

THE JUNGLE BOOK

UK/USA | 2016 | 106' | Adventure, Drama, Family | Rated PG

Directed by

Jon Favreau

Written by

Justin Marks

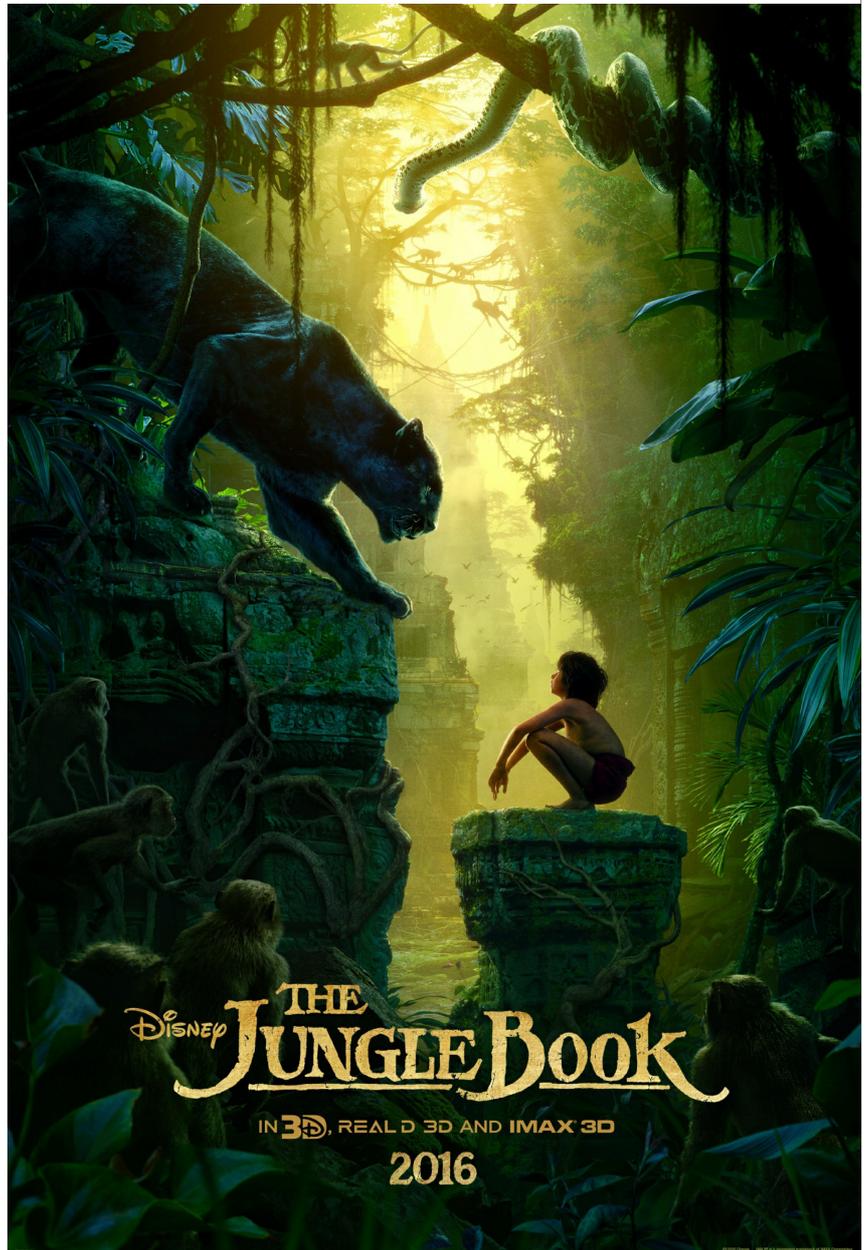
R. Kipling
(from the novel by)

With

Neel Sethi
Ben Kingsley
Bill Murray
Scarlett Johansson
Idris Elba
Giancarlo Esposito
Christopher Walken
Lupita Nyong'o

Original Music by

John Debney



Première:

04/04/2016 (Los Angeles)

World release:

07/04/2016

The legend will never be the same.

Budget: \$175.000.000

Gross: \$966.000.000 ca

REVIEW

Mowgli is a 'man-cub', an orphan and raised in the jungle by a wolf mum. He gets along well with them and the other animals, but Shere Khan, the terrible tiger, is determined to have his revenge against men and wants Mowgli dead. But he doesn't want to go to live amongst his race, the jungle, though dangerous, is his home...

The Disney live-action remake process is just at its beginning, but the standard set by the forerunners seems already high. Right after the success of "Cinderella" by Kenneth Branagh, Jon Favreau takes us back to the Jungle, in the same way as Wolfgang Reitherman did under the last supervision by Walt Disney himself; the animated version, completed after the death of the founder, becomes the trailblazer of this 'new' cycle that the company is about to take advantage of.

Of course, the movie rests a lot on the sentimentality that it provokes since the very beginning, where music and landscapes resemble almost as copies the ones of the animated version: when the actual story begins, though, the screenplay written by Marks distances itself from the original at the perfect balance, so that the narrative lines can be much more independent and each character has a life of its own, without almost any leading role apart from Mowgli of course. The imaginary world is also much more populated with the strangest animals as well as with the most classic ones and the effect is of great impact, even more so thanks to a wonderful mixing of CGI and motion capture; the final result is stunning and the risk of overwhelming this 'live action' remake with obvious digital grafts is smartly worked around.

The major problem of the movie is probably the most predictable one, which is the young leading character, Mowgli, played by Neel Sethi: he is quite good on the whole, but some of his interaction with the digital characters are not-so-believable, even where Jon Favreau tried incredibly hard to avoid the evidence of the kid's 'solo' performance. Little else can be said about the acting, while the voices can be spoken of: Ben Kingsley and Bill Murray resemble and even intensify the opposition between the wise panther Bagheera and the lazy bear Baloo, Giancarlo Esposito and Lupita Nyong'o give life to two characters almost absent from the animated version, drawing inspiration directly from Kipling's Akela and Raksha: they

all give great performances, as their characters come alive from the very beginning. Idris Elba had the most difficult of jobs, since the scary tiger Shere Khan was softened in the original cartoon: here it gets tremendously real in its true cruel side. Christopher Walken, instead, darkens his gigantipithicus King Louie, and in that fraction of the movie risks getting ahead of Shere Khan as the main villain; he totally regains points with the incredible new version of the iconic 'I Wanna be like You'. More uncertainty on Scarlett Johansson's performance, since this choice of a female Kaa still annoys me in some way.

As I was saying before, John Debney uses a lot of the original score and soundtrack, mixing the most famous songs (though they're not as important as they were in the original movie) as well as a lot of more accurate and action-packed music, so that the final result is extremely appreciable overall.

It was impossible to avoid references to the original Walt Disney classic, and I feel sorry for not succeeding in reviewing the movie in itself: sure, I think that most of the viewers will find it hard enough to judge without comparing them. This time, though, comparing doesn't mean diminishing one of the two, rather highlighting the differences that make both of them some great Walt Disney family movies (where this one is much advised for the parents to watch with their children, both for their enjoyment as well as for some intense Shere Khan...).

ASSESSMENT	
POSTER	79%
TAGLINE	67%
TRAILER	82%
SATISFACTION	89%
DIRECTING	84%
SCREENPLAY	90%
PRODUCTION DESIGN	91%
CINEMATOGRAPHY	93%
CAST	89%
MUSIC	95%
TOTAL	89% - B+