Film Review: 'Legends of Oz: Dorothy's Return' is For Kids Only

Submitted by **PatrickMcD** [1] on May 10, 2014 - 8:20am

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CHICAGO – The so-called "legend of Oz" will cease to be legendary if they keep producing lame re-engineerings of the 1939 classic "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz." Close on the heels of last year's dud, "Oz the Great and Powerful," comes the dully rendered "Legends of Oz: Dorothy's Return."

Rating: **2.5**/5.0

The screenplay – by Adam Balsam and Randi Barnes – is strictly boilerplate, with no consideration for creating something different for the Dorothy and Oz story, just an odd updating of the Kansas atmosphere and a rather depressing disaster area in the town after the first tornado. The voice casting of TV actress Lea Michele ("Glee") as Dorothy is a sure sign of a way to lower the budget, and although some of the elements are interesting (the voice of Patrick Stewart as a talking piece of wood), overall the film will work as a glazed-eye babysitter for the kids, while adults can find time for introspective meditation on their lost youth.

The film supposedly takes place after the 1939 adventure, but the setting that Dorothy Gale (voice of Lea Michele) is a more modern Kansas. The area has been devastated by the tornado that took Dorothy to Oz, and a housing assessor (Martin Short) is busy condemning property. Meanwhile back in Oz, the Scarecrow (Dan Aykroyd) is desperately trying to signal Dorothy to help them with another dilemma.

It seems that The Jester (Short, again) has taken all the leaders of Oz captive by using the magic broomstick of the recently defeated Wicked Witch of the West. This includes Glinda the Good Witch (Bernadette Peters), and eventually the Scarecrow, Tin Man (Kelsey Grammer) and Cowardly Lion (James Belushi). Dorothy and Toto ride back to Oz on a magic rainbow (groovy trip) and begins the rescue with some new friends, including an owl name Wiser (Oliver Platt).

"Legends of Oz: Dorothy's Return" opens everywhere on May 9th, in 3D and regular screenings. See local listings for 3D theaters and show times. Featuring the voices of Lea Michele, Kelsey Grammer, Dan Aykroyd, Martin Short, Bernadette Peters, James Belushi, Hugh Dancy, Oliver Platt and Patrick Stewart. Screenplay by Adam Balsam and Randi Barnes. Directed by Will Finn and Dan St. Pierre. Rated "PG"

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The Band is Back Together in 'Legends of Oz: Dorothy's Return'
Photo credit: Clarius Entertainment

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