

'Matrix Resurrections' is loud, joyful, stylish fun

By Chris Hewitt
Star Tribune

Is "The Matrix Resurrections" a kung fu movie? A techno-thriller? A shoot-'em-up? A comedy? A sequel that's also a satire of sequels? Or a love story?

Well, Lana Wachowski's boldly entertaining "Resurrections" combines all those elements, while mixing in flashbacks from the three previous "Matrix" films. There's a lot happening on-screen, but it's so deftly balanced that it doesn't even matter if, like me, your memory of the other "Matrices" is dim and you're occasionally not sure exactly what's going on,

At its core, "Resurrections" is a rescue movie. Neo (Keanu Reeves) is a San Francisco game designer who still finds himself slipping into an alternate reality where he's regarded as a once-in-a-lifetime hero. He struggles to appease his snake of a boss (Jonathan Groff) and to make sense of his trauma with his therapist (Neal Patrick Harris),



Warner Bros.
Carrie-Anne Moss (left) and Keanu Reeves in "The Matrix Resurrections."

but he's in a bad place because, "They took my life and turned it into a video game."

"Resurrections" returns a few other characters from earlier outings, including Carrie-Anne Moss' Trinity (although there's not enough of her and her impeccable cheekbones until the climax) and Jada Pinkett Smith's Gen. Niobe.

The movie also benefits from a batch of newcomers, including Yahya Abdul-Mateen II as an incarnation of Laurence Fishburne's mysterious Morpheus (Fishburne is only glimpsed in flashbacks). Mateen ("The Watchmen") is a charismatic addition, especially when he materializes in the form of a life-sized piece of pin art or dem-

onstrates Morpheus' fondness for vintage discowear circa 1975. Another great newcomer is Jessica Henwick as Bugs, a fierce Neo fangirl who joins his attempt to rescue lost love Trinity from oblivion.

Previous "Matrix" movies have veered into self-seriousness but Wachowski has a light touch here, even making fun of herself for agreeing to do this sequel. (Neo's boss warns him that a new "Matrix" game is inevitable, threatening, "Warner Bros. is going to make a sequel

THE MATRIX RESURRECTIONS

MPAA rating: R (for language and briefly bloody violence)

Running time: 2:28

Where to watch: In theaters and streaming on HBO Max Wednesday

to the trilogy, with or without us.") She and sister Lilly, who didn't participate in the new movie, always have created fantastical, stylish worlds, and this film is ready to tell us what sunglasses we'll be wearing for the next several seasons.

But there's a new confidence and hopefulness in "Resurrections," which takes us to the brink of apocalypse but also imagines a not-far-off day when differences in racial or gender identity are so universally accepted that they're not even remarked upon.

It's true that not a lot of new ground gets covered, story-wise, but "Resurrections" is a big, loud, joyful movie and when one character says, "You've lost your capacity to distinguish reality from fiction," it may make you think, "Duh. Isn't that what going to the movies is about?"

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