

'The Last Starfighter' for summer sci-fi

Take a lot of *Star Wars*, a dash of *Close Encounters*, a pinch of *Tron* and a dose of that Spielberg touch — and what do you get? A concoction called *The Last Starfighter*, a frivolous space fantasy sure to attract crowds of sci-fi fans.

The main ingredient in this slick flick is Alex Rogan (Lance Guest), a 18-year-old who lives in the Starlite Starbrite Trailer Park run by his mother. When he is not fixing faulty wiring or hanging out with his pick-up truck friends, Alex perfects his skills at the Starfighter video game. Not content to settle for City College like the rest of his friends, Alex and his girlfriend Maggie (Catherine Mary Stewart) plan a future in the world beyond the trailer park.

What they get is a future literally out of this world.

Alex breaks the record on the Starfighter game and is excited about the future until his mother (Barbara Bosson of *Hill Street Blues*) informs him that his college financial aid was rejected. Later that night, a stranger arrives in a car that looks like a DeLorean with all the extras, except this one doubles as a space ship, too. Its pilot is an intergalactic hustler called Centuri (Robert Preston) who designed the video game to find a starfigh-

ter good enough to save the universe from Evil Emperor Zur (Norman Snow) and the Ko-Dan armada.

If this sounds silly, it's because the film is silly, but *The Last Starfighter* never takes itself seriously. The film's tongue-in-cheek style goes a long way toward redeeming the predictable situations and outcome in the film.

As a reluctant Luke Skywalker, Lance Guest is a delightful new actor, who also gets to play the dual roles of Alex and the clumsy Beta Unit replicant, who takes Alex's place on earth. In fact, the Beta, who can't quite figure out how to handle a human girlfriend, is the funniest character in the film.

Not unlike *Gremlins*, *Starfighter* has a little bit of a lot of movies within it. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then there should be a lot of flattered movie makers out there.

Starfighter has enough slimy creatures to fill any cantina, plus lots of talking lizards (remember *V?*), including a "gun ho iguana" named Grig (Dan O'Herlihy) who serves Alex with a proper English accent (C3P0?).

There is a precocious little brother (a male Drew Barrymore) and a harried, but loving mother (*E.T.* again) plus a whole slew of

neighbors suddenly set upon by a very close encounter via a video game (*Tron?*).

audience chuckling, instead of opting for mucky melodrama that might have them chunking things at the screen.

Most of the performances are fine, including the predictably hissable Zur, but Robert Preston, who is usually good in oddball roles, overplays Centauri in trying to mix too much wisdom (like a Obi-Wan) with too much cuteness (like Yoda).

And the highly acclaimed special effects?

Well, to tell the truth, they are

Review

Ivy Hilliard

Writer Jonathan Betuel's script is also skillful in poking just enough fun at itself to keep the

BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed



THE Daily Crossword

by Alfio Micci

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|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| ACROSS | 41 Sod | DOWN | 29 Mayday |
| 1 Soft drink | 42 Cruising | 1 Rubik's — | 30 Running knot |
| 5 "— Frome" | 43 Degree | 2 Exam of a kind | 31 News disperser of old |
| 10 Actor Convoy | 48 Caviar | 3 Defeat | 32 Lab heaters |
| 14 Author of "Milla 18" | 49 Author | 4 Residue | 37 Confident treat |
| 15 Auto | 50 Rubbish that sounds terrible | 5 Bakery | 38 "— y Plata" |
| 16 Olive genus | | 6 Extreme | 39 Behind schedule |
| 17 Degree | | 7 Boar's head | 41 Actor Peter O'— |
| 20 Lodge member | | 8 Footless | 44 Journey |
| 21 Passe | 53 "Blues" street | 9 Ship-shaped clock | 45 Gil Blas creator |
| 22 Concerning | 55 — du tout | 10 Put out by force | 46 Draw out |
| 23 Exchange premium | 58 Scholars' milieu | 11 If not | 47 Louise or Turner |
| 24 Rainbow | | 12 Control | 50 Fee-to-fum. |
| 25 Degree | | 13 Diplomat's forte | 51 Campus group |
| 33 River of Poland | 61 Steak order | 18 Advantage | 52 "Queen — Day" |
| 34 Realtor's offering | 62 Ear prominences | 19 MVP of 1960-61 | 53 Court star |
| 35 Table scrap | 63 Pinnacle | 23 Give it — | 54 Remote |
| 36 Rotate | | 24 Court proceedings | 55 Squash |
| 37 March king | 64 Catchall abbr. | 25 Changed residence | 56 Final word |
| 39 Meat cut | 65 Heron's kin | 26 Hersey title locale | 57 X-rated |
| 40 Alfonso's queen | 66 Kind of express | 27 Glacial pinnacle | 59 Cecile or Agathe |
| | | 28 Down | 60 Drop bait lightly |

