

## The Jungle Book : A Bare No Absolute Necessity

Almost any way you look at it, Walt Disney's *The Jungle Book* (you can hardly call it "Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*") was a pivotal film in the history of the Disney Studios. It was the last animated feature that Walt worked on personally, and one of the first to make extensive use of celebrity voices on its soundtrack. *Sleeping Beauty* had already introduced a more angular look to the Disney style, and *101 Dalmatians* had used the Xerox process to reduce the expense of animating, but *The Jungle Book* refined and softened both processes, to yield the modified Disney "look" showcased in *The Aristocats*, *Robin Hood*, *The Rescuers*, and the animated portions of *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*. And its great financial success it grossed about \$73 million on its first release (the equivalent of about \$400 million at today's ticket prices) seemed to validate its approach. For better or worse, *The Jungle Book* set the trajectory for the company's animated features during the post-Disney/pre-Eisner interregnum.

The movie boasts some of the highest high points in the Disney animated canon: Colonel Hathi reviewing his elephant patrol; Kaa the snake lulling Mowgli into a hypnotic slumber; King Louis aping Mowgli even as Mowgli apes King Louis; and, of course, the eternally popular "Bare Necessities" number by Baloo the bear. The average viewer has probably seen these sequences showcased in so many specials and retrospectives, and watched and rewatched them so many times on videotape, that he or she probably has little sense of where they show up in the overall feature, and may not even have a firm memory of what the movie as a whole is like.

So it's a bit of a surprise and even a little disconcerting, actually to sit down with the recent Platinum Edition DVD release of *The Jungle Book*, watch it from start to finish, and discover that the movie itself is little more than the aforementioned high points. Sure, it begins with some brief expository background: the panther Bagheera discovers an infant boy (the "man cub" Mowgli) and drops him off at the den of a wolf mother; it then cuts to a wolf council ten years later where, for the boy's own safety, it is deemed best that he be returned to the man village. But the rest of the movie (which is actually less than 90 minutes long) simply has Mowgli meeting new jungle creatures while either escaping or being kidnapped from his would-be benefactors, Bagheera and Baloo. Except for one or two quasi-emotional scenes (like one where Baloo wrestles with having to part with "Little Britches"), the movie is little more than a succession of comedic or musical set pieces tied together with some very weak plot stitching.

But what set pieces they are! Probably everyone has their own favorite scene, but surely there isn't one sequence that hasn't something for everyone. Colonel Hathi leads a herd of the funniest and most idiosyncratic elephants ever committed to celluloid. The limbless Kaa does things with his coils that acrobats and magicians can only dream of. King Louis just swings, man. Contemporary animators often point back to *The Jungle Book* as a source of inspiration, and these scenes are certainly full of inspired movement. There is tremendous, supple power in Shere Khan's shoulders and haunches as he stalks a deer; Bagheera moves with a feline grace and daintiness; King Louis moves like a four-armed bag of rubber bands. The great Disney animators who worked on the film also manage to show their stuff without the kind of boastful, attention-grabbing showmanship that can mar the work of their latter-day imitators. With *The Jungle Book* you feel as though you are in the hands of masters so confident of their abilities that they can toss off amazing work in throwaway gags, as when one of King Louis' elderly retainers does some short but sensationally energetic dance steps atop a stone pillar.

The energy may have flowed directly from the pens of such artists as Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnson, but much of the subtle characterization on display clearly comes from the voice artists. Now, speaking personally, I see no good reason that contemporary animated features must employ such colorless performers as Matt Damon, Brad Pitt, or Julia Roberts. To tell the truth, I'm not even especially thrilled when a good performer like Jeremy Irons or James Earl Jones shows up on a soundtrack it comes too close to stunt casting. So I have to admit I'm intellectually a bit ambivalent about *The Jungle Book*'s celebrity-heavy cast, and think it set something of a bad precedent for the art form. But even I can't deny the power and energy it gains from such charismatic performers as Phil Harris (Baloo), Louis Prima (King Louis), Sterling Holloway (Kaa), and especially George Sanders (Shere Khan). Even if the characters behave and sound more like their performers than like an independent character, there's no denying that these are some of the most attractive characters Disney ever committed to film, and that this stems in no small measure from the forceful personalities voicing them.

The plushly appointed Platinum Edition DVD comes with most of the usual extras. The entertaining and highly informative commentary track features Bruce Reitherman, the voice of Mowgli and son of *Jungle Book*-director Wolfgang Reitherman; Richard Sherman, one of the movie's three songwriters; and Andreas Deja, a thirty-year Disney animator. Reitherman is able to give background on the production of the film, but the best stuff comes from Sherman, who illustrates some points about the musical score with a handy piano, and Deja, whose keen professional eye lets him pick out and discuss some of the lovely visual details. The three commentators are quite personable and have a great deal of fun with each other and with the movie.

Other highlights include a set of songs written for an earlier version of the story (that was later rejected as being too dark), and a deleted scene (illustrated with original storyboards, vocal tracks, and score) involving Rocky the Rhino, a character who was later eliminated. This scene, which originally had the four vultures goading Rocky into attacking Mowgli, was to lead into a rock 'n roll version of "That's What Friends Are For" that, had

things gone to plan, might have been performed by the Beatles. (The Beatles are not in evidence, but this section includes a test track showing what a rock version of the song would have sounded like.) There are also two lengthy and very interesting featurettes on the making of The Jungle Book; a shorter featurette with various contemporary artists voicing their admiration for the film; a profile of Bruce Reitherman's later career as a wildlife documentary filmmaker; and a short in which veteran animators Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnson discuss the art of character animation.

Lesser extras that might yet interest some viewers include art galleries, a set of DVD games that alternately bored and baffled me, a new music video of "I Wanna Be Like You" by the Jonas brothers, and a selection of songs from the movie that, unfortunately, lacked any way to turn off the on-screen lyrics. (It being a Disney release, the DVD also comes generously festooned with warnings and logos that you are not allowed to skip.)

The Jungle Book is, deservedly, one of the most popular titles in the Disney library. The Platinum Edition DVD will be of most interest to Disney aficionados, but the movie itself is sure to delight anyone. This is as close as one can get to a must-have or must-give present this holiday season.

As a brand, Disney is now the world's top 10 international brands in attendance of the fifth, brand value of over 60 billion US dollars. It is an endless charm of the rats, from Hollywood to the world, hundreds of millions of men, women and children of the world Doule.

It is a wealth can create hundreds of millions of mice, and its image into the film, tourism, media, network, clothing, shoes, toys, leather goods. It is also one of the mice remain forever young, born since 1928 has been 80 and the world is still red, the sun at high noon, Fengtouzhenjin.

Brand name: Disney / Walt Disney

Chinese brand name: Disney / Walt Disney (unofficial title: Disney)

Brand name Source: The Walt Disney Company co-founder of the Walt Disney (Walt Disney), the brand name

signs description: Graphic inspiration from the Walt Disney President's signature brand

content: provide consumers with the best and most special entertainment experience

Below are the Disney brand in the BusinessWeek / Interbrand list of the top 100 world brand value (which is the world's most authoritative assessment of one brand) in the last few years data:

2005: Brand Value 26.441 billion US dollars, No. 7

2004: Brand Value 27.113 billion US dollars, No. 6

2003: Brand Value 28.036 billion US dollars, No. 7

2002: Brand Value 29.256 billion US dollars, No. 7

2001: Brand Value 32.591 billion US dollars, No. 7

2000: Brand Value 33.553 billion US dollars, No. 8

1999: Brand Value 32.275 billion US dollars, No. 6

Although the Walt Disney Company launched from the 1928 prowess 9:00-15:30 have been experienced by nearly 80 years of development, but the core of the Disney brand has been There are no changes. They are:

Innovation - Innovation

Disney has always adhered to the tradition of innovation

quality - Quality

Disney continuous efforts to achieve high quality standards of excellence in turn

Disney brand in all products, quality is essential to guarantee

Sharing - Community

For families, Disney has been creating a positive and inclusive attitude

created by the Disney entertainment can be shared by all generations

Story - Storytelling

Disney will be a product of each tell a story

eternal story always brings joy and inspiration

optimistic - Optimism

Disney entertainment experience always hope that the publicity to the people, eager and optimistic determination

respect - Decency

Disney We respect each individual

Disney fun is based on our own experience, do not make fun of others

Disney brand story

Disney is a global brand, the seventh largest in the world, a place of Chinese cartoon market, the three main promote brand awareness in 1974, Winnie the Pooh, Mickey Mouse and Princess series, OUR Disney sells its products have been authorized manufacturing sales commodities, the future will continue to introduce new Disney brand positioning young and trendy.n

Mickey Mouse - 1928 Walt Disney cartoon with sound launch powerful 9:00-15:30 Mickey formally meet with the audience, from international fame, his girlfriend Minnie, and a good friend Donald Duck, fly dogs, Bulutuo, the Donald Duck Silk and his girlfriend also be everyone s favorite.

Princess series - six princess, show different styles, gentle and elegant Snow White, Sleeping Beauty romantic love Luo beautiful, charming Cinderella, the jasmine brave, savvy and love of adventure Beier Aili and lively children.

Other Disney characters Series - Baby Cubs, Baby mimic, the Queen Mary cats, Aiaididi, Star Baby, Toy Story, Deer grouper ratio, One Hundred and One Dalmatians.

## About the Author

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Sleeping Beauty. Once upon a time there was a Queen who had a beautiful baby daughter. She asked all the fairies in the kingdom.

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