

Movie Review: *Soul*

Amid life, there comes a time to meet the pressure of society's expectations — finding a stable job, getting married, having children, paying bills — but one cannot help but wonder if life's true purpose lies solely in survival and monetary pursuits.

Or is there something more profound that ignites the “spark” in our soul? Disney and Pixar's *Soul* dares to tackle these existential questions in a light-hearted manner, urging viewers to contemplate the connection between passion, purpose, and fate.

*Soul* skillfully weaves its emotional potency through its captivating animation style and introspection of compelling characters. At the heart of the film lies a mesmerizing journey of Joe Gardner, a passionate jazz pianist whose love for music is immeasurable. Gardner, voiced by the talented Jaime Foxx, encounters an unforeseen accident that leaves him in a suspended state, neither fully alive nor dead, leading his soul to embark on an extraordinary voyage.

Before his accident, Joe was on the cusp of living his lifelong dream as a professional jazz pianist, securing a highly anticipated gig. Fueled by his ardent tenacity, Joe's soul is determined to return to Earth to fulfill his dream. However, Joe's soul is mistakenly placed in The Great Before, a place where souls fully develop themselves and their personalities before being sent to Earth. With no way of returning to Earth alone, Joe is assigned to a precocious young soul named 22. Voiced by the brilliant Tina Fey, 22 contended finding her “spark” and purpose to go to Earth, making her look like less than the ideal candidate to get Joe back to Earth.

Among the considerable unpredictability surrounding Joe's and 22's quest to reach Earth, they unexpectedly evolve into a dynamic duo, filling a void you never knew existed. Through a

series of chaotic events they face together, the pair learns to embrace the beauty in life's imperfections while challenging the very fabric of existence.

In this mesmerizing cinematic experience, Matt Aspbury, the gifted cinematographer, creates the perfect balance between realism and the cartoonish nature of Pixar animations. Venturing new ground for Pixar films, Aspbury explores various art styles, most notably Cubism, through the leaders of the spiritual ecosystem with neon two-dimensional lines. By artfully portraying these powerful beings with simple and evocative color and linework, Aspbury gracefully guides the audience to ponder the gritty and introspective aspects of existence.

Furthermore, Aspbury crafts a breathing-taking realistic rendition of New York City, capturing the seamless continuity of living in the vibrant city. The creative direction of Aspbury seamlessly and effectively transports viewers into an alluring world where the spectrum between the tangible and ethereal becomes fluid, evoking an impression of awe and self-discovery.

Soul celebrates the intricacies of life and invites viewers to explore the boundless possibilities that lie within and beyond conscious comprehension. Viewers are left with a “spark” lit within themselves, accompanied by a deepened gratitude for the human experience. The best way to light up your “spark” is to watch the movie Soul.