

Film Review: Spectacle, Emotion Propel Animation in ‘Mars Needs Moms’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on March 11, 2011 - 6:13pm

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CHICAGO – “Mars Needs Moms” is an animated epic that takes its time to build toward the message, but the path to that real emotion is decorated with spectacular imagery and sprightly comedy. It’s Mom, apple pie and motion capture technology.



Going the same route as “Avatar,” but creating a more cartoon feel, Mars Needs Moms uses motion capture – the actors performing in specially designed outfits on which their animated characters will be applied to in post production – as a way to create a Planet Mars that needs a lesson. The landscape of this lesson is breathtaking, another breakthrough in design and function. The story gets in the way a bit, but evens the score with a exciting ending.

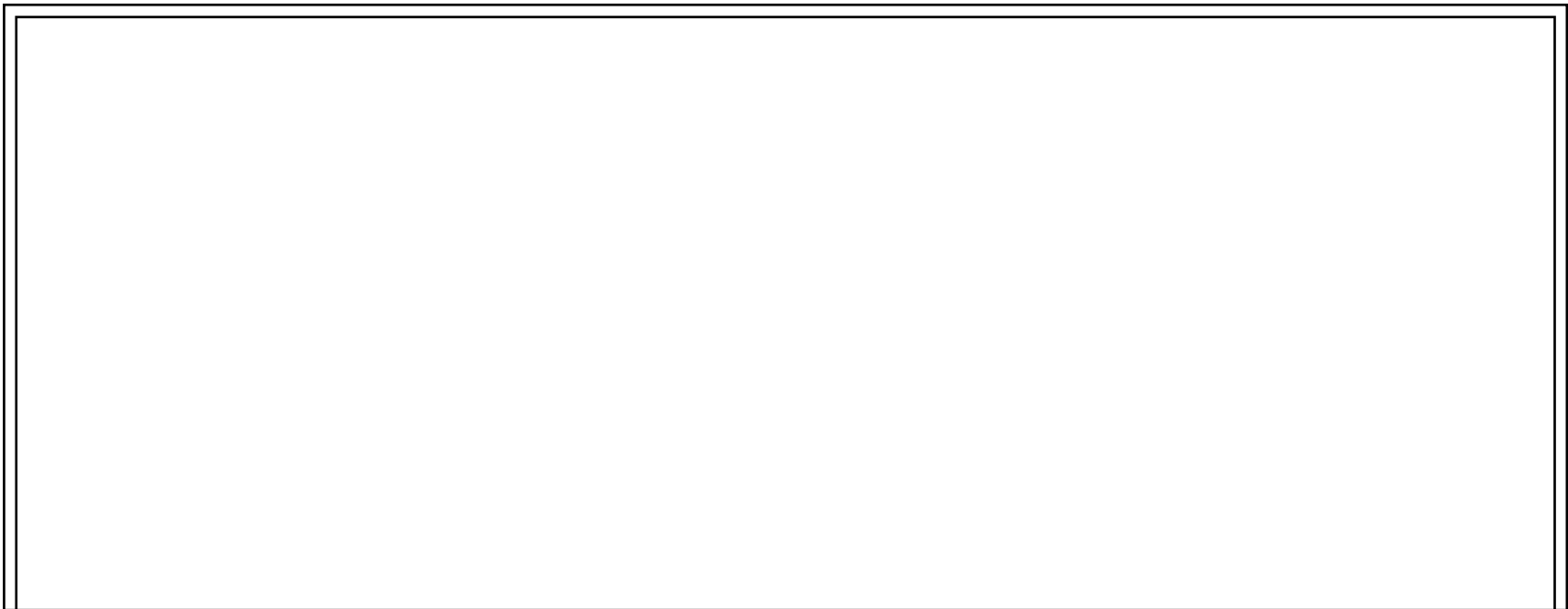
Milo (crisply voiced by Seth Green) is a pre-pubescent boy who hates taking out the garbage and feels he is put upon by his demanding mother (Joan Cusack). After another argument, he is forced to his room, and hurls a very hurtful last epithet towards his Mom. Meanwhile, in the underground world of the Planet Mars, Milo’s mother has been targeted as a perfect disciplinarian figure to abduct for nefarious purposes.

And abducted she is. A posse of Martians captures her in the night, but not without notice from Milo, who pursuits the captors back to the spacecraft. He manages to get aboard, and through the wormhole the rocket occupants go, back to the Red Planet. Milo is noticed and imprisoned, but an unseen force opens his cell, and craftily leads him to a large garbage dump. There he meets Gribble, an earthling who ended up on Mars 25 years ago for the same reason Milo is there; they captured his mother.

Gribble explains that Mars implants the perfect mother’s disciplinary essence into their robot nannies, who then care for the children who are born every 25 years. The mother they use is expendable, she ceases to exist once the power of the sunrise completes the process. That gives Milo about six hours to plan a rescue. With Gribble’s help, and a hippie-esque Martian named Ki (Elisabeth Harnois), they might just be able to pull it off.

“Mars Needs Mothers” opens everywhere March 11th. Featuring the voices of Seth Green, Dan Fogler, Joan Cusack, Elisabeth Harnois and Tom Everett Scott.. Based on the book by Berkeley Breathed, screenplay by Simon Wells and Wendy Wells, directed by Simon Wells. Rated “PG” NOTE: Stay for the end credits, they contain a fun music video and some behind-the-animation technology scenes.

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Nerve Center: Gribble (Voice of Dan Folger) and Milo (Seth Green) in ‘Mars Need Moms’
Photo credit: © Image Movers Digital

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