

“And finally, here we are” Spectre Reviewed

by Glen Ryan Tadych

(Note: The following contains spoilers)

November, or the start of the holiday season in the U.S., is always the month of 007 for me. Every James Bond film for the last 20 years has debuted this time of year, and despite this fact, along with the countless advertisements for 007-themed products, I have never actually had a true Bond experience in a theater...until *Spectre*.

I first became a fan of the 007 franchise in my early teens with *GoldenEye* (1995). Shortly after,



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got the part.

Having played the weaselly mobster son of Paul Newman in *Road to Perdition* (2002), Craig simply couldn't fill Bond's shoes in my eyes. I didn't come around until the release of *Skyfall* three years ago

when there was something about the 007 atmosphere that sucked me in and got me excited. After finally getting to watch *Skyfall* the following spring, I accepted Craig as Bond and found myself actually enjoying something I always thought I'd hate.

It wasn't until after *Skyfall* that I discovered something intriguing about the Sean Connery films: the SPECTRE organization and Bond's nemesis, Ernst Stavro Blofeld. Specifically, *Dr. No* (1962), *From Russia with Love* (1963) and *Thunderball* (1965) form an interesting narrative from film to film as Bond takes on the organization one plot at a time. My fondness of these three films later amplified my anticipation of Craig's next 007 entry once the new film's title surfaced.

I was already sold knowing Ralph Fiennes would be playing the new M, but Christoph Waltz playing the film's antagonist was an added bonus I never expected. With the exception of Sean Bean in *GoldenEye* and Javier Bardem in *Skyfall*, none of the recent Bond villains ever made a lasting impression on me, but Christoph Waltz is Christoph Waltz, and an actor with his charismatic ability can make any film worth watching. So, a new Bond film featuring SPECTRE—an organization absent from the Bond franchise since *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971)—and Waltz as the antagonist could only fuel speculation for one thing: The return of Blofeld. I'll start off by saying I enjoyed *Spectre* very

much. The film contained both engaging action and dialogue, and while it seemed a tad long, I still never found myself bored. The train fight sequence between Bond and Hinx (Dave Bautista, Drax in *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014)) was heavily reminiscent of *From Russia with Love*, which is probably my favorite Bond film next to *GoldenEye*. And the various moments where Bond emulates (not intentionally) Sterling Archer and his “tactleneck” only made the film all the more enjoyable. I even found Sam Smith's “Writing's on the Wall,” as the

opening song, perfectly fitting for the film's story and tone, despite my still holding Adele's “Skyfall” in higher musical regard. Waltz's character did it for me in the end though.

The film could honestly have been about Bond desperately attempting to save a box of kittens, and I wouldn't have cared one way or another due to Waltz's performance. The one thing I wanted from this film was for Waltz—solely listed as Franz Oberhauser prior to *Spectre*'s release—to be





Blofeld, and I'm ecstatic to say the odds were in my favor regarding that desire. It wasn't a surprise though really. Anyone who knew Blofeld's significance knew an actor like Waltz wouldn't be wasted for any other role. Blofeld has been out of the films for more than 40 years, and I couldn't think of a better choice for reintroducing him than Waltz.

It's true, however, some aren't happy with the modern interpretation of Blofeld, as well as the SPECTRE organization. For one, the SPECTRE in this film—actually written as Spectre in the film—is not the Special Executive for Counter-intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge and Extortion group from the Connery films. Though antagonistic, the organization is very much a different group with a different purpose. And all the legal issues regarding Ian Fleming's novels aside, I still felt this was a decent and acceptable way to reference Fleming's work in the modern era. The organization in Fleming's novel was very much influenced by the Cold War, so to me, it's only natural some kind of change would be made.

Blofeld himself is different too. Though he still heads Spectre, he's more than just a man heading an organization to bring destruction down upon the world. He shares a close, personal tie with Bond, a tie going back to childhood, which, in my opinion,

helps deepen the subject matter and makes for a more interesting exchange between the two characters, but I won't say anymore about that.

Is it the Blofeld from the novels? Not exactly. But for one, I feel fans should be happy they're finally getting him back after so many years. Secondly, none of that really matters to me because Waltz shined so damn bright in the film compared to everyone else. The film's only drawback is not using Waltz more, and it's because of this some feel Waltz's talents were wasted, preferring Bardem and Skyfall over the new installment. Not me though. Yes, I wanted more of Waltz, but I was happy to get him at all, and what I got was great.

The ending was certainly the film's best element, nicely tying up everything from Craig's films, not to mention it gives us a real classic Bond exit, which I appreciate more than anything else in these films.

I'm not sure whether Craig will return for another entry. Whether he's contracted to or not, I feel *Spectre* was the perfect wrap-up for his Bond, but who knows? We just might be surprised.



FRESH FILM PICKS THIS WEEK & NEXT WEEK



LOVE THE COOPERS

Love the Coopers
PG-13 Comedy

When four generations of the Cooper clan come together for their annual Christmas Eve celebration, a series of unexpected visitors and unlikely events turn the night upside down, leading them all toward a surprising rediscovery of family bonds and the spirit of the holiday.

Director: Jessie Nelson

Stars: Olivia Wilde, Amanda Seyfried, Marisa Tomei, Diane Keaton



THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY - PART 2

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2

PG-13 137 min Adventure | Sci-Fi

Realizing the stakes are no longer just for survival, Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence) teams up with her closest friends, including Peeta (Josh Hutcherson), Gale (Liam Hemsworth) and Finnick for the ultimate mission. Together, they leave District 13 to liberate the citizens of war-torn Panem and assassinate President Snow, who's obsessed with destroying Katniss. What lies ahead are mortal traps, dangerous enemies and moral choices that will ultimately determine the future of millions.

Director: Francis Lawrence

Stars: Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson, Liam Hemsworth, Woody Harrelson

FILMS COMING SOON TO THEATERS

NEW FILMS: NOVEMBER 13, 2015

By the Sea

R 132 min Drama | Romance

Set in France during the mid-1970s, Vanessa, a former dancer, and her husband Roland, an American writer, travel the country together. They seem to be growing apart, but when they linger in one quiet, seaside town they begin to draw close to some of its more vibrant inhabitants, such as a local bar/café-keeper and a hotel owner.

Director: Angelina Jolie

Stars: Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Mélanie Laurent, Melvil Poupaud

The 33

PG-13 120 min Biography | Drama | History

Disaster strikes on Aug. 5, 2010, as a copper and gold mine collapses in Chile, trapping 33 men underground. With more than 2,000 feet of rock in their way, members of a rescue team work tirelessly for 69 days to save the seemingly doomed crew. Beneath the rubble, the miners begin an epic quest to survive, contending with suffocating heat and the need for food and water. With family, friends and the rest of

the world watching, it becomes a race against time and a true test of the human spirit.

Director: Patricia Riggan

Stars: Antonio Banderas, Rodrigo Santoro, Juliette Binoche, James Brolin

James White

R 85 min Drama

James White is a troubled twenty-something trying to stay afloat in a frenzied New York City. He retreats further into a self-destructive, hedonistic lifestyle, but as his mother battles a serious illness James is forced to take control of his life. As the pressure on him mounts, James must find new reserves of strength or risk imploding completely.

Director: Josh Mond

Stars: Christopher Abbott, Cynthia Nixon, Scott Mescudi, Ron Livingston

Entertainment

R 110 min Drama

En route to meet his estranged daughter and attempting to revive his dwindling career, a broken, aging comedian plays

continued on page 30

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