

## DVD, Blu-Ray Review: Marvelous Magic of Miyazaki Led by ‘Ponyo’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 3, 2010 - 6:44pm

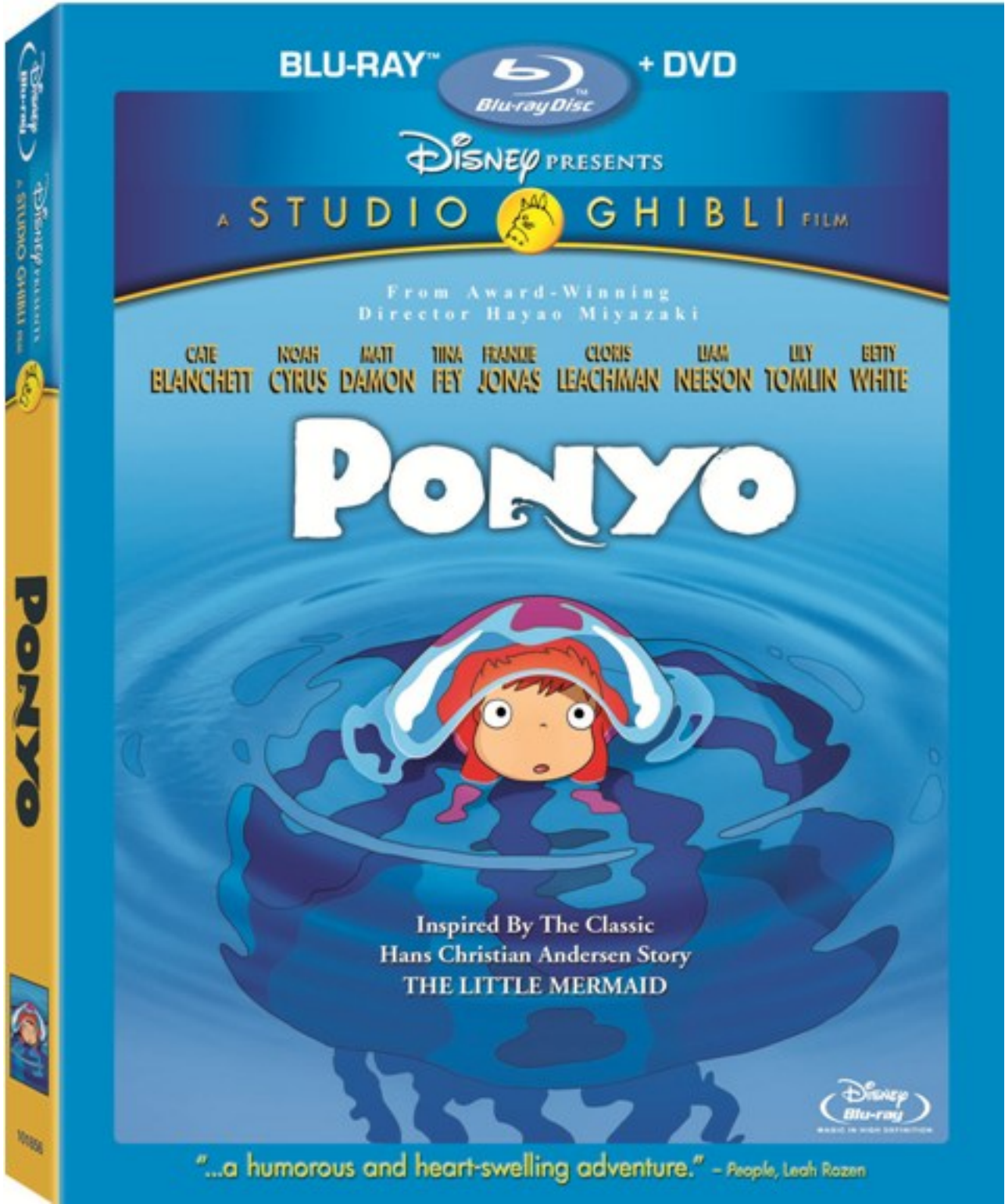
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CHICAGO – Hayao Miyazaki has made some of the most magical, wonderful films in the history of animation. He is easily one of the medium’s most influential and talented filmmakers and one need look no further than this week’s special edition releases of “Castle in the Sky,” “Kiki’s Delivery Service,” “My Neighbor Totoro,” and “Ponyo,” the last of which comes in a Blu-ray/DVD combo. Pick them all up.



Blu-Ray Rating: **4.5/5.0**

I have such love and admiration for Miyazaki’s work that I nearly lose my critical faculties when I watch his films. They are so beautiful and transporting that it becomes difficult to assess them in the same way one would animation like, say, “Planet 51” or “Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs”. They are films that only work if one succumbs to them like one used to do with the fantasy books their parents read them as a child. Don’t ask questions. Take the ride and enjoy the magic.



Ponyo was released on DVD and Blu-ray on March 2nd, 2010.  
Photo credit: Buena Vista Home Video

Having said that, viewers should be aware that “Ponyo” is a Studio Ghibli film aimed more directly at the smallest members of the family than recent entries like “Howl’s Moving Castle,” “Princess Mononoke,” or even the amazing “Spirited Away”. At times, “Ponyo” can feel a little too “kiddie” but if you give in to the world it creates, the gorgeous animation, and the heartwarming story, you may, for lack of a less-used cliché, feel like a kid again yourself.

“Ponyo” is a retelling of the classic fairy tale “The Little Mermaid” by Hans Christian Anderson, told in a way that only Miyazaki’s Studio Ghibli could tell it. The title character is a goldfish rescued by a little boy named Sosuke. When Ponyo decides she wants to be a human, it triggers a natural catastrophe and throws off the balance between man and the sea. Voice work on the dubbed version of “Ponyo” is contributed by Cate Blanchett, Matt Damon, Tina Fey, Cloris Leachman, Liam Neeson, Lily Tomlin, Betty White, and more.

For me, “Ponyo” is a visual experience, a gorgeous representation of an underwater world and the real one that lives just on the edge of it. What child hasn’t dreamed off a fantastic world under the sea? And the animation in “Ponyo” is strikingly beautiful, as if the water is alive. It looks remarkable in HD and “Ponyo” is the first Miyazaki film available on Blu-ray. To coincide with its release, Disney is releasing three other Miyazaki films in two-disc, standard DVD releases. It’s too bad all of the films weren’t released on Blu-ray, but they’re all worth a look, especially the delightful “My Neighbor Totoro”. Official synopsis and special feature info for the standard titles follow.

Before that, special features on “Ponyo” include “The World of Ghibli,” “Meet Ponyo,” and a storyboard presentation of the film.





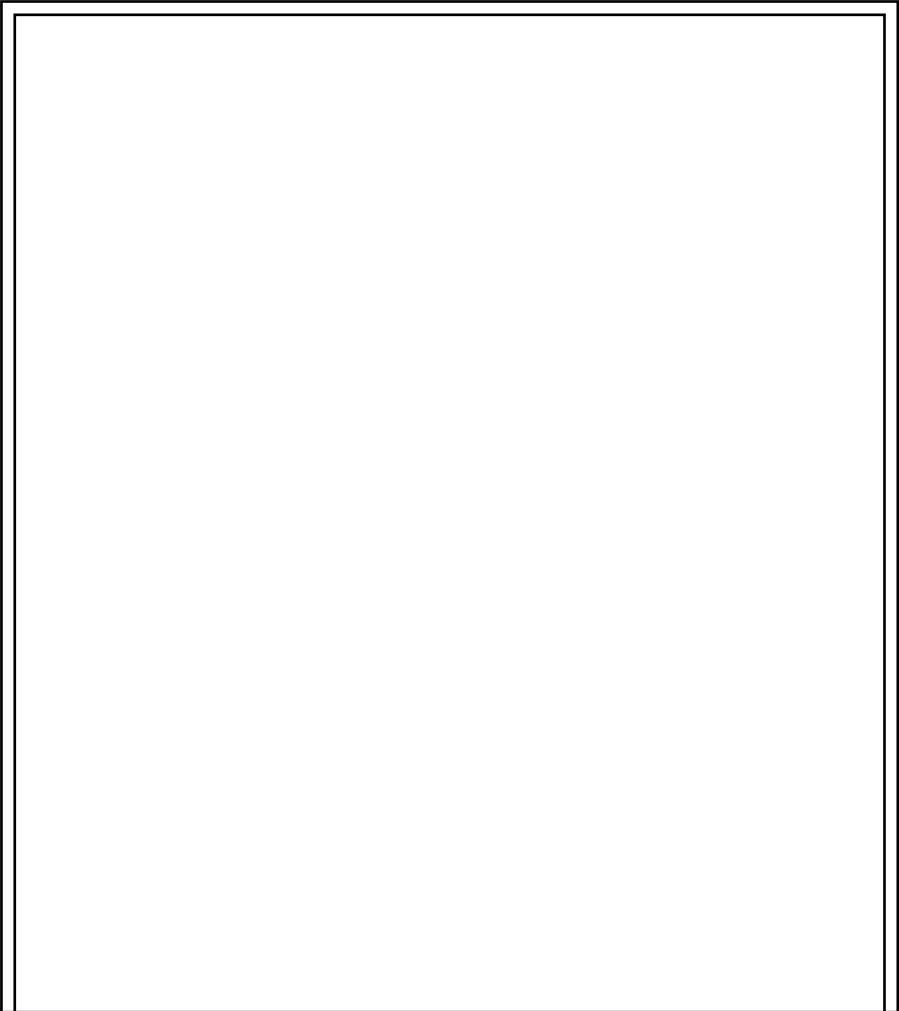
Castle in the Sky was released on DVD on March 2nd, 2010.  
Photo credit: Buena Vista Home Video

“Castle in the Sky”

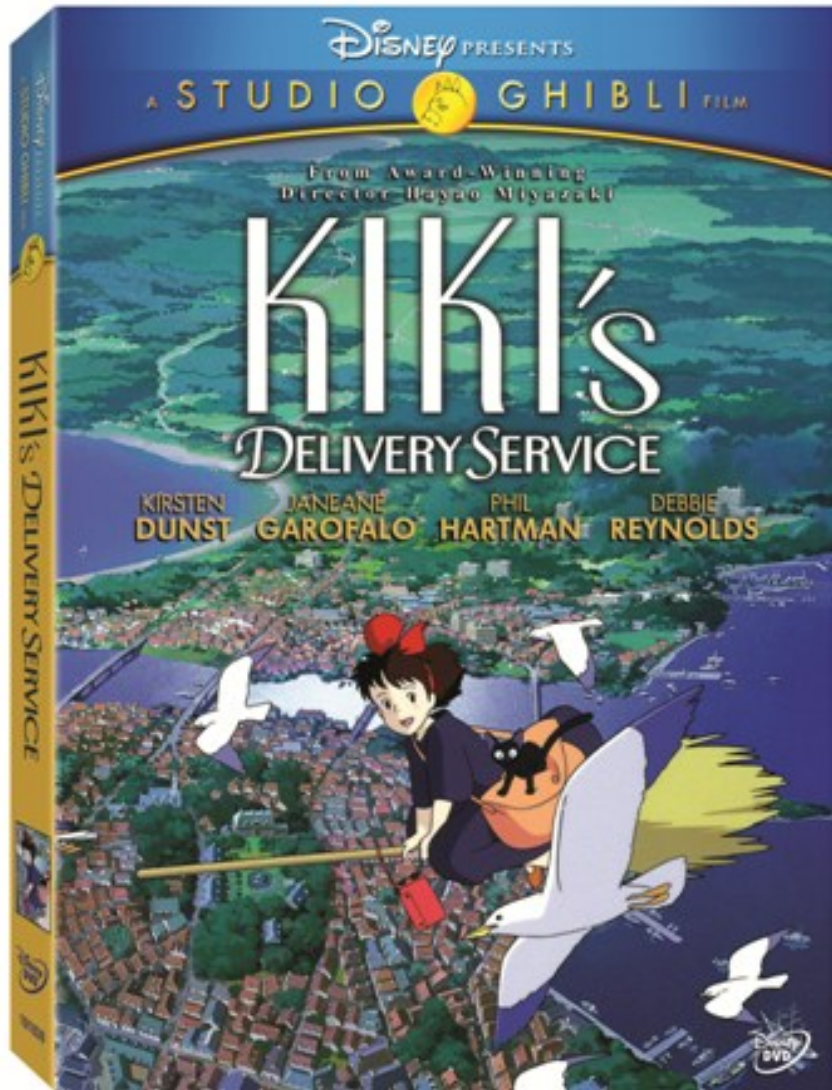
Synopsis: “Introduce your entire family to Castle In The Sky: Special Edition, featuring a timeless story of courage and friendship with stunning animation from acclaimed Academy-Award®-winning\* director Hayao Miyazaki. Plus, this 2-Disc Special Edition DVD included never-before-seen bonus features that transport you deeper into the film’s amazing world! This high-flying adventure begins when Pazu, an engineer’s apprentice, finds a young girl, Sheeta, floating down from the sky, wearing a glowing pendant. Together, they discover both are searching for a legendary floating castle, Laputa, and vow to unravel the mystery of the luminous crystal around Sheeta’s neck. Their quest won’t be easy, however. There are greedy air pirates, secret government agents and astounding obstacles to keep them from the truth—and from each other. Add Castle In The Sky: Special Edition to your DVD library, and this magical and uplifting classic will thrill and amaze your family for years to come!”

Bonus Features

- o The World Of Ghibli – Visit Castle In The Sky In This Imaginative Interactive Experience!
- o Introduction By John Lasseter
- o Storyboard Presentation Of The Movie







Kiki's Delivery Service was released on DVD on March 2nd, 2010.  
*Photo credit: Buena Vista Home Video*

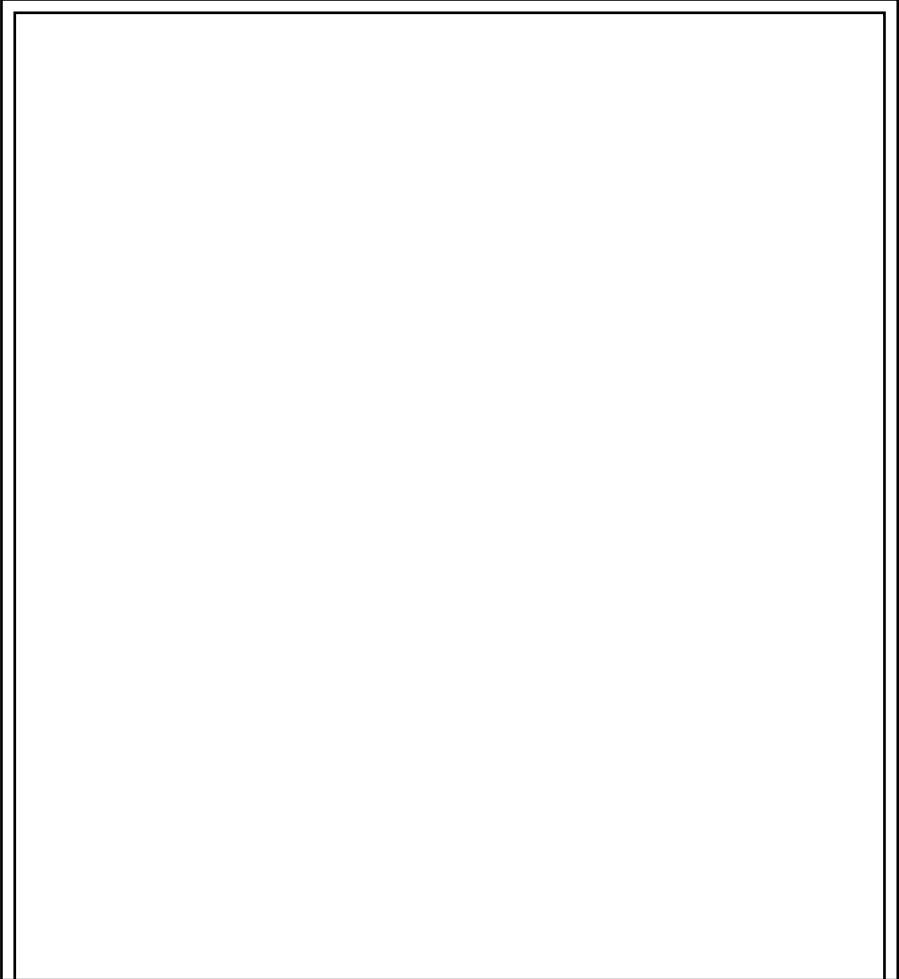
“Kiki’s Delivery Service”

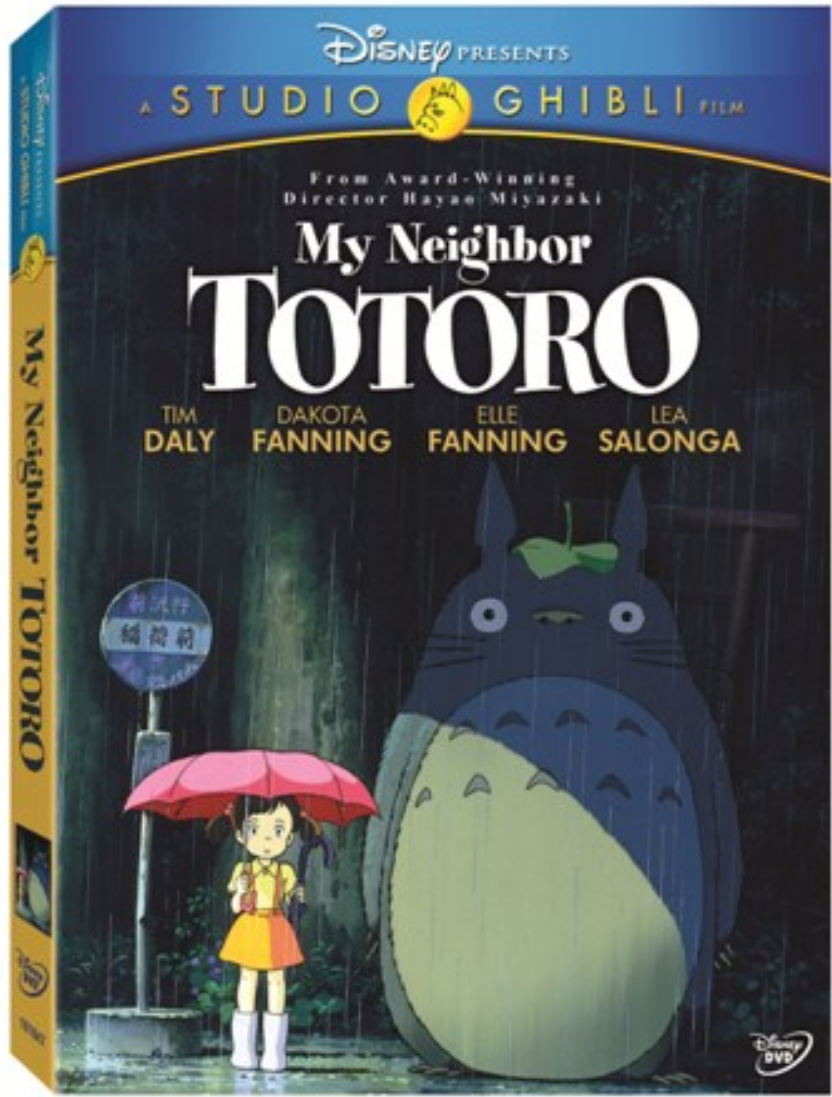
Synopsis: “Discover Kiki’s Delivery Service: Special Edition, a fantastic coming-of-age tale full of magic, adventure and self-discovery from the sensational imagination of Academy-Award®-winning\* director Hayao Miyazaki. And now you can explore even more of Kiki’s amazing world through never-before-seen bonus features—exclusively in this 2-Disc Special Edition DVD! Kiki is an enterprising young girl who must follow tradition to become a full-fledged witch. Venturing out with only her black cat, Jiji, Kiki flies off for the adventure of a lifetime. Landing in a far-off city, she sets up a high-flying delivery service and begins a wonderful experience of independence and responsibility as she finds her place in the world. Bring home Kiki’s Delivery Service: Special Edition for your family’s DVD library and share Kiki’s high-flying adventure again and again!”

Bonus Features

- o The World Of Ghibli – Visit Kiki’s Delivery Service In This Imaginative Interactive Experience!
- o Introduction By John Lasseter
- o Storyboard Presentation Of The Movie

“My Neighbor Totoro”





My Neighbor Totoro was released on DVD on March 2nd, 2010.  
Photo credit: Buena Vista Home Video

Synopsis: “Visionary and Academy-Award®-winning\* director Hayao Miyazaki has created a heartwarming, music-filled and wonderful world in My Neighbor Totoro: Special Edition, a delightfully animated family adventure. And now—exclusively in this 2-Disc Special Edition DVD—never-before-seen bonus features reveal even more of Totoro’s fantastic world! Follow the adventures of Satsuki and her four-year-old sister Mei when they move into a new home in the countryside. To their delight, they discover that their new neighbor is a mysterious forest spirit called Totoro—who can be seen only through the eyes of a child. Totoro introduces them to extraordinary characters—including a cat that doubles as a bus!—and takes them on an incredible journey. Bring home My Neighbor Totoro: Special Edition for your family’s DVD library and experience the timeless classic film critic Roger Ebert calls “one of the very few that come along that are magical for all ages.””

Bonus Features

- o The World Of Ghibli – Visit My Neighbor Totoro In This Imaginative Interactive Experience!
- o Storyboard Presentation Of The Movie



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Source URL (retrieved on Apr 25 2024 - 12:44pm):  
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