
 1 Disc
 1-Sided disc(s)
 Layers: dual

Extras Review: Writer/director Cory McAbee provides what the backcover calls a "live" commentary, which means he was recorded at a screening before a small audience, and he fields questions and talks about the film as it runs. What makes this slightly unique is that viewers can alternate back-and-forth (using the angle button on your remote) between the film itself and footage of McAbee's recording of the commentary. That novelty aside, it's one of the more engaging commentary tracks of late, with McAbee steadily chatting about all elements of the production, from the music to the artwork to the meager budget. My only beef is that the audience questions are often poorly miked.

The rest of the supplements offer a mix of galleries for storyboards, test footage, on-set stills (in color), production and graphic design, poster art, theatrical trailer, and even an entire section devoted to McAbee's sidewalk art. A very bizarre short piece entitled *Rio Yeti* (:53s) is also included, and it basically defies description.

The disc is cut into 24 chapters, and features optional subtitles in English, French or Spanish.

Extras Grade: A-

Final Comments

Easily one of the most unusual and inventive DVD releases of the year, Cory McAbee's low-budget sci-fi/western/rock musical is stylized 1940s black-and-white strangeness. Echoes of David Lynch seep in from all sides, but McAbee surges forward with his own alt-noir style, and if the bizarre storyline doesn't get you, the music will.

For my money, one of the year's best.

Highly recommended.

DVDs By

action
 adventure
 animation
 comedy
 crime
 drama
 experime
 film noir
 gangster
 historical
 horror
 martial ar
 musical
 mystery
 opera
 romance
 sci-fi
 suspense
 thriller
 western



[Sam](#)
[5M](#)
 \

(Pr
 Pr

Agree or Disagree with our reviewer? Add user comment

Not a member? Register here!

Back to top

Price Comparisons 5 of 12 Listings

Powered By PriceGrabber.com

Calculate your BottomLinePrice including shipping & tax! Enter Zip Code:

Input field for zip code and a Go button

American Astronaut (2001) - DVD

Table with 4 columns: Seller, Base Price, Tax & Shipping, Seller Rating. Lists sellers like DVD Empire, BestPrices.Com, eBay, Overstock.com, and cd Universe with their respective prices and ratings.

Click Here For All 12 Stores (\$12.81 - \$24.71) >

* Shipping costs are based on an estimate of UPS ground or equivalent carrier within the contiguous US, excluding Alaska and Hawaii

Do you see a mistake? Report a pricing error on the American Astronaut (2001) - DVD

All copyright and trademarks are property of their respective holders. All materials created specifically for digitallyOBSESSED! digitallyOBSESSED! and its reviewers and writers. Any use without prior permission prohibited.

dOc Privacy Policy

digitallyOBSESSED.com created and maintained by catsprite|studios.

home become a member shop for dOc stuff contact us links site map htf forum become a re

Email the editor