

= TMNT (film) =

TMNT is a 2007 American computer @-@ animated fantasy action film based on the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles characters which were published by Mirage Studios and part of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles franchise . Written and directed by Kevin Munroe , the film features the voice talents of James Arnold Taylor , Nolan North , Mitchell Whitfield , Mikey Kelley , Chris Evans , Sarah Michelle Gellar , Kevin Smith , Patrick Stewart , Zhang Ziyi , and Laurence Fishburne (who provides narration) . It was the last film that Mako Iwamatsu made before his death and was co @-@ produced by the franchise 's co @-@ creator Peter Laird for Warner Bros. Pictures . TMNT was the first Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles film made with computer @-@ generated imagery (CGI) , created by Imagi Animation Studios , as well as the first feature film in the franchise in 14 years . The film sees the four Turtles (Raphael , Leonardo , Donatello , and Michelangelo) grow apart after their final defeat of the Shredder , when strange things are happening in New York City as ancient creatures threaten the world and the Turtles must reunite to save it .

TMNT premiered theatrically on March 23 , 2007 , grossing \$ 95 million worldwide on a budget of \$ 34 million . Its release coincided with tie @-@ in products including toys , comics and video games .

= = Plot = =

Three thousand years ago , an Aztec warlord named Yaotl and his four generals discover a portal opening into a parallel universe which is said to have great power . Yaotl becomes immortal but at a high price , as his four generals were turned to stone . The portal releases thirteen immortal monsters that destroy his army as well as his enemies . In the present , the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles have grown apart . After defeating the Shredder , Master Splinter has sent Leonardo to Central America for training . Donatello works as an IT specialist , Michelangelo works as a birthday party entertainer called Cowabunga Carl and Raphael works at night as a vigilante nicknamed Nightwatcher . April O 'Neil operates a company that locates and acquires relics for collectors with the help of her boyfriend , Casey Jones .

During a business trip to Central America , April runs into Leonardo and tells him that the turtles have drifted apart . She returns to New York with four statues for her client , Max Winters , the richest man in the city . Upon arrival she calls Casey and tells him that she spoke to Leo and tells him that Leo 's not coming back . However a little later Leo does return , and April and Casey deliver the statues to Winters . Winters hires Karai and the Foot Clan to search the city for the thirteen beasts before the portal opens again . Raphael encounters Casey , who reveals his knowledge of Raphael 's double identity and joins him in hunting criminals .

Winters , who is actually the still @-@ immortal Yaotl , reanimates his generals with his company 's advanced technology , but they remain made of stone . Leo returns to the sewer , meeting Splinter . Splinter forbids the Turtles from fighting until they can act as a team again . While training , the Turtles encounter one of the thirteen beasts , Bigfoot , battling the Foot Clan . The Turtles engage Bigfoot , going against Leo and Splinter 's orders .

Eventually , the Generals and the Foot Clan captured Bigfoot . When Raphael visits Casey , they encounter the Vampire Succubor and witness her capture by the Foot Clan and the Stone Generals , who spot them and knock Raphael unconscious . Casey takes him back to the apartment while April calls the Turtles for help and reveals the identities of Yaotl and his Generals . After being revived , Raphael suggests they pursue Yaotl , but Leo forbids him to go until Splinter gives out the order and so Raphael goes out to investigate alone as Nightwatcher .

Leo , Donny and Mikey return to their sewer home to plan their next move , where Donny discovers the reopening of the portal will be directly over Winters ' skyscraper headquarters . Splinter informs Leo that his team is incomplete , and that he knows what he must do . After eleven monsters have been captured , General Aguila questions Yaotl 's actions . The Generals conspire against Yaotl , wanting to remain immortal .

Raphael encounters one of the remaining monsters , the Jersey Devil , at a diner , but drives him off . Leo has been following him , wanting to put an end to the Nightwatcher 's vigilante acts , but when

Raph is revealed , they battle . Raph breaks Leo 's twin swords and seems as though he is about to kill him - but then realises the terrible act he was about to commit , and flees . Immediately after Raph leaves , the Generals ambush Leo , who is shot with a poison dart and too weak to fight them . Raph hears him scream in the distance as he 's taken hostage and doubles back in pursuit , but he fails to get there in time . He takes Leo 's broken sabers back to Splinter and explains what happened .

The Generals intend to substitute Leo for the thirteenth missing beast and Raphael decides to make amends for his reckless mistakes by rescuing Leo . As the portal opens , Yaotl discovers his Generals ' treachery , while Splinter and the Turtles , accompanied by Casey and April , fight their way through the Foot Clan cordon and breach the tower . Yaotl reveals the truth to the heroes : He wants to be free of his curse of immortality . The Generals reveal that they wish to preserve their immortality , but also to use the portal to bring in more monsters to conquer Earth under their command .

Having refused to betray Yaotl in exchange for serving the Generals , April , Casey and the Foot Clan work together , searching for the final monster while the Turtles fight the Generals . Splinter and Yaotl fight off winged portal monsters emerging from the portal . April , Casey and Karai arrive at the tower with the Sea Monster . The Sea Monster crashes into the Generals , dragging them into the portal before it closes for another three thousand years . Karai then warns the gang to enjoy their victory while it lasts , claiming they will soon contend with a familiar face from their past . She and the rest of the Foot Clan depart via smoke bombs . Yaotl , now mortal , honors the Turtles and Splinter , thanking them with his dying breath for fulfilling his lifelong wish . Splinter places Winter 's helmet among his collection of various keepsakes (items seen in the previous three films such as the time scepter and the ooze canister) , as well as Raphael 's Nightwatcher helmet and Michelangelo 's turtle costume . The movie ends with Raphael narrating that the Turtles will always be brothers as the four of them jump across the rooftops of New York .

= = Cast = =

= = Production = =

A computer graphics imagery (CGI) TMNT movie was first announced in 2000 , with John Woo supposedly at the helm . That movie languished in development hell and Woo ultimately moved on to other projects . TMNT , executive produced by the TMNT co -@- creator Peter Laird , is disparate from the previous and subsequent films ' live action style as the only CGI film in the franchise to date . Writer / director Kevin Munroe said that he wanted to do total CGI instead of live action and CGI turtles because it would be easier for the audience to " suspend disbelief for such an offbeat story " as there would be no break in the reality between CGI and live action . Producer Tom Gray explained that the decision to depart from the live action series was due to escalating budgets for the three films , and with each film making less than its predecessor , a CGI film became a reality . For example , the first film made \$ 135 @. @ 2 million on a budget of \$ 13 @. @ 5 million , and the third made \$ 44 million on a budget of \$ 21 million . Orange Sky Golden Harvest 's rights to the franchise had expired , and Gray said the question arose there over a CGI TMNT film in 2004 . Munroe stated in terms of the story line that ideas were floated as extreme as the Turtles being in space , but eventually it just came back to New York City , and the theme of the family that had fallen apart . When developing the screenplay , Munroe wanted to take on a less lighthearted tone or " less Cowabunga " and place an emphasis on dark elements as shown in the original comics to appeal to the mature audience . " I had a very specific tone because mixing that sort of action and comedy is a very specific thing . Most people were just coming and wanting to make it too funny . I think that version of the movie could do really well , but we wanted to do something where it sort of pushes the envelope a little bit more and says that animation is more than just comedic animals bumping into each other and farting ! " Munroe said that in design and in the rendering of the animation , he was after the feel of a comic book . Karai was one of Munroe 's favorite characters

from the comics and he " was the one who really pushed for Karai " to appear in the film . Development and pre @-@ production for TMNT began in June 2005 at Imagi 's Los Angeles facility and the CGI animation was produced in Hong Kong , followed by post @-@ production in Hollywood . In designing the New York backdrop , art director / concept artist Simon Murton stylized the familiar Manhattan skyline and urban landscapes : " We began with cinematic cues from certain black @-@ and @-@ white films from the 1940s and ' 50s . I really wanted to push the lighting and the environments to create the look and feel of an alternate reality . " The animators that worked on the fight sequences were inspired by Hong Kong action films . Animation director Kim Ooi explains said that because of CGI they were able to " push and stylize beyond the limits of live action . " Imagi used Maya with Pixar 's RenderMan for the production pipeline 's back @-@ end . Jim Cummings was the only past TMNT actor to appear in this film , where he had previously contributed voice @-@ work in the 1987 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles series . The film also features the two voice actors for Ratchet in the Ratchet & Clank series , Mikey Kelley from the first game , and James Arnold Taylor from the others , playing Michelangelo and Leonardo respectively . TMNT was Mako Iwamatsu 's last film before his death . Mako was announced as the voice of Splinter at the San Diego Comic @-@ Con on July 20 , 2006 . He then died the next day . A dedication to Mako appears at the end of the film 's credits . Although Iwamatsu is the only actor credited in the role , Greg Baldwin performs a substantial portion of Splinter 's dialogue in the finished film ; Baldwin had already mimicked Iwamatsu 's voice when he took up the late actor 's role as Iroh in the concurrently @-@ produced cartoon Avatar : The Last Airbender , and used this precedent to successfully lobby to join the cast of TMNT as Splinter following Iwamatsu 's death . Talking about a possible sequel to the film , Munroe said :

Shredder ? it would be cool to see . I ? d love to see us explore the Karai and Foot Ninja thing a little more . I love the Rat King , even though it ? s such a ? one @-@ opp ? villain , but I still think it would be kind of cool to go back to him . [...] I ? d love to ? and this is sort of the ? out there ? one , as I don ? t think it would work for our next sequel ? the idea of the Triceratons . I think that would be really fun ? the idea of traveling to that planet or them invading or something . [...] We come up with ideas for Peter [Laird] . ? Okay , Pete , they time @-@ travel back , and they go to Mayan culture , and they fight aliens , who just happen to be teleporting back at the same time . ? And he ? s like , ? Eh , we did it in 1992 . ? Stuff like that . I mean , they ? ve been everywhere . There ? s so much source material .

= = Marketing and tie @-@ ins = =

At the 2006 San Diego Comic @-@ Con , the TMNT panel screened an exclusive preview that contained a Splinter voice @-@ over with facial tests , concept art , muscle and dynamic fight tests , and a few comedic scenes . A sneak peek booklet containing storyboards , environment designs and character designs by comic artist Jeff Matsuda was also distributed at the convention .

Several tie @-@ in products were released in 2007 . The McDonald 's fast @-@ food chain had the film @-@ based toys to collect with the purchase of a Happy Meal . A series of action figures based in the film 's characters was released by Playmates Toys . A novelization , adapted from Munroe 's screenplay by Steve Murphy , was published by Simon Spotlight . A five @-@ issue prequel comic miniseries was published by Mirage Comics .

= = Soundtrack = =

The licensed soundtrack TMNT : Music from the Motion Picture was released by Atlantic Records in 2007 .

= = Video games = =

Three beat 'em up / action adventure game / platformer adaptations of the film were developed and released by Ubisoft in 2007 for a variety of video game consoles . A mobile game TMNT : The

Power of 4 was also developed by Overloaded and released by uClick that same year . In addition , characters from the film are available in Ubisoft 's 2009 Wii and PlayStation 2 fighting game Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles : Smash @-@ Up , while artworks from the film are available in this game as unlockable content .

= = Release = =

The film was originally set for release domestically (USA and Canada) on March 30 , 2007 , which would have been the 17th anniversary of the release of the first TMNT film . The March 30 date was advertised in the teaser trailer and early posters , but the release was moved up to March 23 . A home media edition of TMNT was released on August 7 , 2007 , for the DVD , HD DVD and Blu @-@ ray . In 2009 , a box set with all four TMNT films was released to celebrate the franchise 's 25th anniversary . The DVD release contains several Special Features , including commentary on the feature by writer / director Kevin Munroe ; an alternate opening and an alternate ending to the film ; and interviews with some of the featured voice talent as well as the filmmakers .

= = Reception = =

= = = Box office = = =

TMNT ranked number one at the box office on its opening weekend , beating 300 (the top film of the previous two weeks) , The Last Mimzy , Shooter , Pride , The Hills Have Eyes 2 , and Reign Over Me . Weekend estimates showed that the film made \$ 25 @.@ 45 million over the weekend of March 23 ? 25 , 2007 . The film grossed over \$ 95 million worldwide , including over \$ 54 million domestically during its 91 @-@ day run in the 3 @,@ 120 North American theaters .

= = = Critical response = = =

TMNT has a 34 % approval rating on the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes , based on 115 reviews with an average rating of 5 / 10 , and the consensus being " TMNT 's art direction is splendid , but the plot is non @-@ existent and the dialogue lacks the irony and goofy wit of the earlier TMNT movies . " Another review aggregator , Metacritic , which assigns a weighted average score from film critics , calculated an average rating score of 41 out of 100 based on 21 reviews . Claudia Puig of USA Today gave a negative review , stating that the film " is trying for a new image . But it takes more than an awkward title attempting to sound cool to overcome its mundane plot and silly dialogue . " Michael Ordone of the Los Angeles Times wrote that " despite the doll @-@ like cartoonishness of the human figures , the filmmakers seem to expect us to take this animated romp seriously . Too seriously . " Wesley Morris of the Boston Globe called the film " a junk @-@ food pastry . The plot is the wrapper . The action is the oily sponge cake . And the message ? family , family , family ? is the processed cream filling " . Conversely , Todd Gilchrist of IGN gave the film a positive review , calling it " a fun , action @-@ filled adventure that will satisfy longtime fans and generate a legion of new ones , whether it be by virtue of simple storytelling , solid CGI , carefully @-@ choreographed action , or just the spirit and energy that only the Turtles can create . " Stephen Hunter of The Washington Post felt that the film " is technically superb and quite enjoyable as long as you don 't bang your head against the plot , which will cause hot flashes , premature aging and fallen arches . " According to Steven Rea of The Philadelphia Inquirer , the film is " not so dark or scary as to keep most kids away " and it " has a cool , noirish sheen . There 's an attention to detail in the visuals and sound design that pushes it up several notches above most kiddie fare . "

= = = Awards = = =