

## Blu-Ray Review: 'Horton Hears a Who' a Playful Movie, Average Blu-Ray

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 15, 2008 - 1:20pm

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CHICAGO – Fox animation tries to keep pace with DreamWorks and Disney with their high budget, extras-packed release of “Dr. Seuss’ Horton Hears a Who”, an entertaining animated adventure but a Blu-Ray release that does nothing to rise above average.

With a mediocre video and audio transfer, a frustratingly organized collection of special features, and the fact that the highlight of the package is essentially a commercial for another movie, the Blu-Ray release of “Horton Hears a Who” has to be considered a disappointment, even if the film itself is more consistently enjoyable than most adaptations of the legendary author.



Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who is available on DVD/Blu-Ray on December 9, 2008.

Jim Carrey voices the title character, a playful pachyderm named Horton who happens to hear a sound coming from microscopic speck of dust. Horton discovers an entire community known as Who-ville existing on that floating orb and realizes that he holds their fate in his giant hands. Steve Carell voices the Mayor of Who-Ville, the only Who who knows that the strange changes in his world are due to Horton and the inhabitants of the world above. Horton needs to find a safer home for the Who-ville speck of dust but the Sour Kangaroo (Carol Burnett) stands in his way. Meanwhile, the Mayor has a loving wife named Sally (Amy Poehler), 96 daughters, and one lonely son named JoJo (Jesse McCartney). Can the giant elephant and the creature who lives on a speck of dust work together to save the day?

“Horton Hears a Who” is far from the most clever animated script of the year but it’s well-paced enough to be consistently enjoyable for its brief running time and the voice work helps the film stand out. Carrey and Carell are predictably excellent and expressive but Burnett, Will Arnett, Seth Rogen, and the rest of the cast work together seamlessly and creatively. There’s also a surreal nature to both the character design and script for “Horton Hears a Who” (for example, the movie ends with a cast sing-a-long to REO Speedwagon’s “Can’t Fight This Feeling”) that’s refreshing for a genre that’s typically predictable.

“Horton Hears a Who” was not as critically successful as “Kung Fu Panda” or “Wall-E”, but that doesn’t excuse the sometimes-shabby treatment Fox continues to give their animated features on Blu-Ray. The HD video in 1.85:1 widescreen is certainly not bad, but when it’s compared to “Panda” or “Wall-E” it looks shockingly flat. The colors simply are not as vibrant or three-dimensional. The audio is also below average for animation on Blu-Ray with a 5.1 DTS HD Master Audio track that isn’t bad but isn’t memorable either.



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What's most frustrating about Fox Blu-Ray is the way they have chosen to organize their special features. While other studios are trying to find new ways to present featurettes and commentaries on the next-gen format, Fox is taking a step back, usually choosing to emphasize quantity over quality or organization.

Looking at the back of the BD case for "Horton Hears a Who" will entice fans of the film to set aside time for the extensive list of special features but a large majority of them run under five minutes long before bouncing viewers back to the menu screen. Why not collect them all into one behind-the-scenes documentary? It's hard to believe that there's a single viewer out there who enjoys two-to-three minute featurettes like "Meet Katie" or "The Elephant in the Room: Jim Carrey". Other featurettes include "Bringing the Characters to Life", "That's One Big Elephant: Animating Horton", "Bringing Seuss to Screen", "A Person is a Person: A Universal Message", "Our Speck: Where Do We Fit In?", and "Elephant Fun: The Facts". None are memorable.

Far more interesting will be the deleted footage and animation screen tests, the commentary by directors Jimmy Hayward and Steve Martino and an all-new "Ice Age" short called "Surviving Sid". Featuring John Leguizamo and his character from the first two "Ice Age" movies, "Surviving Sid" is a cute, 8-minute film that all fans of that franchise should enjoy. There's also a preview for the third "Ice Age" movie, coming out early in 2009. Hopefully, the inevitable Blu-Ray release for that film is more impressive than the one for "Horton Hears a Who".

*'Horton Hears a Who' is released by Twentieth Century Fox Home Video on DVD/Blu-Ray and stars Jim Carrey, Steve Carell, Will Arnett, Seth Rogen, Isla Fisher, and Amy Poehler. It was written by Cinco Paul & Ken Daurio and directed by Jimmy Hayward & Steve Martino. It will be released on December 9th, 2008.*



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