

CINEMA

Review: 2010

Written for the screen, produced and directed by Peter Hyams; based on the novel by Arthur C. Clarke; director of photography—Peter Hyams; starring Roy Scheider, John Lithgow, Bob Balaban, Helen Mirren, Keir Dullea.

I don't know how Peter Hyams thought he was up to the task. 2001: A Space Odyssey was an almost religious experience for an entire generation of filmgoers, and any sequel is destined to be looked at in light of the brilliant original.

Hyams begins the film with a recap of the first film, complete with the recurring last transmission of David Bowman—"My God, it's full of stars!" We jump ahead years later, where Heywood Floyd (Roy Scheider, replacing 2001's late William Sylvester) has been made the scapegoat of the Discovery failure. The US and Russia are engaged in a space race to reach the deserted Discovery in orbit around Jupiter, and the Russians are ahead. Their only problem is that they have no way to reactivate HAL or retrieve the vital information stored in his dormant memory banks. A deal is struck—three American scientists will travel with the Russians aboard the Leonov. This is quite a diplomatic feat, considering the volatile situation in Latin America and the nature of the country's reactionary president (you think Hyams is trying to tell us something?).

Relations aboard the Leonov are shaky. Russian Captain Tanya Orlov (Helen Mirren) takes her country's diplomatic relations seriously and cooperates as little as possible. The crews loosen up as time goes on, however, and soon an atmosphere of cooperation is born. Here is where Hyams takes his first major departure from Kubrick. Where Kubrick's film was almost silent and solitary and devoid of human relations, Hyams concentrates on relationships and human cooperation. American Walter Churnow (John Lithgow) and Russian Max Bairovsky (Elliot Baskin) strike up a warm friendship, and Floyd tries to thaw the cold Orlov out with a touch of Kentucky Bourbon.

Only Dr. Chandra (Bob Balaban) would fit in the original film. The designer of HAL, he relates better to computers than to humans. As such, he is out of place in the cordial atmosphere of the Leonov.

Hyams opens 2010 with a strong, understated scene played in a lifeless field of enormous data gathering machines, which dwarf the actors. This opening scene feels like something Kubrick might have done, and the first half hour of the film continues on the most part in this style of grand wide shots, long takes and epic visual proportions. It captures the epic look and feel of the original but misses out on the elegance and poetry. Once in space, however, this style is dropped for a more modern, pedestrian visual style. Alienating whites, greys and blues are replaced with warm reds and greens in an attempt to humanize the surroundings. Very human political situations dominate the story, which is as much about the dangers of modern foreign policy as it is about a mysterious monolith in space. Yes, the monolith is still there, but instead of unlocking the answers to the universe and life in space, we get a very (if you'll pardon the expression) down-to-earth conclusion.

2010 is more interesting than it is involving. Granted Hyams had to go his own way with the film; granted the original is a hard act to follow; granted the human perspective is conceivably interesting. It still doesn't work well. Fine acting by Scheider, Lithgow, Mirren and crew makes for a very watchable show, and fairly grand special effects almost create the same epic atmosphere of Kubrick and Doug Trumbull's original conceptions, but Hyams degrades the film with a puerile, simplistic, preachy liberal discourse on multi-national relations that is far less intriguing than the monolith. 2010 is space opera pure and simple. It's lively and interesting and sets the heart to pounding when the familiar strains of "Thus Spake Zarathustra" are heard over the soundtrack. But it doesn't come close in scope, elegance, creativity or execution to the legendary 2001.

—Sean Axmaker

Missing in Action: Chuck Norris is ex-G.I. looking for POW's in Vietnam. West 11th Tri (342-4142).

Oh God, You Devil: George Burns is a cigar-smoking deity who is also the devil. Shows with All of Me. Oakway (342-5351).

Purple Rain: Shows with Teachers. Fine Arts (747-2201).

Rocky Horror Picture Show: Bijou Late Nite (686-2458).

Runaway: Tom Sellick (Magnum, P.I.) and Cynthia Rhodes combat a future world where the machines invented to save people begin to turn on them. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Starman: A man from another galaxy (Jeff Bridges) meets young widow Karen Allen. Directed by John Carpenter. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Supergirl: Helen Slater stars in the title role. Co-stars Faye Dunaway, Brenda Vaccaro, and Peter On'ole. Jeannot Szwarc directed. West 11th Tri Cinema (342-4142).

Teachers: A school district is in court for awarding a diploma to a student who can't read or write. JoBeth Williams plays the attorney. Nick Nolte is a teacher, Judd Hirsch, Ralph Macchio. Comic absurdity. Music from Joe Cocker, The Motels, Freddy Mercury and others. Shows with Purple Rain. Fine Arts (747-2201).

The Terminator: Currently the country's top-grossing movie. This thriller takes place before the big nuclear war and has Arnold Schwarzenegger as a half-man half-robot who arrives from the future to kill the woman (Linda Hamilton) who will bear humanity's savior. 30-year-old Director James Cameron's view of the future splices violence with humor, borrows heavily from *Alien*, and has its share of morose dialogue, but is a surprisingly entertaining, suspenseful, action-packed flick. Mayflower (345-1022).

—S.R.

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