

Disney · PIXAR
LIGHTYEAR

"The faster I fly, the further into the future I travel. I get it."

~ Buzz Lightyear

ADVANCE

Every cinephile loves a good hero—someone to admire, someone to root for. Heroes overcome insurmountable obstacles to save the day. And the best heroes—the ones who live on long after their films hit the big screen—are, at heart, human. They have flaws and fears—they're utterly relatable, even as they soar to greatness.

Buzz Lightyear is such a hero—in fact, he's the kind of big-screen phenomenon that inspired a successful line of toys. That's what filmmakers pictured when creating the character for Pixar Animation Studios' 1995 feature film "Toy Story." That story placed Buzz Lightyear—the toy in this case—center stage as the brand-new, highly sought-after toy that gives vintage pull-string Sheriff Woody a run for his money as Andy's favorite toy. Fast forward 21 years, and director Angus MacLane found himself asking: What movie inspired Andy to beg for a fancy action figure with lasers, karate chop action and aerodynamic space wings? "Lightyear" is the movie that Andy, his friends and probably most of the rest of the world saw," says director Angus MacLane. "I wanted to make something that felt true to those fun, big-budget popcorn films."

A sci-fi action adventure and the definitive origin story of Buzz Lightyear, "Lightyear" follows the legendary Space Ranger on an intergalactic adventure. "I did a lot of research, breaking down the nature of genre thrillers," says MacLane. "I knew Buzz would have to face a big problem, and I liked the sci-fi element of time dilation. There's a rich history of character-out-of-time heroics: Captain America, Flash Gordon, Buck Rogers, to name a few."

According to producer Galyn Susman, Buzz Lightyear gave filmmakers a rich opportunity for exploration. "Ever since we met the character, Buzz has had this inherent and interesting tendency to view the world in a unique way," she says. "His version of reality is never quite the same as everybody else's, and there's something super entertaining about that.

"He's an aspirational character," Susman continues. "And the world really needs more aspirational characters right now."

The film kicks off with accomplished Space Ranger Buzz Lightyear, his commander Alisha Hawthorne and a crew of more than a thousand scientists and technicians heading home

from their latest mission. Approximately 4.2 million light-years away from Earth, a sensor signals their proximity to an uncharted but potentially resource-rich planet. Buzz makes the call to reroute their exploration vessel aka the Turnip to T’Kani Prime—a swampy planet with aggressive vines and giant swarming bugs. Efforts for a quick exit go horribly awry, culminating in a crash that shatters their fuel cell, leaving Buzz, Alisha and their entire crew stranded on the less-than-welcoming planet. “Buzz is the guy who’s been at the top of his game for a while,” says executive producer Andrew Stanton, who’s contributed to all four films in the “Toy Story” franchise. “We’re witnessing in this movie his first fall from grace. He’s never experienced that before.”

Marooned on the decidedly hostile planet, the crew settles in for the long game. Says Jason Headley, who’s a screenwriter on the film, “Nobody’s going anywhere until the resident scientists can create a new hyperspeed crystal that holds up to a test flight. It’ll be years of trial and error.”

Buzz blames himself. “Burdened with the guilt of having made a critical mistake, Buzz is consumed by the desire to rectify it,” says Susman. “Our story takes place in space—but it’s still something we all face at some point or another. We make bad decisions, but if we spend our lives regretting those bad decisions instead of investing in what’s in front of our eyes, is that really living?”

Adds MacLane, “Life is never what we plan for. It’s not about dwelling on the past and wishing things were different—that seems like a waste of time. While Buzz is obsessed with righting his wrong, Alisha decides that she’s going to do her best with where she is right now. She wants to make the most of her time regardless of what planet she’s on.”

Time. Among Buzz’s battles with guilt, technology, chemistry and surprisingly strong vines—it seems time is the most challenging. With each test flight he undertakes to gauge their latest hyperspeed fuel concoction, he experiences time dilation. His initial four-minute test flight for Buzz takes four years on T’Kani Prime and it intensifies with each effort. Life is literally passing him by: Alisha and the crew members are living their lives—pursuing interests, building families, getting older—and Buzz virtually stays the same. The math is complex, but Buzz sums it up in the film: “The faster I fly, the further into the future I travel. I get it.”

Filmmakers liken it to their own experience at Pixar. “Every time you make a film,” says MacLane, “at least four years go by. Then you come up for air and you realize the world has gone on without you.”

Decades—and friends—pass. Buzz, determined to “finish the mission” and get everyone back to Earth, continues to test fuel in a series of test flights as his crew mates age without him. But just when he’s about to crack the code, everything changes. After a series of impulsive decisions and the arrival of a mysterious alien ship that threatens the colony, Buzz reluctantly teams up with a group of ambitious recruits known as the Junior Zap Patrol. According to Headley, Buzz somehow over- and underestimates the trio’s potential. “He starts out thinking ‘This is perfect! I need an elite squad!’” says Headley. “He assumes they’re the A-Team. But pretty quickly—following a bungled battle with one of Zurg’s robots—Buzz realizes they’re the B-Team—if that. They aren’t trained, they don’t know anything, and he decides ‘they can’t help me. I don’t need them. I’ll do this on my own.’ But he has no idea the effect they’ll have on him.”

“Lightyear” features the voices of Chris Evans as accomplished Space Ranger Buzz Lightyear, Uzo Aduba as his commander and best friend Alisha Hawthorne and Peter Sohn as Sox. Keke Palmer, Taika Waititi and Dale Soules lend their voices to the Junior Zap Patrol’s Izzy Hawthorne, Mo Morrison and Darby Steel, respectively, and James Brolin can be heard as the enigmatic Zurg. The voice cast also includes Mary McDonald-Lewis as onboard computer I.V.A.N., Isiah Whitlock Jr. as Commander Burnside, Efren Ramirez as Airman Diaz, and Keira Hairston as Young Izzy.

Award-winning composer Michael Giacchino, who’s behind the scores for the upcoming film “The Batman,” as well as “Spider-Man: No Way Home,” is scoring “Lightyear.” Giacchino has a long history with Pixar; he won an Oscar, Golden Globe and GRAMMY for the original score in “Up.” His other Pixar credits include “The Incredibles,” “Ratatouille,” “Cars 2,” “Inside Out,” “Coco” and “Incredibles 2,” among others. The *Lightyear Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* from Walt Disney Records will be available on June 17, 2022.

Directed by MacLane (co-director “Finding Dory”) and produced by Galyn Susman (“Toy Story That Time Forgot”), “Lightyear”—Pixar’s first to be created specifically for IMAX—opens June 17, 2022.

SPACE RANGERS, ZAP PATROL AND A ROBOT CAT **Who’s Who in “Lightyear”**

For director Angus MacLane, one of the big themes in “Lightyear” is particularly timely—and applicable in both the story and the making of the story. “It takes the collaboration of many individuals to achieve big things,” he says. “It really is a team effort. As much as we focus on the individual in our culture, there is tremendous value in a group. ‘Lightyear’ is one character’s recognition of that.”

So, while the film is named for the Space Ranger—the whole cast of characters works together to create the story and ignite change in the star character, adding depth, sincerity and relatability to what the world knew about Buzz Lightyear.

CHARACTER LINEUP:

BUZZ LIGHTYEAR is a confident, loyal and accomplished Space Ranger whose pride in his work shines bright. “He enjoys the thrill and adventure of gallivanting around the galaxy, successfully completing missions with his friend and mentor, Commander Alisha Hawthorne,” says MacLane. “Buzz really enjoys the kind of comfort and familiarity that comes with being part of a tight-knit team.”

Buzz’s respect for Alisha runs deep—but he doesn’t have time for the up-and-comers who dream of being a Space Ranger just like him. It might seem like arrogance, but Buzz is a perfectionist at heart—for everyone including himself. When his clutch decision leads to a mission-busting crash-landing, stranding a spaceship full of intergalactic explorers on an uncharted and hostile planet, Buzz is determined to make things right, regardless of the cost.

The character is a deliberate contrast to the toy audiences have come to know. “We got used to Buzz providing a lot of the comedy,” says executive producer Andrew Stanton. “This film reminds us of his cool factor that the character was initially created to provide. The comedy

really came from a toy who didn't know he was a toy—but Buzz, the hero, is serious and ambitious.”

Chris Evans provides the voice of the Space Ranger. “Buzz Lightyear has always been a determined, confident and heroic character, but with ‘Lightyear’ we get a chance to see a more vulnerable and human side of Buzz,” says Evans. “We witness his struggles, uncertainties and occasional failures.”

Says MacLane, “Buzz is such an iconic character. I wanted this film to be separate from ‘Toy Story.’ I thought of it more as a prequel. And I wanted it to be cinematic. I thought of Buzz as a different character—in a cool, low-key, clever way. Chris has the gravitas in his performance, and also a square sense of humor that was appropriate for the character. And he has that inexplicable movie star quality that our larger-than-life character needed.”

Filmmakers were challenged with ensuring Buzz Lightyear was recognizable but clearly not the toy audiences are familiar with. Says production designer Tim Evatt, “We had to incorporate some of the ingredients of the toy in the design—but almost as if we’d taken it to NASA and worked with experts who actually do space travel and add that authenticity of space to the suit.”

Artists did, in fact, get to visit NASA. “We had a crash course on space travel,” says Evatt. “We got to hang out with the astronauts and ask them anything. They took us around and we went to the original mission control center and training flight simulators where they prepare astronauts for space.”

The final looks for Buzz were a mashup of NASA and general military inspiration.

ALISHA HAWTHORNE, Buzz’s long-time commander, is a fellow Space Ranger and friend. “She is skilled, competent and trusting,” says producer Galyn Susman. “She invests in people, mentoring recruits and welcoming rookies to the action while Buzz just doesn’t have the patience.”

After crashing on an uncharted planet with Buzz millions of light-years from Earth, Alisha shares Buzz’s desire to fix their spacecraft, mine the planet’s resources to create the fuel they need and, one day, return home. But Alisha’s response to their marooning—especially as it continues far beyond their expectations—differs from Buzz’s. She opts to live her life regardless of the planet she’s on, advancing her career, falling in love and building a family with her wife. “She’s going to make the best life she can with what she has in front of her,” says Susman.

Adds MacLane, “Alisha is somewhat of a founder of the colony. She keeps everyone sane and moving forward while Buzz is focused only on correcting his mistake.”

Uzo Aduba lends her voice to Alisha. “She has that super commanding, authoritative quality to her voice,” says Susman, “but she’s also got a lot of warmth. It’s a hard combination to find.”

IZZY HAWTHORNE is the eager leader of the Junior Zap Patrol, a volunteer team of self-motivated cadets training to become protectors of the nascent society that's taken shape on the planet. Izzy dreams of becoming a Space Ranger like her grandmother Alisha—but that's easier said than done: Izzy has a secret that is standing in her way.

According to director Angus MacLane, Izzy represents a part of the community that Buzz can't really understand. "She's only ever known life on T'Kani Prime," he says. "She's heard tales about space rangers and knows everything about her grandmother's career. Her self-imposed challenge is living up to the legacy."

Keke Palmer voices Izzy. "Keke is just a burst of energy—as a performer and as a person," says MacLane. "She's a really creative force of nature."

"Keke quickly helped define the character," MacLane continues. "Izzy represents an opportunity for Buzz to reconnect with Alisha after losing so much time with his best friend through his own hubris. This is his chance to get it right."

MAURICE "MO" MORRISON suffers from a lack of direction—not for lack of trying, Mo just can't seem to find his passion. He has long had a fear of commitment, especially when it comes to a holding a full-time job. Mo decides to join forces with Izzy Hawthorne and the Junior Zap Patrol, but he doesn't exactly share Izzy's passion for the cause. It's just something to do. "Mo joins the unit because he doesn't have anything else going on," says MacLane. "He doesn't have a lot of confidence in his ability to succeed—he figures he'll just quit before he has a chance to find out. But it's impossible not to laugh at his antics."

The humor, in large part, can be attributed to Taika Waititi, the voice of Mo. "He has a very dry, goofy delivery that is a nice contrast to the others," says MacLane.

DARBY STEEL is a gruff, no-nonsense and not-exactly-voluntary member of the Junior Zap Patrol. Nonetheless, she completes the trio in a refreshing albeit abrupt way—Darby says it like it is and doesn't care what anyone thinks about it. "Her mysteriousness is what I think makes her interesting," says MacLane, "and kind of hysterical."

Dale Soules was cast as the voice of Darby. "We saw her in 'Orange Is the New Black,'" says Susman. "She's so tough and the perfect counter to Taika's take on Mo."

SOX is a dutiful robot companion cat gifted to Buzz from Star Command aka Alisha. Intended to ease the Space Ranger's emotional transition after his time away, Sox basically exists to make Buzz happy. A hidden grab bag of gizmos in a cute, kitty package, Sox is the friend and sidekick Buzz needs. Sox is also adept at providing white noise and is capable of complicated computations. "He can fill Buzz in on whatever he's missed while he's away," says Susman. "And, according to Sox himself, he's an excellent listener."

Peter Sohn provides the voice of Sox. "He's like your best friend and digital assistant all rolled into a cute robot cat," says Susman. "Peter is Sox. He's just perfect. His voice is so charming and the right mix of intelligence and innocence."

ZURG captains the alien spaceship that shows up at T’Kani Prime while Buzz is on his final test flight. The imposing presence comes complete with an army of ruthless robots and a spaceship full of high-tech gadgetry. Shrouded in shadow and mystery, Zurg’s mission is unclear, but the threat looms large.

Director Angus MacLane, who was one of the artists who worked on Zurg’s design in “Toy Story 2,” was excited to explore the character. “Of course, Zurg’s the villain,” says MacLane. “We’ve known for a long time that he’s Buzz’s nemesis. But we never really knew why.”

James Brolin lends his voice to Zurg.

TO INFINITY... AND BEYOND **Filmmakers Take '80s-Era Aesthetic into the Future**

When it comes to the look and feel of “Lightyear,” director Angus MacLane envisioned a distinct departure from what audiences experienced in the “Toy Story” films. The setting, for starters, was deep in space, some 4.2 million light-years away from Earth. “While this film does pay homage to some sci-fi references, a lot of it is a tribute to cinema in general,” says MacLane, who’s known around Pixar as a walking encyclopedia of film. “CG looks great in the dark,” MacLane continues. “‘Jurassic Park’ was made in the early ’90s and it still looks amazing because it was largely shot at night. I wanted to take advantage of that.

“The design esthetic in general is a little retro,” continues MacLane, “a kind of chunky, early ’80s look that is inspired by films ranging from ‘Star Wars’ and ‘The Parallax View’ to ‘Raiders of the Lost Ark’ and a lot of anime of the time. I wanted the film to feel tactile and lived in with a high level of contrast like French New Wave.”

Adds producer Galyn Susman, “The look as a whole is a cool mishmash of retro and futuristic. Throughout the film—the knobs, the dials, the buttons are all very tactile. The edges are all rounded in an effort to capture that feel Angus wanted.

“We hired John Duncan, who had done a lot of work for ‘Star Wars,’ and had him build our first spaceship design as if he were building it for a live-action prop use,” continues Susman. “Then we took the same designs and built them on the computer because we wanted to see what it was about CG that lacked the warmth that you get when you use practical models like in a ‘Star Wars’ set. From that, we developed a film language that put the warmth back into the CG models—curves where you would normally do straights, making sure that there’s no such thing as a single edge—all to move away from that super sharp, super crisp CG look.”

The setting—a hostile planet called T’Kani Prime—could be anything. Artists narrowed their options, deciding to include familiar features like trees and lakes—with an otherworldly twist—to ensure the audience would not be distracted. The planet itself, says production designer Tim Evatt, is smaller than Earth with a big difference. “It’s a locked planet so it doesn’t rotate,” he says. “The sun only hits half of the planet: one half is always light—the other is always dark. But we decided that the light side does change with weather conditions, so there might be a buildup of clouds, bright sunlight or thick, steamy atmosphere.”

According to Evatt, the light side of the planet isn't exactly peaceful and breezy. The terrain is part swampy and part rocky with wildly aggressive vines that target and capture unsuspecting victims. If the vines aren't attacking, then giant bugs are likely swarming. The dark side, says Evatt, is devoid of life. "It's colder there because it doesn't get any sun," he says. "There's no plant life—it's stark and barren and really underscores key moments in the story."

The setting is mysterious, intriguing and exotic, says Susman, but the story remains rooted in an all-to-familiar reality. "Burdened with the guilt of having made a mistake, Buzz is consumed by fixing it to the point where he's left alone," she says. "Everybody regrets a decision at some point in time, but it's important to learn how to let go—how to release the guilt and instead build upon what currently exists. And that's what the story's about—except we do it in space with giant bugs, crazy robots and zero-gravity fights."

BIOGRAPHIES

ANGUS MacLANE (Director/Screenplay by/Story by) joined Pixar Animation Studios as an animator in 1997. He has since worked on a number of Pixar's feature films including "Toy Story 2," "Monsters, Inc.," and the Academy Award®-winning films "The Incredibles," "WALL•E" and "Toy Story 3." For his work on "The Incredibles," MacLane won an Annie Award from ASIFA-Hollywood for outstanding achievement in character animation.

MacLane directed the short films "BURN•E" and "Small Fry." He won an Annie Award for outstanding achievement in direction for his work on the television special "Toy Story of TERROR!" and co-directed "Finding Dory."

MacLane grew up in Portland, Ore., and received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Rhode Island School of Design. He is a huge LEGO fan and designed the LEGO Ideas WALL•E set released in 2015.

MacLane resides in Berkeley, Calif., with his wife, their two children and two cats.

GALYN SUSMAN, P.G.A. (Producer) joined Pixar Animation Studios in November 1990 to work in its television commercial production department as technical director, animator and producer. Soon after, she worked on Pixar's first feature film, "Toy Story," as a character technical director and lighting supervisor.

Susman continued her work building character models on "A Bug's Life," then served as supervising technical director on "Toy Story 2" and as simulation and effects supervisor for "Monsters, Inc." In 2007, she worked as the associate producer for the Academy Award®-winning animated film "Ratatouille." Susman went on to become the producer for Pixar's DVD-Promo Department and oversaw the production of the DVD and Blu-ray bonus features and original animation promotional content for five years.

From 2013 to 2014, she produced two of Pixar's first-ever ABC television specials, "Toy Story of TERROR!" and "Toy Story That Time Forgot."

Before arriving at Pixar, Susman conducted graphics research and development at Apple where she was on the team that created a short film entirely on Macintosh computers.

Originally from Park Forest, Ill., Susman is a graduate of Brown University. She and her husband reside in Piedmont, Calif., where they raised their three children.

JANE YEN (Visual Effects Supervisor) joined Pixar Animation Studios in August 2001 as a tools engineer on the Academy Award®-winning film “Finding Nemo.” She has worked as a technical director in various departments at the studio including simulation, global technology, FX and crowds. Her work has been featured on a number of Pixar titles including “Cars,” “Cars 2” and “Finding Dory,” as well as Academy Award®-winning films “Ratatouille,” “Up,” “Toy Story 3” and “Brave.”

Yen has also worked on many of Pixar's shorts and TV specials including “La Luna,” “Day & Night,” “The Blue Umbrella,” “Piper,” “Toy Story of TERROR!” and “Toy Story That Time Forgot.” In 2017, she worked as the crowds technical supervisor on Pixar's Academy Award®-winning film “Coco.”

Raised in Pacific Grove, Calif., Yen earned a bachelor’s and master’s degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

JEREMY LASKY (Director of Photography) began his film career at Pixar Animation Studios in 1997 as a layout artist on “A Bug’s Life.” He then worked in the layout department on “Toy Story 2” and “Monsters, Inc.” Lasky served as director of photography on Academy Award®-winning films “Finding Nemo,” “WALL•E” and “Toy Story 3,” Golden Globe®-winning feature “Cars,” as well as “Cars 2,” “Finding Dory” and “Cars 3.”

In addition to his work on feature films, Lasky directed the “Tales from Radiator Springs” interstitials “Hiccups,” “Bugged” and “Spinning,” featuring characters from the world of “Cars,” as well as three mock commercials that appear on the “Toy Story of TERROR!” in-home release.

A native of St. Louis, Mo., Lasky received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Rhode Island School of Design before joining Pixar. He resides in the California Bay Area with his wife and two children.

FRAN KALAL (Tailoring and Simulation Supervisor) joined Pixar Animation Studios in July 2007. She began working as a prop and sets shading artist for the short film “Presto” and moved on to work as a character shading artist for some of the background robots in the Academy Award®-winning feature “WALL•E.” For another Oscar® winner, “Up,” Kalal worked as a shot simulation artist and tailored all of the costumes and outfits for Ellie. She also tailored the dress for Merida in the Academy Award®-winning feature “Brave” and worked as the character tailoring lead on “Incredibles 2.”

As the tailoring and simulation supervisor, Kalal leads the team that digitally tailors outfits and simulates outfits, hair and vegetation in shots throughout “Lightyear.”

In addition to her work on Pixar's films, Kalal was a lead instructor of the Pixar Undergraduate Program for six years. In this role, she taught undergraduate interns the technical pipeline in Pixar production through a 10-week program.

While in high school, Kalal had great art and science teachers. Through a summer camp, she gained early exposure to some of the staff and faculty at the Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design (ACCAD) at The Ohio State University. She knew that she wanted to pursue a career in film, and through ACCAD, she realized she could do so through 3D computer animation.

Born and raised in Columbus, Ohio, Kalal earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from The Ohio State University. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

GREG PELTZ (Sets Art Director) joined Pixar Animation Studios in June 2009. He has worked in the sets department on a number of Pixar films including "Cars 2," "The Good Dinosaur," "Finding Dory," "Incredibles 2" and "Onward," as well as Academy Award®-winning features "Up," "Inside Out" and "Coco."

As the sets art director, Peltz is involved with developing and directing the look of the environments, vehicles, structures and other technology in "Lightyear." He works with the director and production designer to collaborate on concepts and looks that are aesthetically compelling and fit the director's vision. He then leads a team of artists to create specific designs, drawings, sketches, paintings and models that inform other departments on the production crew as they build digital assets for the film.

Peltz grew up in Mechanicsburg, Pa. He attended Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, Fla., where he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in computer animation. He lives in Oakland, Calif.