

# Recent releases depict zany genius, cartoon hero

By Judith Trojan  
Catholic News Service

When the son of a Tasmanian apple farmer turns up in Sydney, Australia, around 1905, sporting a frizzy red mop top, high water shorts, bulbous clown shoes and the name Albert Einstein, nothing ordinary can be expected. "Young Einstein" (Warner Bros.) is a nutty comic tribute to the energy and eccentricity of the scientist who gave us the theory of relativity and, according to filmmaker-star Yahoo Serious, the foundation for rock 'n' roll.

The young Australian known as Yahoo Serious who wrote, directed, edited, co-produced and stars in this offbeat comedy recalls the work of such silent-film comedians as Chaplin, Keaton, Langdon and

others who built whole careers around a distinguishable clown-type character.

Serious pratfalls his way through his own warped but never seriously irreverent interpretation of Einstein's life, depicting the physicist as a young man who can't hack it as an apple farmer but makes history by splitting the beer atom, thus adding bubbles.

He rows and slogs his way to the big city to patent his  $E=mc^2$  formula, lugging his luggage over the ocean, up cliffs, through deserts and finally hopping a train on which he meets lovely young Marie Curie (Odile Le Clezio). En route to Sydney to pursue her Nobel Prize-winning studies, Marie falls instantly for Albert's brilliant, unpolished mind.

As soon as innocent Albert hits the side streets of Sydney, he's immediately stripped of his atom-splitting theory by oily patent-office potentate Preston Preston (John Howard), who secretly loves Marie. As Marie studies diligently at the university, Albert settles into a dirty dive on Lonely Street, invents rock 'n' roll (roll 'n' rock) and becomes the darling of all but sleazy Preston, who has Albert thrown in the lunatic asylum ward for mad scientists.

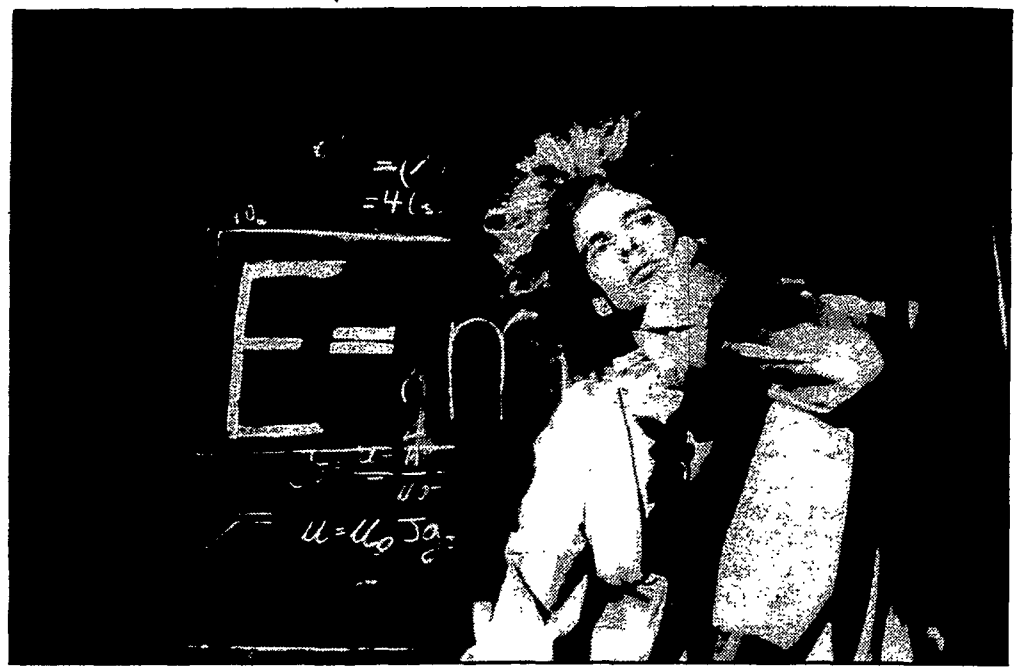
Albert's sojourn in the asylum and his climactic balloon arrival at the 1906 Science Academy Awards are highlights; but no matter how nonsensical the action, Yahoo is such an ingenious, rubbery actor that few will be turned off by his wacky character, a cross between Bozo the Clown and Buster Keaton.

His Monty Python-esque ability to twist recognizable, everyday silliness into scientific theory may seem daft to many adults, but may also work to turn young people on to science.

In its nutty way, "Young Einstein" succeeds where "Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure" failed dismally. The latter neglected to bring a shred of humor or intelligence to its parody of history, and vulgarized it to boot.

Yahoo has a way to go as a filmmaker, since "Young Einstein" has some dry spots that may inspire leisurely visits to the popcorn stand. But his comic character could possibly be the next world-class contender for Pee-Wee Herman's throne.

Due to some rear male nudity in a shower scene and minimal sexual innuendo, the U.S. Catholic Conference



**Pondering scientific mysteries, Albert Einstein, portrayed by Yahoo Serious, formulates the theory of relativity in the film "Young Einstein." The U.S. Catholic Conference describes the movie as an "offbeat comedy" that is a "warped, but never seriously irreverent interpretation" of Einstein's life.**

classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

### 'Lock Up'

Sylvester Stallone plays another larger-than-life cartoon hero in "Lock Up" (Tri-Star), a violent behind-bars drama pitting good prisoners against bad prison officials.

When street-smart Frank Leone (Stallone) punched out the hoods who beat up his stepfather and smashed his auto body shop, Leone landed in the pen and the punks landed in the hospital. But good-guy Leone paid his dues and did his time peacefully until sadistic Warden Drumgoole (Donald Sutherland) refused his request for a deathbed visit to his father. So Leone escaped, became a media darling for his noble effort and earned a berth in a minimum-security institution for the remainder of his short term.

Meanwhile, Drumgoole was hissed into a post at Gateway, a maximum-security hellhole where he plots revenge against Leone, who was the only blot on his resume.

As the film opens, Drumgoole implausibly arranges for model-prisoner Leone to be transferred to Gateway and proceeds to pit every prison psycho against him. Drumgoole's sick vendetta will either result in Leone's death or provoke him to violence that will extend the six months

remaining in his sentence.

Ignoring Drumgoole's powerful obsession, Leone vows to keep cool and personable despite intense sessions of humiliation, six torturous weeks in solitary, beatings, stabbings and fatal attacks on his inmate friends.

When his adored hometown fiancée (Darlaine Fluegel) is threatened with rape by a released prisoner, however, Leone goes off the deep end and plots one last escape. And Drumgoole's self-styled "tour of hell" ends with a bitter twist when Leone turns the tables on the sadist one last time.

Due to much intense sadistic violence and some vulgar profanity, the USCC classification is O — morally offensive. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

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