



Solarbabies

(UK: released – desperately – as “Solarwarriors”)

US : 1986 : dir. Alan Johnson : MBM / Brooksfilms

: 94 min

prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

[Lukas Haas](#)

Richard Jordan; Jami Gertz; Jason Patric; James Le Gros; Adrian Pasdar; Sarah Douglas;
Charles Durning; Alexei Sayle; Bruce Payne; Claude Brooks; Peter DeLuise; Frank Converse

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	□	≠	Z	⌘	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
3319a	3	9	1	1,243	3	7	7	-	-	No	Nov 1995



*“Somebody get me out of this Mel Brooks **CRAP!** Whatever bad thing I did, I’m sorry!”*

Source: indeterminate website

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide
2001 review:

"Futuristic teen junk has Gertz and her mostly male cohorts imprisoned by Nazi-like Jordan inside a fortress; the group plots an escape with the help of "Bohdi" – an ancient mystical force. Appallingly bad stinker from (Mel) Brooksfilm that barely got released. Shot in J-D-C Scope. **Bomb** "

Halliwell's Film Guide review:

"In a future world where water is scarce, a gang of roller-skating teenagers rebel against authority with the aid of a mystic ball. Ludicrous science fiction adventure that lacks invention, style and plausibility."

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89
review:

"Another futuristic space adventure about roller-skating orphans trying to moisten their parched universe. This one rips off everything from "MAD MAX" to "OLIVER!" to "DUNE" to "ROLLERBALL" to "THE WARRIORS" and still comes up dry. ½ "

Rating the Movies review:

"A barren script, with an incoherent plot and ludicrous dialogue, characterises this teenage derivative of the "ROAD WARRIOR" movies. The unappealing setting is Earth in the distant future where water is scarce. A group of roller-skating youths, held in a mysterious orphanage, try to escape from their tyrannical supervisors to discover what the world is like on the outside. * "

TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995 review:

"On a futuristic planet where every drop of water is precious, heroine Gertz and her roller-skating "solarwarrior" cohorts battle a tyrannical enemy with the aid of an ancient mystical force. Filmed on location in a drought-stricken Spain, and using the country's national roller-hockey players, by (Mel) Brooks Films. Too violent for younger children. * "

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

"In the far future, a group of sports teens joins forces with a mystical force. Rated "PG-13" for violence."

Nambla Bulletin vol.7/5 – June 1986 – media note:

"...A summer movie release to watch for is "SOLARBABIES", Lukas Haas, a quality actor, starring; it's described as a cross between "E.T." and "THE ROAD WARRIOR"..."

[no listing in "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "The Time Out Film Guide", "Variety Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

TV Times review:

"This science-fiction yarn mixes elements of "STAR WARS" and the "MAD MAX" films into a junior-league fantasy chase film – and the cast is terrific. But it looks cheap, the dialogue is dire and the villains are laughable. Only the gloomy setting of Tiredtown shows the kind of flair needed. Unsuitable for younger children. * "

"Sci-fi adventure starring Richard Jordan. The future: the Earth is a parched planet dominated by the totalitarian Protectorate. But a group of roller skating teenagers take inspiration from an ancient mystical force to rebel against the state."

Radio Times note:

"Futuristic, world-saving adventure. * "

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Lukas Haas:

"When Lukas was four, his kindergarten class took part in the Los Angeles Festival of Masks. He was so committed to his characterisation as a spider that he insisted on crawling the entire mile-long parade route – such was the artistic seriousness and iron will of the deceptively meek-looking, jug-eared little boy."

He is best known as the Amish child perilously guarded by Harrison Ford in "WITNESS", but was admirable too in "TESTAMENT", though

he could do little to redeem the feebleness of
"LADY IN WHITE".

"Unsuitable" for younger children? Unsuitable for all but the most knucklebrained teen audience, if we're being frank with our readers (which TV guides seldom are). For once the critics seem unanimous, and no wonder. This is risible popcorn junk from that doyen of risible junk, Mel Brooks. It very deservedly bombed at the box office, and after just half an hour of watching it scrabble about in the dust of creative poverty for a plot, I too had to bale out.

The film opens in a maximum security orphanage surrounded by open desert. It's the kind of orphanage, like so many on-screen American high schools, where no-one seems to be under 18 (perhaps the population have all gone as infertile as the planet seems to be?) But wait, there **is** one token kid among all these lumbering "jocks" and "babes", a deaf mascot in the shape of Daniel (Lukas Haas, fresh from better things in "**WITNESS**"). This is the future, dudes, and there appears to be little in the way of transport, yet for reasons surpassing understanding the teen inmates of this state-run lock-up are able to zip about on rollerskates playing hockey after lights out. Like "**ROLLERBALL**", only crap.

While evading arrest one such night, Daniel blunders into a cave where he finds a mysterious glowing orb, "Bohdi", that cures his deafness and responds to his thoughts. Daniel takes this marvel of cutting edge special effects back to the dorm, where his giant room-mates are duly enchanted (the audience is not, because this automated Tinkerbell has zero cute appeal). It creates a thunderstorm for them inside their dorm, and they all hug each other and flex their jock-and-babe musculature ecstatically in the wet.

No time for logic, there is just time for the obligatory face-off with the bad guy (son of the security chief, how else?), who comes on strong to the babe properly earmarked for top jock Jason (Jason Patric, of "**THE LOST BOYS**"), and then we're all set for The Quest to unfold. The orb is stolen, Daniel disappears, and his older messmates decide to break out and search for him. Next moment they're rollerboogeying to freedom. Well, that was quite enough for **my** stomach...

Oh yes, and the hero contingent comprises:

Jocks:	ONE;
Babes:	ONE (for Jock)
Blacks:	ONE
Nerds:	ONE

So no demographic changes anticipated there in the next millennium, and how uncannily the youth of the distant future emulate the speech patterns of their 1980s ancestors. The scenario clearly hopes to curry favour with the Green lobby by its ecologically ravaged Earth, but it hasn't a shred of environmentalist conviction. Indeed, the whole thing reeks of being thrown together from a teen-flic formula on the back of a cereal packet. Poor Lukas Haas, finding himself the lovable pet in such a turkey. No wonder he tried to bail out early. Do likewise. If you thought "**LOGAN'S RUN**" looked cheesy, wait til you get a load of this!

Dystopian futures tend to be light on the set-building budget, which is why B-movie titans favour them. Fistfuls of straight-to-video SF titles have been set in similarly ravaged (eerily late 20th century) landscapes. See "**DAMNATION ALLEY**" (77), "**MAD MAX 2**" (81) and "**MAD MAX BEYOND THUNDERDOME**" (85) for similar visions. Lukas was 10, his less well known outings including "**THE DOCTOR**" (84), "**LOVE THY NEIGHBOR**" (84), "**SEE YOU IN THE MORNING**" (88), "**THE WIZARD OF LONELINESS**" (88) and "**MUSIC BOX**" (89).

See subject index under **DISABLED / HANDICAPPED**, **ECOLOGY / ENVIRONMENTALISM**, **ORPHANS / CHILDREN'S HOMES**, **PRISON / BORSTAL** and **SCIENCE FICTION**.