



TITO E OS PASSAROS (TITO AND THE BIRDS) is a June, 2019 LVCA dvd donation to the Hugh Stoupe Memorial Library of the Heritage United Methodist Church of Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Below is Kino Ken's dvd review of the English-dubbed version of that feature animation.

13 of a possible 20 points

*****1/2 of a possible *******

Brazil 2018 color 73 minutes feature animation fantasy in Portuguese with English subtitles / dubbed in English Split Studio / bitsfilmes / BNDES / Ancine / BRDE / fsa / Indie Sales / ProacSP / FOMEN CINEMA Producers: Gustavo Steinberg, Daniel Greco

**Key: *indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance
(j) designates a juvenile performer**

Points:

- Direction: Gustavo Steinberg, Gabriel Bitar, André Catoto Dias**
- 2 Editing: Vania Ders, Thiago Ozelami, Nina Senra**
- 1 Animation Camera**
- 0 Lighting**
- Special Visual Effects: Caio Bucaretti**
- 1 Animation Direction: Chico Bela, Vini Wolf**
- 2 Screenplay: Eduardo Benaim* and Gustavo Steinberg***
- 2 Music: Ruben Feffer, Gustavo Kurlat**
- 1 Art Direction: Gabriel Bitar, Paulo Turinno, Vini Wolf**

Storyboard Artist: Ivan Freire
Voice Direction: Melissa Garcia

1 Sound

**Sound Effects: João Victor Dos Santos, Caio Gonçalves, Juliana Lopes,
Guta Roim**

Sound Mixing: Bernardo Ets Goes

Voices Casting: Melissa Garcia, Cassia Guindo

1 Voice Acting

2 Creativity

13 total points

**Voices Cast: Pedro Henrique (Tito), Denise Fraga (Rosa, Tito's mom),
Mattheus Nachtergaele (Dr. Rufos, Tito's dad), Mateus Solano (Alaor Souza,
Teó's dad), Vinicius Garcia (Buiú), Enrico Cardoso (Teó), Marina Seritiello (j)
(Sarah)**

**English Voices Cast: Pedro Henrique (Tito), Melanie Minichino (Rosa),
Bernardo De Paulo (Dr. Rufos / Scientist 2), Nicolas Roye (Teó),
Kate Higgins (Bag Lady / Newswoman / Voice Mail Recording / Girl),
Mick Wingert (Alaor Souza, Teó's dad / Scientist 1), Cassandra Morris (Sarah),
Corina Botteger (Girls), Jesse Corti (Robot Butler / School Principal),
Alejandro Cazares (Trickster 1 / Buiú), Michael Yurchak (Trickster 2)**

**If it were really true that people have nothing to fear but fear itself, then
Brazil's animated fantasy TITO E OS PASSEROS (TITO AND THE BIRDS) would
supply a foolproof antidote for the world's ills. Since there exist many other
fright stimuli in the environment, what screenwriters here promote is only part
of a complex solution not addressed by Tito and his friends.**

**Taking the easier of two pressing problems to tackle, this South American
export focusses on social insecurity currently rife in Latin American megalopoli.
A fearmongering television network spews out tirades about world chaos,
predicting an even bleaker future while proposing no program to counter
prevailing hopelessness. There is one bit of optimism though: protection can be
acquired within a domed community of skyscrapers. Entry depends upon how
much money potential escapees can pay realtors. Chief beneficiary of this**

alternative housing scheme happens to be one Alaor Souza, apparently both real estate magnate and vociferous media personality.

It happens Alaor's only son, Teó, and the scion apparent of vanished scientist Dr. Rufos are competing to obtain top prize in their school's invention contest. Tito Rufos is on a mission to complete a communication device enabling humans and birds to understand one another's ideas. At the age of six he had nearly been killed through hesitancy in following paternal instruction about operation of such a contrivance. The resultant explosion sent him to a hospital. His enraged mother Rosa was disgusted by a spouse she believed to have recklessly endangered her cherished son. She made it quite clear such a father was no longer welcome in their home. So Dr. Rufos reluctantly departed for less hostile environs more conducive to objective research. Whether any birds were harmed by his subsequent experiments is left thankfully unreported.

Three years later, Tito fails to achieve his father's goal, creating a smoky mess instead. Teo wins the contest with a novelty less spectacular but more functional. Safer, too.

It won't cure a looming epidemic of trepidation, though. The loser's contraption, if modified and improved, just might.

Apparently these two schoolmates from differing economic backgrounds share a common ornithological interest. Their personalities clash, however. Only through mediation of a third party, an adventure-seeking girl peer named Sarah, can the pair be shamed into cooperation.

Meanwhile, the mystery ailment paralyzing and petrifying their city's populace is afflicting more and more victims. Tito's best friend and technical guru, Buiú, falls prey to it. So does Rosa, encouraged by adult associates to immerse herself in pessimism. Some teachers at Tito's school similarly sink into popular hysteria, leading to closure of that establishment. A lecture by their chief administrator about observed symptoms only terrorizes students further, leaving them also filled with uncertainties.

Steeling themselves to be unflinching regardless of what they see and hear, around them, Sarah and Tito ally with creative genius Teó Souza to perfect a machine to converse with the avian world. While they labor to find something curative to treat those ill, the senior Souza attempts to stifle parallel efforts of scientists supporting Dr. Rufos and his theories. He's quite willing to engage in

kidnapping and isolating them in order to keep realty income intact and mounting.

Can the trio of children intent on dissipating fears derail adult frenzy before they, too, become nothing more than stony ovoids?

Using a combination of oil painting and computer graphics, filmmakers create an intensely dark-hued universe with blurry, insubstantial backgrounds offsetting solid, mobile foreground characters. Wavy and oblique lines predominate over horizontal and vertical ones, as if energy dissipation and radiation are engaged in apocalyptic battle. Doomsday appears imminent for all except those shielded by Souza's hemispherical Eden. Anyone not approved by its guardians will be left outside to die. Sooner or later. What might be happening inside during that process is anybody's guess.

Since the target audience for this parable of us versus them is youths between nine and fifteen years of age, dialogue doesn't probe beyond generalities. How various machines work is neither shown in detail nor explained by their operators. Of course, technology is not being examined in any sense.

What is? Whether or not to pursue divisive policies carving society into polarized segments benefitting only demagogues and profiteers. That's the key message delivered by TITO AND THE BIRDS.

Unfortunately, Eduardo Benaim and Gustavo Steinberg wrote a script pitting kids against adults. Thus it appears the answer to all world problems is simply to let juveniles decide how to manage things. The screenplay doesn't even pretend to claim superior insight comes from bird lore, past or present.

Images of the Tower of Babel and Columbus's caravels don't integrate with plot or dialogue either. Though history is important and needs preservation by intelligent interpreters, winged creatures don't teach us that. They never have and never will.

Lit like scenes ripped from sketchbooks of Edvard Munch, or Vincent Van Gogh at his most frantic, TITO AND THE BIRDS is aesthetically intriguing, applying expressionistic ambience to an increasingly supercharged sociopolitical landscape. Based primarily on recent developments in Brazil itself, where reactionary isolationists encourage ejection of criminals, immigrants, street people of varying stripes, and all other blatantly obvious minorities, the dramedy reflects a snowballing process of disintegration which, if not reversed,

will lead only to proliferation of insular outposts with nothing in common except origins.

Sound recording and sound effects are executed splendidly. Sound mixing is sporadically muddled.

Being intentionally underlit in order to magnify darkness, the production nonetheless delivers too much unrelieved gloom, falling short of full respectability in the lighting department.

Editing rhythm is a different story. Suspense is constructed, maintained, and compounded impressively, aided by the jaggedly incisive music score of Ruben Feffer and Gustavo Kurlat, the same duo responsible for creating *BOY AND THE WORLD*'s soundtrack.

Most colorful of the English voices cast is Pedro Henrique, ably matching his original Portuguese performance as rather shy, accident-prone Tito. Cassandra Morris's recklessly resolute Sarah merits mention. Nicolas Roye's moderately arrogant Teó is also noteworthy.

Special features on the Shout! Factory dvd/Blu-ray combo release reviewed here are a two-minute theatrical trailer and an eighteen-minute interview with Director/Writer/Producer Gustavo Steinberg and Co-Producer Daniel Greco. The latter highlights the film's aesthetic and social themes.

Too scary and visually bleak for under-tens, *TITO AND THE BIRDS* is recommended viewing for audiences ages ten to fourteen. For them, it's a visually offbeat treat with an undebatable, socially affirmative message. Adults may find points underlined too sophomoric and self-evident. Yet the animation's visual elements may suffice to keep them attentive and involved anyway.

TITO E OS PASSEROS won the Best Feature for Children Award at Anima Mundi 2018. It has been quite popular at various international film festival screenings. Watch it and find out why.