

'Independence Day: Resurgence' crashes and burns

Written by gallupsun
Friday, 24 June 2016 14:52



Rating: 1 ½ out of 4 stars

Running Time: 127 min.

By Glenn Kay

For the Sun

Twenty years ago, *Independence Day* was the movie of the summer, breaking box office records and becoming the highest grossing film of the year. It was a big, bag stuffed full of silliness, but it ultimately worked as cheesy popcorn fare. A long time has passed since then, but viewers are now being given an official sequel. *Independence Day: Resurgence* features new and familiar characters enduring another alien invasion.

You might be wondering why the \$165 million dollar epic isn't getting the kind of press that other blockbusters of the season are receiving. Simply put, it's not our fault. There's been limited promotion for this sequel and no preview screenings for reviewing press. Frankly, it seemed a bit strange and didn't bode well for the quality of the film. Out of curiosity, I plunked down my money to solve this mystery for myself on Thursday night.

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I'm paraphrasing here, but there's a point near the end of the movie in which a character states that he doesn't think Earth would be able to survive a third attack. Truthfully, I don't think I could, either. This sequel hits all the same beats (and often completely recreates moments) of the original film, but none of it is executed very well. The movie feels slapdash and cynically thrown together, completely lacking in any kind of charisma or excitement.

Picking up 20 years after the original, the Earth has largely been rebuilt. Now humankind is united and using repossessed alien technology. They've managed to build laser guns, spacecraft and military bases on the moon and distant planets, all to defend against any future threat. Of course, a new and larger alien ship arrives with an even more formidable foe - a hive queen. After scenes of destruction, the survivors attempt to figure out what the villains are after and more importantly, how to stop them.

The best and really only good thing the sequel has going for it are a few of the returning cast members. Bill Pullman and Brent Spiner give their all, channeling all the craziness they can muster as former President Whitmore and Area 51 researcher Dr. Okun. Ultimately, Jeff Goldblum steals the show once again and manages to earn the film the very few chuckles it possesses. The movie springs to life when these performers appear and without them, there would literally be nothing to compliment about the film. A few other previous cast members appear, but many aren't more than quick cameos.

I feel badly for the new cast members. The real leads are actually a group of youngsters (Liam Hemsworth, Jessie T. Usher, Maika Monroe, Angelababy and Travis Tope), some of whom are the children of characters from the previous films. Unfortunately, their roles are poorly written and they're never able to distinguish themselves, despite being front and center for a good portion of the movie. There are some rivalries and personal issues briefly explained in a line or two, but beyond that they aren't given dialogue or action to make their roles stand out. As viewers, we don't care about what happens to any of them.

It's also slow moving. Early on, the film introduces and revisits several characters who spend a great deal of time receiving ominous vibes and discussing the possibility of the nasty creatures returning. It's odd that this sequel attempts to spend so much time with warnings and investigations - we've seen these aliens before and know exactly what is coming, so it's an ineffective way to generate mystery and suspense. These and many other elements just don't make any logical sense.

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When the action does arrive, there is plenty of destruction, but it's actually dull to witness. With just about every landscape on Earth and in space requiring either augmentation or completely original environments, the movie overloads on computer-generated images. There are so many that it must have required dozens of different effects houses. As a result, the work is uneven and lot of it looks chintzy. A blue, bland and nearly monochromatic color scheme doesn't do the movie any favors visually.

This isn't one of those flicks that are so cheesy they're fun. It fails by those standards and can't even equal the good-natured goofiness of the first installment. And the finale, which sets up the possibility of yet another sequel, really irked me. Now that I've set the bar so low, anyone who does go to see *Independence Day: Resurgence* may not mind it as much as I did. Make no mistake though... this movie doesn't need to exist. In fact, it's here solely to cash in on nostalgia for the original; yet even fans of the first won't get anything out of this that wasn't done much better 20 years ago.