

Mark Whelan's Movie Picks

Man Of Steel (2013) Director: Zack Snyder. 148m Rated: PG-13



Superman is reimagined for a post-9/11 world in ***Man Of Steel***, an overextended but enjoyable comic book yarn fashioned to dazzling realization by Zack Snyder.

Henry Cavill is ideally cast as a lone survivor to an obliterated planet sent to Earth by his father (imperiously played by Russell Crowe) in hopes to revive their race. Due to discrepancies in Earth's atmosphere, Cavill is able to possess superhuman strength and aptitudes such as x-ray vision, bulletproof skin and—or course—flying.

Hot on his trail are a group of condemned military insurrectionists, lead by a ferocious Michael Shannon, committed to resuscitating their doomed world even if it means the annihilation of another.

On Earth Cavill is nurtured to manhood by a farming couple (Kevin Costner and Diane Lane) who teach him to discreetly adapt to his new home and recognize the consequences stemming from the great power he possesses. Cavill also finds companionship in a plucky reporter (Amy Adams) who is fascinated by his origins and unforeseen destiny.



Screenwriter David S. Goyer propositions reasonable insight into Cavill's honorably conflicted superhero, but settles for convention in the denouement as the density of his script derails from the psychological turmoil of an isolated individual to the leveling of an entire city (with enough explosions and demolition that would make Michael Bay blush). Disappointingly, in order to placate action film and comic book enthusiasts, ***Man Of Steel*** loses its surest asset: an intimate portrait of a charismatic man attempting to find his place in the world.

Apart from its burdensome second half, ***Man Of Steel*** is a terrific showcase for Cavill and fine entertainment all the same.

--Mark Whelan, July 8, 2015