

SNEAK PEEK RATCHET & CLANK

# Space-based buddy comedy plays on its video-game roots

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USA TODAY

The big screen is getting a couple new guardians of the galaxy.

Animated buddy comedy *Ratchet & Clank* (in theaters April 29), based on the popular PlayStation video games, puts its main characters in the middle of a cosmic conflict and the fate of the universe in the hands of two misfit best friends.

The movie takes aspects of the games and combines them with a Joseph Campbell-type heroic quest and a “weird jambalaya” of comedy, action, sci-fi and pop culture, says director Kevin Munroe (*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*).

“I personally love the idea of breaking down the barriers of what’s a movie and what’s a game, and the whole thing is just a really entertaining story,” he says.

Ratchet (voiced by James Arnold Taylor) thinks he’s the last of his Lombax species, with catlike ears and foxy features. When the evil Chairman Drek (Paul Giamatti) threatens to wipe out entire worlds, Ratchet wants to join the cause as a new recruit for his hero Captain Qwark’s (Jim Ward) super-elite Galactic Rangers.

Qwark thinks Ratchet has everything but the right stuff, and then Ratchet meets Clank (David Kaye), a robot of war who was created to do horrible things yet malfunctions. They become buddies before teaming with the Rangers.

“(Clank is) introduced in the story feeling like a defect. Ratchet just can’t seem to get his feet under him and feels like he’s destined to do more,” Munroe says. “You take these outsiders and it’s in a weird way a very human story.”

The underdogs first put off and later win over their new pals in the Rangers. Brax (Vincent Tong) is the strong guy who takes Ratchet under his wing as a little brother; Elaris (Rosario Dawson) is the tech guru responsible for



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The heroes of *Ratchet & Clank*: Captain Qwark, Ratchet, Clank, Cora and Brax. They take on the evil Chairman Drek.



Ratchet (voiced by James Arnold Taylor), who thinks he’s the last of the Lombax, dreams of fighting alongside his hero Captain Qwark and the super-elite Galactic Rangers.

the team’s cool weapons, gadgets and battle plans; and Cora (Bella Thorne) is a take-no-guff warrior who has the biggest beef with Ratchet joining their ranks.

“She’s all about kicking butt and making the right choices,” Thorne says of her heroine, whom Munroe likens to a “James Cameron *Aliens* character.”

While the actress usually alters her voice for female animated characters because it tends to be too low, it was right in tune with Cora.

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Director Kevin Munroe

“I have such a manly voice, and they were like, ‘Yeah, your voice is awesome,’” Thorne says. There was a thought among the filmmakers that she could go even lower, she says. “And I was like, ‘Oh, my God, we want to make sure this is a girl, though, guys.’”

With *Ratchet & Clank*, Munroe wants to appeal to new audiences but also have something where gamers can relive their experiences playing the original source material.

“Nostalgia used to be listening to an Elvis album or something,” the director says. “Now you can have nostalgia for something 10 years later.”