

Review of the film back to the future

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Back to the Future has always been a personal favorite of mine, part II to be specific. I believe the acting, sound, and cinematography to be crucial in forming the creation of a fantastic film along with many other aspects of animation. Universal Studios released Back to the Future in 1985. The film writer and director, Robert Zemeckis, co-produced the film with Bob Gale and Neil Canton with Steven Spielberg's production company. The film stars Michael J. Fox as Marty McFly, Christopher Lloyd as Doc Brown, Lea Thompson as Lorraine McFly (Marty's mom), Crispin Glover as George McFly (Marty's Father), and Thomas F. Wilson as Biff Tannen, the film's antagonist. Michael J. Fox was the perfect actor to be cast as the main role because his acting made him such a funny and likeable person.

The main character known as Marty ends up getting into Doc Brown's time machine to outrun a gang and accidentally time travels to 1955 when he hits 88 miles per hour in the DeLorean time machine. Little did he know he had just landed in the middle of his parents' courtship. He then struggles with the issue of finding the Doc to help him figure out how to get home all the while taking charge of his parents relationship to ensure it fulfills its destiny as to uphold the structure of the space-time continuum. This event gives him insight about his parents and plays into their relationship dynamic later on. I feel that Marty's analysis of his father as a teen plays a major role in the overall theme of the film. He sees him get bullied, fall in love with his mother, and gets a feeling for his lack of self-confidence. Watching his dad get bullied explains why he is such a pushover in the future. When the future of his parent's relationship starts to look doubtful Marty recognizes this and knows he must help, this becomes his motivation within the plot. Traveling

through time we see a comparison of changing times over the course of 30 years, but we also see the similarities of parents and their children during the same stages of their lives. Taking place in different eras makes the setting unique because once you become comfortable in one time period you are then thrown into a new one, in turn forcing the viewer to pay close attention to the differences between them and how this will have an effect on the outcome.

The film has a significant impact on society due to its futuristic “ promises”. For one, we have all been patiently waiting on the production of the hover board after being exposed to this new invention. One of the inventions that actually has been created based off of the movie is the self-tying shoe, granted this is still not a mainstream design for modern shoes but fascinating nonetheless. Of course we are anxiously awaiting the invention of time travel, but I’m sure this one will take some time. As we see in these examples, films have the ability to inspire people so they tend to hold some responsibility for societies reactions to watching them. Some may underestimate the impact of sound and music has on a film. Thanks to Alan Silvestri we have a great soundtrack that helps us relate and understand the various scenes throughout. This film helped inspire such an appreciation for 80’s music, as well as the era as a whole. “ The Power of Love” was one of the films biggest hits, along with “ Back in Time” by Huey Lewis and the News. “ Johnny B. Goode” was also a popular hit used in both the first and second films in the series. Being originally released in 1958, the 1955 crowd Marty plays the song for in the film was not very receptive of such a new style.

One of the most memorable cinematic scenes is the scene where Marty successfully pulls off his plan to make the jump back to 1985. This has always stood out to me because of the intensity and suspense behind it. The build in the scene is so intense that I still catch myself holding my breath, hoping that Doc and Marty are going to pull it off, even after already knowing the outcome. There is a classic Back to the Future score that was composed and conducted by Alan Silvestri that plays in the background of this scene. It is an orchestra playing a very intense, building, edge-of-your-seat kind of sound. As this plays, Marty is racing down main street, nearing 88 MPH, we zoom in on a close up of Doc Brown as he is trying to reconnect the rig he created to capture the power of a lightning bolt that will strike the clock tower at precisely the moment Marty reaches 88 MPH. Marty has to trust in Doc to connect the lightning cable and is unable to see him struggling with the just barely out of reach connection. As this is happening, the camera shows us shots back and forth of Doc, Marty, and the increasing speedometer, as we intensely feel that time is running out. Bird's eye view shots are taken above the DeLorean to show how fast Marty is going and how risky this can be. The scene is shot at night and in the rain, which adds to the feeling of danger and looming complications. The scene also uses effects of simulated wind and lightning to increase the feeling of the powerful storm.

I would love to learn more about the techniques behind creating sound effects organically such as the crackle of lightening. There are some cool stunts that Doc performs during this scene like climbing the clock tower, zip lining down the power connector, and holding onto the power line as the lightning strikes through it. The bright flash of light, followed by a shot of a

fatefully worried Doc, and then an immediate silence, play into the perfect execution of this scene. It leaves you wondering if Marty made it through this. Doc staggers down the storm-ridden street towards the flaming strips of tire burnout markings and shouts with the knowledge of his success. His facial features expressing more than words during this intense moment. The fire in the street was such an interesting touch and I have always wondered how difficult it was to keep the fire burning with the wind blowing and then how safe it was to put it out after filming. I like the fluidity of the director's camerawork here in showing the whole process instead of using various cuts. This scene mastered visual, audio, and computer simulated effects, then brought them all together to form one award-winning scene.

Ultimately this film is a great example of the use of cinematic elements in a classic American feature film. The direction, cinematography, and effects stand out especially and continue to awe throughout the changing generations. What will the next generation of film inspire in today's society?