JIM reports on TRAIN TOUR for Disney's film "A CHRISTMAS CAROL"

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**DISNEY’S “A CHRISTMAS CAROL” in 3-D (TRAIN TOUR) – Get ON BOARD while this event is around! =**

Rating: 9 of 10 stars.

Disney has set up a TRAIN TOUR to promote their upcoming Robert Zemeckis-directed “A CHRISTMAS CAROL” release in 3-D (& IMAX) on November 6, 2009. A specially-designed tour covering 40 cities stopped at Chicago’s Union Station on July 24th (where it will be thru 7-26). It will visit various Central, Midwest, East Coast & Southern cities thru early November (including DALLAS on August 18-19, DETROIT on September 4-6, & NEW YORK CITY on Oct. 30 – Nov. 1).

Besides live performers (including jugglers, carolers, etc.), there were booths where you could sign up to try to win an HP PC & printer, movie-related prizes, etc.

An inflatable theater was set up inside the station & it showed a 10-minute Digital 3D TRAILER of the film. Using the stop-motion technique Zemeckis pioneered with Tom Hanks in "POLAR EXPRESS", this film expands on the concept using Jim Carrey in a serious role as Scrooge, + Colin Firth as Fred, Robin Wright Penn as Belle, Bob Hoskins, et al. The depth and action achieved by the 3-D & special effects techniques look marvelous, & I expect it’ll be fabulous in IMAX!

I then waited in line (for like an hour) to walk thru the multi-car specially-outfitted TRAIN itself. It held loads of impressive concept art (often shown on individual screens on the walls), costumes from the film, models & maquettes of various characters and architecture (such as Big Ben Tower), information showing how the stop-action MOTION-CAPTURE system works, etc.

In one section, there were various glass cases showing original CHARLES DICKENS artifacts from a London museum dedicated to him—original letters, books, etc.

At the end, they had a special area in which you could take photos of your face & “MORPH” it into various characters from the film— which will later be available for you to DOWNLOAD. (To use it, you must input your birth-date - be sure to use double characters for the month & day, as that’s not clearly explained! — & your e-mail address). After the photo is taken (by lining up your eyes in 2 holes on a mask; be sure you get a proper-height STEP-stool if you need that!), you drag symbols onto your face to line-up with the basic face outlines of the film characters.

There are numerous places you might want to take PHOTOS in the train (including the very end which has a fireplace “from” the film + a “Christmas Dinner” setting looking “out” onto a street scene with Scrooge's store)... The whole thing is FASCINATING & exceptionally WELL-DONE. As a friend commented to me, she wishes they had the Train there for like 5 days, so she had time to go back & see it a SECOND time!... (As you leave, be sure to take the literature they’re offering— because one of them gives you 50% off an AMTRAK fare for a companion ticket, good [with certain restrictions] thru 12-4-09)... This promotional event is HIGHLY recommended for a visit!

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