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THE AMERICAN ASTRONAUT (DVD)



by Ron Wells (2005-02-22)

2001, Un-rated, 91 Minutes, Artistic License Films

OFFICIAL SITE CREDITS



Words may not do this film justice, but that's not going to stop me from trying. Ever see any films that felt less like coherent narratives than doorways into someone's mind? Now, normally I dismiss the "auteur" theory of authorship as a load of shit perpetrated by a bunch of snotty French film critics too full and self-importance (at the time) to know better. Filmmaking is by necessity a team sport big for one man to play. An exception, though, would be those works that feel like an into a person's inner world, a place operating on its own (consistent) set of rules and logic. Nearly all of Jodorowsky's movies feel like that. About half of David Lynch's film Now with a film that looks more than a little like "Eraserhead," this list expands to include name of Cory McAbee, the writer/director/performer/star of the expressionistic, sci-fi/MUSICAL comedy "The American Astronaut."

...and what a strange world it is. McAbee's alter-ego in this universe is Samuel Curtis, astronaut for hire, his lonely existence seems to consist of little more than delivering questionable "parcels" from one godforsaken planet to another. Of course it's only when he lingers in one place too long that his past has time to catch up with him. The audience catches up with him upon his arrival on the dusty planetary equivalent of some California ghost town on the old Route 66. Hoping to kill some time boozing, Curtis wanders into the least fashionable tavern in the galaxy. His only drinking companions would appear to be the contemptuous suspicion of the regulars until a pair of thugs angrily confront the astronaut with a... musical spirited song-and-dance routine. Yep, a musical number. The soundtrack is just getting

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started though, as our hero realizes the goons were just a warm-up for their boss, Cu "pal" the Blueberry Pirate (Joshua Taylor). After strong-arming the astronaut into joining a dance contest, the Pirate presents his old friend with a plan for a multi-planet packa that will earn them both a lot of money. Too complicated and unnecessary to explain, involves several more musical numbers, the "Boy Who Once Saw a Woman's Breast, journeys to several worlds that look like bad neighborhoods. The real danger though I Curtis' old nemesis Professor Hess (Rocco Sisto), a mad scientist hellbent on killing e the astronaut comes in contact with as he closes in on his prey. You know what ensu MADNEss. MADNEss ensues.

At this point I know I haven't come close to conveying the extremely weird charm of th How do you do that with just words? The songs are quite catchy. They can range fror show-tune in style (with decidedly off-kilter content) to garage-band rock n' roll in natu you're familiar with McAbee's primary artistic outlet you probably know what I'm talkin He has long been the front-man and force behind the San Francisco-based (now Nev experimental rock band called "The Billy Nayer Show." McAbee has long experimene as well. All of his creative endeavors to date seem to have built toward this one projec

Can McAbee really claim lone authorship of this film? Eh, probably not. The movie co contributions by many of his longtime collaborators. Chief among them is Billy Nayer-Bobby Lurie, here credited as both musical director and co-producer. McAbee also w this project in labs at the Sundance Institute, which coincidentally premiered the film c that little shindig it has each year on top of that mountain in Utah in the middle of Janu

Still, this musical epic is unlike anything I (or anyone I know) have ever laid eyes on. indicates some kind of unique artistic vision. Too bad the ending fails to live up to the level established by the rest of the picture, but I don't exactly have any ideas how to wrap u show in a manner that would satisfy anybody. Got to give kudos for the effort; it was a while it lasted. It's stayed with me, too. Any movie capable of opening doors in my head have something major going for it. That reminds me. Actually, [Lynch](#) and [Jodorowsky](#) good benchmarks by which to judge what you could expect here. If for no other similar this: You may not know whether drugs were involved in making the movie, but they c couldn't hurt the experience of actually watching it. Now that's entertainment!



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