

Moving on 'Up': Disney, Pixar Score Another Masterpiece in 3-D

Submitted by [Ebeth](#) [1] on May 29, 2009 - 12:28am

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Rating: **4.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – There is an art to music. There is an art to writing a story and an art to telling that story. There is art in a great drawing, a great painting and a great photograph. There is an art to communication. And it may only be a matter of time before museums expand to include a whole new category of modern art: the animated film from Disney and Pixar.



Carl Fredrickson in "Up" is voiced by Edward Asner.

Image credit: Disney, Pixar

For what the studio duo so undoubtedly accomplished in 2008 with its "[WALL-E](#) [17]," which is known for its groundbreaking achievements in many of the above-listed categories, their newest film, "Up," has also managed to ace much of the same. Though two very different films both strong for different reasons, the two establish the Disney and Pixar revolution of the animated genre.

A symphonic balance of captivating silence and clever dialogue, belly-laugh humor and tear-in-the-eye despair, fast-paced action scenes and scenes slowed for their precious detail, "Up" orchestrates the talents of the directors (Pete Docter, who wrote "WALL-E," "Monsters, Inc.," "Toy Story 2" and "Toy Story," and Bob Peterson, who wrote "Up," "Ratatouille" and "Finding Nemo"), the artists (Scott Clark, Dave Mullins,

Shawn Krause, Mike Venturini, Thomas Jordan and a team of nearly 70 animators) and the composer (Michael Giacchino) into one truly unforgettable piece.

The result: a simple smile as one strides from the theatre knowing this is life, there are versions of our dreams we can't imagine and even the most unfortunate or insignificant interactions can lead to great things.



Left to right: Co-director Bob Peterson, star Ed Asner and director Pete Docter for "Up".

Image credit: Deborah Coleman for Disney, Pixar

"Up" tells the story of Carl Fredricksen (voice of Ed Asner): a 78-year-old retired balloon salesman who – after the loss of his wife – is left agitated by the world around him and regretful of desires unfulfilled. An unfortunate altercation pushes Carl to escape society and finally chase after the couple's lifelong dream.

Carl quickly realizes he's not alone in this adventure as 8-year-old wilderness explorer Russell (voice of Jordan Nagai) has secretly stowed away for the ride.

The adventures that ensue and those they meet along the way – namely Kevin, a flightless crazy-for-chocolate bird; Dug (voice of Bob Peterson), a loyal and talkative dog; and Charles F. Muntz (voice of Christopher Plummer), worldwide explorer and Carl's childhood idol – take off in this moving and monumental story.

The story itself can be discussed as if a classic novel with elements so subtle and well-planned that it warrants lasting acclaim.



Left to right: Russell (voice of Jordan Nagai) and Carl Fredricksen (voice of Edward Asner) in “Up”.

Image credit: Disney, Pixar

Not only does the tale brilliantly cater to the child audience – with its pictures colorful and captivating and its animal and youthful characters playful and engaging – but highly adult themes are weaved through in ways that affect those who understand them while coasting right over the heads of kids. This intricate balance of child and adult themes, which is also seen in WALL-E, is a Pixar forte that contributes to the groundbreaking nature of its films.

The writers of “Up” convey meaning and message through “just-enough dialogue” as well as the repeated building and then waning of interaction between the characters. By the end, the audience has been steered through themes of love, loss, loneliness, fear, loyalty, action, drama, acceptance, excitement and fulfillment all without realizing they left one for the other.

The animation can be appreciated for much more than its avid color and often awe-inspiring beauty. The perfectly placed details within each scene convey what words or even the most powerful of music would not be able to achieve alone.



Left to right: Ellie and Carl Fredricksen (voice of Edward Asner) in “Up”.

Image credit: Disney, Pixar

From a montage of the couple’s life together – a story that’s told completely without dialogue – to still photos at the end of the film – with each photo telling an entirely new chapter within itself – the artwork is impeccable and it communicates much with delicate brilliance.

As Pixar’s first 3-D film, “Up” uses the technology lightly. Director Pete Docter in an [interview](#) [18] with Brian Tallerico of

HollywoodChicago.com described the crew's intentions:

"We tried to learn from all the films that had come before us and what makes [them] work. The things that were important to me as a director [were] not to distract people with 3-D. ... We ... said: 'The screen is like a window. You can see into it, but let's not bring too many things out.' That adds a certain sense of depth. ... For a lot of people, they feel more transported into that world."

Docter's description of seeing the "Up" world through a window fits completely. It feels at times one could walk in the grass, smell the flowers and pet the animals. The 3-D experience is often forgotten as members of the audience become one with the in-screen world.

Original music from the Oscar-nominated Michael Giacchino is weaved symphonically into the depth, action or emotion of each scene. Pieces of the character personalities come through in his score and add yet another tier to the layers of this film.



Left to right: Kevin, Russell, Dug and Carl Fredricksen (voice of Edward Asner) in "Up".

Image credit: Disney, Pixar

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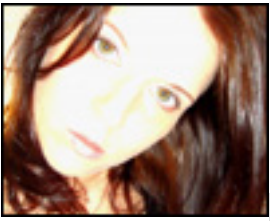
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All in all, "Up" leaves the viewer with little to complain about. There is a violent outburst from Carl that may walk the line for some parents with young children at the theatre. Along with the results of this outburst, there are two additional times characters are injured and bleeding in the film. This likely escalated it to its "PG" rating.

Action sequences at the end become a little far-fetched and Carl seems to surpass his childhood idol in age as the film goes on. But as the audience embraces talking dogs and flying homes in this much-desired fantasyland, these small things go nearly unnoticed.

A true cinematic achievement, "Up" is a film that will strike a chord as equally in the young as it does the old. As the result of the coming together of inspired and artistic minds, each of the film's facets delivers an unforgettable experience. The care and consideration given to each frame is palatable and you're left with an intensely beautiful result. After "Up," one will count the days to the next Disney and Pixar work of art.

“Up,” which comes from director Pete Docter and co-director and writer Bob Peterson, features the voices of Edward Asner, Christopher Plummer, Jordan Nagai, Bob Peterson, Delroy Lindo, Jerome Ranft, John Ratzenberger, David Kaye and Elie Docter. The film opened everywhere on May 29, 2009. “Up” is rated “PG” for some peril and action.



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By ELIZABETH OPPRIEHT
HollywoodChicago.com
elizabeth@hollywoodchicago.com [20]

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Source URL (retrieved on Apr 24 2024 - 9:03pm):
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