

The LEGO Batman Movie

Yeah, yeah, it's just a kid's movie. However, as happens often now with major animated releases, this one is cleverly crafted to appeal as much to mommy and daddy as to the kids.

First of all, it is bright as LEGO blocks themselves and visually most inventive. You somehow buy those plastic pieces talking! Second, it has comic Will Arnett voicing the LEGO Batman in a semi-menacing growl that isn't menacing at all, and whose seriousness is undercut by his curt, deadpan jokes. Third, the movie's message that even a super-hero needs friends and needn't go it alone is nicely underlined. Fourth, adults will get plenty of guffaws at the movie's off-the-wall pop references and goofy non-sequiturs. And fifth, LEGO Batman is ably backed by a cadre of entertaining buddies, voiced by Rosario Dawson (Batgirl), Michael Cera (Robin), and Ralph Fiennes (Alfred) and a parade of ditzzy villains, headed by the barely-controlled Joker, voiced by a raging Zach Galifianakis.

The movie (rated PG) is probably too long for young kids—104 minutes—and, it must be admitted, the pace is often wildly frenetic. The kids probably won't care; they will just giggle at the fevered action as it washes right over them. Meanwhile, their parents will realize that they are missing half the gags and one-liners in the hyper-dialogue and wonder whether they should see it again to take it all in. Which is just the repeat business that DC Studios is hoping for. A semi-gas.

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