

= The Iron Giant =

The Iron Giant is a 1999 American animated science fiction comedy @-@ drama film using both traditional animation and computer animation , produced by Warner Bros. Feature Animation and directed by Brad Bird in his directorial debut . It is based on the 1968 novel The Iron Man by Ted Hughes ( which was published in the United States as The Iron Giant ) and is scripted by Tim McCanlies . The film stars Eli Marienthal , Christopher McDonald , Jennifer Aniston , Harry Connick , Jr . , John Mahoney , and Vin Diesel . Set during the Cold War in 1957 , the film is about a young boy named Hogarth Hughes who discovers a giant metallic robot who fell from space . With the help of a beatnik artist named Dean McCoppin , they have to stop the U.S. military and a paranoid federal agent named Kent Mansley from finding and destroying the Giant .

The film 's development phase began in 1994 as a musical with the involvement of The Who 's Pete Townshend , though the project took root once Bird signed on as director and hired McCanlies to write the screenplay in 1996 . The film was created traditionally , with computer @-@ generated imagery used to animate the title character and other effects . The understaffed crew of the film completed it with half of the time and budget of other animated features . Michael Kamen produced the film 's score , recorded with the Czech Philharmonic .

Upon its release , the film saw wide critical acclaim from critics and audiences . It was nominated for several awards , winning nine Annie Awards . Despite this acclaim , the film significantly under @-@ performed at the box office , making \$ 31 @. @ 3 million worldwide against a budget of \$ 70 ? 80 million , which was blamed on an unusually poor marketing campaign . Through home video releases and television syndication , the film gathered a cult following and is now widely regarded as a modern animated classic . In 2015 , an extended , remastered version of the film was re @-@ released theatrically .

= = Plot = =

In October 1957 , shortly after the Russian satellite Sputnik is put into orbit , an enormous robot from outer space crashes into the ocean near Rockwell , Maine . The robot makes its way inland and wanders into the forest . Nine @-@ year @-@ old Hogarth Hughes discovers the robot one night as it begins eating the powerlines of an electrical substation and electrocutes itself . Hogarth shuts down the power , saving the robot , and returns home . Several days later , Hogarth makes it his mission to find the robot and take a picture . After hours of waiting , the robot surprises Hogarth , who soon befriends him . Suffering amnesia , the Iron Giant accompanies Hogarth wherever he goes . When they come across a railroad , the Giant starts eating the rails . Hearing an oncoming train , Hogarth tells the Giant to repair the tracks . As he does , the train collides , breaking him into pieces . The Giant 's parts start to reassemble , and Hogarth hides the damaged robot in his house 's barn , where the parts can repair themselves .

Later , after dinner with his widowed mother Annie , Hogarth reads comic books to the Giant . The Giant is impressed with Superman , but discovers the comic ' Atom the Metal Menace . ' Hogarth reassures the Giant , " you are who you choose to be " . In the meantime , U.S. government agent Kent Mansley arrives , discovering possible evidence of the Giant . Finding Hogarth 's BB gun near the substation , Mansley takes a room for rent at Hogarth 's home and follows the boy around , hoping to learn more . Hogarth evades Mansley and takes the Giant to the junkyard of Dean McCoppin , a beatnik who had earlier befriended Hogarth , for shelter . Hogarth soon had to discuss " death " with the Giant after they witness hunters shoot a stag in the forest . Paranoid about alien invasion , Mansley alerts the U.S. Army to the presence of the Giant . When he and General Kenneth Rogard , backed by Army troops , force the investigation , Dean reveals the robot disguised as his scrap @-@ metal artwork . Rogard admonishes Mansley and leaves . Later , Hogarth plays with the Giant using a toy gun , which automatically activates the Giant 's weaponry . Dean saves Hogarth and demands the Giant to leave . Thinking the Giant never meant any harm , Hogarth runs after him . Dean finds the toy gun and realizes the Giant was only reacting defensively . He catches Hogarth with his motorbike as the Giant reaches town .

In Rockwell , the Giant saves two boys from falling to their death , to the amazement of witnesses . The Army troops see the Giant , return , and attack while requesting Navy and Air Force support . The Giant flies away with Hogarth and even though being attacked by a USAF F @-@ 86 , the Giant kept his original programming from taking over . However , after he was shot down , the Giant mistakenly believes the unconscious Hogarth is dead . The Giant becomes both saddened and enraged over Hogarth 's death . He activates his energy weapons and battles the completely outmatched Army . Mansley lies to Rogard that the Giant killed Hogarth and suggests he can be destroyed at sea with a nuclear missile from the USS Nautilus . Hogarth wakes up and calms the Giant , causing him to deactivate his weapons . As Mansley keeps telling Rogard to attack , Dean says the Giant never harmed anyone . Seeing Hogarth alive , Rogard has the Army stand down , but before he can tell the Nautilus the same thing , a panicked Mansley grabs the walkie talkie and orders the missile launch without thinking . Furious , Rogard reminds Mansley that the missile , currently targeted on the Giant , will also kill them and everyone in Rockwell . When Mansley cowardly attempts to flee , the Giant stops him and the Army forces Mansley to stay and die with them . Hogarth tells the Giant of Rockwell 's impending fate and the Giant makes the decision to fly off , smiling to himself that he chooses to be Superman . The Giant intercepts the missile , causing a massive explosion high in the atmosphere . The townspeople and soldiers are all very relieved to have survived , but are saddened by the Giant 's apparent selfless sacrifice .

Sometime later , Annie and Dean are dating and Dean has built a statue in the park to honor the Giant . Hogarth receives a package from Rogard , a small bolt , the only piece of the Giant ever found . That night , Hogarth hears a familiar beeping coming from the bolt , which is trying to get out of the window . He opens the window to let the bolt out . Somewhere on the Langjökull Glacier in Iceland , parts of the Giant approach where his head rests . The Giant wakes up and smiles .

= = Voice cast = =

Eli Marienthal as Hogarth Hughes , an energetic and curious boy with an active imagination . Marienthal 's performances were videotaped and given to animators to work with , which helped develop expressions and acting for the character .

Christopher McDonald as Kent Mansley , a government agent sent to investigate sightings of the Iron Giant . The logo on his official government car says he is from the " Bureau of Unexplained Phenomena " .

Harry Connick , Jr. as Dean McCoppin , a beatnik artist and junkyard owner . Bird felt it appropriate to make the character a member of the beat generation , as they were viewed as mildly threatening to small @-@ town values during that time . An outsider himself , he is among the first to recognize the Giant as no threat .

Jennifer Aniston as Annie Hughes , the widow of a military pilot and Hogarth 's widow mother .

Vin Diesel as The Iron Giant , a fifty @-@ foot , metal @-@ eating robot . Created for an unknown purpose , the Giant involuntarily reacts defensively if he recognizes anything as a weapon , immediately attempting to destroy it . The Giant 's voice was originally to be electronically modulated but the filmmakers decided they " needed a deep , resonant and expressive voice to start with , " and were about to hire Peter Cullen , due to his history with voice acting robot characters , but due to Cullen 's unavailability at the time , Vin Diesel was hired instead .

John Mahoney as General Kenneth Rogard , the military leader in Washington , D.C. who strongly dislikes Mansley .

M. Emmet Walsh as Earl Stutz , a sailor and the first man to see the robot .

James Gammon as Marv Loach , a foreman who follows the robot 's trail after it destroys the power station .

Cloris Leachman as Mrs. Tensedge , Hogarth 's schoolteacher .

Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas as the train engineers . Johnston and Thomas were animators and members of Disney 's Nine Old Men . Bird cited them as inspirations for his career and incorporated their voices and likenesses into the film .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

The origins of the film lie in the book *The Iron Man* ( 1968 ) , by poet Ted Hughes , who wrote the novel for his children . In the 1980s , rock musician Pete Townshend chose to adopt the book for a concept album ; it was released as *The Iron Man : A Musical* in 1989 . In 1991 , Richard Bazley , who later became the film 's lead animator , pitched a version of *The Iron Man* to Don Bluth while working at his studio in Ireland . He created a story outline and character designs but Bluth passed on the project . After a stage musical was mounted in London , Des McAnuff , who had adapted *Tommy* with Townshend for the stage , believed that *The Iron Man* could translate to the screen , and the project was ultimately acquired by Warner Bros. Entertainment .

In late 1996 , while developing the project on its way through , the studio saw the film as a perfect vehicle for Brad Bird , who at the time was working for Turner Feature Animation developing *Ray Gunn* . Turner Entertainment had recently merged with Warner Bros. parent company Time Warner , and Bird was allowed to transfer to the Warner Bros. Animation studio to direct *The Iron Giant* . After reading the original *Iron Man* book by Hughes , Bird was impressed with the mythology of the story and in addition , was given an unusual amount of creative control by Warner Bros. This creative control involved introducing two new characters not present in the original book , Dean and Kent , setting the film in America , and discarding Townshend 's musical ambitions ( who did not care either way , reportedly remarking , " Well , whatever , I got paid " ) . Bird 's pitch to Warner Bros. was based around the idea " What if a gun had a soul ? " He expanded upon his desire to set the film in America in the 1950s in a later interview :

Ted Hughes , the original story 's author , died before the film 's release . His daughter , Frieda Hughes , did see the finished film on his behalf and loved it . Pete Townshend , who this project originally started with , enjoyed the final film as well .

= = = Writing and direction = = =

Tim McCanlies was hired to write the script , though Bird was somewhat displeased with having another writer on board , as he wanted to write the screenplay himself . He later changed his mind after reading McCanlies ' then @-@ unproduced screenplay for *Secondhand Lions* . In Bird 's original story treatment , America and the USSR were at war at the end , with the Giant dying . McCanlies decided to have a brief scene displaying his survival , stating , " You can 't kill E.T. and then not bring him back . " McCanlies finished the script within two months . McCanlies was given a three @-@ month schedule to complete a script , and it was by way of the film 's tight schedule that Warner Bros. " didn 't have time to mess with us " as McCanlies said . The question of the Giant 's backstory was purposefully ignored as to keep the story focused on his relationship with Hogarth . Bird considered the story difficult to develop due to its combination of unusual elements , such as " paranoid fifties sci @-@ fi movies with the innocence of something like *The Yearling* . " Hughes himself was sent a copy of McCanlies ' script and sent a letter back , saying how pleased he was with the version . In the letter , Hughes stated , " I want to tell you how much I like what Brad Bird has done . He ? s made something all of a piece , with terrific sinister gathering momentum and the ending came to me as a glorious piece of amazement . He ? s made a terrific dramatic situation out of the way he ? s developed *The Iron Giant* . I can ? t stop thinking about it . "

Bird combined his knowledge from his years in television to direct his first feature . He credited his time working on *Family Dog* as essential to team @-@ building , and his tenure on *The Simpsons* as an example of working under strict deadlines . He was open to others on his staff to help develop the film ; he would often ask crew members their opinions on scenes and change things accordingly . One of his priorities was to emphasize softer , character @-@ based moments , as opposed to more frenetic scenes ? something Bird thought was a problem with modern filmmaking . " There has to be activity or sound effects or cuts or music blaring . It 's almost as if the audience has the remote

and they 're going to change channels , " he commented at the time . Storyboard artist Teddy Newton played an important role in shaping the film 's story . Newton 's first assignment on staff involved being asked by Bird to create a film within a film to reflect the " hygiene @-@ type movies that everyone saw when the bomb scare was happening . " Newton came to the conclusion that a musical number would be the catchiest alternative , and the " Duck and Cover sequence " came to become one of the crew members ' favorites of the film . Nicknamed " The X @-@ Factor " by story department head Jeffery Lynch , the producers gave him artistic freedom on various pieces of the film 's script .

= = = Animation = = =

The financial failure of Warner 's previous animated effort , Quest for Camelot , which made the studio reconsider animated films , helped shape The Iron Giant 's production considerably . " Three @-@ quarters " of the animation team on that team helped craft The Iron Giant . By the time it entered production , Warner Bros. informed the staff that there would be a smaller budget as well as time @-@ frame to get the film completed . Although the production was watched closely , Bird commented " They did leave us alone if we kept it in control and showed them we were producing the film responsibly and getting it done on time and doing stuff that was good . " Bird regarded the trade @-@ off as having " one @-@ third of the money of a Disney or DreamWorks film , and half of the production schedule , " but the payoff as having more creative freedom , describing the film as " fully @-@ made by the animation team ; I don 't think any other studio can say that to the level that we can . " A small part of the team took a weeklong research trip to Maine , where they photographed and videotaped five small cities . They hoped to accurately reflect its culture down to the minutiae ; " we shot store fronts , barns , forests , homes , home interiors , diners , every detail we could , including the bark on trees , " said production designer Mark Whiting .

Bird stuck to elaborate scene planning , such as detailed animatics , to make sure there were no budgetary concerns . The team initially worked with Macromedia 's Director software , before switching to Adobe After Effects full @-@ time . Bird was eager to use the then @-@ nascent software , as it allowed for storyboard to contain indications of camera moves . The software became essential to that team ? dubbed " Macro " early on ? to help the studio grasp story reels for the film . These also allowed Bird to better understand what the film required from an editing perspective . In the end , he was proud of the way the film was developed , noting that " We could imagine the pace and the unfolding of our film accurately with a relatively small expenditure of resources . " The group would gather in a screening room to view completed sequences , with Bird offering suggestions by drawing onto the screen with a marker . Lead animator Bazley suggested this led to a sense of camaraderie among the crew , who were unified in their mission to create a good film . Bird cited his favorite moment of the film 's production as occurring in the editing room , when the crew gathered to test a sequence in which the Giant learns what a soul is . " People in the room were spontaneously crying . It was pivotal ; there was an undeniable feeling that we were really tapping into something , " he recalled .

He opted to give the film 's animators portions to animate entirely , rather than the standard process of animating one character , in a throwback to the way Disney 's first features were created . The exception were those responsible for creating the Giant himself , who was created using computer @-@ generated imagery due to the difficulty of creating a metal object " in a fluid @-@ like manner . " They had additional trouble with using the computer model to express emotion . The Giant was designed by filmmaker Joe Johnston ( best known for designing the Star Wars trilogy ) , which was refined by production designer Mark Whiting and Steve Markowski , head animator for the Giant . Using software , the team would animate the Giant " on twos " ( every other frame , or twelve frames per second ) when interacting with other characters , to make it less obvious it was a computer model . Bird brought in students from CalArts to assist in minor animation work due to the film 's busy schedule . He made sure to spread out the work on scenes between experienced and younger animators , noting , " You overburden your strongest people and underburden the others [ if you let your top talent monopolize the best assignments ] . " Hiroki Itokazu designed all of the film 's CGI

props and vehicles , which were created in a variety of software , including Alias Systems Corporation 's Maya , Alias ' PowerAnimator , a modified version of Pixar 's RenderMan , Cambridge Animation 's Animo ( now part of Toon Boom Animation ) , Avid Elastic Reality , and Adobe Photoshop .

The art of Norman Rockwell , Edward Hopper and N.C. Wyeth inspired the design . Whiting strove for colors both evocative of the time period in which the film is set but also representative of its emotional tone ; for example , Hogarth 's room is designed to reflect his " youth and sense of wonder . " That was blended with a style reminiscent of 1950s illustration . Animators studied Chuck Jones , Hank Ketcham , Al Hirschfeld and Disney films from that era , such as 101 Dalmatians , for inspiration in the film 's animation .

== Music ==

The score for the film was composed and conducted by Michael Kamen . Bird 's original temp score , " a collection of Bernard Hermann cues from 50 's and 60 's sci @-@ fi films , " initially scared Kamen . Believing the sound of the orchestra is important to the feeling of the film , Kamen " decided to comb eastern Europe for an " old @-@ fashioned " sounding orchestra and went to Prague to hear Vladimir Ashkenazy conduct the Czech Philharmonic in Strauss 's An Alpine Symphony . " Eventually , the Czech Philharmonic was the orchestra used for the film 's score , with Bird describing the symphony orchestra as " an amazing collection of musicians . " The score for The Iron Giant was recorded in a rather unconventional manner , compared to most films : recorded over one week at the Rudolfinum in Prague , the music was recorded without conventional uses of syncing the music , in a method Kamen described in a 1999 interview as " [ being able to ] play the music as if it were a piece of classical repertoire . " Kamen 's score for The Iron Giant won the Annie Award for Music in an Animated Feature Production on November 6 , 1999 .

== Editing ==

Bird opted to produce The Iron Giant in widescreen ? specifically the wide 2 @.@ 39 : 1 CinemaScope aspect ratio ? but was warned against doing so by his advisers . He felt it was appropriate to use the format , as many films from the late 1950s were produced in such widescreen formats . He hoped to include the CinemaScope logo on a poster , partially as a joke , but 20th Century Fox , owner of the trademark , refused .

Bird later recalled that he clashed with executives who wished to add characters , such as a sidekick dog , set the film in the present day , and include a soundtrack of hip hop . This was due to concerns that the film was not merchandisable , to which Bird responded , " If they were interested in telling the story , they should let it be what it wants to be . " The film was also initially going to feature the Warner Bros. Family Entertainment logo at the beginning of the movie , featuring mascot Bugs Bunny in a tuxedo . Bird was against this for a multitude of reasons , and eventually got confirmation that executives Bob Daley and Terry Semel agreed . Instead , Bird and his team developed another version of the logo to resemble the classic studio logo in a circle , famously employed in Looney Tunes shorts . He credited executives Lorenzo di Bonaventura and Courtney Vallenti with helping him achieve his vision , noting that they were open to his opinion .

According to a report from the time of its release , The Iron Giant cost \$ 50 million to produce with an additional \$ 30 million going towards marketing , though Box Office Mojo later calculated its budget as \$ 70 million . It was regarded as a lower @-@ budget film , in comparison to the films distributed by Walt Disney Pictures .

== Themes ==

The film is set in 1957 during a period of the Cold War characterized by escalation in tension between the United States and the Soviet Union . In 1957 , Sputnik was launched , raising the possibility of nuclear attack from space . Anti @-@ communism and the potential threat of nuclear

destruction cultivated an atmosphere of fear and paranoia which also led to a proliferation of films about alien invasion . In one scene , Hogarth 's class is seen watching an animated film named Atomic Holocaust , based on Duck and Cover , an actual film that offered advice on how to survive if the USSR bombed the USA .

The film also deals with the concepts of nonviolence and individualism . When the Iron Giant sees a deer get killed by hunters , the Iron Giant notices two rifles discarded by the deer 's body . The Iron Giant 's eyes turn red showing hostility to any gun . It is repeated throughout the film , " Guns kill . " and " You 're not a gun . " Despite the anti @-@ war and anti @-@ gun themes , the film avoids demonizing the military ( one scene depicts Hogarth next to a picture of his late father , a fighter pilot , while wearing his father 's flight helmet ) , and presents General Rogard as an essentially rational and sympathetic figure , in contrast to the power @-@ hungry civilian Mansley . Hogarth 's message to the giant , " You are who you choose to be " , played a pivotal role in the film . In a deleted scene , the robot dreams of seeing many robots like it marching through a war zone on an alien world , suggesting that the robot was created to be a weapon in a long @-@ ago war .

Writer McCanlies commented that " At a certain point , there are deciding moments when we pick who we want to be . And that plays out for the rest of your life . " McCanlies said that movies can provide viewers with a sense of right and wrong , and expressed a wish that the movie would " make us feel like we 're all part of humanity [ which ] is something we need to feel . " Some film critics compared the film to E.T. : The Extra @-@ Terrestrial ( 1982 ) , including Roger Ebert . In response to the E.T. parallels , Bird said , " E.T. doesn 't go kicking ass . He doesn 't make the Army pay . Certainly you risk having your hip credentials taken away if you want to evoke anything sad or genuinely heartfelt . "

= = Marketing = =

The Iron Giant was largely a theatrical failure due in part to poor promotion from Warner Bros. This was largely attributable to the reception of Quest for Camelot ; after its release , Warner would not give Bird and his team a release date for their film until April 1999 . After wildly successful test screenings , the studio were shocked by the response : the test scores were their highest for a film in 15 years , according to Bird . They had neglected to prepare a successful marketing strategy for the film ? such as cereal and fast food tie @-@ ins ? with little time left before its scheduled release . Bird remembered that the studio only produced one teaser poster for the film , which became its eventual poster . Brad Ball , who had been assigned the role of marketing the film , was candid after its release , noting that the studio did not commit to a planned Burger King toy plan . In an interview with IGN , Bird stated that it was " a mis @-@ marketing campaign of epic proportions at the hands of Warner Bros. , they simply didn 't realize what they had on their hands . "

The studio needed an \$ 8 million opening to ensure success , but they were unable to properly promote it preceding the release . They nearly delayed the film by several months to better prepare . " They said , ' we should delay it and properly lead up to its release , ' and I said ' you guys have had two and a half years to get ready for this , ' " recalled Bird . Press outlets took note of its absence of marketing , with some reporting that the studio had spent more money on marketing intended summer blockbuster Wild , Wild West instead . To perhaps soften the potential blow , Warner Bros. scheduled Sunday sneak preview screenings for the film prior to its release , as well as a preview of the film on the online platform Webcastsneak .

= = Release = =

= = = Box office = = =

The Iron Giant premiered at Mann 's Chinese Theater in Los Angeles on July 31 , 1999 , with a special ceremony preceding the screening in which a concrete slab bearing the title character 's footprint was commemorated . The film opened in Los Angeles and New York on August 4 , 1999 ,

with a wider national release occurring on August 6 in the United States . It opened in 2 @, @ 179 theaters in the U.S. , ranking at number nine at the box office accumulating \$ 5 @, @ 732 @, @ 614 over its opening weekend . It was quick to drop out of the top ten ; by its fourth week , it had only accumulated \$ 18 @. @ 9 million ? far under its reported \$ 70 million budget . According to Dave McNary of the Los Angeles Daily News , " Its weekend per @-@ theater average was only \$ 2 @, @ 631 , an average of \$ 145 or perhaps 30 tickets per showing " ? leading theater owners to quickly discard the film . At the time , Warner Bros. was shaken by the resignations of executives Bob Daly and Terry Semel , making the failure much worse . T.L. Stanley of Brandweek cited it as an example of how media tie @-@ ins were now essential to guaranteeing a film 's success .

The film went on to gross \$ 23 @, @ 159 @, @ 305 domestically and \$ 8 @, @ 174 @, @ 612 internationally for a total of \$ 31 @, @ 333 @, @ 917 worldwide . Analysts deemed it a victim of poor timing and " a severe miscalculation of how to attract an audience . " Lorenzo di Bonaventura , president of Warner Bros. at the time , explained , " People always say to me , ' Why don 't you make smarter family movies ? ' The lesson is , Every time you do , you get slaughtered . "

= = = Critical response = = =

The Iron Giant received widespread critical acclaim from both critics and audiences . Based on 132 reviews collected by the review aggregate website Rotten Tomatoes , The Iron Giant received an overall 96 % approval rating ; the average score is 8 @. @ 2 / 10 . The consensus reads : " Engaging , endearing , affecting and charmingly retro , The Iron Giant tackles touchy subjects and complex relationships with a steady hand and beautiful animation direction from Brad Bird . " On Metacritic , the film achieved an average score of 85 out of 100 based on 27 reviews , signifying " universal acclaim " . In addition to its response from film critics , CinemaScore reported that audiences gave the film an " A " grade . The Reel Source forecasting service calculated that " 96 ? 97 % " of audiences that attended recommended the film . As of 2015 , Rotten Tomatoes ranks it the third most @-@ acclaimed animated film made in the 1990s .

Kenneth Turan of the Los Angeles Times called it " straight @-@ arrow and subversive , [ and ] made with simplicity as well as sophistication , " writing , " it feels like a classic even though it 's just out of the box . " Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun @-@ Times compared it , both in story and animation , to the works of Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki , summarizing the film as " not just a cute romp but an involving story that has something to say . " The New Yorker reviewer Michael Sragow dubbed it a " modern fairy tale , " writing , " The movie provides a master class in the use of scale and perspective ? and in its power to open up a viewer ? s heart and mind . " Time 's Richard Schickel deemed it " a smart live @-@ and @-@ let @-@ live parable , full of glancing , acute observations on all kinds of big subjects ? life , death , the military @-@ industrial complex . " Lawrence Van Gelder , writing for the New York Times , deemed it a " smooth , skilled example of animated filmmaking . " Joe Morgenstern of The Wall Street Journal felt it " beautiful , oh so beautiful , as a work of coherent art , " noting , " be assured that the film is , before anything else , deliciously funny and deeply affecting . "

Both Hollywood trade publications were positive : David Hunter of The Hollywood Reporter predicted it to be a sleeper hit and called it " outstanding , " while Lael Loewenstein of Variety called it " a visually appealing , well @-@ crafted film [ ... ] an unalloyed success . " Bruce Fretts of Entertainment Weekly commented , " I have long thought that I was born without the gene that would allow me to be emotionally drawn in by drawings . That is , until I saw The Iron Giant . " Peter Stack of the San Francisco Chronicle agreed that the storytelling was far superior to other animated films , and cited the characters as plausible and noted the richness of moral themes . Jeff Millar of the Houston Chronicle agreed with the basic techniques as well , and concluded the voice cast excelled with a great script by Tim McCanlies . Amid the positive reviews , a negative review came from The Washington Post 's Stephen Hunter , who opined , " The movie ? as beautifully drawn , as sleek and engaging as it is ? has the annoyance of incredible smugness . "

= = = Accolades = = =

The Hugo Awards nominated The Iron Giant for Best Dramatic Presentation , while the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America honored Brad Bird and Tim McCanlies with the Nebula Award nomination . The British Academy of Film and Television Arts gave the film a Children 's Award as Best Feature Film . In addition The Iron Giant won nine Annie Awards and was nominated for another six categories , with another nomination for Best Home Video Release at The Saturn Awards . IGN ranked The Iron Giant as the fifth favorite animated film of all time in a list published in 2010 .

The American Film Institute nominated The Iron Giant for its Top 10 Animated Films list .

= = = Home media and television syndication = = =

Stung by criticism that it mounted an ineffective marketing campaign for its theatrical release , Warner Bros. revamped its advertising strategy for the video release of the film , including tie @-@ ins with Honey Nut Cheerios , AOL and General Motors and secured the backing of three U.S. congressmen ( Ed Markey , Mark Foley and Howard Berman ) . Awareness of the film was increased by its February 2000 release as a pay @-@ per @-@ view title , which also increased traffic to the film 's web site .

The Iron Giant was released on VHS and DVD on November 23 , 1999 , with a laserdisc release following on December 6 . The VHS edition came in three versions ? pan and scan , pan and scan with an affixed Giant toy to the clamshell case , and a widescreen version . All of the initial widescreen home video releases were in 1 @.@ 85 : 1 , the incorrect aspect ratio for the film . In 2000 , television rights to the film were sold to Cartoon Network and TNT for three million dollars . The networks marketed the film as an overlooked but acclaimed film . Cartoon Network showed the film continuously for 24 consecutive hours in the early 2000s for such holidays as the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving .

The Special Edition DVD was released on November 16 , 2004 . In 2014 , Brad Bird went to Warner Bros. to talk about the possibility of releasing The Iron Giant on Blu @-@ ray . " WB & I have been talking . But they want a bare bones disc . I want better , " Bird said on his Twitter account . He also said that fans can log on to their Twitter accounts and post a tweet on the Twitter homepage of Warner Bros. Home Entertainment , demanding a Collector 's Edition Blu @-@ ray for the film .

= = Legacy = =

The film has since then gathered a cult following .

= = = Signature Edition = = =

A remastered and extended cut of the film , named the Signature Edition , was released for a limited time on September 30 , 2015 , and later October 4 , 2015 . The edition is approximately two minutes longer than the original cut , and features a brief scene with Annie and Dean and the sequence of the Giant 's dream . Aside from the additional scene , it also showcases other ideas that weren 't able to be used , like a nod to Disney via Tomorrowland commercial and a joke of the film being shot on CinemaScope cameras . Both scenes were storyboarded by Bird during the production on the original film but never finished due to time and budget constraints . Before they were fully completed for this new version , they were available as deleted storyboards on the 2004 DVD bonus features . They were animated in 2015 by Duncan Studio , which employed several animators that worked on the original film . The film 's Signature Edition was released on DVD and for digital download on February 16 , 2016 . An official Blu @-@ ray release will be available on September 6 , 2016 .