

## Document Citation

Title	<b>Animated cartoons (Cartoni animati)</b>
Author(s)	Deborah Young
Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	2004 Jul 12
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	24
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Cartoni animati (Animated cartoons), Citti, Franco, 2004

## ANIMATED CARTOONS

(CARTONI ANIMATI)

(ITALY)

A Filmo release of a Morgan Film/Lumina production in association with Mediaset. Produced by Francesco Pamphili, Felice De Maria.

Directed by Franco and Sergio Citti. Screenplay, Franco and Sergio Citti, Marco Tocchi. Camera (color), Felice De Maria; editor, Ugo De Rossi; music, Ennio Morricone; production and costume designer, Mario Ambrosino. Reviewed at Anica, Rome, June 25, 2004. Running time: **91 MIN.**

With: Franco Citti, Rosario Fiorello, Elide Melli, Olimpia Carlisi, Ermanno Castriota, Guerrino Crivello, Pietro De Silva, Daniele Ferretti, Franco Iavarone, Vera Gemma, Barbara De Pace.

By DEBORAH YOUNG

**A**n allegorical fable about homeless people caught between dreams and reality, "Animated Cartoons" was made in 1998 but changed hands several times before finally being released now, without fanfare. Ailing helmer Sergio Citti and his actor-brother Franco co-direct. Sergio, whose last release was the 2001 Sicilian melodrama "Viper," here returns to the naïf style of his better pictures ("Minestrone," "We Free Kings"). Yet, although characters are engaging, the ensemble cast never clicks and the gossamer story fails to catch fire. Coming out in a few Italian cities at a time, pic's main drawing



**EASY RIDERS:** Franco Citti, left, and Rosario Fiorello appear in "Animated Cartoons," helmed by Citti with his brother Sergio.

card is highly popular TV entertainer Rosario Fiorello.

Salvatore (Fiorello), a magical dream merchant who travels by raft and motorbike, dispenses dream elixirs to the destitute residents of an abandoned factory on the outskirts of Rome. Looking much like former hippies, this community of society's rejects lives together in harmony and friendship.

Only the white-haired Franco Citti is gruff. He's particularly unpleasant to a woman he meets in the cemetery wearing a bridal dress (Elide Melli). Melli is convinced he's her lost fiancé, who was run over on his way to their wedding.

Meanwhile, a Japanese company buys the empty factory and transfers its denizens to a housing project, where they start to bicker and

fight with each other.

Pic quotes a number of famous films, drawing much inspiration from Vittorio De Sica's 1950 neorealist classic "Miracle in Milan" in which the poor jump on broomsticks and abandon industrial society, flying up to paradise. Here the allegory is much more heavy-handed and some of the sketches fall flat, like Citti and Melli being turned away from fancy restaurants and hotels because they don't look rich.

Still, poverty in the midst of plenty is a lofty theme to tackle in a fairy tale and the Cittis do extract a few felicitous moments from the cobbled-together story. One delicious moment is when a group of ghetto children mistakes the weeping Melli for the Virgin Mary, a scene that echoes, still more paradoxically, the apparition of

the Madonna in "La Dolce Vita."

Franco Citti dusts off the tough-but-honest Roman character that is his screen trademark, and Melli is pure obsession as the lovelorn bride, yet handsome Fiorello steals the show with his sparkling eyes and rasta braids. Lensing is on the simplified side with a few zooms too many, and Ennio Morricone's soundtrack has overly familiar circus overtones.