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Star Wars: The Complete Trilogy



Synopsis

Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back, and Return of the Jedi, slipcased. When this series was first broadcast on National Public Radio in 1981, it generated the largest response in the network's history: 50,000 letters and phone calls in a single week, an audience of 750,000 per episode, and a subsequent 40-percent jump in NPR listenership. This landmark production, perhaps the most ambitious radio project ever attempted, began when Star Wars creator George Lucas donated the story rights to NPR an affiliate. Writer Brian Daley adapted the film's highly visual script to the special demands and unique possibilities of radio, creating a more richly textured tale with greater emphasis on character development. Director John Madden guided a splendid cast--including Mark Hamill and Anthony Daniels, reprising their film roles as Luke Skywalker and the persnickety robot See Threepio--through an intense ten day dialogue recording session. Then came months of painstaking work for virtuoso sound engineer Tom Voegeli, whose brilliant blending of the actors' voices, the music, and hundreds of sound effects takes this intergalactic adventure into a realm of imagination that is beyond the reach of cinema.

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Customer Reviews

I'm surprised I've been a Star Wars fan for so long and had never bothered to listen to this. It's actually a great way to relive the movie. It's quite different from the actual film script and includes expanded and deleted scenes. For me, the best part was the beginning, with Luke's friends at Tosche Station. It has such a 1970s flavor and would have started the movie off really differently (although nothing beats the actual opening space battle). Overall, the case works well. Mark Hamill

actually plays Luke Skywalker and does a great job of it. Likewise, Anthony Daniels plays C-3PO. Most of the other characters come off at least similar to their on-screen counterparts. Han is appropriately cocky, although he's also more selfish than portrayed in the films. Leia has a good amount of spunk. Unfortunately, the series didn't quite get Darth Vader right. The torture scene with Leia - not in the movie for good reason - was particularly onerous and Vader sounds more like a shrink than a Sith Lord. One other thing that bugged me is the episode breaks. Originally, when this aired as a radio show, it was broadcast as 13 episodes, and each time there was an introductory narration and credits. Unfortunately, these remain on the audiobook version. Thus, every 15 minutes or so you hear another listing of credits, then another introduction. I hope future versions eliminate this and allow listeners to hear just one uninterrupted book. The ESB episode wasn't quite as strong. Luke, Han, and Leia are all well done. However, Vader comes off as corny and Yoda just doesn't have the majesty he demands. Also, it doesn't have many deleted scenes, aside from the Battle of Derra at the beginning. It's about an hour shorter than the ANH radio show.

I'm part of the generation that literally grew up with STAR WARS, ten years old when it was first released. Like so many young fans I was enthralled by the then limited official adaptations of the work expanding on the STAR WARS universe. I collected the original Marvel Comics, wrote fan fiction and fanatically collected all things published in connection with it like SPLINTER OF THE MIND'S EYE and the Han Solo novels. I grew up in Canada where the radio series was not to my knowledge broadcast and a friend in the USA kindly alerted me to and taped episodes of the series for me which I listened to for years, practically memorizing them. But I only ever had about three quarters of the STAR WARS episodes and never even knew about the adaptations of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK or the long delayed RETURN OF THE JEDI. So when I found them all released in a single boxed set many years after I had to get them and no one buying it will be disappointed. Given that Brian Daley (also the author of the Han Solo trilogy) has his own take on the story he does a fascinating job of expanding on the original stories. He captures, I think, the sense of fun of STAR WARS. It's full of quirky humour and fun asides, like the casual abuse suffered by working robots or the hovering-on-farce confrontations between Han Solo and the creepy minions of Jabba the Hutt. I think that STAR WARS as a whole released a lot of pent-up creativity in my generation and helped to give it a mythological template that owed a lot to many different sources, not least the story of PARSIFAL and the Grail Knights on which STAR WARS is clearly based in part.

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