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From its arguable origins in Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" to the incredible action set pieces found in "The Matrix," the science fiction genre has changed and evolved throughout its history. It has become the most prominent fantasy-oriented genre found in film, spawning massive franchises spanning decades.

One of the most prolific franchises to date is "Star Wars." Though the volume of media may not match other popular franchises such as "Star Trek" or "Doctor Who," "Star Wars" has become ingrained in our society more deeply than any of its peers.

Released on May 25, "Solo: A Star Wars Story" is the most recent entry in this long running franchise, serving as a backstory for one of the most beloved characters found in the "Star Wars" universe, Han Solo.

The movie appears to be a certain success on paper, allowing viewers another glimpse into the history of the universe's history, into the history of one of its star characters. "Rogue One," Disney's first attempt at fleshing out the backstory of the universe after taking over the franchise from George Lucas was a massive success with box office revenue settling

at just

million budget. This success, however, has proven more fleeting than expected.

Original projections believed "Solo's" opening weekend would land around the \$130 million mark, but the movie missed that mark by a wide margin. Netting only \$84.4 million, "Solo" marked the least successful opening weekend for a Star Wars movie since Disney took control; many have been quick to call it a flop.

The movie itself is far from bad. Alden Ehrenreich, who could easily have been the film's greatest weakness considering the shoes he was cast to fill, brings just enough of the smuggler's charms to the movie while also managing to depict what truly feels like a younger, less cynical version of the beloved character.

Donald Glover also shines in his portrayal of Lando Calrissian, creating a believable, youthful version of the fast-talking con artist. Ehrenreich and Glover play well off each other, easily allowing viewers to understand how the two become friends later in life.

The visual effects are just what would be expected from a Star Wars movie, with some of the most beautifully crafted space sequences seen in film to date. One of the most striking occurs near the middle of the movie, depicting the frequently mentioned boast about the Millennium Falcon's ability to make the Kessel Run in less than 12 parsecs.

The movie's music also hits all the right notes.

Though long time

work on the Bourne franchise, Kung Fu Panda, and X-Men: The Last Stand, serves as an adequate replacement.

With so many elements hitting the right marks, why then has "Solo" struggled so much? Perhaps fans simply don't know what they want from the franchise.

Though each of the previous "Star Wars" movies have performed well in the box office, each has been met with great criticism despite exploring different aspects of the universe. "The Force Awakens" served as a throwback to the original trilogy, a love story to the franchise that so many fans have enjoyed over the years. It heavily referenced the earlier movies, specifically "A New Hope," while also setting up something new. This was met with severe critical feedback from many fans who felt that it was too derivative, adding nothing new to the universe. "The Last Jedi" attempted to resolve that issue. The core concept of the movie was moving in a new direction. It explores the idea that perhaps some of

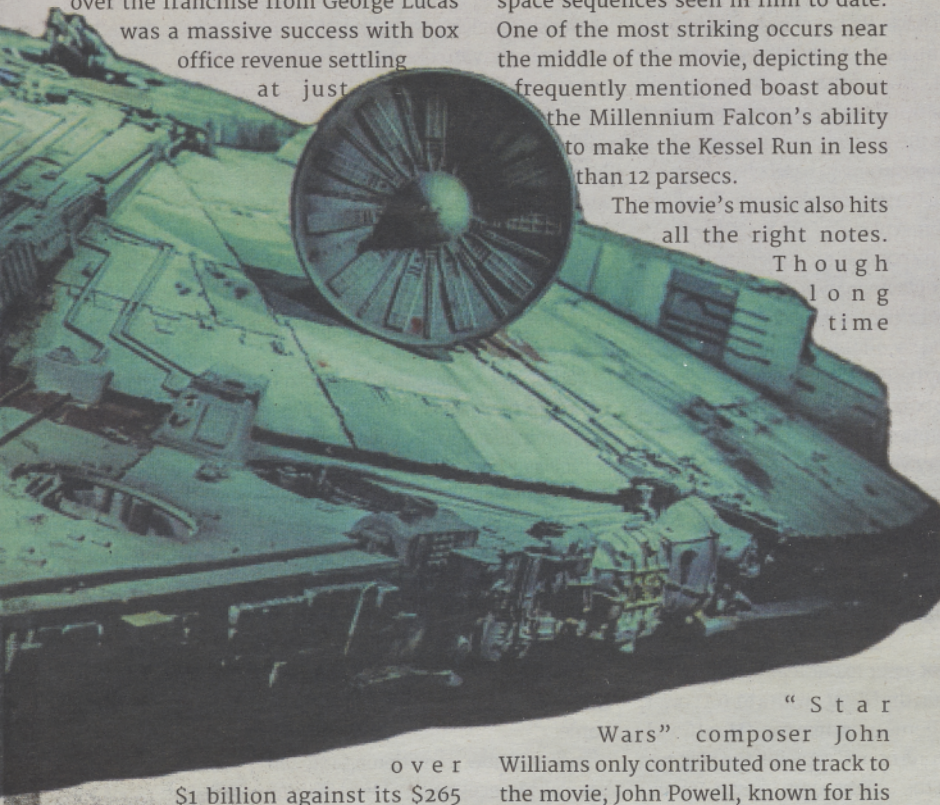
the preconceived notions held by the movie's protagonists are wrong, that it is time to try something different.

And yet again, the movie was met with severe criticism for straying far from the franchise's established lore, even if many of the complaints, such as Luke's use of force projection, have been referenced in "Star Wars" media before.

Now "Solo" struggles, with many of the complaints focusing on its lack of impact on the "Star Wars" universe, though some of the implications found in the movie are quite fascinating, such as bringing the "Clone Wars" and "Rebels" animated series solidly into the "Star Wars" canon with the surprise reveal in the movie's final act.

"Star Wars" will likely continue to struggle with future releases, unless fans can decide what they want and expect from future entries.

Solo receives an 8/10, with specific praise at Ehrenreich's performance and the movie's visual effects.



"Star Wars" composer John Williams only contributed one track to the movie; John Powell, known for his

