Heroic, Visually Bold ‘How to Train Your Dragon 2’

Submitted by PatrickMcD [1] on June 13, 2014 - 4:46pm

- 20th Century Fox [2]
- America Ferrera [3]
- Cate Blanchett [4]
- Christopher Mintz-Plasse [5]
- Craig Ferguson [6]
- Djimon Hounsou [7]
- Gerard Butler [8]
- HollywoodChicago.com Content [9]
- How to Train Your Dragon 2 [10]
- Jay Baruchel [11]
- Jonah Hill [12]
- Kit Harrington [13]
- Kristen Wiig [14]
- Movie Review [15]
- Patrick McDonald [16]
- T.J. Miller [17]



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – “How to Train Your Dragon 2” is spectacular in 3D, the filmmakers actually geared the film to enhance that much maligned vision. It also features a warm and heroic story about the coming-of-age for the character Hiccup, and his now fully trained dragon, Toothless.

The film evokes emotion in its visuals, they are so beautiful. From the Viking home of Berk, to the travels of Hiccup and Toothless, there is a stunning and artistically graphic world created – both above and below the clouds. The story is a bit more common and expected, but fine for the intended child audience. The combination of dragons, Vikings, flight and goofy humor should be irresistible to the kiddies, and the famous voice over actors behind the characters aim to please. While not sharing a classic story status with “Frozen” – as the previews imply – “How to Train Your Dragon 2” satisfies with its own ability to create awe at the movies.

It’s five years after the events of the first film, and the Viking village of Berk is at peace with the dragon population, who now live amongst the villagers and participate in their hottest spectator sport, dragon races. The gang from the first film is back, including Hiccup (voice of Jay Baruchel), with his faithful dragon companion Toothless. Hiccup’s father Stoick (Gerard Butler) is satisfied, and he’s planning to pass along the role of chief to his now famous son.



Hiccup (Voice of Jay Baruchel) and Company in ‘How to Train Your Dragon 2’

Photo credit: 20th Century Fox

A twist occurs when Hiccup and his galpal Astrid (America Ferrera) discover the remains of a burnt out fort. It is the work of an insane conqueror name Drago Bludvist (Djimon Hounsou) and it involves a dragon trapper named Eret (Kit Harrington). This opens up a hidden drawer of secrets including the manipulation of the dragon’s alpha species and the possibility that a mystery woman named Valka (Cate Blanchett) may be Hiccup’s long lost mother.

Everything in this film is so visually arresting it practically vibrates. The filmmakers have generously used the 3D technology to move the “camera” through the dragon races, the magical oceanic environment and the presentation of the dragons themselves. The acuity of all this is just so entertaining in itself, it elevates a story that is all too familiar to fairy tale readers.

Hiccup is now twenty years old, a little stubble on his cherubic face. His heroism in the face of his Oedipal issues – Mom may be- back! – is animated-cartoon-hero strong, and bit too predictable. But the story tries to make his struggle the symbolic transition to manhood, and manhood is much easier to defend if a fire breathing dragon is at you disposal. Hiccup takes the reins, and Toothless makes sure their friendship is the ride to his destiny.

The familiarity of the voice actors is getting a bit distressing, in the sense that as an adult you can practically hear them screaming to their agent “get me a cartoon!” Now the third and fourth supporting role is a familiar voice, Kristen Wiig anyone? Anyone? Gerard Butler and Craig Ferguson get the opportunity to use their accents to the nth degree, and the character actor Djimon Honsou adds a proper growl to the villain Drago. Everybody is so earnest and kid friendly that it becomes a bit cheesy, even the usually radical T.J. Miller has something in common with the main dragon. There are both “toothless.”



Fly My Pretty! Hiccup and Toothless in ‘How to Train Your Dragon 2’
Photo credit: 20th Century Fox

The basic story premise is very kid friendly, it should be a tremendous and understandable circus train for them, and the 3D images might even compete with their iPad screens. There is so much magic in the movies now that it must blow the minds of the newbies to the medium. What will the future bring?

Speak like Jay Baruchel, and carry a fire breather between your legs. That line alone is more naughty than the entirety of “How to Train Your Dragon 2.” Maybe they can explore that notion after the inevitable hero/heroine marriage in the next sequel.

“How to Train Your Dragon 2” opens everywhere on June 13th in 3D, IMAX and regular screenings. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring the voices of Jay Baruchel, Cate Blanchett, Gerard Butler, Craig Ferguson, America Ferrera, Jonah Hill, Christopher Mintz-Plasse, T.J. Miller, Kit Harrington, Kristen Wiig and Djimon Hounsou. Screenplay adapted and directed by Dean DeBlois. Rated “PG”

[18]

By PATRICK McDONALD [19]
Senior Staff Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [18]

© 2014 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on *Mar 29 2024 - 2:25am*):
http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/24127/heroic-visually-bold-how-to-train-your-dragon-2

Links:
[1] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq
[2] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/20th-century-fox
[3] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/america-ferrera
[4] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/cate-blanchett
[5] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/christopher-mintz-plasse
[6] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/craig-ferguson
[7] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/djimon-hounsou
[8] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/gerard-butler
[9] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hollywoodchicagocom-content
[10] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/how-to-train-your-dragon-2
[11] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/jay-baruchel
[12] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/jonah-hill
[13] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/kit-harrington
[14] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/kristen-wiig
[15] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html
[16] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/patrick-mcdonald
[17] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/tj-miller
[18] mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com
[19] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT