

Toy Story 2: The Toys Are Back in Town!

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A Review by
Andrew Henry, Instructor
Tom Sims, Executive Director
Cape May Film Society
609-884-6700
capemayfilm@hotmail.com
www.capemayfilm.org

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Henry: The sequel. Often an ill-conceived idea, slapped together to capitalize on a film's success and eek more money out of the movie-going public. There have been great ones (The Godfather 2, The Dark Knight), and there have been bad ones (Weekend at Bernie's 2 – did we really need that?), but there is one that is the gold standard. And it involves a bunch of toys.

Sims: Don't tell me you're going to review Toy Story?

Henry: Yes, well sort of. Toy Story (Disney/Pixar, 1995) made Woody and Buzz Lightyear household names. They, along with Mr. Potato Head and the rest of the toys living in a child's bedroom, were brought to life in a way never seen before – computer animation. But it is the 1999 sequel, Toy Story 2, which elevates not only the visuals, but also the level of storytelling seldom seen in a “kids” movie.

Sims: Can't believe you're going on like this...

Henry: (ignoring Sims) It would be easy to create a sequel that panders to kids, but that is not the case with this film. Every character has motivations and goals, from Woody trying to find his place in life, to Stinky Pete (a great new addition) trying to relive his glory years. Finding oneself is a pretty weighty topic for any film, let alone a film on the shoulders of animated toys. Toy Story 2 outperforms the first film in every way.

Sims: Are you done?

Henry: Yes. And now you can have your turn. Go on.

Sims: Well it would appear that for the first time, I think we're in perfect agreement.

Henry: You're kidding.

Sims: Listen, I can't list my top 10 movies of all time. That list is always changing. But I can tell you that Toy Story 2 (not Toy Story the original) has been somewhere in that top ten list for some time. The characters have depth, Jesse the Cowgirl's song is a masterpiece, and the story leads you from suspension of disbelief to complete abandonment! The tale of these poor toys wanting to be loved rivals the classic 1922 Margery Williams' book *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

Henry: Well then imagine how happy we both were to hear that Disney has re-released both Toy Story and Toy Story 2 (in 3-D no less!) for a limited time in theaters, all in preparation for next summer's Toy Story 3! Trying to strike oil for a third time is risky, but given the track record of this franchise, I have a feeling a new standard for threequels will be coming soon.

Sims: Threequels? That's not even close to a word.

Henry: Didn't think the harmony would last forever.