

Mark Whelan's Movie Picks

Transformers: Dark Of The Moon (2011) Director: Michael Bay. 154m Rated: PG-13



Michael Bay, the notorious—and notoriously successful—cinematic demolition-master delivers his best film to date in ***Transformers: Dark Of The Moon***; an immense display of gleaming metal and mayhem. Generally panned, unreasonably loathed, and preposterously addressed by one critic as “high on any list of worst blockbusters ever,” this gargantuan production of pseudo-science-fiction is ideal escapism on a grand scale.

The third film in the ongoing ***Transformers*** universe (based on a popular Hasbro toy-line introduced in the 1980s); the noble Autobots, in sanctuary on Earth from their ill-fated planet Cybertron (lead by fearless commander, Optimus Prime) having formed a special-operations alliance with the United States government, aid in remedying “human troubles” while their formidable foes (the tyrannical Decepticons) lay dormant.

Meanwhile, freshly college graduated, ever convulsive, and obnoxiously overactive Shia LaBeouf fails to find gainful employment but prospers in nabbing another girlfriend (model Rosie Huntington-Whitely, stepping in for Megan Fox from the first two installments) and a chance to prove himself a hero.

Screenwriter Ehren Kruger teasingly redrafts the historical proceedings of the Cold War Space Race, suggesting the entire operation was in response to an Autobot spacecraft crash-landing on the moon. Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins were assigned to investigate under the pretense of exploring the desolate terrain. Therein the derelict spaceship awaits an undisclosed technological construct that will aid the Autobots in the battles that lay ahead.



Bay needlessly pads and protracts this fusillade of shimmering steel, blinding lens-flares, and excessive explosions into nearly three hours of cinematic chaos, but there are ample showcases for integrity and sentiment that are typically remiss from a film of this ilk. Unsurprisingly, the actual stars are the Transformers themselves, who act and appear more real than the majority of human actors occupying the film.

Transformers: Dark Of The Moon, similar to its predecessors, abandons sense in favor of sensation, but its exhaustive more-is-more approach to popcorn matinee is aptly suited for a film about giant robots.

--Mark Whelan, February 25th, 2015