

TV Review: Disney XD Launches Likely Hit in ‘TRON: Uprising’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 6, 2012 - 8:12pm

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CHICAGO – What took so long? It’s the question that keeps nagging at the back of one’s mind while watching the series premiere of Disney XD’s “TRON: Uprising,” a new animated program debuting on the network on Thursday, June 7, 2012 and a virtually guaranteed hit. This is dark, well-made, entertaining material that mines a common thematic vein in young adult fiction — defying authority.



TV Rating: **3.5/5.0**

“TRON: Uprising” takes place in the same universe as the recently-released Disney theatrical hit, “TRON: Legacy,” and was created by two of the writers of that film — Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz (who were also executive producers on “Lost” and “Once Upon a Time”). On a storytelling level, it feels very much in step with “Legacy.” If you were put off by that film, don’t expect to fall in love with this show. At the same time, if you’re one of the pre-teens who adored the return to “TRON,” the show should work for you. It’s well-made, intense, and interesting on a design level. I wish the writing was a bit stronger and it doesn’t stand up to today’s best young adult animation (at least not in the premiere) but there’s enough to like here to recommend it to the audience for which it was intended. “TRON” fans should be satisfied. And that’s all that really matters.



TRON: Uprising

Photo credit: Disney XD

Elijah Wood voices Beck, a new character in the universe of “TRON” (although familiar ones will be referenced and sometimes even make appearances as Olivia Wilde will do in a future in episode and Bruce Boxleitner does throughout the series). Beck is a part of a generation of programs in the universe of “TRON” who are tired of being beaten down by the ruthless Clu and his henchman General Tesler (Lance Henriksen) in a city on The Grid named Argon City. Beck’s best friend Bodhi is derezzed in the blink of an eye by Clu’s Army and the young man decides it’s time for a revolution. It’s time for an uprising. Beck’s plans catch the attention of Tron (Boxleitner) and he trains him to follow

in his footsteps as a leader of the people.



TRON: Uprising
Photo credit: Disney XD

It’s a classic young adult story — the average kid turned hero against authority — but it’s done in a modern enough way that the audience probably won’t even notice the cliches. Naturally, the focus here is on action, often in slow motion and scored to consistent music. And so things like dialogue and character kind of miss the mark. I wish I could have seen more than one episode since the premiere naturally has to be heavy on effects and action to keep audiences interested in coming back. But I hope Beck becomes a more dynamic protagonist in future episodes.

Until then, the two things that elevate “TRON: Uprising” are simple and related — the pedigree of the voice cast and the quality of the animation. Wood is fantastic, as usual, and co-stars like Emmanuelle Chriqui, Mandy Moore, and Paul Reubens add depth to a voice cast that could have been thin without them. They’re all quite good. And “TRON: Uprising” looks great. The show is a CGI program, of course, but it has a 2-D look at times that allows it to stand out.

In many ways, “TRON: Uprising” is better than “TRON: Legacy.” Whereas that film wore out its welcome with a bloated running time and fell due to self-seriousness, “Uprising” is a perfect adrenalin shot of sci-fi that knows it should be hyperactive young adult fun. The universe of “TRON” feels like it was always meant for TV animation. What took so long?

“TRON: Uprising” features voice work by Elijah Wood, Emmanuelle Chriqui, Mandy Moore, Paul Reubens, Nate Corddry, Lance Henriksen, and Bruce Boxleitner. It premieres on Disney XD at 8pm CST on June 7, 2012.



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