

## ‘Star Wars: The Clone Wars’ Boldly Goes Animated With Potent Story, Mediocre Animation, Anemic Acting

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on August 15, 2008 - 12:01am

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Rating: **2.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Star Wars: The Clone Wars,” which is the inaugural animated “Star Wars” project from Lucasfilm Animation and “Star Wars” architect George Lucas, feels and looks every bit as introductory as a foundational attempt could be.

In many ways, the film again typifies what every “Star Wars” film always does. We’re again treated to yet another compelling storyline. Despite public perception that Lucas declared three years ago that the decades-long “Star Wars” saga has come to an end, Lucas now clarifies.



Jedi Anakin Skywalker (Matt Lanter) prepares for battle in “Star Wars: The Clone Wars”.

*Image credit: Lucasfilm Ltd.*

Lucas merely says the Skywalker family plotline has runs its course.

Upon its completion, he now has a plethora of new stories to impart – and much more money to rake in – about the beloved galaxy so far, far away. In the “Star Wars” storyline, the three-year clone wars took place between “Star Wars, Episode II: Attack of the Clones” and “Star Wars, Episode III: Revenge of the Sith”.

Story aside, though, we’re again deluged with atrociously melodramatic acting (this time solely in the form of voice work). What’s most interesting is that the cheesy acting, which is legendary in the “Star Wars” saga, actually for the first time has found a better home.



Ahsoka Tano (Ashley Eckstein) engages in battle with an enemy in “Star Wars: The Clone Wars”.  
*Image credit: Lucasfilm Ltd.*

The animated format actually manages to dial down the dreadful acting and makes it more tolerable than the live-action, human format.

In terms of the quality of its animation, which is clearly front and center in “Star Wars: The Clone Wars,” the film flirts in a middle ground between amateur and truly elite design work. The quality of the work neither completely underwhelms nor blazes a new path for the future of animation.

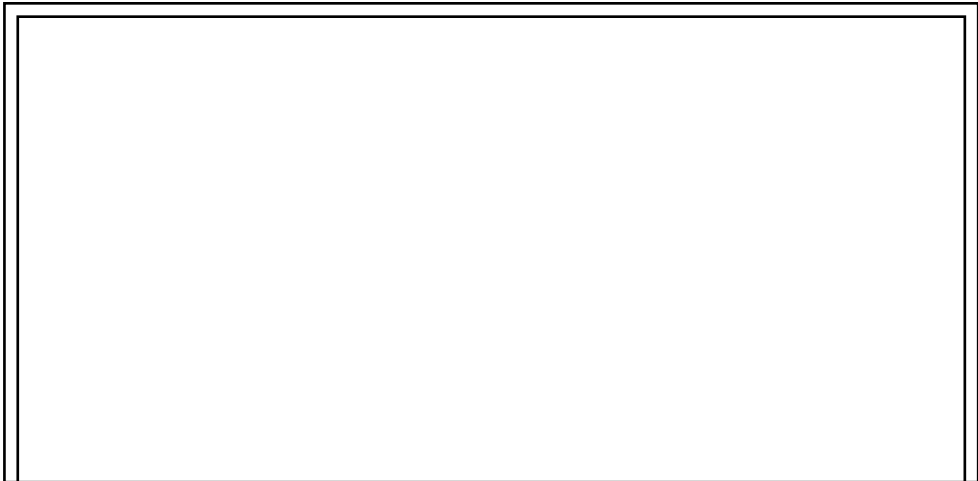
The animation ultimately pales in comparison to the world’s best movie animator – Disney’s Pixar Animation Studios – and much more closely resembles modern-day video games. You needn’t put this animation under a microscope to see the awkwardly square designs where decidedly smoother and rounder imagery should appear.



Heroic Anakin Skywalker (Matt Lanter) confronts a foe from the past in “Star Wars: The Clone Wars”.  
*Image credit: Lucasfilm Ltd.*

It’s also no secret that “Star Wars: The Clone Wars” is essentially a feature-length, glorified television pilot for Lucas’ upcoming cable TV series of the same name. The 30-minute TV version, which will also be fully animated, is slated to premier on Oct. 3, 2008 on the Cartoon Network.

Lucas took a chance and cashed in on a big bet when he brought on his own “padawan learner” – Dave Filoni – to direct the feature-length animated film “Star Wars: The Clone Wars”.







This image is Asajj Ventress (Nika Futterman) concept art for “Star Wars: The Clone Wars”.  
Image credit: Lucasfilm Ltd.

Prior to the brazen Hollywood assignment, the relatively unknown Filoni only had directing experience with seven episodes of the low-profile TV series “Avatar: The Last Airbender”.

Now Filoni isn’t the only relative unknown who Lucas selected as a primary driver of the film.

Aside from original “Star Wars” actors Samuel L. Jackson as the voice of Mace Windu, Christopher Lee as the voice of Count Dooku and Anthony Daniels as the voice of C-3PO, nearly all other characters look like, sound like and act like their “A”-list counterparts but certainly aren’t.

Yoda, for example, is now voiced by Tom Kane rather than the famous Frank Oz.

Anakin Skywalker (who later becomes Darth Vader) is Matt Lanter (instead of Hayden Christensen), Obi-Wan Kenobi is James Arnold Taylor (instead of Ewan McGregor), Padmé Amidala is Catherine Taber (instead of Natalie Portman) and Chancellor Palpatine is Ian Abercrombie (instead of Ian McDiarmid).

Amid the bunch of newcomers and unknowns, Lucas does his greatest service with the introduction of the talented but reckless padawan learner Ahsoka Tano. Rather than being assigned to Obi-Wan Kenobi for her Jedi training, though, Yoda selects Anakin Skywalker to take her on.

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Voiced by TV talent Ashley Eckstein (whose longest TV run has been eight episodes on “That’s So Raven”), Ahsoka Tano is as much the star in this film as any other more recognizable character.

Rotta the Huttlet (voiced by David Acord) is also an endearing character introduction. He’s the ailing baby of Jabba the Hutt.

Pixar, by the way, was actually founded in 1979 as a division of Lucasfilm. It was then spun off and purchased in 1986 by Apple Computer co-founder Steve Jobs.

The Walt Disney Co. then scooped up Pixar in 2006 for a not-too-shabby \$7.4 billion. Lucasfilm Animation was founded in 2003 as a division of George Lucas’ Lucasfilm.

*“Star Wars: The Clone Wars,” which is directed by Dave Filoni and written by George Lucas and others, stars Samuel L. Jackson, Christopher Lee, Matt Lanter, Ashley Eckstein, James Arnold Taylor, Tom Kane, Nika Futterman, Ian Abercrombie, Catherine Taber, Kevin Michael Richardson, David Acord and Anthony Daniels. The film opened everywhere on Aug. 15, 2008.*



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