

Review : The Wind Rises (Hayao Miyazaki, 2014)



Masters of animation Studio Ghibli are on irrefutable top form once again with their latest release, *The Wind Rises*. The touching biography of Japanese airplane designer Jiro Horikoshi set against the backdrop of World War II era Japan, it is a love letter to all of director Hayao Miyazaki's passions. This is his swan song; his final film before retiring from a position that has seen him hailed as one of cinema's greatest directors and an internationally renowned animator.

Ever since he was young, Jiro has had dreams of flying and designing beautiful aircraft. As his pilot ambitions are halted by his poor vision, he develops a love for a plane's design. His passion pulls him through, passing by some of the most significant moments of his life and Japan's history.

Miyazaki's magic subtly threads through *The Wind Rises*; a beautifully aware film that still manages to match the ethereality of Miyazaki's more obvious works, such as *My Neighbour Totoro* and *Spirited Away*. Intricately painted and animated, it's a feast for the eyes, from the flamboyant dream sequences featuring Jiro's Italian inspiration, to the tender moments between himself and his lover. It's a testimony to Miyazaki's skill as a storyteller that he can create a war film with such elegance and colour in a way that doesn't devalue the brute force of war. This is undoubtedly one of his best and after *Ponyo* (Miyazaki's rumoured final directorial outing), one that's a suitable send off to a man with exquisite talent.

Ghibli's English language dubs always tend to be fairly

strong, this being no exception. Joseph Gordon Levitt takes the helm as the film's protagonist, with Emily Blunt and Stanley Tucci as supporting cast. Werner Herzog also makes a wise, comforting appearance.

It does not have the wild imagination that Miyazaki's previous features are known for, but it does have a heart more wholesome than others. Elegant, moving and a fitting farewell to a great filmmaker, *The Wind Rises* is a true masterpiece of animation.

The Extras:

For a film as expansive as this, the home release extras are a little lacking. There is a number of trailers and TV spots from all over the world, as well as a Feature Storyboard setting to watch the film with the original sketches simultaneously. The Collector's edition features a short press conference for the announcement of the film but, other than that it's fairly empty. Hopefully there is a lot more content available that will appear sometime later in the Ghibli timeline.

The Wind Rises is released by StudioCanal UK on DVD and Blu-Ray Collector's Edition on Monday 29th September