



THE MEANS JUSTIFY THE END

The third installment of the Wright-Pegg trilogy is fun, but nothing new

THE WORLD'S END: Directed by Edgar Wright. Written by Wright and Simon Pegg. Cinematography, Bill Pope. Editing, Paul Machliss. Music, Steven Price. Starring Simon Pegg, Nick Frost, Rosamund Pike, Martin Freeman, Eddie Marsan and Paddy Considine. Focus Features, 2013. R. 109 minutes. ★★☆☆☆

It's been six long years since the last Edgar Wright/Simon Pegg collaboration, the gets-better-with-age *Hot Fuzz*. Wright and Pegg have kept plenty busy: Wright directed *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*, my favorite comic book movie that comes off like a video game movie, and Pegg, of course, is Scotty in the new *Star Trek* franchise. Pegg and the third member of this trio, Nick Frost, spent some time on the disappointing *Paul*, while Frost memorably appeared in the entirely excellent

Attack the Block (which Wright executive produced).

The movie that gets the band back together is, appropriately, a movie about getting the boys back together: Gary (Pegg), who hasn't changed his dress or attitude since high school, decides to reunite his fellas to make a second go at the Golden Mile, a legend in their hometown of Newton Haven. At the end of school, the five boys attempted to drink one pint in each of the town's pubs, and failed, rather spectacularly. Gary wants to try again, and will not be denied. Not even by an army of sort-of robots.

Exactly why Gary is so desperate to complete the Golden Mile is a bit of information that appears late and fits awkwardly into *The World's End*. The movie isn't without a streak of darkness, and Gary's desperation is

manic and a little pathetic. He cajoles and bullies and tricks all four of his pals into joining him: Steve (Paddy Considine), Oliver (Martin Freeman), Peter (Eddie Marsan, a welcome addition to the Wright universe) and Andy (Frost). They're all fed up, but nostalgia and faded love keep them from calling Gary on his shit.

That distinction is given to Sam (Rosamund Pike), Oliver's down-to-earth sister. Sam arrives just before the boys (nearing 40, but mostly still boys) start to realize that something in Newton Haven is not right. It's not just the pubs that have been Starbucked.

The World's End is intermittently funny, and cleverly filmed, full of the repeating images and snappy sound effects that Wright always provides. (He can never resist a snapping seat belt or a bubbling pint, and his movies are the stronger for it.) New faces keep this from being altogether too much of an inside joke, but there's a been-here-done-thisness to the story (which is very *Hot Fuzz*). Wright and Pegg lean a bit heavily on their fan base's established affection for the characters Pegg and friends are so good at creating: average Joes with peculiar quirks and inescapable, wonderful flaws.

Is there anything wrong with that? Not exactly. (There is something wrong with padding your movie with half-assed gay jokes, though.) For all the elements *The World's End* briefly toys with — the greater good, the network, the future, the horrible possibility that for some people high school really was a high point and it's never going to get better, *ever* — it's the slightest of Wright's Pegg/Frost "Three Flavours Cornetto" trilogy. I want to say it's a bit like what might happen if John Hughes wrote a *Doctor Who* episode with a lot of beer and swearing, but that might set your expectations a little high. But despite not quite matching up to its creators' earlier work, *The World's End* is thoroughly likable, a little bittersweet and sometimes gleefully, cartoonishly fun. Any movie with a ridiculous robot fight in a pub is, on some level, all right by me. ■

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FRIDAY—SUNDAY
1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:10, 10:10
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6:00, 8:10, 10:10
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