



MAKING MAGIC: 100 YEARS OF DISNEY

Pinocchio

Ferdinand and the Bull

Director: Dick Rickard
USA 1938
8 mins

Pinocchio

Supervising Directors: Ben Sharpsteen, Hamilton Luske
©: Walt Disney Productions
a Walt Disney production
Distributed by: RKO Radio Pictures
Presented by: Walt Disney
Sequence Directors: Bill Roberts, Norman Ferguson, Jack Kinney, Wilfred Jackson, T. Hee
Story Adaptation: Ted Sears, Otto Englander, Webb Smith, William Cottrell, Joseph Sabo, Erdman Penner, Aurelius Battaglia
From the story by: [Carlo] Collodi
Camera Operator: Chuck Wheeler
Animation Direction: Fred Moore, Franklin Thomas, Milton Kahl, Vladimir ['Bill'] Tytla, Ward Kimball, Arthur Babbitt, Eric Larson, Woolie Reitherman
Animation: Jack Campbell, Oliver M. Johnston, Bery Wolf, Don Towsley, Don Lusk, John Lounsbery, Norman Tate, John Bradbury, Lynn Karp, Charles Nichols, Art Palmer, Joshua Meador, Don Tobin, Robert Martsch, George Rowley, John McManus, Don Patterson, Preston Blair, Les Clark, Marvin Woodward, Hugh Fraser, John Elliotte
Backgrounds: Claude Coats, Merle Cox, Ed Starr, Ray Huffine
Art Direction: Charles Philippi, Hugh Hennesy, Kenneth Anderson, Dick Kelsey, Kendall O'Connor, Terrell Stapp, Thor Putnam, John Hublely, McLaren Stewart, Al Zinnen
Character Designs: Joe Grant, Albert Hurter, John P. Miller, Campbell Grant, Martin Provensen, John Walbridge
Music and Lyrics: Leigh Harline, Ned Washington, Paul J. Smith
Sound System: RCA Sound System
Voice Cast – all uncredited:
Dickie Jones (*Pinocchio*)
Cliff Edwards (*Jiminy Cricket*)
Christian Rub (*Gepetto*)
Walter Catlett
(*J. Worthington Foulfellow*, '*Honest John*')
Evelyn Venable (*The Blue Fairy*)
Frankie Darro (*Lampwick*)
Charles Judels (*Stromboli/coachman*)
Don Brodie (*barker*)
USA 1940©
87 mins

The screening on Sat 12 Aug will feature an extended introduction

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Disney's *Pinocchio* is the first cartoon feature to allegorise animation's miracle, the creation of life. By *Pinocchio*'s release in 1940, cinema audiences had seen many fantastic births, but usually of monsters: Paul Wegener's clay Golem, Fritz Lang's robot Maria, the lumbering Boris Karloff. Early cartoons, meanwhile, reduced their life-giving magics to jaunty conjuring, inspired by the lightning artists of vaudeville. The connection is explicit in J. Stuart Blackton's *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* (1906), perhaps the first cartoon ever. The first chalk drawing is by a visible hand, but then the magician drops out and the faces move by themselves.

In contrast, Disney couches *Pinocchio*'s birth in wondrous fairytale metaphor, but with a showman's wink to the audience. A winged Blue Fairy in a glittering dress touches her wand to a boy marionette and declares, 'Little puppet made of pine; Wake, the gift of life is thine!' *Pinocchio* wakes amid sunbursts, stretches and blinks his blue painted eyes, and we cut to the gnome-like spectator Jiminy Cricket, voiced by vaudeville star Cliff Edwards. Jiminy looks at us, lets out an impressed 'Phew!' and chirps, 'What they can't do these days!' You can almost see Walt beaming with pride.

Pinocchio was the second cartoon feature released by Disney, three years after *Snow White*. It was a flop; war in Europe blighted foreign sales, while some critics argue the film was too dark for American viewers. Yet many reference books cite *Pinocchio* as the greatest cartoon feature ever, even if its images and characters haven't sunk into the popular memory as deeply as *Bambi*, *Dumbo* and *Snow White*.

The technology unites handicrafts with high-tech. *Pinocchio*'s pictures were interpreted in 3D through the multiplane, a giant camera holding glass sheets on which cels, backgrounds and overlays were painted separately. When *Pinocchio*'s alpine village wakes, we swoop and turn overhead like a bird, looking down at the flocking crowds, though it's typical of the pell-mell narrative that we never see this bustle again.

The film's greatness is haphazard, its magic almost shapeless. It has five villains (including a monster whale), untidily sprawling set-pieces, broad panto knockabout (exaggerated double-takes abound) and moments of high terror. There's the horror-film shadow of a doomed delinquent, turning from boy into donkey), and the shock-and-awe climax, where *Pinocchio* and the toymaker Gepetto are chased by a whale like a roaring locomotive. If *Pinocchio* has a self-metaphor, it's Gepetto's fantastic toyshop array of clocks shaped like animals, birds, dancers and delinquents, all brassily chiming the hour – though Gepetto must still check what time it actually is.

The carvings and clockwork of Gepetto's home advertise the animators' handicraft. The toyshop scenes drip enclosed and intimate charm, modulated by Gepetto's cranky cat (animated by Eric Larson). Cliff Edwards as Jiminy was the first celebrity voice in Disney's features, a precursor to Phil Harris in *The Jungle Book* and Robin Williams in *Aladdin*. Edwards, though, can mix fanny gags with snowy purity, and his tenor singing of 'Fate steps in and sees you through...' conjures a lost world of Hollywood gentility.

MAKING MAGIC: 100 YEARS OF DISNEY

Mary Poppins

Wed 9 Aug 17:50; Mon 21 Aug 14:20;
Mon 28 Aug 13:00

Up Wed 9 Aug 20:30; Mon 28 Aug 12:30

101 Dalmatians

Thu 10 Aug 14:20; Sat 19 Aug 15:30;
Tue 29 Aug 14:20

The Love Bug

Fri 11 Aug 20:30; Sat 12 Aug 11:50;
Sun 20 Aug 13:30

A Disney Day for Young Audiences

Sat 12 Aug 11:30-16:30

Pinocchio

Sat 12 Aug 11:30 (+ extended intro); Mon 14 Aug
14:20; Sun 20 Aug 19:00

Tarzan Sat 12 Aug 18:00; Sat 26 Aug 12:00

Soul Sat 12 Aug 20:30; Sat 19 Aug 13:00;

Thu 24 Aug 14:20

The Lion King

Sun 13 Aug 13:00 (+ Funday Sing-along);
Sat 26 Aug 20:30; Thu 31 Aug 14:20

The Fiendishly Difficult Disney Quiz

Sun 13 Aug 15:30 Blue Room

Bambi

Sun 13 Aug 15:50; Wed 16 Aug 14:20;
Sat 26 Aug 12:20; Mon 28 Aug 16:20

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

Sun 13 Aug 18:10; Tue 22 Aug 14:20;
Wed 23 Aug 20:20

Finding Nemo

Sun 13 Aug 18:30; Sun 27 Aug 13:30

The Rescuers

Mon 14 Aug 18:30; Sat 19 Aug 15:50

Luca Mon 14 Aug 20:30; Sun 27 Aug 13:15

The Jungle Book

Wed 16 Aug 20:45; Wed 30 Aug 14:20

Bedknobs and Broomsticks

Thu 17 Aug 14:20; Sun 27 Aug 18:20

Sister Act

Fri 18 Aug 18:20

Freaky Friday Fri 18 Aug 20:30; Thu 24 Aug 20:50

Ratatouille Sat 19 Aug 12:00; Tue 29 Aug 20:30

Beaches Sat 19 Aug 17:30

The Parent Trap Sun 20 Aug 15:10

Zootropolis (aka Zootopia) Fri 25 Aug 18:00

Dick Tracy

Fri 25 Aug 20:40; Tue 29 Aug 18:10 (+ intro by
Ben Roberts, BFI CEO)

Turning Red Sat 26 Aug 15:30

The Little Mermaid

Sun 27 Aug 16:00; Mon 28 Aug 16:40

With thanks to The Walt Disney Company

Disney's Pinocchio is an adorable child, far from the devil doll created by Italian author Carlo Lorenzini, writing as Carlo Collodi. The original character swung between cruelty, indolence and prima-donna sentimentality, more 'Looney Tunes' than Disney. Walt didn't corrupt the source; Pinocchio was an innocent in a popular 1938 US stage version directed by Yasha Frank. Disney's and Collodi's Pinocchios are often contrasted by pundits looking to denounce one or the other, but they can coexist. (Spielberg references Disney's Pinocchio in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, 1977, and Collodi's in *Artificial Intelligence A.I.*, 2001)

Collodi's puppet is hero of a rickety junior *Bildungsroman*, a round of painful falls and lessons. Disney's Pinocchio just needs to become a real boy to escape wicked exploiters, like the foxy J. Worthington Foulfellow with his red fur and quizzical, questing malignity, voiced by a bluff Walter Catlett. Far worse is the coachman who takes urchins to Pleasure Island, a cockney fiend who leers, 'They never come back... AS BOYS!', and turns into a penny-dreadful cross between a gargoyle and Batman's Joker (invented that year). The whinnying puppetmaster Stromboli, animated by Bill Tytla, is a campily monstrous Santa Claus. His rolling flesh and scarlet mouth foreshadow the rampaging whale at the end.

None of these evildoers are punished or destroyed, but just melt away like lemon drops, ready to entrap the next careless child. Even at the happy ending, we're not allowed to linger at the celebrations, but follow Jiminy out into the cold night – though a night suffused with light, where each twinkling star equates to a small but sturdy conscience. Disney pours New World optimism over unkillable European nightmares; *Pinocchio* opened just as Europe was falling under tyranny.

Andrew Osmond, *100 Animated Feature Films* (BFI/Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

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