

Throwback Thursday: Space Jam (1996)

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By Michael Johnpoll

This week I am revisiting the antics of the childhood heroes, the Looney Tunes. We're taking a look at the 1996 film that brought Bugs Bunny and Michael Jordan together for 88 intense, fun-loving, wacky minutes for our viewing pleasure. That's right; I'm talking about Space Jam.

That 6-year-old inside me is still holding the turn wheel on the VCR to the left, watching the movie rewind in fast-motion. Right now, I can look back with fondness and a better understanding of the inherent joke of a movie that stands as a monument of the 1990s for myself and many others.

Roger Ebert called it "a happy marriage of good ideas." You take an older television commercial featuring Bugs and Michael, expand the idea with Warner Brothers' writers, throw in a 15-year-old telling off Charles Barkley for impersonating himself, and include the occasional crack on Michael Jordan's short-lived baseball career, and you have Space Jam.

Space Jam's plot is simple. The Looney Tunes are threatened with slavery by the proprietor of an intergalactic theme park (as voiced by the one and only Danny DeVito), take the Looney way out when deciding on a challenge to keep their freedom, confront the bad guy's idiotic henchmen rather poorly, and have to enlist a self-proclaimed baseball player to win a basketball game.

Add the voice of a much younger and less funny Billy West and the acting talents of Bill Murray to play himself being mistaken for Dan Aykroyd (of GhostBusters fame), and you have yourself a movie. And what 90s movie is complete without a celebrity cameo or cheap 3D effects?

Between self-reference to the Looney Toons being Warner Brothers' property, the blaring plot hole (which we can all happily ignore) of there being two sets of MonStars to contend with, a blatant and humorous reference to the team's "Special Drink," and the fantastic sextuple-platinum soundtrack, Space Jam wins a place in the hearts of those of us old enough to know what a VHS tape looks like.

Continuing with our recollection, the official site for the movie hasn't changed in more than ten years, maintaining an advertisement for the 2-disc special edition DVD version of the movie.

I think I know what I want for my next birthday.

Space Jam steps up for 4 out of 5 Hats.