

Light, Speedy ‘Turbo’ is a Great Race for Kids

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 17, 2013 - 10:03am

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Summer vacation means summer animated movies, and nothing will give the kids more of a break than rooting for a snail that becomes as fast as an Indy race car. Why not put him in the Indianapolis 500? Ryan Reynolds is the voice of that miracle mollusk named “Turbo.”

This high concept is engineered for maximum speed and efficiency. The gang of snails in a typical garden have that one rebel named Turbo, who wants to be the fastest slow creature of them all. The scenario is taken to the nth degree, amongst a interesting visual universe, and a large ensemble of familiar celebrity voices. This is the moral of no matter what circumstance you’re born into, you can overcome the obstacles. This plays out both with Turbo, his snail community and his working class human pals. Everybody goes to the Indianapolis Speedway to find out how a snail will set them free. Either that or it makes a nice incentive to buy that stuffed Turbo for Christmas.

Turbo the snail (voice of Ryan Reynolds) is a self determined speed freak. He is constantly watching race footage of his driver hero Guy Gagné (Bill Hader). Turbo’s brother Chet (Paul Giamatti) is worried about his sibling’s obsession, and tries to keep it from the rest of the snail community. Fate intervenes when Turbo sits above a highway, watching cars speed by.



Turbo (voice of Ryan Reynolds) with Tito (Michael Peña) in ‘Turbo’
Photo credit: 20th Century Fox

The snail is thrown into the air and is sucked into the engine of a drag racer. His DNA fuses with the nitrous oxide in the engine, and his whole body is changed. Turbo has gained super speed, along with other vehicle characteristics like eyes that glow like headlights. This gets him involved first in snail races, which are facilitated by a taco stand dreamer named Tito (Michael Peña). When Tito discovers this super speeder, he's taking him all the way to the Indianapolis 500.

This is a crazy fairy tale, and works best on the level of kids. There is some amazing scenic beauty in the film, especially the snail's garden and the details of the "Brickyard" track in Indy. And it was refreshing to see the heroics of the working man save the day through sheer determination. Tito lives in a world populated by his skeptical brother Angelo (Luis Guzmán), beautician Kim-Ly (Ken Jeong), mechanic Paz (Michelle Rodriguez) and hobby store operator Bobby (Richard Jenkins), and they all represent.

Yes, this is a vast and familiar roster of celebrity voices. This expresses the new era of animation, in which part of the fun is hearing Samuel L. Jackson's voice come through a rambunctious snail (Whiplash). The additional snail crew includes the voices of Maya Rudolph (Burn) and Snoop Dogg (Smooove Move). The film sounds almost like an after-party post a "Saturday Night Live" episode.

Like air travel and smart phones, there is a tendency to take for granted how brilliant the design and worlds created in the new golden age of animation. It's now about the story, and how the telling of it merges with the design. "Turbo" takes it to new heights, with the DNA conversion scene, the world of the strip mall where Tito works and the race track itself all rendered in a realistic tone and feel. Add 3D to that and it can be mind blowing.



The Indianapolis 500 is No Match for 'Turbo'
Photo credit: 20th Century Fox

There is nothing deep here, except maybe a slight satire regarding sports bureaucracy in bringing Turbo into the race. That took some serious story gymnastics. This is a lighter movie to take the family to, and can be enjoyed in both the two and three dimensional versions. It's the 27th animated epic from DreamWorks Animation, and they are closing in on taking the cartoon reins from Disney, as their studio seems to best understand this new golden age.

And when the slowest among us becomes the fastest, then we are humbled by the circumstances. It is the lesson we all must learn, as we cheer "Go Turbo Go" and hope that his hard shell can withstand the sublime moment when the rubber meets the road.

"Turbo" opens everywhere on July 17th in 3D and regular screenings. See local listings for 3D theaters and show times. Featuring the voices of Ryan Reynolds, Paul Giamatti, Michael Peña, Luis Guzmán, Bill Hader, Richard Jenkins, Ken Jeong, Michelle Rodriguez and Maya Rudolph. Screenplay by David Soren, Robert D. Siegel and Darren Lemke. Directed by David Soren. Rated "PG"



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