

Voice Cast Delights in Wonderful ‘Wreck-It Ralph’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 2, 2012 - 10:04am

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – The nostalgia of the old video game arcade comes to life in a charming and fun way in the new Disney film, “Wreck-It Ralph.” One of the strengths is the precise selection of celebrity voices used to animate the rollicking characters. John C. Reilly, Sarah Silverman and Jane Lynch are part of the familiar voice cast.

What makes “Wreck-It Ralph” so enjoyable, is that it never panders to sweetness and it doesn’t rely on pop culture references for laughs (beyond it video game roots, which is the subject of the story). The coming-to-life of the various video game characters are fit with perfect voice matches, which adds so much entertainment to an already fresh story and atmosphere. Creating a universe from the simple and well-known comfort zone of the arcade – for what is now multiple generations – is pure genius, and for the most part the wacky story fits naturally into that environment. “Wreck-It Ralph” is a valuable day at the movies.

Ralph (voice of John C. Reilly) is the antagonist of the video game “Fix-It Felix, Jr.” The idea is that Ralph wrecks the building, and points are gained by Felix (Jack McBrayer) fixing up the joint. This arrangement has worked for 30 years, until finally Ralph has had enough. He wants to be the hero for a change, and join in the adulation of the Fix-It community. He escapes his game – by cleverly going through the electrical plugs – and ends up in the game “Hero’s Duty,” a tough-as-nails first shooter contest run by the harsh commander Calhoun (Jane Lynch).



Vanellope (voice of Sarah Silverman) and Ralph (John C. Reilly) in ‘Wreck-It Ralph’
Photo credit: Walt Disney Pictures

He gets a heroes medal as part of the game, and can't wait to get back to the Fix-It village to claim his attention. He borrows a craft from "Heroes Duty" that accidentally lands him into "Sugar's Rush," a sticky-sweet candy themed game. He loses his medal to Vanellope Van Schweetz (Sarah Silverman), who uses it to enter the Sugar Rush race. Vanellope is a "glitch," who is trapped in exile until she participates in the race. Meanwhile, Fix-It Felix goes in search of Ralph, and gains an ally in Calhoun. It seems that Ralph has taken a Cy-bug in "Sugar Rush" and can destroy the whole video universe if the bugs multiply, which would result in "game over."

The worlds of these video games come to life, in eye-popping 3D. The animation advantage of Walt Disney Studios provide the highest degree of landscape for the characters to romp in. Attention to detail includes how the video characters move, especially the villagers of Fix-It Felix, doing that herky-jerky dance of the old school arcade games. It's an easy and life-affirming laugh. The contrast between the modern looking game of "Heroes Duty," and the Japanese influenced "Sugar Rush" is also an amusing counterpoint to sad sack Ralph.

The voice talents behind the characters are nearly perfect. Reilly has idealized the outsider depressed soul, like his "Mr. Cellophane" character from the movie "Chicago." He gives Ralph a heart, but he still can't help but wreck things. Somehow Reilly is able to characterize everything in his voice manner. Sarah Silverman is a highlight, maintaining her off-kilter naughty girl act, but filtered through a child-like game persona. Her riffs are both sugary and acidic, and it was both clever to cast her and let her go. Jane Lynch gets the best "back story" for her army character, and spouts the best lines in her inimitable style. And it's a credit to Jack McBrayer (Kenneth the page on "30 Rock") that Fix-It Felix looked more and more like him as the story progressed.

The background is vital to making this work as well. There is a villain in the story, King Candy, and he is voiced by Alan Tudyk like the old-time comedian Ed Wynn. That touch gives the Sugar Rush kingdom a sense of nostalgia, amid its anime modernity. His aides, a sour ball hard candy and cops that look like doughnuts, are visual puns that are savory. Everything about creating the video game universe is done with such care, using all the tools of today's computer animation, that the Walt Disney Studios can embrace the new age with heads held high.



Fix-It Felix (Jack McBrayer) and his Magic Hammer in 'Wreck-It Ralph'
Photo credit: Walt Disney Pictures

The story is easy to guess, but it's the journey that is better than the destination. There is a sense of wrapping up everything at the end, but it is joyful to see the friendship of Ralph and Vanellope come to reasonable fruition – with a tartness rather than saccharine – plus the addition of new jobs for some famous video creatures. "Wreck-It Ralph" is a glad-to-be-alive celebration.

The ambience of the old video arcades – the faded carpets, stand-up consoles and smells of whatever fried food was cooking – deserves to come back to form. There were many hours spent there, and so much euphoria realized. It's the best life ever in memory chips, and the game is never over.

"Wreck-It Ralph" opens everywhere November 2nd. See local listings for 3D showings and theaters. Featuring the voices of John C. Reilly, Sarah Silverman, Jane Lynch, Jack McBrayer, Mindy Kaling, Ed O'Neill, Dennis Haysbert and Adam Carolla. Screenplay by Jennifer Lee and Phil Johnston. Directed by Rich Moore. Rated "PG"



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