Dad disappears. Son goes looking for him in digital wonderland. Cue the special effects.

Watching *Tron: Legacy*, I could easily believe the above summary is a perfect quote from the movie’s first—and only—screenwriting session. No doubt the eight writers who share script credit for the movie would disagree, but surely we can all agree that the story is just a background for the expansive—and undeniably fantastic—FX. Make no mistake, the visual tableau that our hero—a young man named Sam (Garrett Hedlund)—finds himself plunged into is dazzling in its scope and magnificence. A computer universe of dizzying colors overlaid atop a constantly shape-changing landscape and populated by a host of sometimes bizarre “programs”, it is, to say the least, a most impressive SFX collage.

But unfortunately, that is exactly what *Tron: Legacy*, is: a menagerie of special effects in which all semblance of plot and character is swallowed up in the spectacle. More’s the pity because the cast is impressive, featuring not only the aforementioned Hedlund in the role of protagonist but also the esteemed Jeff Bridges in the dual role of Sam’s father, Kevin, and his evil digital doppelganger, Clu. Bruce Boxleitner plays as the sadly underused super-warrior Tron, and the lovely Olivia Wilde is literally luminous as Quorra, a mysterious native of the digital universe in which the story—such as it is—unfolds. But sadly, their roles are all poorly developed and the whole plot is full of more holes than the average shooting range target. If the screenplay were just a bit more complete, if only the characters were imbued with the faintest semblance of life, the FX would have brought a great movie to life. As it is, the movie is devoid of the drama a good action movie has to have because the viewer is never made to care what happens to the characters or their world.

Beyond the visual effects, the best thing about the movie is the soundtrack, a thumping techno-beat that pulses with a life of its own. If the script had the same kind of heartbeat, this would have been an awesome movie. But contrary to contemporary Hollywood wisdom, hi-tech FX do not replace a thoughtful script or well-conceived characters. Alas, the filmmakers disagreed, and so watching *Tron: Legacy* is about as much fun as watching someone else play a video game.