



HOT PICK



MY NEIGHBOUR TOTORO

Furry folklore for the whole family



TOTORO SHOULD be familiar to anime fans everywhere; he appears at the beginning of each Studio Ghibli film and has become the company's mascot, so it is only fitting that March finally sees the UK release of his debut, My Neighbour Totoro.

Directed by Hayao Miyazaki and set in a rural Japanese prefecture in the late Fifties, the story follows Mei and her elder sister Satsuki. After moving house to be closer to their mother, who is recovering from TB in a nearby hospital, the two girls discover a sacred camphor tree at the top of a hill. With Satsuki at school, Mei begins to explore and discovers a tunnel in the undergrowth that leads to a nest where a furry giant slumbers.

Mei names this creature Totoro (a mispronunciation of tororu, a kind of Japanese troll) but the rest of the family, including Satsuki, think Mei's encounter is a mere whimsy. However, when Mei gets lost trying to take corn to her mother, the only being Satsuki can rely on to find her sister is

Totoro and the other inhabitants of his strange world.

The disc is presented with the original Japanese dub and a newly recorded English version, both in Dolby 2.0. The stellar English cast includes real-life sister Dakota and Elle Fanning as Satsuki and Mei, with Timothy Daly as their father, proving it is now fashionable for actors to sideline in anime. My Neighbour Totoro also includes stunning animation and classic scenes, like the often-seen image of Satsuki and Totoro standing in the rain, waiting for their respective buses.

Featuring memorable characters, including the smaller totoros, dust bunnies and the Catbus, this is Miyazaki at his best; a classic family film that recaptures a lost age of innocence by balancing reality with a fantastical world of Japanese folklore. LESLEY SMITH

DVD Disc Extras

The extras on this disc are a fraction of those contained on the original Japanese release. However, Studio Ghibli fans will relish the inclusion of the film's storyboards. As well as a textless opening and closing credits, the disc also contains trailers for other productions and My Neighbour Totoro's original Japanese theatrical trailer.

ANIME ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★