

movie review

BY JAY BOBBIN

Daniel Craig is at his Bond best in 'Skyfall'

As the world continues its wait for Daniel Craig's fifth and final James Bond movie, "No Time to Die," one of his best remains on view.

Being shown Saturday, June 5, on EPIX – and also streaming on Amazon – 2012's "Skyfall" marked the 50th anniversary of the film franchise and gave it a needed re-energizing after the relatively lackluster "Quantum of Solace." The four years between the pictures, then an unusually long gap for Agent 007's screen capers, helped both Craig and the audience recharge ... as did the participation of director Sam Mendes, who had guided Craig through a vastly different role in "Road to Perdition" a decade earlier.

"This time, it's personal" is an overused trope, but it applies to Bond as he returns from the supposed dead – wounded during a mission to recover a list of agents'

aliases – to assist the British Secret Service and boss M (Judi Dench) when they're targeted by an enemy who seems to know a lot about how the agency works.

Still nursing his literal wounds, and under the skeptical eye of intelligence superior Mallory (Ralph Fiennes), Bond makes his way through Shanghai and Macau (gorgeously filmed, as is the whole movie, by cinematographer Roger Deakins) to find the tale's chief villain: Silva (a deliciously scene-chewing Javier Bardem), whose reason for committing larceny also falls on the deeply personal side.

"Skyfall" incorporates a large amount of entertaining touches, including the introductions of a new Q and Money Penny, neatly played by Ben Whishaw and Naomie Harris. Figuring into the climactic portion that explains exactly what Skyfall is, the great Albert Finney had one of his last substantial roles, and Berenice Lim Marlohe makes an exotic and alluring femme fatale as a Silva moll who guides Bond deeper into the enemy's plans.

Though David Arnold had done a highly respectable job succeeding John Barry as the series' principal composer, Mendes enlisted prolific past collaborator Thomas Newman, who interpolated familiar Bond themes to give "Skyfall" its own sound (one that would be echoed when Mendes and Newman reunited on the subsequent "Spectre").

While holding quite true to what had been established in the world of James Bond, "Skyfall" also moves his saga forward sensibly and authentically ... quite a tall order for such an iconic character whose history is well-known by millions upon millions of fans internationally. That and "Casino Royale," Craig's high marks during his Bond tenure, give "No Time to Die" a lot to live up to. In the meantime, though, "Skyfall" will do just fine.



WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 18

In the grid below, twenty answers can be found that fit the category for today. Circle each answer that you find and list it in the space provided at the right of the grid. Answers can be found in all directions—forward, backward, horizontally, vertically and diagonally. An example is given to get you started. Can you find the twenty answers in today's puzzle?

Today's Category: Nations of the World

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