

‘Wonder Woman’ provides something fresh to the superhero genre

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 02 June 2017 02:56



Rating: «« out of 4

Running Time: 142 min.

The latest comic book movie to hit cinemas this week is *Wonder Woman*, part of the DC Universe that includes the likes of Superman and Batman. The good news is that this film is far, far superior to the efforts featuring those superheroes. In fact, the movie is helped tremendously by the fact that previous titles were so poor - this looks phenomenal in comparison. The bad news is that there are still flaws present and that the feature makes a few of the same mistakes as previous DC releases, though not on as grand or epic a scale. In the end, it's reasonable enough to entertain children and fans of the character.

Child of the Queen of the Amazons, Diana, aka Wonder Woman (Gal Gadot) is a warrior princess living with her people on the Island of Themyscira, hidden from humanity. Her life is changed when Steve Trevor (Chris Pine) crashes his plane in the vicinity while being hunted by German officers during WWI. After learning of the conflict, she decides that this event coincides with her purpose in life - to vanquish the God of War, Ares, who is turning humankind against each other. She is taken to London and introduced to Sir Patrick (David Thewlis), who agrees to fund the pair on a secret mission on the front lines. Wonder Woman believes that General Erich Ludendorff (Danny Huston) is Ares in disguise and sets out to assassinate him. However, helping Ludendorff in his activities is his sinister yet tortured chemist, Dr. Poison (Elena Anaya).

The movie feels a bit wooden early on, with some stiff dialogue and awkward exchanges, as well as some surprisingly dodgy and unconvincing special effects. Gadot capably handles the physical stuff, but isn't given much to work with in relating to the other characters. However, things do improve somewhat when the lead leaves home and travels to London. The

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fish-out-of-water material makes for more interesting fodder and plays much better as the idealistic Diana must deal with the era’s conservative social attitudes and the duplicitous motives of those around her.

And of course, it’s also fun to watch the superhero take down the bad guys. There are some decent action scenes in the middle of the film as the character fights some villains using hand to hand combat and other, more exaggerated methods. It’s always fun to see a female character break with old tradition and stereotypical gender roles. Unfortunately, one wishes that a little more could have been done with the supporting male characters summoned to help her on the quest. They come off as one-note stereotypes. I suppose one could argue that it draws attention to some of the issues being dealt with onscreen, but I don’t really believe this was the movie’s intention.

Things also fall off of the rails during the nonsensical final act. Some of the absurdities include a battle in a watchtower that receives no attention from nearby soldiers in the area. This escalates into explosions and a fight on a German base covered in flames (reminiscent of a previous DC movie entry), with some histrionics about the power of love ironically uttered around the time a character fires a devastating, disintegrating beam. It’s also unfortunate that more isn’t done with one of the feature’s most interesting characters, Dr. Poison. She doesn’t play much of a role in the finale. Perhaps the filmmakers are saving the villain for another feature, but they certainly don’t make the most of her in this effort. It’s unfortunate that the climax ends up devolving into complete silliness.

So, in the end, this is a mixed bag that does some things well but messes a few elements up along the way. As long as you can shut off your brain, the film should provide just enough thrills to make it enjoyable. In the end, *Wonder Woman* is a decent but imperfect superhero movie that plays much better thanks to the dreck of what has preceded it.

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