
Hulk Smash!!!

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 16-06-2008 14:25

I saw it last night. I really liked it.

It manages to be a sequel to the Ang Li film (it starts off with Bruce Banner in South America in hiding because General Ross, et. al are looking for him) while not recalling much of what happened in that film. One need not have seen the previous film to follow what's going on here. It does a quick flashback to the gamma ray experiments during the opening credits and then jumps right into Bruce Banner in hiding in Brazil.

The casting here is much better with Edward Norton, Liv Tyler and William Hurt and the pacing is so much better. By comparison, Eric Bana and the consistently overrated Jennifer Connelly seem really wooden.

The first film tried to do all this psychoanalytic shit about Bruce Banner and his dad. This one is all about him hiding and then going on the run, so it moves along and keeps the tension going, even though Bruce Banner gets more screentime than the Hulk.

Not surprisingly, the CGI and overall design is better in this one than in the first. Some critics didn't like the CGI in this one either (how can they tell if a giant green monster looks "realistic" or not?) and I heard some say the pace of the action was too fast and intense. Fuck off, granddad! If you can't appreciate big monsters throwing cars at each other, you shouldn't be allowed to review this film (or perhaps any film). It is among the best films to date in the big-monsters-throwing-cars-at-each-other genre, perhaps the best.

I was never a regular Hulk reader, so I don't know all the comic stories, but I know enough to know that this film, like other recent Marvel films, tries to bring as much from the comic as possible. ****spoiler**** Appearances by The Abomination (which was stupidly given away in the trailer) and foreshadowing of The Leader (no doubt for the sequel). Also, Robert Downey makes a brief appearance in the end as Tony Stark, presaging the eventual Avengers/Marvel Team-Up film in the future.

I give credit to Marvel for acknowledging that the Ang Li version didn't do justice to the character and trying again only a few years later. I hope they do the same with Daredevil.

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Re:Hulk Smash!!!

Posted by Sir Fartle - 16-06-2008 14:49

Tony Starks cameo was ace. I like the way they are trying to tie in everything to give the impression that all these Marvel heroes live in the same universe.

But put me in the small group that actually liked the first Hulk movie. This one was alright, but I felt the first one concentrated more on the characters rather than seeing how many things they could blow up (like this one). I thought Eric Bana was much better as an angst ridden and generally miserable Bruce Banner.

I mean, you've been infected with radiation and your cells carry mutations which turn you into this bloody great big green thing when you get annoyed. you're bound to be a bit upset about it all, aren't you?

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Re:Hulk Smash!!!

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 16-06-2008 16:36

I thought the first one was ok, but I liked this one better. Norton's Banner has moved a little beyond angst and misery and has begun to try to address the situation.

If there isn't going to be a lot of mayhem and smashing, then there's no point in making a Hulk film.

I'm not really a huge fan of superhero universes. Sometimes the interaction between the different characters and their different approaches is interesting, but often it seems hard to imagine that they could exist in the same world. For example, I don't think Superman and Batman or Metropolis and Gotham really make sense in the same fictitious version of the US. And Daredevil's New York isn't at all like the New York of the Fantastic Four, et al.

Also, I like the idea of unique superheroes. The best Batman stories are when he's working alone and most people in Gotham aren't even sure if he really exists. The stories where he's working with Robin, Nightwing, Azrael, Huntress, Oracle, Batgirl, Black Canary, Catwoman, Spoiler, et. al tend to be a bit crap as a result.

But sometimes it works. Iron Man, SHIELD and Hulk could fit together.

WB is thinking about a Justice League film, but not using Brandon Routh as Superman or Christian Bale as Batman. I think it will probably be a disaster unless they try something explicitly retro with it like Darwyn Cooke's *The New Frontier*. WB has made an animated movie out of that (which can be rented on DVD) which is outstanding. PG-13, so not a typical superhero cartoon and it includes a lot of semi-obscure DC characters from the golden and silver age.

Re:Hulk Smash!!!

Posted by Sir Fartle - 16-06-2008 20:11

WB is thinking about a Justice League film, but not using Brandon Routh as Superman or Christian Bale as Batman.

This sounds awful.

I don't think it will translate well to screen and I'm not talking about the casting choices.

I think they should just keep it as it is. Give the impression that all these hero-types work alone within their own space, but have a few cameos (like Tony Stark in *Hulk*) to make it clear that they all exist in the same universe.

I heard theres a deleted scene from *Iron Man* where its mentioned in passing that Stark Industries developed the metal tentacles for Otto Octavius.

I like that sort of thing, little nods and winks here and there but having all these bastards on the same screen together? I doubt it could work, film is the wrong medium for that sort of thing. Works great on paper though.

Re:Hulk Smash!!!

Posted by Mitch - 16-06-2008 20:39

A friend of mind reckons there's meant to be a link between the new *Hulk* movie & *28 Days Later* (like it's the same virus or something).

But I saw this on Sunday night, and I can't remember any zombie references. Or anything else about the movie really. It suffers from the same faults as the first film in that all the CGI bollocks looks like it's part of a different film.

The best *Hulk* movie would be one when you never actually see him (which is why the first half of the Ang Lee one is ace).

Re:Hulk Smash!!!

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 16-06-2008 20:46

I agree with Fartle.

There are at least five or six characters in the JL that deserve to be "first tier." A film with all of them would be too crowded and do none of them, er, justice.

The New Frontier works ok as a comic and a film because it mainly focuses on Green Lantern and Martian Manhunter. Superman, Wonder Woman, Flash, Batman, etc, etc, all have important roles, but their existence and origins within the universe are taken as given. You have to be a fan of DC comics or a fan of 1950s pop-culture sci-fi to fully appreciate it and if you're neither of those, then there's no help for you.

I like the Justice League Unlimited animated show because they're constantly wedging in semi-obscure characters that only a hardcore geek would know. It's fun to watch it to see "ooh, there's the original Sandman in the background there!! Oooh, The Question! Awesome!!"

The TV series Smallville has picked up over the last few seasons with cameos from other DC characters, which compels me to watch out of sure geekdom. Smallville is all a "reimagining" of the stories so nobody (except, oddly, Green Arrow) is really explicitly a superhero in the story yet. But there have been appearances by Arthur Curry (Aquaman) Bart Allen (Flash), Vic Stone (Cyborg), John Jones (Martian Manhunter), Kara (Supergirl) and Dinah Lance (Black Canary), Brainiac and somewhat different versions of Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen. I assume they're waiting for the last season to bring in Bruce Wayne and Diana Troy.

Re:Hulk Smash!!!

Posted by jason voorhees - 17-06-2008 01:23

"Fuck off, granddad!"

AWLIGHT REED, TELL 'EM !!!

Those 3 words made me want to see this. No pisstake.

Re:Hulk Smash!!!

Posted by Eggchaser - 17-06-2008 12:33

I dragged my wife along and she loved it. Was that the old Hulk from the TV series as the security guard?

Roman Abrahamovic/Tim Roth was pretty good.

I was waiting for "HULK SMASH!" and my wife laughed at me for saying it in time to the dialogue.

Re:Hulk Smash!!!

Posted by Sir Fartle - 17-06-2008 12:57

The only comic book characters that I love are:

Iron Man
Batman
Concrete
The Flaming Carrot

That's it mostly. I still buy the Batman and Iron Man books, in fact I have to go out after work to pick up the latest installment of Batman Confidential which is a pretty decent comic, showing a lot of Batmans early adventures. It's the only Batman series where I have every single issue.

It's also good to see that the movie industry is consistently producing decent movie adaptations although I would love to see Frank Miller's original vision for Robocop 2 made into a film. I read the collected edition graphic novel and thought it was brilliant, if somewhat brutal.

Re:Hulk Smash!!!

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 17-06-2008 13:37

I dragged my wife along and she loved it. Was that the old Hulk from the TV series as the security guard?

Yes.

And Stan Lee was the guy who drank the Brazillian soda with the blood in it.

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Re:Hulk Smash!!!

Posted by Eggchaser - 17-06-2008 14:38

Oh, I spotted that one. He may as well wear a big hat with "I INVENTED THIS BLOODY CHARACTER, I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW!" embroidered on it for all the subtlety of his cameos.

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Re:Hulk Smash!!!

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 17-06-2008 15:37

And yet, he gets way too much credit for a lot of these characters.

Most people who are at least vaguely in tune with pop culture have heard of Stan Lee. Hardly anyone outside of comics fans are familiar with Bill Everett, Steve Ditko, Jack Kirby, Joe Simon, Jim Steranko, John Romita, etc. And Stan Lee hasn't actually done much writing since the mid 1970s.

Still, it's nice to see that he's still very enthusiastic about the characters and the medium at his age (he's in his mid 80s now).

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