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▶▶ **Movie DVD Reviews**

Robots

Rated PG » Grade: C+

by Michael C. Sherrin
EDGE Entertainment Contributor
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Like building a model rocket, **Robots** looks spectacular but fails to take off. From the makes of the hilarious Ice Age, Robots offers laughs and eye-candy but drowns with a story that is simply mechanical.

Robots follows Rodney Copperbottom (Ewan McGregor) as he lives his working class home to become a big-time inventor in the big-time Robot City. As it seems with all CGI films, a character (soon to be group of characters) makes a journey whether to save the Princess, find a fish or become an inventor. Astonishingly, all of these CGI-journey films find a unique twist with an equally vivid world, as this team successfully accomplished in Ice Age. "Robots" has a creative world completely inhabited by robots. To grow, robots actually wear bigger parts. Because Rodney's family was so poor, he had to wear his female cousin's hand-me-downs giving him a slim, hourglass figure throughout high school. Unfortunately, there's little at stake in this journey.

The following criticism comes from years now of stellar CGI movies. Animation no longer needs to cater just for kids and "Robots," with its trailer boasting its star-studded cast, seeks the same adults that loved "Finding Nemo" and "The Ice Age." The scripts and visuals have been steadily excellent and this movie will be held to the high standard already set.

Now for the mature, constructive criticism.

In a sense trying to mirror past CGI successes, "Robots" seems to pair the journey of "Finding Nemo" with the heroics of "The Incredibles" find itself neither a journey nor a super-hero. The villains Ratchet (Greg Kinnear) and his mother, Madame Gasket (Jim Broadbent) never seems that scary. Ratchet, under orders from his mother, ousts Bigweld (Mel Brooks) from his own company to live peacefully in retirement. Ratchet comes off whiny instead of Oedipal (as would be the effective cliché in this situation). And the Incredible's Syndrome had far superior robot warriors at his disposal than Ratchet with his army of monster garbage trucks.

Rodney's journey matters little, aside from the bland villains, because the good guy is actually the good guy. In a movie trying to comment on corporate greed, Bigweld is actually a good person from beginning to end. So is Rodney. Even the afterthought love interest, Cappy (Halle Berry) refuses to follow Ratchet from the beginning. And for all its symbolism, rescuing Bigweld means nothing as once he's

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rescued, the bad guys decide now's the time to kill him.

Even Robin Williams' excellent delivery as Fender couldn't keep up with the rushed one-liners the writers forced into his short screen time. The intriguing supporting cast of Fender with his love sick sister, Piper, a robot using random voice boxes and Aunt Fanny with her giant behind only get introduced for the second half of the short film. All of this leads to a visually impressive but lackluster epic battle between "Blade Runner"-dirty robots and mouser-escapes from Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

While the kids will love it and you'll laugh more than once, Robots is worth a quick rental – then just watch "The Incredibles" for the twentieth time.

Special Features


Thankfully, a full short, "Don't Get Left Behind," exclusively features the entertaining supporting cast. This highlight of a moderately impressive group of extras ties with the amazing Blue Man Group music featurette for most rewarding. The Blue Man Group helped compose the entertaining music for the film, best of all the theme when we first see the underground garbage dump where Madame Gasket lives. There's fun DVD-ROM content (best of all a sneak peek at the certain-to-be-better Ice Age 2) and an Xbox racing game.


Most disappointing was the deleted scenes, often hilarious on CGI discs, here pair unfinished animatronics with actual sketches with voiceovers. These deleted scenes look like a college project thrown together the night before it was due.

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