Hosoda Mamoru: The Worst To The Best

intro
A lot of Anitubers will talk about seasonal series, episodic reviews or even a collection of all of those. And as much as it is awesome and fun to focus on how good or bad each individual series are, I feel that a lot of us forget about the important people behind the scenes that make these anime and manga possible! So with that being said, welcome to the first episode of The Worst To The Best; a show where we look at the entire catalog of a particular director, mangaka or author and give my personal rankings of their worst stuff to their best stuff! And to kick-start this series, we're going to be listing off the works from world-renowned anime director Hosoda Mamoru. If you're into anime movies, you'll most likely be familiar this gentlemen or you've at least seen or heard of one of his movies. Now, Hosoda has done a lot of other work in the anime world other than directing, such as key animating for a number of TV series and even directing the Samurai Champloo opening (which if you ask me is an extremely weird yet amazing detour). But for today we're only going to be only looking at his major film directing works, and it's going to be fairly easy and quick to get through considering there are only 6 films to look at. But that doesn't mean it's going to be easy to list them from worst to best, and it's certainly going to be even harder for all of us watching to agree wholey with my list, so make sure to let me know your personal list in a video of your own or by leaving it in the comments below! Without further ado, let's begin with what I consider the worst Hosoda Mamoru film, that being….!

6. Boy and the Beast
Now look, before you start sending in your hate comments, let me clear a few things up. First of all, I don't HATE this movie, nor do I think it is subjectively a BAD movie. If anything, this movie was actually pretty decent compared to a LOT of other anime films I have seen in the past from other directors. All of that being said I do think out of all of Hosoda's works, Boy and the Beast is probably his most uninteresting and unengaging entry. It is the newest entry in his filmography as of the recording of this video, so naturally it's going to have the most stunning visuals and animation to accompany it, but unfortunately even that doesn't really impress me. Hosoda is known for utilizing styles, themes and techniques from his previous works to then build upon them into the new setting and characters, but with this film it kinda just felt like he took a bunch of elements from not just one movie but rather everything he had made without really improving or building upon them, which ended up making the setting, characters and everything else feel like something we had already seen before; something that felt oddly familiar and weirdly predictable. However Hosoda's directing is on par as usual, and the animation quality of the action scenes are full of energy and power, but it's just one of those films that didn't urge me to go and watch it a second time, which for me personally, Boy and The Beast is the only entry in this list to make me feel that way. The ending to this film is kinda just a hot mess and many scenes reminded me more of a Hayao Miyazaki film more than a Hosoda Mamoru film, and the characters while they are very unique individually, collectively didn't interest me as much as Hosoda's other casts. I don't know, maybe it's because I had already seen all of his other original films by the time Boy and the Beast came out; perhaps if I had never seen any of his

other movies then I probably would have enjoyed this a lot, but watching this for me was like watching a Quentin Tarantino marathon from Death Proof like… yeah it's good, but I dunno hm like let's watch something else? But I still recommend the movie, it's fun while it lasts, but just know that yeah, there are better films in the Hosoda Mamoru collection.

5. One Piece Movie 6: Baron Omatsuri and the Secret Island

I'll admit right here and right now that as much as I love One Piece, I've never actually sat down to watch any of the One Piece movies. I always looked at these movies as just filler content that only the hardcore fans watch and froth at the mouth over, so it was ever really anything that I felt was worth my time. That was until I heard that one of them was directed by Hosoda, which got me really interested considering Hosoda doesn't strike me as a director you would normally associate with the biggest shonen series of its time. And well, I don't know if Baron Omatsuri and the Secret Island is the best entry in the One Piece movie franchise overall, but it certainly was an entertaining film individually. The film is set most likely after the Alabasta Arc considering that Frankie hasn't made an appearance yet, and compared to how the One Piece series looked and felt during that arc, this movie certainly has a much more modern, refined and a very Hosoda look to it. Everything is drawn a lot more crudely with Hosoda's distinct lineart-styled animations, and the characters just move and bounce around the screen with a lot more buoyancy and elasticity (no pun intended). And honestly, the story was quite compelling and surprising with its rather dark and ominous tones which you very rarely see in One Piece, but especially from somebody like Hosoda Mamoru. Or maybe you do, I wouldn't know for certain since again, I haven't seen any other One Piece film, but as a standalone, this film was well-shot, well-written and is definitely a right step above Hosoda's first major work, that being...

4. Digimon: The Movie

Growing up at my age, there were mainly two types of kids; the Pokemon fans and the Digimon fans. And if you weren't a Pokemon fan, then you would have considered this film as your bible. And rightfully so, this is not only a fantastically written movie but is also an incredibly well-directed, well-presented movie in general. Because while a lot of non-Digimon fans like to dismiss this as nothing more than a Summer Wars Beta or a competitor to the first Pokemon movie, a lot of people tend to forget that this was one of two films that propelled Hosoda Mamoru's name out as a notable and prestigious anime director. And if anything, I think the film stands on equal grounds with some of the higher ranked Hosoda Mamoru films in terms of narrative execution regardless of its much shorter length. Yes, this is a kids movie. Yes, you can just dismiss it as a good film based off the nostalgia argument. But at the core of it there is a soul, a spark that ignited not only with the Digimon fanbase but basically with any fan of any franchise. This was the start of a visual style that Hosoda would then use in many films later in his career, by using large amounts of color inside a lot of dead white space; a style that even caught the attention of world-renowned artist Murakami Takashi for its unique and spatially aware style that other directors never attempted to try. This movie really manages to shine through the ages especially if you look at what other anime films at the time looked like. The many action scenes were cleverly shot, marking the start of many notable camera movements that Hosoda learnt to flesh out in later works, and I don't know about you but I watched this film

when I was 15 and even though I was never into Digimon, I still loved every minute of it. Not a lot of kids films can manage to do that, and even more-so, almost completely influence Hosoda's first original anime film.

3. Summer Wars

Yeah, you can call it just a "Digimon Movie Ripoff", but Summer Wars left a large impact on the entire industry for a lot of us, and you have to admit that this movie is just a MASSIVELY fun wave to ride on. Now granted, I did watch Summer Wars before I knew or saw The Digimon Movie, so I personally might have gotten an opposite reaction to the whole "what's copying what" thing here. I'm sure that for a lot of people Summer Wars and Digimon are almost replaceable but one thing that I think makes Summer Wars stand out that much more from the Digimon Movie is the fact that it's a feature length film. It manages to keep you on your toes throughout its entire duration without it seeming too overstretched or drawn out. Yes, there are a lot of characters that initially don't seem to be very interesting or unique in any way, and since there are such a large amount of characters its difficult to give them all enough screen time and presence to us viewers. But by the end of the film, after seeing everyone go through the horribly stressful things they had to overcome, not just in Oz but just within the family and in the real world, you feel like you're part of their giant family. The fact that it's a family film rather than a kids film makes Summer Wars that much more engaging and enthralling for me compared to the previous entry. Hosoda manages to portray the characters in a very relatable and believable way by not only throwing us with a bunch of awesome shots and action scenes from the digital world and its characters, but by giving us enough time to explore the real people involved in the story. The juxtaposition of vibrant, vivid colors of the digital world and the calm, cool, relaxed color palette of the family house gives a nice flux of motifs throughout a story that offers us a wide variety of emotions. I feel that Hosoda not only grabbed and perfected elements from the first Digimon Movie in terms of shot composition and storyline, but also grabbed and perfected many directing and compositional techniques that portray sombreness and calmness. An element unique to Hosoda in which he first perfected with what I believe to be his most underrated film...

2. The Girl Who Leapt Through Time

A classic, lost in time… literally. So many people seem to forget about The Girl Who Leapt Through Time, perhaps because it isn't a Hosoda story, perhaps because there have been so many iterations of the story told in so many different ways, or perhaps to some it's just a "boring time travel story" that the youth of today just don't seem to understand and appreciate if it doesn't have at least one shonen action scene in it. But along with Summer Wars, Hosoda's rendition of The Girl Who Leapt Through Time is easily the most serene, simple and beautiful retelling of what I believe to be one of the most important time-travel stories to come out of Japanese literature. This film, along with Summer Wars, was responsible for boosting Hosoda's reputation as an anime director, winning himself several awards and a long-time recognition amongst the industry. The way the camera moves in this film is very important to the style that Hosoda would gradually be known for; having many wide shots that have one central focus that displays a calmness yet deepness to whatever it is you're looking at. And it's also one of the first

films done by Hosoda that showed off his interesting use of the lateral tracking shot; a style of directing that we would later see utilized in many different ways in his other films. Yes, compared to his other action-based films like basically every other film on this list so far, The Girl Who Leapt Through Time is a very quiet, very atmospheric, very sombre film. But at the core of it, what Hosoda displays is his ability to show that quietness to striking and highly-engaging levels with his unique sense of camera movements and spatial awareness. And honestly, if we're talking about time-travel based anime, I would put this film up there with the greats like Steins;Gate and Suzumiya Haruhi. But as much as I love this film, there is inarguably one film that takes the crown in Hosoda's filmography and that is...

1. Wolf Children

Yeah… Wolf Children. I know, it's super mainstream, it's a super popular choice. But I think based on how the story-telling was presented, how the directing was undertaken, and how everything in the narrative tied back together with its central themes, Wolf Children is easily Hosoda Mamoru's best film. The biggest criticisms I see online about this film is how a) the mother had sex with a literal wolf to get her wolf children and b) the entire plot of the film is driven on quote-unquote "stupid mistakes". And if you agree with either one of those factors, then I'm sad to say that you completely missed the point of this film. Yes, the mother has sex with a wolf, a.k.a. She conducts herself in beastiality, but you could have replaced the father with a human and this film would have still made sense. The central theme of this film is about family choices, growing up and overcoming social and cultural boundaries by believing in what is best for you and your children. The only reason why Hosoda made these children wolf children was so that he could portray this social segregation, this difficulty of raising children, this challenge of overcoming social norms, this fear and distress of letting your children go, this realisation of acceptance for what your descendants have decided to pursue in life, in a much more simple and unique way. We've already seen plenty of films and TV shows that cover these very topics because it's something that every child and parent goes through in life. And Hosoda, being a new parent himself at the time, wanted to cover those same topics in his own unique ways. And the whole "stupid decisions" thing can be cleared up simply by saying, "we all make stupid mistakes bruh". With this film, Hosoda managed to perfect a lot of directing techniques he'd used in previous films in the most visually stunning, emotionally moving and atmospherically memorable ways. The way that he can make a simple movement of a character have so much bounce and energy to it without it being at One Piece levels of unbelievable movement within a warm yet calm and dramatic context is quite a standout notionworth crediting. He took all those distinct camera movements and shot compositions he had learnt in his previous films, especially those that he used in The Girl Who Leapt Through Time and cranked up the drama factor to an 11 without it being sappy or predictable. It's one of the only Hosoda films that has gotten me close to crying and is easily the most heart-warming family film that I have ever seen, period. And I think is a fantastic example of not only Hosoda's exceptional directing work but also his attention to detail in storytelling and overall presentation. If you had to see one Hosoda Mamoru film, then I would only recommend Wolf Children.

But that's my list of Hosoda Mamoru's worst to best films, what did you guys think? Again, this is just my list, I would love to hear your opinions in your own videos or comments so make sure to let me know! And look, let me just say again that even when I say The Worst To The Best, I think all of Hosoda Mamoru's films are excellent. Even The Boy and the Beast, even though in my opinion it is the "worst" Hosoda film I still think is quite a good film, hence why this list was very difficult for me to make. So if you've never seen a Hosoda Mamoru film before then why not watch all of them with a little marathon? Not to mention his new film is coming out this year which I am very excited for, so I wonder how the list will change after that comes out? Also let me know which creator, director, mangaka or author you would like to see me cover on the next episode of The Worst To The Best by tweeting at me or by answering the poll over on my Patreon. Certain Patron tiers will get you different voting powers so if you want your voice heard or would just like to support the show then make sure to check out my Patreon by clicking the link in the description below!
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