

Just had the pleasure of FINALLY experiencing "Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse". This endlessly creative, color drenched fever dream of a comic book film is directed by Peter Ramsey, Rodney Rothman and Bob Persichetti ("Rise Of The Guardians"). It is produced by Phil Lord and Christopher Miller("The LEGO Movie"). The film's expansive voice cast includes Jake Johnson, Shameik Moore, Hailee Steinfeld, Chris Pine, Nicolas Cage, Mahershala Ali, Brian Tyree Henry, Lily Tomlin, Luna Lauren Velez, Zoe Kravitz, John Mulaney, Kimiko Glen, Kathryn Hahn, Liev Schreiber, Natalie Morales, Oscar Isaac, Jorma Taccone, Lake Bell and the late and great Stan Lee.

This has been a film on my radar for over a year at least. I remember watching the first trailer for this several months back and being blown away by it. The animation style looked like nothing I've ever seen before. Everything besides that was just icing on the cake. As long as a film can get my attention in some way, I will support it. Cut to a few months later and the following trailers that followed were even more impressive. So naturally at that point I was sold on this film. Now, I've seen the finished product. Was it worth the excitement and does it deliver?

It brings me great joy to answer both those questions with a resounding YES. This movie is truly UNLIKE ANYTHING I'VE SEEN BEFORE. When was the last time you could say that about a movie? For me the last time was almost 4 years ago when I saw "The Lego Movie" for the first time. Funny enough, the 2 directors of that film were also heavily involved with this one. So to give it to you straight, this film was PHENOMENAL. I don't use that word often but this film deserves it. I ADORE this movie. So I'll quit drooling over it and we can begin.

The voice cast. I have no issues at all with it. So many talented people lending their voices to a beautifully crafted and well told film. Every character gets enough screen time and where it could have been scattered and distracting, instead it just elevated the movie to even more impressive heights. Moore's "Miles Morales" is front and center in this story and his big screen debut is flat out awesome. While not having much screen-time, Pine's version of "Peter Parker" still leaves his mark on the film in a big way. Not to be outshined is Johnson's older, hilarious, sweatpants wearing "Peter B. Parker". Steinfeld's "Gwen Stacy/Spider-Woman" is another strong and smart addition. Cage's "Spider-Man Noir" is undeniably badass and gleefully strange.

Both Mulaney's "Peter Porker/Spider-Ham" and Glen's "Peni Parker" added just the right amount of silliness to the film. Henry's portrayal of Miles' dad "Jefferson Davis" was both reserved and heartfelt. Ali's "Uncle Aaron" was yet another layered and important character to both the story and growth of his nephew. Last but certainly not least is Schreibers villainous "Wilson Fisk/Kingpin". While easily being the only weakness of the film, he still had a understandable motivation for his actions. At the same time if the film had spent more time with his character, it would have taken away from getting to know the central heroes more. So it's not really that big of an issue when I think about it. Yeah, that's a lot of voice actors to cover. Just wanted to make sure I praised everyone.

OK, next up is the animation style. Arguably the film's biggest draw. It's INCREDIBLE. The visuals in this movie are insane and bursting with every color imaginable. The animation department pulled out all the stops on this one. While it may take a few minutes to get used to, after that you're completely on board with it. From showing Miles' inner thoughts as text boxes to utilizing the 3 scenes next to each other, this film's creativity was overflowing. Not to mention the color, which this film mixes together constantly to create a aggressively psychedelic thrill ride to feast your eyes on. I could not have looked away if I wanted to. No film before this has ever combined 2D art, 3D art, computer based and hand drawn animation together so effortlessly. It was if I was watching a comic book burst to life on the big screen. It was a glorious sight to behold.

Lastly, the film's soundtrack. One word. KILLER. I loved this soundtrack with all of my being. It fit the film like a glove. That is to say, it fit PERFECTLY. From Miles' daily jam "Sunflower" to the slick "What's Up Danger?" accompanying his first heart-stopping roof jump, this soundtrack pumped serious adrenaline into a already fast paced film.

In conclusion, you need to run out and see this film if you haven't already. Plain and simple as that. It's one of, if not, the BEST "Spider-Man" film to grace the silver screen. It's exciting, gorgeous, heartfelt and incredibly satisfying. Oh and it has a great tribute to the man himself, "Stan Lee". It has tons of fun and still manages to tell a deeply compelling story in the process. It's currently my FAVORITE "Spider-Man" film thus far. If I had to quickly score the past films, I'd give "Spider-Man" 3/5 stars, "Spider-Man 2" 4.8/5 stars, "Spider-Man 3" 2.5/5 stars, "The Amazing Spider-Man" 4/5 stars, "The Amazing Spider-Man 2" 3.2/5 stars and "Spider-Man: Homecoming" 4.9/5 stars. With ALL of this being said I'm going to give "Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse" 5/5 stars. Yeah, it's THAT good! Easily one of my favorite films of the year! Oh and stay for that great end credits scene!