

Ice Age 3: Dawn of the Dinosaurs 3D

Review by Mark Edgemon

I chose to view this movie in the 3D offering to get the full effect and for the reason that I don't recall ever having had the 3D experience prior to this movie and so I paid the extra \$2.50 for the glasses and the additional \$500.00 for the popcorn and soft drink and settled in for the full works. My wife is a big fan of computer generated, cute lovable animals which I'm sure started back with Rankin and Bass's Rudolph, having all of the characters as Christmas ornaments and the 30 minute program being a must see with it's first showing in December every year.

I went to see this movie for her and I braced myself for 90 minutes of the cute and cuddly rampage getting ready to be peeled off my cornea, thanks to the 3D glasses.

I reviewed this movie from three viewpoints; from those who love computer animation films (through the eyes of my wife), from the view of a voice artist and producer and from those who do not care for such films.

And now from the view of computer animation and animal lovers, this film was superb across the spectrum, from story and plot development to artistic and vocal performances, this film had it all and never let up even past the end of the movie and into the credits.

The story begins with Manny (Ray Romano) and Ellie (Queen Latifah) two of the last Woolly Mammoths on earth preparing for the debut of their newborn child. Manny has built a winter wonderland playground in preparation of the big event, while Sid (John Leguizamo) and Diego (Denis Leary) felt left out of the mix and each departed the herd to pursue their own destinies.

Early into the movie, Sid discovers three large eggs in a frozen cavern beneath the ice covered surface and decided "he" would be their mother, adopting the eggs and caring for them until they would hatch and he would finally see what he was the mother of. They were in fact, infant dinosaurs who were being looked for by their huge, angry mother, who eventually finds them and carries them off to an underground jungle, filled with what was believed to be extinct dinosaurs and other ferocious wildlife.

When Manny finds out that Sid is missing, he and Ellie reunites with Diego and sets out to find him and bring him back to their herd, hopefully alive. As they traveled into caverns beneath the icy surface, they discovered a lush, tropical jungle and a travel guide named Buck (Simon Pegg) an insane, but wily weasel, who helped them through the unknown territory in search of their friend.

As the journey moves closer to conclusion, the plot divides into 4 sub plots, alternating between them with Diego protecting Ellie from minions of little dinosaurs while she is giving birth, Manny fighting obstructions to get to her, Sid floating on a rock toward a lava fall and Buck flying in to rescue him perched on a flying pterosaur.

As the herd comes together once again, they say goodbye to their guide and return to the surface, with the realization that they belong together and that they were a family, despite their differences. Sometimes, your family is the one you make for yourself.

Two creatures that are part of a running gag in the film, Scrat (Chris Wedge) and his female counterpart Scratte (Karen Disher) continue their exploits throughout the film in their pursuit of acorns and eventually each other. They are a riot!

And now as a voice artist, I believe the performances were solid by the lead actors, but the focus of the movie was stolen by the voices of Sid and Scrat. Usually, animated film producers will cast their lead roles to strong bankable names and the minor roles given to strong voice artists to fill any holes or support possible weaker performances by the leads. Ray Romano did a good job in all three-movie installments, nothing that stood out, just a good solid performance. Queen Latifah had a weaker performance, but she has not performed a lot of voice acting roles, so that is understandable. But overall, a professional job!

And for those who do not like cute animal, computer animation films, I would have this one word of advice...Run!