

Just witnessed "Avengers: Infinity War" for a second time. This astronomically anticipated culmination of Marvel's last 10 years is directed by Anthony and Joe Russo ("Captain America: The Winter Soldier", "Captain America: Civil War"). The film stars a massive cast of A-listers including Robert Downey Jr., Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo, Chris Evans, Scarlett Johansson, Don Cheadle, Benedict Cumberbatch, Tom Holland, Chadwick Boseman, Zoe Saldana, Karen Gillan, Tom Hiddleston, Paul Bettany, Elizabeth Olsen, Anthony Mackie, Sebastian Stan, Idris Elba, Danai Gurira, Peter Dinklage, Benedict Wong, Pom Klementieff, Dave Bautista, Vin Diesel, Bradley Cooper, Gwyneth Paltrow, Benicio Del Toro, Josh Brolin, Chris Pratt, William Hurt, Letitia Wright, Terry Notary, Tom Vaugahn Lawlor, Carrie Coon, Michael James Shaw, Winston Duke, Kerry Condon and Jacob Batalon.

NO SPOILERS.

Whew. That's a really long list of actors! Still with me? Cool. Now that we've gotten that out of the way let us continue with the review. I don't think I've ever been more excited for a film than I was for this one. Like a lot of people, I've been following the Marvel Cinematic Universe since its humble beginnings with the first "Iron Man". I can't really put it into words what it's been like to watch these films over the last decade. If I had to find a word I'd say profound. Never in film history has a super hero franchise of this magnitude been brought to the silver screen. It's unique and now it's this massive global franchise. It sounds crazy just thinking about it, but its true. Marvel has become a household name over the years and audiences have embraced every new film and character they've created with open arms. They teased this ultimate culmination for years. Now, after a decade of anticipation, Marvel is delivering on that promise. Well let me tell you right now. They DELIVERED.

It's taken me a week to really collect my thoughts on this movie. Both times I left the theatre stunned and speechless. It was as if I had gotten the wind knocked out of me. This film evoked a wide range of emotions from me. The most prominent ones were excitement, laughter, sadness and shock. At one point I'd be pumping my fists in the air in joy and at another I'd be tearing up with my mouth hung open. It's amazing how exciting and emotional this film turned out to be. This is the very definition of a summer BLOCKBUSTER. The extremely high bar that most movies strive to reach but often don't.

To talk about the performances in the film would be a waste of time. Not because all these actors don't deserve the praise but simply because there's just too many. Yes. Everyone in this film is fantastic, but you probably were already expecting that going in. Out of all the awesome characters in the film however, the one that really steals the show is Josh Brolin's "Thanos". He is hands down the best villain in the MCU to date. Whenever he was on-screen I felt nervous and wicked tense. That's a testament to Brolin's acting and his layered character. Thanos isn't just another evil bad guy. He has humanity and believes what he's doing is the right thing. That's often what makes a villain all the more menacing. The fact that they think what they're doing is for the greater good. He gets the most screen time out of everyone and the movie is all the better for it. This may be a "Avengers" movie but at the end of the day it's really a "Thanos" movie. Moving on.

Everyone who has yet to see this(which is admittedly not that many people seeing as how it's now the biggest opening weekend of ALL TIME) may be asking about the film's action and special effects. You can put any worries you may have to rest because they're both fantastic. There's a lot of CGI and green screen in the film and it all works seamlessly. I never questioned it's believability or it's level of quality. The action is also top notch. Let us not forget that these guys directed "Captain America: Civil War". They've completely ditched the shaky cam approach and every fight and battle are fully realized. The scale of these action scenes is the biggest we've seen so far and the stakes have never felt more REAL.

Sure, action and effects are great but they can only get you so far. Once you've overlaid some music over them, now you've got something exciting. Thankfully this film's musical score is more than up to that task. Hot off the heels of scoring "Ready Player One", Alan Silvestri provides a edgier and emotional score here. The way he was able to balance rapidly shifting tones was very impressive. Somehow he completely pulled it off and in doing so has delivered perhaps his best score so far. I'm so glad he came back after the 1st "Avengers" to score this one. Hearing that iconic theme gives me chills every time.

I've got one more aspect I'd like to touch on. That's the film's ever-changing tone. I'm still shocked as to how they managed to balance tones without having it feel jarring. The signature Marvel humor is out in full force as usual but this is also the darkest film yet. From scene 1 the film lets you know what you're in for and the danger feels incredibly high very quickly. That's all before the opening title even appears. It would be criminal to not mention this film's 2 hours and 29 minute run-time but also its relentlessly fast pace. By the time it was over I felt like only 45 minutes had gone by, give or take.

So if I were to wrap this up in a nutshell, yeah this film is indeed everything I wanted it to be and more. It's emotional, unexpectedly hilarious, vastly exciting and shocking. That

ending had my jaw on the floor and by the time the credits rolled, I felt like I had just gone on a journey. Very few films have left me with that feeling. This film shattered any expectations I may have had. I'm immensely excited for Part 2 and can't wait to add this to my library and watch it again and again. It's easily the best "Avengers" film if the 3 and my favorite in the MCU to date. On the off chance that you haven't seen it yet, I have two words for you. SEE IT! I'm going to give "Avengers: Infinity War" 5/5 stars. Summer 2018 has some huge shoes to fill.