

'Baby Driver' hits the gas and never stops

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 30 June 2017 08:08



Rating: ««« out of 4

Running Time: 113 min.

It has been a few years since director Edgar Wright (*Shaun of the Dead*, *Hot Fuzz*, *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*

,
The World's End

) has treated us to another one of his quirky and idiosyncratic feature films. His latest is an homage to car and heist movies with a modern spin. Admittedly,

Baby Driver

isn't as eccentric as his previous efforts. However familiar the path may be, he throws in enough twists and turns to make it a very enjoyable ride.

Baby (Ansel Elgort) is a getaway driver for criminal mastermind Doc (Kevin Spacey), who sends the kid out on a series of wild robberies through the streets of Atlanta. He's teamed with various suspicious and occasionally unhinged partners, including couple Buddy (Jon Hamm) and Darling (Elza Gonzalez), Griff (Jon Bernthal), the aptly named Eddie No-Nose (Flea) and the hot-tempered Bats (Jamie Foxx). Owing a debt to Doc, Baby works his way closer to leaving his dangerous profession with each job. However, the situation is complicated by a burgeoning relationship and when he overhears his various cohorts plotting to double-cross each other during a big score.

The new aspect to this feature is its use of music. This movie is loaded with tunes from beginning to end and the songs play a big part in dictating the editing and general feel of the story. Our protagonist isn't a big talker, suffering from tinnitus and using various iPods with the music turned up to block the ringing in his ears. Particular songs, when both driving and

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walking, set a bouncy and consistently exciting rhythm to events (including a nifty long take early on scored entirely by a song).

Another big plus is the driving itself. It appears as though most of the car stunts are real. These aren't digital cars flying through the air, but authentic vehicle spins and tire squeals lend authenticity and thrills to the proceedings. There are some really impressive chases early on as Baby's skills are displayed, as well as some great bits towards the end of the picture that include a tense and exciting chase in a parking garage.

And of course, with so many great performers onscreen playing nasty types, the banter is a lot of fun too. Spacey and the various robbery crew members are threatening in certain situations, but also enjoyably flabbergasted with each other and by their young driver and his skills behind the wheel. The movie manages to work in some funny discussions about music (Baby's secret hobby pays off with a good laugh late in the feature) and well as some amusing pop culture references that relate to comments about teamwork. There's also a great bit involving a robbery mask mix-up.

Perhaps the one surprising thing about the feature is that it does feel a little more traditional in some respects compared with the filmmaker's earlier efforts. Typically, the leads in this director's films are very flawed. Plenty of humor is derived from the character's struggles with their own shortcomings. Baby is not flawed. He's a supremely nice and talented guy put in a bad situation through no fault of his own. Elgort makes him easy to root for, but one does wish that the role itself had a bit more edge to it to add some extra tension and uncertainty to events. The finale also resolves itself in a more straightforward manner than one might have expected.

Still, these are very minor, nitpicking points. For the most part, *Baby Driver* slams its foot on the gas and never hits the breaks. Anyone who has ever enjoyed an action film or walking around listening to music on their earbuds will find this effort a whole lot of fun. It easily bests a lot of the bigger and more elaborate summer movies out there.

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