

Fans of the original show will enjoy ‘The Bob’s Burgers Movie’

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: ««« out of «««««

Running Time: 102 minutes

This animated feature from 20th Century Studios will be released exclusively at theaters on May 27.

Of all the animated television shows to adapt into a feature film, “Bob’s Burgers” might not be the first and most obvious one to leap to mind. While the program is hilarious if one can get on its unique wavelength, the eccentric deadpan humor and tiny restaurant setting doesn’t seem like something requiring an epic cinematic opus.

The makers of “The Bob’s Burgers Movie” have clearly decided to keep the same oddball, low-key humor, adding in a few extravagances for the big screen. Thankfully, the approach works and those who enjoy the series will find this wonderfully weird and quirky effort to be a welcome addition to the franchise.

Struggling restaurant owner Bob Belcher (H. Jon Benjamin) and wife Linda (John Roberts) find themselves in deep financial straits when they realize a huge bank loan is due. Short on funds needed to keep their business afloat, things get worse when a water main breaks and an

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enormous sinkhole blocks entry into their restaurant.

Meanwhile, daughter Tina (Dan Mintz) desperately wants Jimmy Jr. (also voiced by H. Jon Benjamin) to be her summer boyfriend, but is too afraid to make the first move. And youngest child Louise (Kristen Schaal) struggles after being called a "baby" at school for continuing to wear her bunny-themed headgear. When something startling is discovered in the sinkhole, Tina, Louise and Gene (Eugene Mirman) decide to help their parents and resolve their own issues by solving the sinkhole mystery.

The Belcher's first cinematic effort benefits greatly from its upgraded visuals. The animation is far more striking here than it is on the small screen, with eye-popping widescreen backdrops and elaborate high-angle shots of the characters and locations. The creative images on display add extra scale and importance to the proceedings, even if the characters themselves are more often than not concerned with personal (and trivial) matters. In fact, everything on display in the movie is flashier, including some extended musical numbers with wonderful, longer shots of the leads dancing and busting moves.

Admittedly, those unfamiliar with the show will undoubtedly be baffled by what they see. The movie does little to indoctrinate newcomers to its world or brand of humor. But those acquainted with the source material will find plenty to their liking.

One of the best jokes involves an amusingly strange fantasy from the teenage mind of Tina that includes talking horses, undead figures and Jimmy Jr. wiggling his rear (moviegoers can wait for a callback after the credits).

As the investigation takes the kids into the world of amusement park carnies, it results in a few entertainingly awkward exchanges with suspects.

Other familiar series characters like Sergeant Bosco (Gary Cole), Calvin Fiscoeder (Kevin Kline) and Felix Fiscoeder (Zach Galifianakis) all have their moments and make a strong impression. And there is always an off-handed comment that raises a chuckle, or funny signage present in the background... a school "Swim Club" poster is another stand out.

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Impressively enough, the movie’s climax features an elaborate chase and a couple of sequences that border on action (albeit with a very comedic bent). And on a more dramatic note, there is even a moving and warm-hearted origin story for Louise’s bunny ears and her emotional ties to them, earning the film even more points.

In the end, those who don’t know the show will have difficulty adapting to the movie’s unusual rhythms. However, fans of the program can expect a fine product that is, in many ways, comparable to “The Simpsons Movie” in terms of overall effectiveness.

“The Bob’s Burgers Movie” is an enjoyably idiosyncratic animated effort from a major studio that somehow manages to maintain a completely unique and distinctive voice in its translation to the big screen.

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