

'JURASSIC WORLD': An Adventure 14 Years In The Making

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Summer is here, which means it's the season of blockbusters. Many exciting titles await moviegoers, the most anticipated possibly being Jurassic World.

Debuting this weekend, Jurassic World is the first film in the Jurassic Park series to hit theaters since Jurassic Park III in 2001. Work on a fourth film originally began following Jurassic Park III's release, but a decade-long period of development limbo soon consumed the project. And as if creative hurdles weren't enough, the deaths of Michael Crichton—author of the novel that spawned the original 1993 film—and Stan Winston—special effects artist behind the series' practical effects—in 2008 nearly sealed the fate of the franchise. But after months of teasers, trailers and an intricate viral marketing campaign, immense hype surrounds the return of moviegoers' beloved sci-fi adventure franchise.



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Hype isn't all it takes though. This isn't the first time a film series has been revived after an extended period of time. Indiana Jones returned in 2008 after 19 years, Star Wars in 1999 after 16 years (and now again in December after a decade) and Mad Max in May after 30 years. These hiatuses typically result in an overwhelming amount of anticipation from fans, and can result in an amplified level of

either satisfaction or disappointment. Nostalgia plays a key role with fans, and the Jurassic series certainly carries a wide load of it.

It's undeniable viewers will compare Jurassic World to Jurassic Park. Jurassic World is a film with new characters, a new director, a new composer and 22 years of cinematic evolution behind it, so the feel of the film won't be the same. It's important to remember this going into the movie, otherwise the likelihood of automatically hating it will skyrocket. I will admit I have my own reservations regarding Jurassic World's quality, as the original film is one of my favorite films of all time, and what we hold close to our heart often gets in the way of having an open mind.

Judging by the trailers, I feel this new entry will be too flashy and become the monster movie Steven Spielberg avoided in the early 1990s. Of Jurassic Park's 127-minute running time, dinosaurs only filled 15 minutes—roughly 12 percent of the film. I have a sneaking suspicion viewers will encounter dinosaurs more often during Jurassic World's 124 minutes, which to me, contradicts the "less is more" style employed in Spielberg's classic. One could argue this shift in style is what will make Jurassic World a fresh chapter, and while there's some truth to this, the lurking suspense and subtle nature of Jurassic Park is what gave it its edge.

A certain "If it isn't broken, don't fix it" method applies when it comes to thrillers like Jurassic Park. When you stray too far from

the flight path, you wind up lost, and that can cause a movie to fail. One of the reasons Jurassic Park performed so well and is now hailed as a classic is because it borrows from one of the greatest thrillers of all time: Jaws (1975).

Jaws and Jurassic Park have many commonalities, the obvious of which are the films being Spielberg creature thrillers and a captivating John Williams score. The films bear character similarities—Quint and Muldoon, Hooper and Malcolm, Brody and Grant, Vaughan and Hammond—and feature similar opening (a dramatic and terrifying character death) and closing (the protagonists heading out into the horizon) sequences, but the biggest connection is the slow and suspenseful reveal of the films' antagonistic creatures.

While other films since 1975, such as Alien (1979), have put these elements to use, Jurassic

Park is the film to pull it off step by step, but in a fresh and riveting way. You want to watch the film without thinking, "Well, I've seen this before." Obviously, there's no way to be sure until Jurassic World actually comes out, and while I hope the film offers a fresh take on Crichton's fiction, I don't see it being any less of a typical monster movie than Jurassic Park III.

Jurassic World will either bring life back into the Jurassic series, or it will send it back into oblivion. Whatever my opinion, I don't see the latter being the more likely as Jurassic is a popular, crowd-drawing franchise like Star Wars.

For now though, go see Jurassic World and in two weeks, I'll give the rundown on the film and we'll see just what the future holds for the sci-fi world of genetically engineered dinosaurs.

