



BFI FAMILIES

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EARWIG AND THE WITCH

What's it about?

Ten-year-old orphan Earwig is taken in by a witch, who teaches her how to cast magic spells in return for helping around the house. With the aid of a talking cat, Earwig starts to learn about her true family. The latest film from Studio Ghibli is directed by Gorô Miyazaki (*Tales from Earthsea*) and sees the studio revisit the books of Diana Wynne Jones (*Howl's Moving Castle*) while venturing into computer animation for the first time.

Hayao Miyazaki on 'Earwig and the Witch'

I received *Earwig and the Witch* from publisher Tokuma Shoten, which sends me children's books every month. I love Diana's books, and upon opening this one, I found it be very engaging. It's extremely scathing and full of sarcasm, but also has a sprinkling of humour that doesn't get buried, making it genuinely delightful. In a sense, it's quite down-to-earth, in that it depicts the process by which a family comes together.

Earwig's charm comes from her indomitable spirit. She has an unflappable strength and formidableness, and at the same time, she's an adaptive and tenacious fighter. They're the same qualities you need when making your way in the world, and those aspects of her character are particularly endearing. When people around us display hostility, we often tend to lose our nerve, shrink, and give up, but we can still somehow find a niche to cling on to, by our fingernails if need be, and use it to lift ourselves up. That's the definition of formidableness. When times get hard, it enables you to maintain a positive outlook and endure hardship with a smile on your face.

The use of CG was impressive. That's thanks to the truly wonderful team that came together for this project. Once the decision was made to work with CG, I wondered how it would be done, but when I saw the finished product, I had no complaints. Because it was drawn using CG, not pencils, it has a more deliberate quality. My praise comes with no reservations. It must have been a tough film to make. Earwig's formidable ability to never give up and to dig her heels in permeates the picture.

Production notes

EARWIG AND THE WITCH (ĀYA TO MAJO)

Directed by: Goro Miyazaki
Production: Studio Ghibli
Chief Executive Producer: Isao Yoshikuni, Keisuke Tsuchihashi
Executive Producer: Koji Hoshino, Kiyofumi Nakajima
Producer: Toshio Suzuki
Line Producer: Kentaro Morishita
Planning: Hayao Miyazaki
Screenplay: Keiko Niwa, Emi Gunji
Based on the novel by: Diana Wynne Jones
Animation Supervisor: Tan Se Ri
CG Supervisor: Yukinori Nakamura
Layouts: Nobuo Hosoyama, Yusuke Hirota, Shota Deguchi
Art Director: Yuhki Takeuchi
Character Designer: Katsuya Kondo
Original Character and Setting Design: Miho Satake
Music: Satoshi Takebe
Sound Designer/Sound Re-recording Mixer: Koji Kasamatsu

Voice Cast

Richard E. Grant (*The Mandrake*)
Kacey Musgraves (*Earwig's mother*)
Dan Stevens (*Thomas*)
Taylor Paige Henderson (*Earwig*)
Vanessa Marshall (*Bella Yaga*)
Pandora Colin (*matron*)
Logan Hannan (*Custard*)
Summer Jenkins (*Phyllis*)
Vivienne Rutherford (*Sally*)
Alex Cartaña (*assistant matron*)
Tom Bromhead (*cook*)
Eva Kaminsky (*assistant cook*)
JB Blanc (*Mr Jenkins*)

Japan/USA 2020
83 mins

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