

Awe Factor is Sorely Lacking in ‘Tomorrowland’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on May 21, 2015 - 8:31pm

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Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – For a movie all about the awesome power of inspiration, innovation and wonder, “Tomorrowland” has precious little of its own. “Tomorrowland” the title promises a kind of retro futuristic world where anything is possible, but “Tomorrowland” the movie rarely delivers anything approximating joy.

So what exactly is “Tomorrowland”? The answer is more than a little convoluted and confusing. It involves essentially an interdimensional gated community where the best and the brightest of the scientific cognoscenti have been allowed to let their inspirations and dreams run wild and create a better world. There are flying cars, jetpacks, giant swimming pools in the sky and the usual suspects, but there’s also something a little off. It’s less a recognizable, or even an inspiring future, than yet another blur of hyperkinetic CGI that’s shiny, slick and completely devoid of anything distinctive. But I guess you run the risk with a movie named after a theme park.



Distant Future: Britt Robinson in ‘Tomorrowland’

Photo credit: Walt Disney Studios

Britt Robertson is consistently pitch perfect as the teenage daughter of a NASA engineer who hasn't lost her desire to dream or the desire to fix the things that don't work. One day she's slipped a special pin by an android robot in the form of a little English girl with unusual ass kicking skills (Raffey Cassidy). The pin magically takes her to "Tomorrowland," but only for a limited amount of time. And then she spends the rest of the movie trying to get back there. This leads her to a bitter grizzled inventor (George Clooney) who was influential in the creation of Tomorrowland when he was a boy, and now is obsessed with the end of the world and keeps a doomsday clock in his home.

The reasons why this movie doesn't work aren't easy to spot. The cast isn't the problem. Everyone from Clooney and Robertson, to Raffey Cassidy and Thomas Robinson, are all on target. They're cute without being cutesy, appealing without being annoying.

The script by director Brad Bird and Damon Lindelof gets most of the blame. The movie never quite realizes its own dreams and ambitions. This is a movie that could literally do and be about anything, instead it's the same old conspiracy laden plot with people in power – led by Hugh Laurie – out to destroy the world, and only a grizzled old inventor and his plucky teenage sidekick can stop them. Yawn!

The film occasionally brushes up against the thrilling adventure it should have been, such as when Clooney repurposes the Eiffel Tower as a rocket ship, and activates a seemingly endless series of booby traps while trying to evade capture in his home.



Hugh Laurie and George Clooney in 'Tomorrowland'

Photo credit: Walt Disney Studios

Yet there are some unusually intense sequences for a PG-rated Disney movie, with an army of evil robotic super agents turning their opponents into dust with laser guns, and they are hot on our heroes trail. My son Harry got scared during some of the chase scenes, but my daughter Helen was unfazed. If anything she seemed a little bored by some of it. Harry fell asleep by the end, while Helen said she liked Disney's monkey movie ("Monkey Kingdom") better.

The film does go out on a high note. It's conclusion suggests a more interesting movie that might be in the future, instead of the rather earthbound and pedestrian one the audience just saw.

"Tomorrowland" opens everywhere on May 22nd. Featuring George Clooney, Britt Robertson, Raffey Cassidy, Hugh Laurie, Keegan-Michael Key, Kathryn Hahn and Tim McGraw. Screenplay by Brad Bird and Damon Lindelof. Directed by Brad Bird. Rated "PG"



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