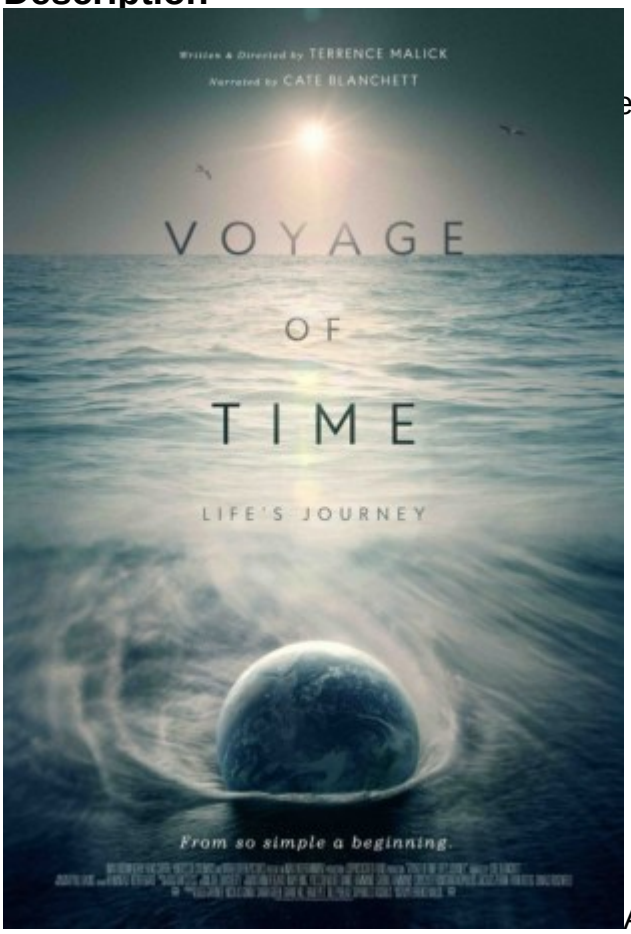
FILM REVIEW: Voyage of Time: Lifeâ??s Journey (Malick, 2016): USA

Description



enice International Film Festival at the Sala Darsena

Acclaimed director Terrence Malick (*Tree of Life*, The Thin Red Line, *Badlands)* is bringing to light consciousness of the universe and what it means to be a human being in the present moment in his latest production, *Voyage of Time: Lifeâ??s Journey*, produced by Dede Gardner, Nicolas Gonda, Sarah Green, Bill Pohlad, Sophokles Tasioulis, Brad Pitt

and Grant Hill. Paul Atkins served as the Cinematographer while Dan Glass handled special effects. Keith Fraase and Rahman Ali provided editing. Cate Blanchett narrated this version.

Director Malick reached out to a Harvard Professor of Natural History and the author of *Life On a Young Planet: The First Three Billion Years* and *Biology: How LIfe Works*, Andrew Knoll, and said he wanted to make a picture about natural history and the cosmos grounded in science. Malick had long been an admirer of natural history films drawing inspiration from earlier films such as *Cheese Mites*, a 1903 landmark film by British cinema pioneer Charles Urban and zoologist Francis Martin Duncan, depicting the microbial world inside a piece of Stilton cheese, and George Meliesâ?? 1902 *Le Voyage Dans La Lune*. Knoll had seen Malickâ??s recent film at the time, *Badlands.* Having enjoyed the film, Knoll agreed to be a part of it. Little did he know of Malickâ??s appetite to thoroughly investigate and devour subjects and correlating theories.

An ambitious project in the making for over two decades, *Voyage* runs the gamut of time from the first cells splitting and foraging their way in and through their vacuous environment to the land of the dinosaurs and Tyrannus Rex to the dawn of man up to today and into the future with sweeping visuals and spectacular effects sure to encapsulate and stimulate the mindâ??s imagination of time and place.

The result is a journey uncovering what shape and form time has given and what shape and form that time has taken. From the early Primordial III stars that ushered the first sparkles of light to the universe and the Tiktaalik fish that came out of the oceans to walk on land.

Special Effects Supervisor Dan Glass provided wide-ranging special effects from an Austin, Texas photographic laboratory called Skunkworks, a techie and industry term connoting radical innovation in research and development in conjunction with a variety of scientists and artists who collaborated to give representation to abstract images. While chemical experiments were conducted, a myriad of liquids, solids, and gasses were filmed at high speeds to generate a spectrum of effects as the team produced an array of stunning images.

In addition, sublime photographs from the Hubble Space Telescope, NASAâ??s interplanetary space probes, the Solar Dynamic Observatory â?? a satellite observing the sun, as well as adapted supercomputer simulations and electron-microscopy are added to the productionâ??s visual cornucopia of images.

Long time cinematographer Paul Atkins was charged with assembling a series of forest and desertscapes as well as seascapes to provide backdrop for the computer generated imagery of long-lost species. To provide contrast and to remind viewers of the ebb and flow of existence â?? and its future- , contemporary images of humankind were collected from lo-fi Harinezumi cameras Malick handed out to people across the globe that produced warm and fuzzy, colorful images.

Sound designer Joel Dougherty created and meshed in natural and speculative sounds of the universe. Meanwhile, Music Supervisor Lauren Mikus working closely with Malick selected instrumental pieces to evoke the swirling, swelling and creative energy at both ends of the magnitude scale.

To watch *Voyage of Time* is a journey unto itself. Malick tells his story in a non-linear fashion allowing the viewer to create meaning from whatâ??s being shown and from whatâ??s being seen. The film opens with an establishing shot of clouds and blue skies. The shot is juxtaposed with a cut to a dystopian futurist refugee camp with fires burning. Then, a jump is made to what appears to be plasma.

Cate Blanchettâ??s voiceover begins with a soothing quality as she vocalizes, â??Light giver. Light bringer. Who are you?â?• Blanchette continues with some pretty heady questioning throughout the rest of the filmâ??s narrative:

> â??What brought me here? Where are you leading me? Who am I to you? Will we always be together? Where are you? Mother, does your goodness never fail? Will you abandon me? Did love make me?â?•

If you like stunning visuals and mind-boggling questions, I would hallucinate that this is a film for you. Warmly Recommended.

Voyage of Time will be released in two differing formats. One a 90-minute poetic foray full of open questions narrated by Cate Blanchett and the second a 45-minute giant screen adventure for all ages narrated by Brad Pitt.

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