

'The LEGO Batman Movie' Delivers the Usual Laughs

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on February 10, 2017 - 9:51am

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – “The LEGO Batman Movie” is more of a parody than the laugh-out-loud hijinks of the surprising “The LEGO Movie,” but the legend of The Bats is ripe for a good skewering, and the movie has a lot of fun doing it. Will Arnett reprises the voice as the title character, with Zach Galifianakis taking on the antics of The Joker.

Unlike the first LEGO film, the Batman version is a recitation of jokes that are pretty much tipped off, wrapped around a squirrely “Batman needs a family” plot line. Both tend to drag down the lightness that the LEGO franchise has established, but the jokes are lighting fast, rarely pausing to take a breath. Don't like this one-liner? Here are ten more in the next two minutes. There were five screenwriters on this one, and I picture them being more like Jay Leno-like jokesters than a cohesive team. Tell a Batman joke, see what sticks, write it down and shoehorn it into the basic plot. And maybe because the previous LEGO movie got us all used to look of the characters, losing that surprise meant that the Batman movie had to tried harder...and it certainly did.

The Batman (voice of Will Arnett) is entrenched in his routine of saving Gotham City. In his latest confrontation with The Joker (Zach Galifianakis), he is surprised to have the super villain tell him that they need each other to co-exist. Batman will have none of it, he is a super loner, preferring the part-time company of his butler and protector, Alfred (Ralph Fiennes).



The Gang's All Here in 'The LEGO Batman Movie'

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

Things change when Commissioner Gordon (Hector Elizondo) retires, and his job is taken by his daughter Barbara (Rosario Dawson). She wants to make The Batman less of a force in crime fighting, even as a giant wormhole is opened up to the Phantom Zone, and the worst criminals are released. In the meantime, an orphan boy named Dick Grayson (Michael Cera) is about to fly into The Batman's life as Robin.

Lotsa plot in this one, to go with the ton of jokes. It's a great movie for our current short-attention-span times, as it never holds one scene or dialogue exchange for more than a minute. The biggest set of jokes, which may expose the demographic of the writing staff, was aimed at the 1966 "Batman" TV show, which had a shooting fish in a barrel quality to them. One second it's the Batman, the next it's a parody of the 1966 Batman, again. But the film does go over all iterations of the character, and there is a funny part where they go over all the "Bat looks" from the various film versions (nipple suit!).

Will Arnett is an MVP for being the Bat Glue that holds it all together. He had a hilarious supporting role in the first LEGO movie, so it was logical to take that scene stealing and expand it. The ability not to crack from that terse voice he gives the Caped Crusader is what makes the character funnier, especially in contrast to the gee-whiz optimism of Michael Cera's Robin. The Bats character is painted as an impatient narcissist, with Arnett delivering it with ease.



Robin (voice of Michael Cera) Annoys The Batman (Will Arnett) in 'The LEGO Batman Movie'

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

With the other voice celebrities, nothing really stands out. It feels like a strange Hollywood party has broken out...led by none other than Zach Galifianakis, who doesn't add anything distinctive to the comic Joker part. Throw in Rosario Dawson, Ralph Fiennes, Jenny Slate, Conan O'Brien and Billy Dee Williams, in addition to voice cameos from Channing Tatum, Jonah Hill, Eddie Izzard, Elle Kemper and Mariah Carey, and it's either a LEGO movie or the scene around the appetizer table at the SAG-AFTRA Awards.

Yet the LEGO movies have proved themselves to be always fun, and there is nothing wrong with a little fun to take a mind vacation at the movies. It is time to don our tights and cowl, and dance the Bat-tusi. Dammit, another 1966 reference! Long live Adam West.

"The LEGO Batman Movie" opens every where on February 10th, in 3D and regular screenings. See local listings for 3D theaters and showtimes. Featuring Will Arnett, Michael Cera, Rosario Dawson, Ralph Fiennes, Siri, Zach Galifianakis, Jenny Slate, Conan O'Brian, Billy Dee Williams, Hector Elizondo, Eddie Izzard, Channing Tatum and Mariah Carey. Screenplay by Seth Grahame-Smith, Chris McKenna, Erik Sommers, Jared Stern and John Whittington. Directed by Chris McKay. Rated "PG"



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