

= Bionicle : Mask of Light =

Bionicle : Mask of Light , stylized as BIONICLE : Mask of Light ? The Movie , is a 2003 direct @-@ to @-@ video science fantasy action film based on the Bionicle toy series created by Lego . Set in a universe filled with bio @-@ mechanical beings allied with classical element @-@ themed tribes , the story follows two friends from the fire @-@ based village of Ta @-@ Koro on a quest to find the owner of the Mask of Light , a mystical artifact that can potentially defeat Makuta , an evil entity threatening the island . The story is based on the latter half of the toyline 's 2002 ? 2003 narrative .

The project was first proposed in 2001 , during the original run of the Bionicle toyline . Lego contacted multiple writers for the project , including original Bionicle contributors Bob Thompson and Alastair Swinnerton , and Hollywood writers Henry Gilroy and Greg Weisman . Production began in 2002 , taking approximately a year to complete . A major part of the graphical design was adjusting the characters so they could work in human @-@ like ways while still resembling the original toys . The music was composed by Nathan Furst , who used orchestral and tribal elements to create the score . Voice casting was handled by Kris Zimmerman , and the voicework was done with the setting and mythos of Bionicle in mind .

Multiple studios were involved in the development and distribution of Mask of Light : it was co @-@ produced by Lego and Create TV & Film , developed by Creative Capers Entertainment and CGCG , and post @-@ production was handled 310 Studios and Hacienda Post . It was released in September 2003 on home video and DVD , distributed by Miramax Films and Buena Vista Home Entertainment . Upon release , the film reached high positions in VHS and DVD charts , and received generally positive reviews from journalists . Following Mask of Light , further films based on Bionicle have been released .

= = Plot = =

The Mask of Light takes place on a tropical island in the Bionicle universe . According to legend , the Great Spirit Mata Nui created the island 's masked Matoran inhabitants . Mata Nui was sent into a coma by his envious spirit brother Matuka , who began a reign of terror on the island until six guardians known as Toa freed the island from his regime . The Matoran , alongside the Toa and Turaga leaders , live in Element @-@ themed regions of the island . The events of The Mask of Light takes place during the latter half of the toyline 's 2002 ? 2003 narrative .

The film starts when two Matoran from the fire village of Ta @-@ Koro called Jaller and Takua discover a Great Kanohi , a Toa mask imbued with Elemental power . The two Matoran then participate in a multi @-@ tribal game of Kohlii , the island 's national sport : the match reveals developing tensions between the Fire Toa Tahu and the Water Toa Gali . At the end of the match , the Mask is accidentally revealed and the Turaga recognize its powers . They announce that it heralds the arrival of a seventh Toa destined to defeat Makuta and awaken Mata Nui . Jaller and Takua are sent on a quest to find the Seventh Toa , guided by the Mask . In the meantime , Makuta sends three of his Rakhshi " sons " to retrieve the Mask . During an attack on Ta @-@ Koro which destroys the village , Tahu is poisoned , causing him to become increasingly erratic and worsening his already @-@ strained relationship with Gali .

During their journey together , Jaller and Takua receive aid from the Air Toa Lewa , and the Ice Toa Kopaka , the latter of whom temporarily immobilizes the Rakhshi by trapping them in a frozen lake . After this , Takua is threatened by Makuta , and abandons Jaller in an attempt to shield him . Makuta then releases three more Rakhshi , who attack the Earth village of Onu @-@ Koro as Takua arrives . Tahu , Kopaka , Lewa and Gali arrive to help the Earth Toa Onua and the Stone Toa Pohatu : during the battle , Tahu is further corrupted and goes insane , forcing the Toa to capture him and flee . Takua decides to rejoin Jaller , while Gali and the other Toa purge the Rakhshi poison from Tahu , resulting in his reconciliation with Gali .

Arriving at Kini Nui , a great temple at the island 's centre , Jaller and Takua are confronted by all six Rakhshi . The six Toa mount a united offensive and defeat five of them , but a surviving Rakhshi attacks Takua . Jaller sacrifices himself to protect Takua , and Jaller 's final words prompt Takua to

don the Mask of Light : the Mask transforms him into Takanuva , the Toa of Light . Defeating the final Rakhshi , he constructs a craft powered by the worm @-@ like creatures inside the Rakhshi to guide him to Makuta . Traveling to his lair beneath Mata Nui , the two hold a Kohlii contest for the island 's fate . At Takanuva 's bidding , the Toa , Turaga and Matoran gather together in the chamber , and witness Takanuva merging with Makuta to form a single powerful being . With Takanuva 's willpower dominant , the being raises a gate leading deeper beneath the island , through which the gathered people flee . The being also revives Jaller before the gate collapses on top of it . The Turaga proceed to awaken Mata Nui using the Mask of Light , which in turn revives Takanuva . The film ends with Takanuva discovering the long @-@ dormant city of Metru Nui , the Matoran 's original home .

= = Characters = =

Jason Michas as Takua / Takanuva . Portrayed as an inquisitive Ta @-@ Matoran , he is a disguised Av @-@ Matoran ( Matoran of Light ) destined to become the Toa of Light .

Andrew Francis as Jaller , the Captain of Ta @-@ Koro 's Guard , who is designated as the Herald of the Seventh Toa .

Scott McNeil as Tahu , the headstrong Toa of Fire ; Onua , the wise Toa of Earth ; and Graalok the Ash Bear , a beast from Lewa 's domain .

Dale Wilson as Lewa Nuva , the Toa of Air ; and Turaga Onewa , leader of the Po @-@ Matoran .

Kathleen Barr as Gali Nuva , the Toa of Water .

Lee Tockar as the Makuta , the main antagonist ; Takutanuva , a being created from the merging of Takanuva and Makuta ; and Pewku , Takua 's pet racing crab .

Christopher Gaze as Turaga Vakama , the leader of the Ta @-@ Matoran .

Lesley Ewen as Turaga Nokama , the leader of the Ga @-@ Matoran .

Michael Dobson as Kopaka Nuva , the Toa of Ice ; Hewkii , a Po @-@ Matoran Kohlii player .

Trevor Devall as Pohatu Nuva , the friendly Toa of Stone .

Chiara Zanni as Hahli , a Ga @-@ Matoran and close friend of Jaller .

Julian B. Wilson as the Ta @-@ Matoran Guard , and the Rakhshi ( vocal effects ) , mechanical " sons " of Makuta driven by fragments of his being .

Doc Harris as Kolhii announcer .

= = Production = =

The concept for a movie based on the Bionicle topline was proposed as early as 2001 , when Bionicle became an unexpected commercial success for Lego : this idea was originally inspired by the fact that Lego advertised Bionicle as if it were a movie , and they had received inquiry emails and licensing requests from multiple film studios . Deciding to make the movie while retaining full creative control , Lego began discussing with potential partners , knowing that the film needed to come out while Bionicle was still looming large in the public consciousness . Lego 's eventual partner was production entity Create TV & Film . With the initial partnership set up , Lego created some development assets and went round various animation studios to find one that would develop the film . They narrowed it down to two studios , one of which was Creative Capers Entertainment . Creative Capers convinced Lego to employ them after producing a well @-@ received short animated segment featuring Lewa . Creative Caper 's three principles , directors Terry Shakespeare and David Molina , and producer Sue Shakespear , all took up their respective roles for the film 's production . The deal was reportedly worth \$ 5 million . In a later interview , Shakespeare referred to the film 's aesthetic as " primary colors that were coded to the areas " , saying it had a " younger feel " when compared to its sequel . He also referred to the film as " very intimate , very organic " .

The film began full production in 2002 . While most projects of its type took 18 ? 24 months to complete , the development team completed the film in 13 months . The project 's budget was later estimated as being between \$ 3 @.@ 5 to \$ 5 million . In addition to Creative Capers , Taiwanese studio CGCG created most of the animation : at the time , overseas outsourcing was a rarity for CGI

movies . By the end of production , the film ran to 77 minutes of raw footage . At this stage , 310 Studios was brought in to handle post production , which mostly entailed cutting the film 's length down by 7 minutes . According to 310 Studios president Billy Jones , the hardest part of this was deciding which pieces needed to be cut , as they were impressed with everything that had been produced . 310 Studios also created the opening title and ending credit sequences . Lego also partnered with Miramax to distribute the film , along with developing a future full feature @-@ length theatrical film .

Five different people were involved in the creation of the film 's story and script : executive producer Bob Thompson , original Bionicle co @-@ creators and writers Alastair Swinnerton and Martin Riber Andersen , and Hollywood writers Henry Gilroy and Greg Weisman . The script @-@ writing process began in 2002 . Gilroy became involved after a meeting with Thompson , and enjoyed working on the script as he greatly admired the Bionicle mythos . Two draft scripts were originally created to see who would write the better script : one by Swinnerton , and one from Gilroy . Due to time constraints , the Gilroy script was accepted with some of Swinnerton 's ideas included . Gilroy 's most difficult task was creating the dialogue for the Toa : he needed to take into account Thompson 's own interpretations , and what the majority of fans thought they should sounds like . In the end , he attempted to stay true to original portrayals while giving the voice actors something unique to work with . He also needed to balance their portrayals and screentime , as each of the six needed a chance to shine . The script went through eight different drafts before the final version , although this was far less than Gilroy was used to seeing on other projects . During planning stages , a lot of time was devoted to how characters interacted with each other : cited example were Lewa 's style of speaking , and Kopaka 's stoic behaviour . These traits were accentuated for the film to give the characters more distinction and depth . He also needed to avoid putting in out @-@ of @-@ context pop culture references , which would not fit into the setting of Bionicle . As part of the world and character development , expressions and exclamations unique to the world were created : a cited example is Jaller saying " You could have been Lava @-@ Bones " when Takua narrowly escapes being killed by a flood of lava .

= = = Design = = =

The characters of Bionicle had been portrayed in various ways across multiple media , including the official comics , Flash animations used for online videos , and CGI commercials for the sets . The team decided to use the models from the CGI commercials as their working base for the film models . Before commencing with designing the characters , the team went to Lego 's Denmark headquarters and received lessons in the Bionicle design process . The team were originally not going to alter the characters that much , but they needed them to be emotive , which necessitated a redesign . The first step in creating the character models was redrawing the skeleton , then adding muscle pods that would interweave with the skeleton : the muscle gave the characters a more textured appearance , and were added to the shoulders , calves , abdomen and chest cavity . Each character was given a " heart light " , a pulsating light in their chest which would fluctuate even when the character was stationary in @-@ shot . They also adjusted the eyes , making the sockets shallower than on the sets and giving them a glow . While redesigning the Toa , the team consulted with the original Lego staff to determine what materials the characters were made of : the muscles were compared to rubber , the bones described as a mesh of titanium alloy and carbon fibre , while the armour was made of Kevlar . In general , the outer shells remained mostly unchanged from the sets , although the visible gears were removed and armour was fitted to their backs . The Toa were also bulked up a little when compared to their sets so their feats would be believable for viewers .

Several external features were redesigned for the movie , including the introduction of a movable mouth to allow for a more human character , and a four @-@ pronged mechanical tongue to make them look less like dolls . Other characters used lights behind their masks to form mouth movement . Particular emphasis was placed on the eyebrows and lips of characters . The main change from the original models was the inclusion of hands , which was a necessity if the character performances were to be made realistic . Each character also had Custom texture maps were created for each

character so they would appear unique . In addition to reinventing old characters , the team created original character designs with Lego staff . Makuta , who had only been briefly glimpsed in the comics and web animations , was created through a " Frankenstein principle " , taking parts and pieces from multiple Bionicle sets to create the ultimate Bionicle villain . Other original creations included Takua 's pet crab Pewku , and a Gukko Bird designed to transport two Matoran . The Rahkshi are described by Bob Thompson as " like hounds hunting down the [ Mask of Light ] " . They were created by Swinnerton , and comic writer Alan Grant helped develop their characters . They were designed to appear more machine @-@ like than the rest of the cast , and their design were strongly inspired by the bio @-@ mechanical artworks of H. R. Giger .

= = = Audio = = =

The music was composed by Nathan Furst , whose preferred composition style of grand orchestra and electronica was what the film 's producers were looking for . Initially ignorant of the Bionicle universe , he explored the official website after getting the job as composer to get better context for his music . This and discussions he had with staff helped in the creation of eight or nine specific themes . The overall style is grand orchestral , but includes elements of electronic and tribal music . Furst used elements of African , Polynesian , and Eastern European music to communicate the fact that Mata Nui was an island , and when he could he incorporated his music into the action rather than leaving it as a standalone element within scenes .

Voice casting was managed by Kris Zimmerman , who chose voice actors that seemed to suit certain roles : the Matoran were voiced by young adults , while the Turaga were voiced by older actors . The voice actors and their performances were chosen so they would not sound like they came from a specific area of the world , instead sound like they came from and belonged in the Bionicle universe . A notable event during recording was a behind @-@ the @-@ scenes incident between Michas and Francis : originally cast in the respective roles of Jaller and Takua , Michas came into a recording session in a muddled state and began reading Takua 's lines by mistake . When Francis came in , he read Jaller 's lines : when the staff heard them and were favourably impressed , the actors permanently switched roles . Voice acting for the project was mostly done in 2002 , but dialogue was re @-@ recorded during Additional Dialogue Recording ( ADR ) into 2003 : approximately 30 % of the final film 's dialogue was done during ADR . Audio and music post @-@ production was handled by Hacienda Post . The company 's president Tim Borquez served as sound supervisor . Mask of Light was the first time in any media that Bionicle characters spoke .

= = Release = =

Mask of Light was first announced in April 2002 for release in September the following year . It was Lego Media 's ( later becoming Create TV & Film in early 2003 ) first project based on original characters and storylines , and their first direct @-@ to @-@ video production . It initially released on 16 September 2003 for home video and DVD . It went on to release in 27 different countries over the next eight weeks . It was released under the Miramax Home Entertainment label through Buena Vista Home Entertainment . Prior to its release , the film received a world premiere at Legoland in Carlsbad , California on 13 September : the premiere featured a huge mosaic built of Lego and a special effects show , in addition to special guests and costumed characters . The following year , the film received its television premiere on Cartoon Network 's Toonami program block .

At release , the film ranked high in multiple sales charts . In the " Top Kid Video " compiled by Billboard , it came close to the top of the charts upon release . Upon release , the film ranked at # 2 on Amazon.com 's VHS best seller list , coming in behind the VHS release of Lord of the Rings : The Two Towers . According to Lego 's 2003 financial report , the game was top @-@ selling VHS release in the United States in its first week , and ranked at # 4 in a similar list compiled by The Hollywood Reporter . It was also among the top premiere DVDs of the year . The game 's rental sales were also high , being placed at # 8 in the animated direct @-@ to @-@ video charts and totalling \$ 4 @.@ 24 million revenue by October 2004 . According to Animation Magazine , the film

is considered to be a commercial success .

== Critical reception ==

Entertainment Weekly gave the film a favourable ranking of " B + " , calling it a " well @-@ constructed CGI adventure " and saying that those who did not understand the story would enjoy the effects and action sequences . DVDTalk 's Don Houston was generally positive about both the film and its additional content : he called the visuals " exceptionally crisp and clear " when compared to other films of its type , and gave high praise to the voice acting and noting darker themes within the film . His main criticism was that it relied heavily on foreknowledge of earlier Bionicle storylines . Sci Film.org praised the film 's design and visuals , but felt that the film was too short , echoed Houston 's criticism of a need for foreknowledge , and said that it was " too politically correct " when compared to other films like Transformers : The Movie . Jules Faber of Digital Views Daily said the story had been designed with children in mind , and again praised the visuals despite seeing some stilted animations and poorly @-@ done environmental effects . He was generally positive about the DVD 's audio and visual quality . Both Houston and Faber noted homages to other well @-@ known films , including The Lord of the Rings , Raiders of the Lost Ark , and the works of Ray Harryhausen .

== Legacy ==

Mask of Light won a Golden Reel Award for Best Visual Effects in a DVD Premiere Movie in December 2003 . In addition , it won the Best DVD release award at the 2004 Saturn Awards . In 2014 , Vulture.com made mention of the movie in a 2014 retrospective on Lego 's history in the movie industry . That same year , Radio Times ranked it as among the best movies based on toys , say that the developers " did a better @-@ than @-@ average job of translating the appeal of the toys to screen " .

Mask of Light was promoted by Lego with new toys based on the film 's characters , a video game based on its story that released in 2003 , and a novelisation of the film . Two further Bionicle movies were confirmed prior to the release of Mask of Light , with the second being another direct @-@ to @-@ video feature and a third for theatrical release . The second movie , Bionicle 2 : Legends of Metru Nui , released in 2004 . The third movie , Bionicle 3 : Web of Shadows , was released as a direct @-@ to @-@ DVD feature in 2005 . Both films were produced by the same creative team behind Mask of Light . A fourth film by a different studio , Bionicle : The Legend Reborn , was released in 2009 through Universal Pictures Home Entertainment . A four @-@ episode television series based on the rebooted Bionicle toyline is set to begin airing in the first quarter of 2016 on Netflix .