

**DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT, *YOU'RE OUTA HERE*
BY GEORGE GRIFFIN**

You're Outa Here is a conversation stopper. It means "Shut up and leave now before I start screaming." But it's primarily an eviction notice, delivered with emphatic gesture, like a baseball ump to an offending player who has just gone "beyond the pale." All these quotes suggest conversational rhetoric, for this short animated cartoon is really about language.

There is only one speaker, an angry woman who is trying to get her now-former boyfriend out of the apartment they've shared. His stuff is already packed but there seems to be a last minute recalcitrance; he has stubbornly settled into his beloved Barcalounger and refuses to budge. Her song is in essence her proclamation of his perfidy and, at its conclusion, her empowerment. He is shown to be a liar, a cad, a cheat. He's manipulative, homophobic and racist, a heavy drinker, angry at fish, afraid of dogs and lazy. Maybe he wants to kidnap the cat. The list is endless.

Each character is a pastiche of cartoon convention. She is short, cute, sexy in her faux leopard skin miniskirt, no-nonsense in her designer glasses: an up-dated Betty Boop who has to do all the heavy lifting by herself. He is tall, spikey, mute, clueless; more comfortable guzzling brews with his buddies than making up with his girlfriend. His face is a variation on my "Square Man" design that has for years been a kind of default "everyman," so simple a six-year-old could do it (better), yet also a self-portrait/doppelganger through whom I can act. A wooly turtleneck and jeans give him the attributes of an over-educated, urban sophist, indulging in a life of "creative poverty." She wears her emotions on her sleeve and doesn't hesitate to name his each and every transgression; her solo has the feeling of a complex legal brief, dramatically argued at breakneck speed by a tough trial lawyer.

The film begins with a live-action introduction by legendary jazz pianist Dick Hyman playing the Fats Waller tune, "The Minor Drag," which provides the melodic and rhythmic structure for the film. In later interludes Hyman goes solo as the action cuts back to his energetically playing hands and animated Lindy Hoppers, rotoscoped from movies of Harlem's Savoy Ballroom in the 1930s. The first section is meant to have the effect of pulling us back from the text of her critique to imagine the couple dancing together in an earlier sensual period of their relationship. The second solo section is cluttered, discordant, pressured, as if to suggest that something is about to explode.

Dick Hyman was filmed at the Nola Sound Studio on West 57th Street in New York. This studio has witnessed recording by the biggest names in twentieth-century American pop and jazz: Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, and Charlie Parker. Hyman played the complete 3-minute piece flawlessly for 8 takes.

Making *You're Outa Here*, based entirely on a pre-recorded song, was like producing a music video but with an essential difference. There was no live performance by the singer (this was Lorraine's only stipulation), even though the character veers close to a caricature portrait of her. The mood of a Fleischer "Out of the Inkwell" cartoon comes through the heroine's feisty personality, the slightly retro apartment décor and the bumptious pulse of the stride piano. As the song is so clearly jazz and references an earlier period in our culture when jazz was THE popular idiom and short documentary films of great artists like Waller were called soundies, it seems appropriate to call *You're Outa Here* a "Neo-Soundie."

www.lorrainefeather.com/YOH/
www.lorrainefeather.com/nycdrag.html