

american tail fievel goes west

American Tail Fievel Goes West is a beloved animated musical film that continues the adventures of Fievel Mousekewitz, a brave young mouse who dreams of a better life beyond the dangers of his small Russian village. Released in 1991 as a sequel to the critically acclaimed *An American Tail* (1986), this film has captured the hearts of audiences worldwide with its engaging storyline, memorable characters, and lively animation. In this article, we will explore the origins of the movie, its plot, themes, characters, production details, and its enduring legacy in popular culture.

Overview of American Tail Fievel Goes West

Background and Development

American Tail Fievel Goes West was directed by Phil Nibbelink and Simon Wells, with Steven Spielberg serving as an executive producer. The film was produced by Amblin Entertainment and Universal Pictures, building on the success of the original *An American Tail*. The sequel was conceived to expand the story of Fievel Mousekewitz and introduce a new setting—Westward expansion—mirroring the historical American frontier.

The film's development involved a talented team of animators, songwriters, and voice actors dedicated to creating an engaging narrative that appealed to both children and adults. The musical score features songs by James Horner and the renowned Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, further enriching the film's emotional depth.

Release and Reception

Released on November 22, 1991, *Fievel Goes West* was both a commercial and critical success. It grossed over \$22 million domestically during its initial release, quickly becoming a favorite among

family audiences. Critics praised its vibrant animation, catchy songs, and heartfelt storytelling. Over the years, it has maintained a strong fan base and is considered a classic in the animated musical genre.

Plot Summary

American Tail Fievel Goes West follows the adventures of Fievel Mousekewitz and his family as they leave their small Eastern European village and journey to the American West in search of a new life free from persecution and hardship.

The Journey Begins

The film opens with Fievel and his family settling in a small town in the United States. Fievel, still full of hope and curiosity, dreams of exploring the wild west and making new friends. His parents, Tony and Tanya, are cautious but supportive of their son's adventurous spirit.

Fievel's desire for adventure leads him to wander off, where he encounters a group of mice led by Cat R. Waul, a cunning and sinister outlaw rat. Waul has plans to take over the West using mind-control technology, and Fievel unwittingly becomes involved in his schemes.

The Westward Expansion

Fievel, along with a motley crew of characters—including the tough, no-nonsense sheriff Wylie Burp and the clever feline, Tiger—the mice set out to thwart Waul's evil plans. They travel across the frontier, facing various challenges such as treacherous landscapes, hostile predators, and Waul's minions.

Throughout their journey, themes of friendship, perseverance, and courage are highlighted. Fievel's innocence and determination shine as he learns important lessons about trust, bravery, and believing in oneself.

The Climax and Resolution

The climax occurs at Waul's hideout, where Fievel and his friends devise a plan to stop Waul's mind-control machine and prevent him from taking over the West. With cleverness and teamwork, they manage to outsmart the villain, freeing the other mice from his control.

In the end, Fievel's family reunites, and the mice establish a new community in the West, embracing the spirit of hope and freedom that the frontier symbolizes. Fievel's adventures serve as a reminder that courage and kindness can overcome even the most daunting obstacles.

Major Characters

- **Fievel Mousekewitz:** The brave and optimistic young mouse who dreams of adventure and justice.
- **Tony Mousekewitz:** Fievel's father, a kind and protective figure who supports his family's dreams.
- **Tanya Mousekewitz:** Fievel's mother, caring and nurturing, she encourages her son's curiosity.
- **Cat R. Waul:** The main antagonist, a clever rat villain with plans to dominate the West.
- **Wylie Burp:** The tough sheriff of the frontier town, a good-hearted protector.
- **Tiger:** A savvy alley cat who becomes an unlikely hero and Fievel's friend.

The Musical Elements and Soundtrack

Music plays a pivotal role in Fievel Goes West, enhancing its storytelling and emotional resonance.

Notable songs include:

- "Dreams to Dream" – Sung by Linda Ronstadt, encapsulating Fievel's aspirations.
- "Way Out West" – A lively tune capturing the frontier spirit.
- "Who Will Help God?" – A heartfelt song emphasizing hope and faith.

The soundtrack received positive reviews and contributed to the film's enduring popularity.

Animation Style and Technical Aspects

American Tail Fievel Goes West features vibrant, detailed animation characteristic of early 1990s Disney and Amblin productions. The film's visuals effectively depict the expansive American frontier, with sweeping landscapes, dynamic action sequences, and expressive character designs.

The animation team employed advanced techniques for the time, including computer-assisted imagery for complex scenes, which added depth and realism to the backgrounds and effects.

The Cultural Impact and Legacy

Fievel Goes West has left a lasting imprint on popular culture, inspiring merchandise, video games, and even theme park attractions. Its themes of perseverance, adventure, and hope resonate with audiences of all ages, making it a staple in family entertainment.

The film also contributed to the resurgence of animated musicals in the early 1990s, paving the way for future classics. Its memorable characters and songs continue to be celebrated in various media and reunions.

Sequel and Spin-offs

While Fievel Goes West remains the most prominent in the series, the character of Fievel has appeared in other media, including television specials and merchandise. Fans continue to cherish the film as a quintessential example of heartfelt animation.

Conclusion

American Tail Fievel Goes West stands as a testament to the power of storytelling through animation. Its engaging plot, memorable characters, and spirited music make it a timeless classic that continues to entertain and inspire generations. Whether viewed as a nostalgic favorite or a standalone adventure, the film embodies the enduring spirit of hope, courage, and the pursuit of a better life.

For fans and newcomers alike, Fievel Goes West offers a delightful journey into the American frontier through the eyes of a brave little mouse, reminding us all that no obstacle is too great when faced with kindness and determination.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main plot of 'An American Tail: Fievel Goes West'?

The film follows Fievel Mousekewitz and his family as they move from New York City to the American West to escape danger, hoping to find a better life and facing new adventures and challenges along the way.

When was 'An American Tail: Fievel Goes West' released?

The movie was released in 1991 as a sequel to the original 'An American Tail' film from 1986.

Who are the main characters in 'Fievel Goes West'?

The main characters include Fievel Mousekewitz, his family members (Mama, Papa, and Tanya), and new characters such as Sheriff Wylie Burp and the villainous cats, Cat R. Waul and his henchcats.

Is 'Fievel Goes West' suitable for children?

Yes, it is an animated family film suitable for children, with themes of adventure, friendship, and bravery.

What are some popular songs from 'Fievel Goes West'?

Notable songs include 'Dreams to Dream,' 'Somewhere Out There,' and 'Way Out West,' which are memorable and have become fan favorites.

How does 'Fievel Goes West' compare to the original 'An American Tail'?

While the original focused on Fievel's journey to America and his family's struggles, the sequel introduces new characters and a Western setting, adding a more adventurous and humorous tone.

Was 'Fievel Goes West' a commercial success?

Yes, the film was well-received and performed well at the box office, becoming a popular animated feature of the early 1990s.

Are there any notable voice actors in 'Fievel Goes West'?

Yes, the film features voice talents like Dom DeLuise, John Cleese, and Neil Ross, among others.

Has 'Fievel Goes West' received any awards or nominations?

The film received nominations for awards such as the Annie Awards and Golden Globe Awards, especially for its music and animation.

Is there a sequel or reboot planned for 'Fievel Goes West'?

As of October 2023, there have been no official announcements of a sequel or reboot; however, the film remains popular among fans and is considered a classic in animated cinema.

Additional Resources

American Tail: Fievel Goes West is a beloved animated classic that continues to enchant audiences decades after its initial release in 1991. As a sequel to the groundbreaking An American Tail (1986), this film expands on the adventures of Fievel Mousekewitz and his family as they journey westward in search of a better life. Combining heartfelt storytelling, vibrant animation, and memorable music, Fievel Goes West stands out as a significant entry in the realm of animated cinema. In this review, we will delve into various aspects of the film, exploring its narrative, animation quality, voice performances, music, themes, and overall impact, providing a comprehensive overview for fans and newcomers alike.

Plot and Narrative Structure

Overview of the Story

Fievel Goes West picks up shortly after the events of the first film, with Fievel Mousekewitz and his family facing the challenges of life in the American frontier. The family decides to move westward to escape the hardships of their current life and seek prosperity in the American West. Their journey introduces them to new characters, including the clever cat-in-disguise, Cat R. Waul, and the charismatic sheriff, Wylie Burp. The plot revolves around Fievel's desire to prove himself, the family's struggle to adapt to their new environment, and the eventual confrontation with the villainous cat.

The narrative is engaging, weaving themes of perseverance, courage, and the importance of

community. The story balances humor and tension effectively, appealing to both children and adults. It also emphasizes the value of believing in oneself and the importance of family bonds.

Strengths of the Plot

- Well-paced storytelling with a clear beginning, middle, and resolution.
- Rich character development, especially of Fievel's growth and confidence.
- Exciting action sequences combined with comedic moments.
- Themes of hope and resilience that resonate with audiences.

Critiques

- Some critics argue that the plot relies on familiar Western tropes, which may feel formulaic.
- Certain subplots, such as the character of Wylie Burp, are underdeveloped.
- The villain, Cat R. Waul, while charismatic, is less threatening than the antagonist from the first film.

Animation Quality and Visuals

Animation Style

Fievel Goes West features bright, colorful animation characteristic of early 90s Disney and Amblin productions. The animation is fluid and lively, capturing the lively spirit of the Western frontier while maintaining the charm associated with the An American Tail franchise. The character designs are expressive, with distinct personalities conveyed through visual cues.

The backgrounds depict sweeping plains, dusty towns, and rugged landscapes, immersing viewers in the frontier setting. The animation team successfully balances action scenes, such as train chases and

shootouts, with intimate character moments.

Visual Highlights

- Dynamic action sequences with well-choreographed movement.
- Vibrant color palette that emphasizes the Western theme.
- Creative character designs, especially for the villainous cats and the various animal townsfolk.

Critiques of the Visuals

- Some scenes appear less detailed compared to contemporary CGI standards.
- Certain background elements feel static or less polished.

Voice Cast and Musical Score

Voice Performances

One of the film's strongest features is its talented voice cast. Dom DeLuise reprises his role as Tiger, providing comic relief with his humorous antics. The character of Fievel is voiced by Phillip Glasser, whose earnest performance captures the young mouse's innocence and bravery. Other notable voices include James Stewart as Wylie Burp and Dom DeLuise as Tiger, both bringing warmth and humor to their roles.

The casting choices lend authenticity and charm, making the characters memorable and relatable.

Musical Score and Songs

Music plays a pivotal role in Fievel Goes West, with songs that enhance the emotional depth and humor of the film. The soundtrack features catchy tunes such as "Somewhere Out There," which originally gained fame from the first film, and new songs like "Way Out West," which encapsulate the adventurous spirit.

The songs are well-composed, with lyrics that reflect character emotions and themes of the story. The musical score complements the visuals and adds to the overall immersive experience.

Pros and Cons of the Music

Pros:

- Memorable songs that stick with viewers.
- Effective use of music to heighten emotional moments.
- Talented voice cast delivering lively performances.

Cons:

- Some songs may feel dated to modern audiences.
- A few musical sequences may seem overly long or inserted for commercial appeal.

Themes and Moral Messages

Core Themes

Fievel Goes West explores themes of perseverance, bravery, and the importance of community.

Fievel's journey symbolizes the pursuit of dreams despite obstacles, emphasizing that courage and belief in oneself are vital for overcoming adversity. The film also underscores the significance of family

support and working together to face challenges.

Additionally, the Western setting allows for themes of adventure and exploration, inspiring viewers to embrace new opportunities.

Educational and Moral Aspects

The film promotes messages about honesty, loyalty, and trusting one's instincts. It encourages viewers to stand up against evil and to value friendship and teamwork. The portrayal of characters overcoming their fears and working towards common goals imparts positive lessons for children.

Overall Reception and Cultural Impact

Critical Reception

Fievel Goes West received generally positive reviews from critics upon release. It was praised for its lively animation, engaging story, and memorable music. Some critics noted that it did not quite reach the emotional depth of its predecessor but still offered a fun and heartfelt experience.

Audience Reception and Legacy

The film has maintained a strong fanbase over the years, regarded fondly as a classic animated adventure. Its nostalgic value, combined with its charming characters and upbeat tone, has kept it relevant in popular culture. The movie has inspired merchandise, theme park attractions, and has been featured in various home media collections.

Impact on Animation and Popular Culture

Fievel Goes West contributed to the early 90s wave of successful animated features, blending traditional animation with storytelling that appeals across generations. Its musical numbers and character archetypes influenced subsequent animated films.

Pros and Cons Summary

Pros:

- Engaging and adventurous storyline with emotional depth.
- Vibrant, expressive animation.
- Memorable songs and a compelling musical score.
- Strong voice performances from a talented cast.
- Positive themes promoting courage, family, and perseverance.

Cons:

- Some plot elements may feel predictable or formulaic.
- Visuals, while charming, lack the polish of later CGI animations.
- Certain subplots and characters feel underdeveloped.
- Some musical sequences may seem dated.

Conclusion

Fievel Goes West remains a cherished animated film that offers a delightful blend of adventure, humor, and heartfelt moments. Its engaging narrative, memorable characters, and lively music continue to resonate with audiences young and old. While it may not have achieved the groundbreaking status of

its predecessor, it stands as a testament to the charm and enduring appeal of classic American animation. For fans of family-friendly adventure films and animated musicals, Fievel Goes West is a timeless choice that captures the spirit of exploration and the importance of believing in oneself. Whether revisiting childhood memories or discovering it anew, viewers are sure to enjoy the whimsical journey into the Wild West through the eyes of Fievel Mousekewitz.

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