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As Aventuras da Turma de Monica

(The Adventures of Monica's Friends)

(BRAZILIAN-COLOR/B&W-ANIMATED)

Rio de Janeiro, Dec. 30.

An Embrafilme release and production. Directed by Mauricio de Sousa. Screenplay, Reinaldo Waisman, De Sousa; storyboard, Waisman; art direction, Roberto Barbist, Fumiomi Yabuki, Alice Keiko Takeda; editing, Mauro Alice, Jair Correa; musical direction, Remo Usai; songs, Mauricio de Souza, Gao Gurgel, Remo Usai, Marcio de Sousa, Eduardo Leao Waisman; lyrics, Vilma Camargo, Yara Maura Silva; special effects, Pedro C.O. Azevedo, Ives Ribeiro; animation, Jose Eliseo Villa, Nova Conceicao; production director, Eduardo Leao Waisman; executive producer, Marcos Urbani Saraiva; sound, Rancho Studios. Reviewed at Embrafilme screening room, Rio de Janeiro, Dec. 30, 1982. Running time: 80 MINS.

Feature cartoons are an odd product in Brazilian cinema, although four of them have officially been produced since 1952. In fact, except for the "Troublemakers" series, children's pics are practically nonexistent among Brazil's 80 native releases a year; less than 5% of them are actually created for mop-pet audiences.

"Monica," therefore, is an exception. Author Mauricio de Sousa has managed to turn his characters into the most popular of local comic strips, reportedly sold to 21 countries. "Monica And Her Friends" has also achieved a good marketing position, the names selling everything from tomato concentrates to soap and shampoos all over the country.

Strip's success encouraged De Sousa to jump with his drawings into films and Embrafilme to co-produce it (picture had a \$550,000 budget, high by local standards). Early boxoffice figures (item has just open in Sao Paulo) have shown that pic may return its investment, even if it is not a smash.

Technically, experience has proven to be satisfactory. If not rich, animation is fluent and characters — Monica, Cebolinha, Cascao, Magali, Franjinha — remain at least as attractive as in the comic strips. Author seems to have dealt with the lack of a good story satisfactorily. He's put four small vignettes together, filling them with his own presence, which is questionable as a brilliant solution from the audience's stand. Characters consequently move well, but they do not know exactly where to go or what to say, which could certainly be frustrating for the Monica fans.

Such problems, however, do not hamper the crew's efforts. Evaluation of the problems involved in this cartoon narrative will be most helpful in making the sequels planned by the producers. As a unique experience of its kind in Brazil, "Monica," besides the solid animation, has voices that are pertinent and well placed; sets are okay as is the music. More carefully written and narrated, it would certainly amuse the children even more than the comics have already done. —*Hoin.*