

FILM REVIEW: Trevor Jackson Plays Iconic Title Character in Stylized Remake of 'Superfly'

By Kam Williams
For The Skanner News

“**S**uper Fly” (1972) was one of the most profitable of the Blaxploitation-era flicks. Released during the genre’s heyday, the picture revolved around its iconic title character, Youngblood Priest, a flamboyant cocaine dealer who dressed like a pimp, drove flashy cars and sampled his wares from a spoon shaped like a cross draped around his neck.

Overcoming a modest budget of just a half-million dollars, the film’s phenomenal box-office success led to a couple of sequels, (“Super Fly

T.N.T.” (1973) and “The Return of Superfly” (1990). Nevertheless, the franchise is probably best remembered for the

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original’s soundtrack by Curtis Mayfield which enjoyed a long run at #1

atop Billboard’s Top 100 chart.

Given its woeful production values, “Super Fly” is a movie almost begging to be remade. And 2.0 represents an upgrade which does not disappoint in that regard. As overhauled by Julien Christian Lutz (aka Director X), the highly-stylized production bears a greater resemblance to McG’s frenetically-paced “Charlie’s Angels” (2000) and Baz Luhrmann’s decidedly-decadent interpretation of “The Great Gatsby” (2013) than to any blaxploits made back in the 1070s.

The setting has been shifted to Atlanta, but the basic plotline is oth-



Trevor Jackson (of TV’s “Grown-ish”) stars in ‘Superfly’

erwise faithful to the source material. The blow-by-blow is narrated by the picture’s protagonist, played with perfect aplomb by Trevor Jackson (of TV’s “Grown-ish”).

At the point of departure, a beleaguered Priest informs us via voice-over that he’s been selling drugs on the street since the age of 11. He now sits atop a gang caught up in an escalating bloody turf war marked by drive-by shootings with a flashy posse called the Snow Patrol.

Understandably, Priest wants out of the game, but first he has to do a bigger deal than he’s ever attempted before. That involves going over the

head of his supplier Scatter (Michael Kenneth Williams) and securing a huge shipment of narcotics directly from the South American cartel kingpin, Adalberto Gonzales (Esai Morales).

Somehow Lutz, a veteran director of music videos, manages to manipulate the audience into rooting for the sort of unsavory characters you’d cross the street to avoid in real life. Listen, the cinema has a long history of championing ruthless lawbreakers like Bonnie and Clyde, the Godfather and more recently, the “Ocean’s 8” crew.

The upshot: this incarnation of Superfly proves to be a riveting, slick and pulse-pounding reboot that easily blows away the original!

profanity, graphic sexuality, violence, ethnic slurs, nudity and drug use

Running time:108 minutes

Production Studios: Columbia Pictures / Sony Pictures Entertainment / Silver Pictures

Distributor: Columbia Pictures

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ro Lucius Best/Frozone. Noteworthy additions to the ensemble include Catherine Keener, Isabella Rossellini and Bob Odenkirk.

The picture picks up precisely where the first left off. Jack Jack is still a toddler, but learning to harness the superpowers that had just started to manifest towards the end of the previous episode. At the point of departure, we find the

a pizza delivery guy-turned-hacker who has started hijacking people’s computer screens. Might someone else be behind a wider diabolical plot to hypnotize all of humanity? If so, that might call for the rest of the Parrs to morph into their superhero alter egos and join the fight.

What ensues is another visually-captivating,

dizzying delight for young and old alike. Pixar and Disney have done it again!

Excellent ★★★★★

Rated PG for action and brief mild epithets

Running time: 118 min.

Production Studios: Pixar Animation Studios / Walt Disney Pictures

“Might someone else be behind a wider diabolical plot to hypnotize all of humanity?”



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Parrs being forced into retirement by a government agent (Jonathan Banks) because of the costly collateral damage of their last operation.

Of course, that doesn’t last long. Helen is soon coaxed back into her stretchy superhero suit by a rich fan (Odenkirk) for a photo op designed to resurrect her disgraced clan’s image. The impromptu sex role reversal has Bob staying home to assume the child-rearing and domestic duties.

Next thing you know, Helen is further recruited to subdue Screenslaver (Bill Wise),

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