



HOP is an August, 2013 LVCA dvd donation to the Hugh Stoupe Memorial Library of the Heritage United Methodist Church of Ligonier, Pa.

United States / India 2011 color feature animation comedy 95 minutes
Producers: Chris Meledandri, Michele Imperato Stabile, Wendy Geary
Universal Studios, Inc.

8 of a possible 20 points

** of a possible *****

*indicates outstanding performance or technical achievement

2 = superior 1 = adequate 0 = deficient

Points

Director: Tim Hill 2nd Unit Director: Thomas Ackerman

0 Film Editors: Peter Elliott, Gregory Perler

1 Cinematographer: Peter Lyons Collister

1 Lighting: Shane Kelly

2 Animation: Chris Bailey (supervisor)

0 Screenplay: Cinco Paul, Ken Daurio, Brian Lynch

0 Music: Christopher Lennertz, Philip White

1 Production Designer / Art Directors / Set Designers / Set Decorator:

Richard Holland*/ Charles Daboud, Jr.* , Chris Consoni*/ Philip Cruden* ,
Paul Sonski* , Gene Darnell*/ Don Diers*

- 1 Sound: Ann Scibelli, Richard Anderson, Nerses Gezalyan,
Richard Bryce Goodman, Brian Magerkuth, Mark Sheffield, Matthew Reale
- 0 Acting
- 0 Creativity
- 8 total points

On appropriately named Easter Island a young bunny is perched atop the head of a prehistoric statue, whacking wildly on a set of drums. His name is E.B. (B for Bunny, perhaps?). Dad is the current Easter Bunny. This position of honor will one day belong to E.B. himself. But Junior is more concerned with joining a rock band and winning fame as a master musician.

In Van Nuys, California, a sleeping boy is roused by sparkling lights of an egg-shaped sleigh bearing E. B.'s dad and assistants. Observing from a bedroom window, the youngster is amazed when that gaudy vehicle lands on his front lawn and several rabbits scurry out with egg-filled baskets which are swiftly hidden in bushes. The watcher's name is Fred O'Hare and he determines to snap at least one photo of the memorable scene to authenticate it. Fred fetches a camera, then hurtles downstairs and flings open the front door. What gives? Rabbits and transport have vanished. All that remains visible are two Easter baskets left behind on the stoop. They are loaded with candy treats and flank a chocolate bunny.

Back in the Pacific, E.B. is brought to the Easter factory, a production center approached through a hidden door concealed within one of the Easter Island statues. Seeing its marvels for the first time and surreptitiously tasting a few enticing products, Junior Bunny is dazzled, but discouraged. How can he ever hope to supervise such a massive operation successfully and still find time for an illustrious musical career?

An oversized yellow chick called Carlos apprehends the apprehensive visitor for devouring items requiring overseas delivery. Unconcerned, his boss defends E. B., asserting he was only taste testing to evaluate taste quality.

When the elder rabbit asks for a judgment concerning savoriness, the younger

offers an enthusiastic endorsement. Dad picks a sample from E.B.'s paws, tries it and comes to a different conclusion. Junior has a lot to learn yet about the business.

Meanwhile, time advances twenty years in California. Fred is now an unemployed squatter at home, having retreated there after being discharged from a downsizing company. With no imminent job prospects and a completely nonchalant attitude towards securing one, the freeloader is verbally banished by parents and siblings weary of listening to an infinite litany of excuses for rejecting employment offers.

Help is on the way, however. Kindly Sister Sam comes out to propose Fred substitute for her as housesitter in a mansion occupied momentarily solely by two dogs. Sam is averse to canines. Fred needs money and lodging. While guarding the property, Mr. Picky can go to job interviews and try to land a long-term position. Really? Well, perhaps life works that way in Van Nuys.

Out in the Pacific, E.B. and his father have an angry confrontation, with Senior demanding Junior accept responsibility of training for promotion to Easter Bunny status. Quit fooling with music. Devote yourself to family tradition. Start thinking about others, such as children who depend on faithful bunnies for holiday deliveries.

E.B. sullenly rejects this compulsory scenario, deciding the moment for exiting from home has arrived. An automated rabbit hole is programmed to convey him magically to Hollywood, where fame and fortune await.

Does this screenplay so far stretch credibility? Apparently its writers assume children will accept anything they see on screen and have no comprehension of adult behavior, for from this point on a completely ditzy Los Angeles accepts unblinkingly a talking rabbit playing percussion with speed, power and accuracy despite complete absence of formal instruction. E.B. is apparently the Mozart of Bunnydom.

Ensuing complications include a school play featuring a lead singer with no concept of pitch, Carlos's attempted insurrection against an oppressive Easter Island establishment, belligerent dogs, three Pink Beret attack bunnies operating as special security agents, an abortive interview at a video game production firm

and parallel training clips of Fred and Carlos getting into shape to function as Easter Bunny surrogates.

Being a family film, HOP ends in predictable flight into complete fantasy, with parents precipitately accepting their progeny's vocational choices and Carlos foiled by a combination of accelerating drumming and dance addiction.

Left behind in a welter of loosely connected subplots are audiences at a scheduled E.B. performance, Fred's duty to feed two dogs daily, three petrified Pink Berets, a scripted Easter play which degenerates into spontaneous farce and then concludes in an unnatural premature exit of blissful performers and auditors, the duty of an apology from upstaging elder brother to sabotaged sibling, and open questions of where Fred will reside when his neglected housewatching obligation ends and what job he will ultimately accept after his non-repeating romp as Co-Easter Bunny, whatever that is.

Filled with incredible springs through time and space juxtaposed with laborious toilet humor setups and a sluggish dialogue scene between distraught E.B. and solipsistic, annoyingly overemphatic David Hasselhoff, the final edit of HOP pleads for return to the cutting room. Simply matching scenes and sounds, a prerequisite of montage, is not sufficient to create an integrated motion picture. A rhythm needs to be established and maintained. This doesn't happen here.

Lighting is generally adequate, though inconstant in clarity. Special effects scenes vary in tonal quality, with color maintenance problematic. Considering the huge number of lighting technical directors, color matching may have become impossible, with too many different eyes assigned to the task.

Whoever approved the music for HOP did a very poor job of generating suitable material for children. Blues-rock tunes are not appropriate for the target audience of this movie. A heavy metal volume level is absolutely crushing.

On the positive side of the ledger, vocal performances by Hank Azaria (doubling as both Carlos and Phil) and Russell Brand as E.B. are entertaining and memorable.

With almost kaleidoscopic pastel brightness and elaborately detailed assembly-line machinery, the Easter Island egg factory is magnificently realized as a perfect child's fantasy. Just as brilliantly effective is the trashing of rooms Fred is supposed to be protecting, with chaotic littering presented in thoroughly

revolting profusion. The Art Department team of production designer Richard Holland, art directors Charles Daboud, Jr. and Chris Consoni, set designers Philip Cruden, Paul Sonski and Gene Darnell, and set decorator Don Diers, ably assisted by set dressers Matthew Altman, Marc Martin Del Cambo, Matthew Guenther, Mark Kudra, Michael Mestas, and Karen Riemenschneider have consistently fashioned elegant, lavishly appointed interiors, giving props and images attractive appeal to fascinated viewers.

Animation is superior, with minute movements of hyperkinetic E.B. and Phil being especially remarkable for flexibility and lifelike fidelity.

Cinematography is effective and even sporadically adventurous.

Special features of the HOP dvd consist of 1. The World of HOP, a ten minute overview of production and animation, 2. three minutes of Russell Brand eliciting Kid Crack-Ups, 3. All-Access with Cody Simpson, a 3-minute introduction to various viewing formats, 4. one minute of Russell Brand Being the Bunny and 5. pictorial scene selections.

With the above enumerated reservations, HOP is best suited for children ages six to ten. Older audiences are likely to reject it as unrealistic and childish.