



FROZEN is a feature animation on dvd recently screened by Kino Ken.
Below is his review of that film.

12 of a possible 20 points

***** of a possible *******

**United States 2013 color 102 minutes feature animation fantasy musical
Walt Disney Animation Studios / Walt Disney Pictures Producers:
Peter Del Vecho, Aimee Scribner**

Key: *indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance

Points:

- Co-Direction: Chris Buck, Jennifer Lee**
- 0 Editing: Jeff Draheim**
- 2 Cinematography: Jerry Kim, Thomas Baker, Mark Henley**
- Special Visual Effects: Mark Empey, Vijoy Gaddipati, Steve Goldberg,
Dale Mayeda, Marlon West, Adam Levy,
Thaddeus Miller, Jon Krummel,
Neelima Karanam, Jesus Canal**
- 2 Lighting: Josh Staub, Jason MacLeod, Dexter Cheng,
Alessandro Jacomini, Mohit Kallianpur, Heather Pritchett,
Amol Sathe**
- 0 Screenplay: Jennifer Lee, Chris Buck, Shane Morris**
- 2 Animation: Kathleen Bailey, Corey Bolwyn, Nicholas Burkard,
Carlos Cabral, Fabrice Ceugniet, Glen Claybrook,
Casey Dame, Iker J. de los Mozos, Lino DiSalvo,
Jennifer Dawns, Moe El-Ali, Christopher Evert,
Christopher Otto Gallagher, Jay Gambell, Frank Hanner,
Mark Henn, Rose Ibiama, Andrew Jennings,**

**William Kastak, Si-Hyung Kim, Jang Chol Lee, Hubert Leo,
Adam Levy, Maia Neubig, Hyrum Osmond,
Luis San Juan Pallares, Daniel Malcon Pierce, Navin Pinto,
Niklas Puetz**

**Layouts: Jeff Sadler, Joaquin Baldwin, Scott Beattie, Allen Blaisdell,
Cory Rocco Florimonte, Daniel Hu, Terry Moews, Rick Moore,
Merrick Rustia, Matt Sullivan, Matsune Suzuki,
Michael Talarico, Kendra Vander Vliet, David Wainstain,
Nathan Warner**

Music Supervision: Tom MacDougall

Music Editing: Fernand Bos, Serge Courtois, Earl Ghaffari

**Music Recording: David Boucher, Tom Hardisty, Kevin Harp,
Larry Mah, Joe Raia**

Music Mixing: Casey Stone, David Boucher

**1 Music: Christophe Beck*, Kristen Anderson-Lopez, Frode Fjellheim*,
Aaron Shang, Robert Lopez**

**Orchestrations: Tim Davies, Kevin Kleisch, Dave Metzger,
Doug Besterman, Christophe Beck***

2 Production Design: David Womersley*

Art Direction: Michael Giaimo*

Character Design: Bill Schwab

2 Sound Design: Odin Benitez*, Angelo Palazzo*

Supervising of Sound Editing: Odin Benitez*

**Sound Effects: Greg Hedgepath, Alyson Dee Moore, Charles Ritter,
Stephen Robinson, John Roesch, Jeff Sawyer,
John Thomas, Tedd Toon, Martyn Zub, Mary Jo Lang**

Original Dialogue Mixing: Gabriel Guy, Bill Higley, Doc Kane

Dialogue Editing: Eliza Pollack Zebert

Sound Rerecording Mixing: David Fluhr, Gabriel Guy

Casting: Cymbre Walk, Terri Douglas, Jamie Sparer Roberts

**1 Voices Cast: Kristen Bell (Anna), Idina Menzel (Elsa), Jonathan Groff,
(Kristoff the Iceman), Josh Gad (Olaf the Snowman),
Santino Fontana (Prince Hans), Alan Tudyk (Duke),
Ciaran Hinds (Troll King Pabbie / Grandpa),
Chris Williams* (Oaken), Stephen Anderson (Kai),
Maia Wilson (Bulda), Edie McClurg (Gerda), Robert Pine
(Bishop), Maurice LaMarche (King), Livvy Stubenrauch
(j)*(Five-Year-Old Anna), Eva Bella (j)
(Eight-Year-Old Elsa), Spencer Lacey Ganus (j)**

(Twelve-Year-Old Elsa), Jesse Corti (Spanish Dignitary), Jeffrey Marcus (German Dignitary), Tucker Gilmore (Irish Dignitary), Paul Briggs (Marshmallow), others

**0 Creativity
12 total points**

FROZEN is a misguided attempt to make Hans Christian Andersen's chilling tale of self-sacrifice and the redemptive power of love into something palatable and attractive to preteen children. Including one suggestive bestiality joke, among other misfires, it fails to be appropriate entertainment for the younger crowd, and is far too illogical to satisfy mature viewers.

Andersen, one of the world's great storytellers, provided an emotionally wrenching account of devotion to seduced playmate, his Gerda portrayed as willing to give her own life to liberate Kay from imprisonment in the ice palace of The Snow Queen. Her selflessness is contrasted with the Queen's frigidly narcissistic egotism.

Gerda's journey across arctic wastelands is travestied in the Disney account, which peoples the tundra with an outsized, self-centered trader, a rustic dolt of an ice distributor, crude trolls, and a trio of villains too bumbling to pass for anyone's idea of dangerous malefactors.

In the Disney animation, two royal sisters experiment with ice-making magic, a trial which nearly kills the younger, Anna. Heartsick at the nearly lethal danger to which she naively exposed her sibling, Elsa consents to being shut off from the world until she gains more mature control over her powers, something which in this version of the story never really happens.

Instead, Elsa runs away from responsibility, liberating herself from external restrictions. But not from self-loathing and internal conflict.

Anna is given a suitor, like herself a younger child not expected to inherit regal power. Though seemingly a romantic nitwit, this prince inexplicably becomes a power-crazed despot. There's no development to indicate how this happens. His switch in character occurs in stupefying suddenness. Observers are expected to swallow this transformation wholesale as just another manifestation of magic.

When Elsa's coronation day deteriorates into a wilderness escape adventure, faithful sister Anna sets out to bring her back to the family palace. Love-besotted, the junior royal puts her princely innamorato in

charge of the family's kingdom, clearly indicating she is no more capable of ruling than her apprehensive sibling. Anna doesn't evidence much ability in character judgment, either.

Indeed, both these young women seem woefully uneducated in social relationships. Just what kind of tutors had been hired for them? Where is Mary Poppins when she's needed?

While Elsa busies herself in creating an icy cocoon for self-defense, Anna attempts to track her, losing a mount in the process. Alone, she reaches an isolated trading post whose proprietor is responsive to feminine charm and ready cash. Little else.

Arriving at the same provisioner with far too little of either of those attributes, a second visitor named Kristoff gets summarily dumped into snowbanks outside.

Compassionate Anna notes Kristoff's reindeer and sleigh could expedite a trip to Elsa's North Mountain retreat. So she exits the trading center, casting her lot with the ice delivery man. Him she can browbeat into doing what she wants.

Continuing to ignore the mess back at the palace caused by Magic Maiden's thoughtless haste crossing water barriers, Anna urges new companion Kristoff ever onward and upward, nearly killing him and his reindeer, Sven, in a rush to reunite with the very person who has denied her greatest happiness. Highly plausible stuff here.

It gets even better, because Elsa's snow and ice don't melt, no matter how much sun shines on them. This is a fairy tale in spades, though oddly lacking sprites themselves. Add to unnatural nature a transformative snowman pining for summer. He's supposed to serve as comic relief, though the script itself fulfills that function admirably with a heap of snowballing contradictions.

Meanwhile, Elsa's abandoned realm faces endless winter as a stranger from a distant land oversees its citizens. Hunger and poverty are kept marginally in check by handouts from royal kitchens by order of Prince Hans, the only one resembling an authoritative executive who knows what he's doing.

Anna ultimately reaches Elsa's lofty sanctuary, only to be rebuffed by her hostess who, like Greta Garbo, just wants to be alone.

This version of the Snow Queen has no allure for anyone else. She simply drips hostility and hermetic self-indulgence. Neither seductive nor evil, Elsa is blatantly confused, reckless, immature, and misanthropic. Everything she does turns out badly. She is under some kind of

inexplicable curse, unable to control raging emotions or even speak civilly to others and possibly suffering from extended adolescence.

To preserve privacy, Elsa invents a gigantic Yeti-like creature named Marshmallow, a big, puffy, brainless thing. After an episode where its creator accidentally turns freezing power upon importunate Anna when she tries to talk the Queen into returning home, Marshmallow chases that visitor and her guardian Kristoff away from the North Mountain palace of ice. Not so successful is the puffball's attempt to block a later assault on its mistress by two potential assassins whose employer, the Duke of Weselton, somehow figures killing her will lead to better trade relations between Elsa's realm and his own. Try to puzzle that one out.

Using ice as protection, the Queen of Arendelle pins one foe with an icicle against a wall and pushes back another with an ice blockade. But like Israel Hand, he refuses to accept defeat, shooting another arrow at her only to have it diverted by Prince Hans of the Southern Isles, who would rather take prisoners as hostages than kill them. This fateful arrow somehow cuts through a chandelier of ice, sending it crashing to palace floor where debris scatters, causing Elsa to stumble, fall, and faint.

In the meantime, Anna begins turning white from cold. In order to prevent sororicide from disrupting Arendelle, Kristoff hastens back to the former Royal Palace to see if either Option A, a kiss from true love Prince Hans, or Option B, thawing out in front of regal fire, can save his companion's life.

On a presumably separate route to the same destination, Hans travels with an unconscious Elsa, bringing her for safekeeping to a dungeon where he hopes icy magic can do no further mischief.

Once restored to awareness, Elsa is apprised of Arendelle's snowbound plight by the Prince Regent. He asks her to reverse operations and recover Summer. His prisoner assures him of the impossibility of granting that wish, guaranteeing herself continued confinement. He leaves her to reconsider matters, busying himself upstairs with a second female guest.

Kristoff has sent Anna to receive the gift of revival from her dream lover. That individual instead tells her she stands in the way of his wielding absolute sway over Arendelle. Living, she is worthless to the Prince Regent. As dead martyr, Anna can be used as a pawn in his treason plot against Elsa. For Hans intends to accuse the elder sister of murderous envy, banning arbitrarily a marriage that would benefit him considerably while condemning her own people to live in perpetual winterscape. He leaves Anna, unconvincingly, to die of despair, lovelessness, and frigidity.

Kristoff retrieves his companion, though. While downstairs Elsa somehow works herself free by turning chains into ice, defying another known principle of nature, since contracting metal should harden its grip, not loosen it. Getting agitated, she produces another snowstorm, which masks her flight outside.

She is nonetheless pursued by bloodhound Hans, now intent on killing her and adding to a growing list of personal crimes, none of which he believes will in any way lead to questioning his capacity to govern anything. When he overtakes Elsa thanks to a convenient lapse in blizzard conditions, the Prince Regent informs her she has brought about, maliciously, the death of Anna.

Thanks to Kristoff's intervention, the corpse is not so dead as all that, at least not yet. Despite onrushing numbness, she reaches Elsa in time to throw herself between Hans and his intended victim. Then she freezes completely while embracing the Queen. This act of selflessness proves total love and loyalty to Elsa, paving the way for thawed relations between them and releasing Elsa's dormant affection for her.

The rest of the production is pure poppycock, keeping everyone either alive and happy to reward virtue, or embittered and banished as just desserts of vice. Kristoff and Anna, a genuinely odd couple, appear headed for a domestic Bergmanesque marriage, possible content for a sequel or spinoff television miniseries. Poor Elsa has no one to marry. She does inherit permanent custody of Olaf, kept intact and smiling under a perpetual snow cloud that follows him everywhere.

As the above indicates, story development and arc are badly mismanaged. Hardly anyone gets what he or she wants, with surprise twists accommodating the writers' penchant for pursuit of novelty at all costs of reasonableness.

Anna wants Hans and ends up with Kristoff. Kristoff wants ice and his reindeer Sven. He winds up with castoff Anna as well. Elsa wants to be left alone. She turns into Palace Tour Guide and Royal Hostess, a real party animal. Hans aspires to be respected Sovereign. He gets exile and shame. The Duke of Weselton hopes for trade privileges and permanent residence. He's denied these and sent packing.

Only with numerous referrals to Wikipedia and Disney Wiki could this reviewer even begin to piece together anything resembling a coherent story line.

While most vocal deliveries are adequate or exceptional, Josh Gad's Olaf is irritatingly similar to Ed Wynn's Uncle Albert in MARY POPPINS. At

the other end of the spectrum, Eva Bella's eight-year-old Elsa has true poignancy and the bubblyness of Livvy Stubenrauch as five-year-old Anna is quite refreshing to hear. Chris Williams' stolidly undiplomatic, do-it-yourself approach to customer service as Oaken the trader is also commendable.

Lighting, sound, camera movement, and animation are of highest quality, nearly cancelling deficiencies of scripting.

Unfortunately for the production team, editing follows the lead of screenwriting right off the cliff. After the ten-minute mark, events begin to move in accord with previously unsuspected rules of motivation, with cause-effect fragmentations popping up in ever increasing abundance.

A similar trajectory, though with some variations, is achieved by the uneven music score. An opening work chant — primal, compulsive, fascinating — promised rich ambience to follow. Merging rhythmic vitality with timelessness all too rare in contemporary film music, it launched FROZEN immediately to classic stature only to be torpedoed by inconsistencies in style and harmonic depth subsequently. Deciding to carry messages with tunes rather than melodies, FROZEN dwindles into musical hodgepodge, sporadically rising above the mundane as it proceeds.

Highlights of the score are the opening "Vuelie," drawing upon Old Norse roots and composed by Frode Fjellheim and Christophe Beck, the ice-cutting work song titled "Frozen Heart" (written by Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez), Anna's plaintive "Do You Want To Build a Snowman?" composed by the same husband-wife duo, the buoyantly optimistic breakout song of Elsa titled "For the First Time in Forever" (co-written by Kristen Anderson-Lopez and her husband), and two richly evocative orchestral cues: "Coronation Day" and "Wolves" by Christophe Beck. "Coronation Day" captures fully the resonant spirituality of medieval Christianity, while "Wolves" is a suspenseful, dynamic accompaniment to the film's most successful chase sequence.

Far less impressive is the overblown "liberation" song of Elsa titled "Let It Go," which substitutes topical lyrics for musical muscle. It lacks the tunefulness of great opera, content with volume overkill and emotionally barren crescendos overshadowing musical shadings. Rossini, Verdi, Wagner, and Puccini knew how to handle such material with subtlety as well as power. The current Disney arrangement team certainly does not.

Likewise, fine work by the art department in recreating antique Lapland is lovely to gaze upon, yet undermined by a contemporizing screenplay. Modern English vocabulary is forgivable, insertions of current political and social clichés less so. Still, ice and snow have seldom looked this attractive on screen. That is due to superior craftsmanship on the part of Disney artists.

Overall, this is a worthwhile piece of animation to see for its graphic and aural artistry. Don't look closely at the writing. It does not reward careful scrutiny.

The film is suitable for ages seven to nine with advance screening by parents recommended to acquaint them with one impaling scene and the "gag" cited in this review's opening paragraph. Not every child will respond positively to the former. The latter is probably going to pass unnoticed by preteens. Older children will find non sequiturs too numerous to accept. There is too little of Andersen's original darkness of tone and moral depth to satisfy mature viewers.

Disney's video release comes with a number of bonus features, notably the short film GET A HORSE. See Kino Ken's review of that film below.

GET A HORSE

14 of a possible 20 points

1/2 of a possible **

United States 2013 black-and-white and color 7 minutes 3-D short comedy animation Walt Disney Animation Studios / Walt Disney Pictures
Producers: Dorothy McKim and Michele Mazzano

*indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance

Points

- Direction: Lauren MacMullan
- 2 Editing: Julie Rogers*
- 2 Animation Camera
- 1 Lighting: Katie Reihman, Kaori Doi
- Special Visual Effects: John Murrah, Stella Hsin-Huei Cheng, Robert Neuman, Brett Boggs
- 0 Story: Lauren MacMullan, Paul Briggs, Nancy Kruse, Raymond Persi
- 1 Art Direction
- Sculptor: Andrea Blasich
- Music Supervisor: Tom MacDougall Musical Director: Mark Watters

- Music Editor: Earl Ghaffari**
- 1 Music: Mark Watters**
- 2 Animators: Rachel Bibb, Glen Claybrook, Margie Daniels, Krzysztof Fus, Eric Goldberg, Adam Green, John Kahwaty, Suzan Kim, Dave Komorowski, Chelsea Lavertu, Luis San Juan Pallares, Brian Silva, Lauren MacMullan**
- 2 Supervising Sound Editors: Kami Asgar, Sean McCormack**
- Sound Effects: John Roesch**
- Sound Rerecording Mixers: Gabriel Guy, John Ross**
- Voices Casting: Jamie Sparer Roberts, Cymbre Walk**
- 1 Voices Cast: Walt Disney (Mickey Mouse), James MacDonald (Archival Mickey Mouse), Marcellite Garner (Archival Minnie Mouse), Russi Taylor (Minnie Mouse), Billy Bletcher (Archival Peg-Leg Pete), Will Ryan (Peg-Leg Pete), Raymond Persi (Pete's Car Horn), others**
- 2 Creativity**
- 14 total points**

Combining 3-D technology, black-and-white animation, color animation, and archival sound recordings, GET A HORSE! is a seven-minute short 2013 animation directed by Lauren MacMullan. The fun begins with the appearance of a country music group called the Haywagon Band. They are riding on a horse-drawn hay wagon performing "Turkey in the Straw."

This noisy excursion into the countryside by Clarabelle Cow, Minnie Mouse, Mickey Mouse, and assorted animal pals is disturbed by arrival of Peg-Leg Pete in a motorcar with a horn which announces "Make way for the future."

That doubles as a preview of what is to come onscreen.

Pete has his eyes fixed on Minnie, to Mickey's chagrin. So the defensive escort plunks Clarabelle in front of his gal as a screen and alternative. That view Pete finds revolting, especially the display of leg reminiscent of the famed hitchhiking scene in Frank Capra's IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT. Not only does he refuse the pickup offer, but the troublemaker spitefully rams his vehicle into the back of the wagon, jarring Mickey loose and seizing his girlfriend.

Thrown through the air by the collision, Mickey and Horace ricochet off the movie screen's interior, encouraging Pete to continue his sport by tossing them back into it. Harder, this second time around.

Mickey and Horace rip right through the screen into the theater, linking black-and-white past from which they came to the contemporary color world.

Mickey must find a way back into black-and-white roots to rescue Minnie and give the villain his comeuppance. Thus begins a series of adventures in and out of screen, with color jousting against black-and-white, archival images with new creations.

This is reminiscent of the setup used for the 1989 Italian comedy masterpiece LADRI DI SAPONETTE (THE ICICLE THIEF) where a new black-and-white film by an Italian director is broadcast with frequent interruptions by color commercials. Eventually characters from the black-and-white neo-realist drama find their way into modern ads and vice versa, with the director himself ultimately entering the film to argue with them about plot and dialogue. Periodic cutaways to home viewers reveal confusion, appreciation, grief, and amusement.

The otherwise delightful Disney fantasy falls short of such complexity, settling for unrefined slapstick rather than pointed satire.

Also recalling Chuck Jones's marvelous DUCK AMUCK and its prototype, Keaton's live action SHERLOCK, JR., GET A HORSE! plays with conventions of cinema, confounding distinct spatial and temporal realities with joyful dexterity.

With accompanying traditional folk music and a story existing solely as linchpin for physical knockabouts, GET A HORSE! provides plenty of entertainment value. It is quite enjoyable even when screened without special glasses. Simplistic hero, villain, and plot are suitable for virtually any age viewers. Just sit back and enjoy seven minutes of spectacular mayhem.