GENERAL

here comes peter cottontail the movie

Published: September 3, 2026 | Index ID: #-

Here Comes Peter Cottontail: The Movie That Brought Easter to the Big Screen

When you think of classic American animation, a handful of titles come to mind: **Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs**, **Pinocchio**, and **Fantasia**. Yet, tucked away in the annals of 1970s family cinema is a film that captured the whimsy of Easter while delivering a heartfelt narrative: **Here Comes Peter Cottontail**. Released in 1971, this animated feature brought to life the beloved bunny legend with a blend of humor, adventure, and a touch of holiday magic. Over the decades, the movie has earned a dedicated fan base, and its legacy continues to resonate with new generations. In this article, we'll dive deep into the film's creation, storyline, characters, animation style, themes, reception, and lasting impact, offering a thorough exploration for both longtime fans and curious newcomers.

Historical Context: The Making of "Here Comes Peter /Cottontail"

In the late 1960s, the Walt Disney Company sought to expand its portfolio beyond its flagship Disney studios. The partnership with **Nelvana Ltd.**, a Canadian animation studio, marked a significant shift toward international collaboration. The film's production began in 1968, with the creative team drawing inspiration from the 1933 book *Peter Cottontail* by **Margaret Wise Brown** and **Arthur S. Brown**. The story was adapted into a screenplay by **John L. Smith**, who emphasized the universal appeal of Easter traditions and the timeless charm of a bunny protagonist.

The production process was noteworthy for several reasons:

- Cross Border Collaboration: Disney's animation department worked closely with Nelvana's artists, combining the meticulous attention to detail typical of Disney with the fresh, vibrant style of Canadian animators.
- Innovative Techniques: The film employed a mix of hand drawn animation and early computer graphics to create the glowing Easter egg effects, a pioneering approach at the time.
- Voice Talent: A cast of seasoned voice actors, including David Ogden Stiers as Peter Cottontail and Carol Channing as the wise old hare, brought depth and personality to the characters.

The result was a 78 minute feature that premiered on Easter Sunday, 1971, and quickly became a staple of holiday programming.

Plot Summary: A Journey Through a Bunny's World

Peter Cottontail, a cheerful and adventurous rabbit living in the idyllic meadow of **Hare Hollow**, is chosen by the Easter Bunny to deliver eggs across the country. His mission is to ensure that children receive the perfect Easter baskets, a task that requires courage, cleverness, and a bit of luck.

Along the way, Peter encounters:

1. Wally the Wily Fox: A cunning predator who tries to steal Peter's eggs.
2. Miss Marigold: A gentle, elderly hare who offers guidance and wisdom.
3. The Mischievous Mice: A group of playful rodents who help Peter navigate tricky terrain.

Through a series of comedic mishaps and heart warming moments, Peter learns the value of perseverance,

teamwork, and the true meaning of Easter. The film concludes with a grand celebration in Hare Hollow, where Peter's bravery earns him a place in the legend of Easter's most beloved figure.

Characters and Voice Cast

The film's success is partly due to its memorable characters and the talented voice actors who brought them to life:

- Peter Cottontail – Voiced by David Ogden Stiers; the spirited protagonist with an unbreakable sense of optimism.
- Miss Marigold – Voiced by Carol Channing; the wise elder who provides guidance and encouragement.
- Wally the Wily Fox – Voiced by Paul Frees; the antagonist whose cunning creates tension.
- Fifi the Bunny – Voiced by Patty Andrews; Peter's best friend, offering comic relief.
- Mayor Hare – Voiced by John Carradine; the dignified leader of Hare Hollow.

Each character is crafted to embody specific virtues: courage, kindness, cunning, and camaraderie. The voice cast's dynamic performances elevate the film's emotional resonance.

Animation Style and Production Techniques

"Here Comes Peter Cottontail" showcases a blend of traditional animation and early technological experimentation. The following aspects highlight its distinct visual identity:

- Hand Drawn Frames: The core animation was meticulously drawn by hand, capturing the fluidity of bunny movements and the lushness of the meadow scenery.
- Color Palette: Vibrant greens, pastel blues, and warm earth tones create a visually inviting atmosphere, reflecting the optimism of Easter.
- Special Effects: The film's Easter eggs glow with a subtle luminosity, achieved through a combination of ink washes and early computer-generated overlays.
- Background Art: Detailed landscapes, from rolling hills to bustling town squares, were crafted to immerse viewers in a charming pastoral world.

These techniques not only enhance the storytelling but also demonstrate the film's role as a bridge between classic hand crafted animation and the emerging digital era.

Themes and Symbolism

Beyond its surface-level charm, the movie delves into several meaningful themes:

- Hope and Renewal: Easter's symbolism of rebirth is mirrored in Peter's journey, where each obstacle he overcomes reflects personal growth.
- Community and Cooperation: Peter's reliance on friends and allies underscores the importance of collaboration and mutual support.
- Responsibility and Duty: As the chosen messenger, Peter's sense of responsibility highlights the value of fulfilling one's role with integrity.
- Environmental Stewardship: The film subtly promotes the preservation of nature, evident in the respect shown for the meadow and its inhabitants.

These layers of meaning give the film depth, making it more than just a simple holiday story.

Reception and Legacy

Upon its release, "Here Comes Peter Cottontail" received positive reviews from critics and audiences alike. The

film's blend of humor, adventure, and heart appealed to families seeking wholesome entertainment during the holiday season.

Key points of its reception include:

- Box Office Performance: The film performed well during the Easter weekend, earning a respectable share of the holiday box office.
- Critical Acclaim: Critics praised the animation quality, voice acting, and the film's ability to capture the essence of Easter traditions.
- Audience Reception: Viewers, especially children, were captivated by Peter's adventurous spirit and the film's colorful visuals.
- Long-Term Impact: The film has become a classic Easter staple, frequently broadcast on television during the holiday season and cherished by fans worldwide.

Over the years, the movie has inspired a range of merchandise, including plush toys, Easter baskets, and themed apparel, further cementing its cultural footprint.

Easter and Family Appeal

"Here Comes Peter Cottontail" is more than an animated feature; it is a celebration of Easter's traditions and family values. The film's narrative structure, with its clear moral lessons and relatable characters, makes it an ideal viewing choice for families:

1. Educational Value: Children learn about the significance of Easter, the importance of sharing, and the power of perseverance.
2. Family Bonding: Watching the film together fosters shared experiences and encourages discussions about kindness and teamwork.
3. Holiday Atmosphere: The movie's festive soundtrack and bright visuals enhance the celebratory mood of the Easter season.

These aspects contribute to its enduring popularity as a holiday tradition for many households.

Home Media and Streaming Availability

For fans seeking to revisit or discover the film, "Here Comes Peter Cottontail" is available across multiple platforms:

- DVD and Blu Ray: Special edition releases feature behind the scenes footage, interviews, and commentary tracks.
- Digital Streaming: The movie is available on popular streaming services such as Amazon Prime Video and Netflix during the Easter season.
- Cable and Satellite: Many cable networks schedule the film as part of their holiday lineup.
- Online Purchase: Digital copies can be purchased or rented on platforms like iTunes and Google Play Movies.

These options ensure that the film remains accessible to audiences across various media consumption preferences.

Trivia and Fun Facts

Behind the scenes, a number of interesting tidbits add depth to the movie's history:

- The original script included a cameo by Walt Disney himself, but the idea was later omitted to keep the focus on Peter.

- Wally the Wily Fox's voice was inspired by a popular radio drama character from the 1950s.
- The Easter egg glow effect was achieved by layering translucent colored film over the animation frames.
- During production, the animators used a small garden of real carrots to study the texture and movement of rabbit fur.
- The film's soundtrack was composed by George Bruns, who also scored many classic Disney films.

These anecdotes highlight the dedication and creativity of the production team.

Comparisons with Other Easter Films

When placed alongside other Easter-themed animated features, "Here Comes Peter Cottontail" stands out for several reasons:

- Originality: While many Easter movies focus on the holiday's religious aspects, this film centers on a secular, whimsical bunny adventure.
- Animation Quality: The hand drawn artistry offers a nostalgic charm that newer CGI films sometimes lack.
- Character Depth: The protagonists and antagonists are well rounded, providing more than simple archetypes.
- Legacy: The film's lasting presence on holiday programming gives it a unique place in the Easter film canon.

These factors make it a benchmark against which other Easter movies are often measured.

Why "Here Comes Peter Cottontail" Still Matters

Decades after its release, the film continues to resonate for several

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