

KINGS- MAN THE SECRET SERVICE



Director: Matthew Vaughn
Writers: Matthew Vaughn, Jane Goldman
Stars: Colin Firth, Taron Egerton, Samuel L. Jackson
Strength: Story, script, effects and action
Weakness: Some of the lines are a bit too cheesy
Runtime: 129 minutes
Rating: 4/5

PLOT: A spy organization recruits an unrefined, but promising street kid into the agency's ultra-competitive training program, just as a global threat emerges from a twisted tech genius.

REVIEW: Kingsman is Kickass meets

James Bond! It marks the third film in a row that director Matthew Vaughn has adapted from a comic book background. His two previous ones being Kick-Ass (2010) and X-Men: First Class (2011). If there is one fun thing you plan to do over the next week, it should be watching Kingsman. Vaughn draws a clean balance between drama and serious character development, and cartoonish humour, creating a unique entertainment piece that stands out from everything else that you have seen. Based on the comic by Mark Millar (who also created Kick-Ass),

the film sees a young and reckless Gary 'Eggsy' Unwin (Taron Egerton), taken under the wing of Harry Hart (Colin Firth), a spy for her majesty's secret service. With the aid of Michael Caine and Mark Strong, they soon come face-to-face with the villainous Richmond Valentine (Samuel L. Jackson); an ego-centric - Steve Jobs-type - billionaire madman (with a lisp), who hates the sight of blood - yet holds a vision of mass biological warfare. The camera work is simply brilliant, making complicated action choreography easy and enjoyable to follow.

Fans of any spy movie and Kick-Ass are certain to love it, as through rollercoasters of action, comedy and espionage, comes a bucket of winks, references and nods to the world of spy movies. Portraying the lead character of 'Eggsy', Taron Egerton, proves to be an outstanding newcomer as he brings the character to life with an energizing vibe of a 'chav' lifestyle vs. gentleman's class. This should not be missed under any circumstance and is a must watch for people of all ages!

Reviewed by ZAKIR MUSHTAQUE



SHAMITABH

Director: R. Balki
Writer: R. Balki
Stars: Amitabh Bachchan, Dhanush, Akshara
Strength: Unique Story, Solid performances
Weakness: Pace Uneven at times,
Runtime: 155 minutes
Rating: 2.5/5

PLOT: A mute, aspiring actor joins forces with a man who has a powerful voice. Together they take the film industry by storm, but will their egos get in the way?
REVIEW: The film opens nicely with a charming flashback that introduces us to our protagonist Daanish, who is mad about movies. Unfazed by the fact that he cannot speak, he dreams of becoming an actor someday, meanwhile happily putting on impromptu performances for anyone who'll watch.

It's this very passion and his unmistakable potential that catches the eye of assistant director Akshara (debutant Akshara Haasan) when he's staking out film studios in Mumbai and hiding in vanity vans hoping to catch a break. Conveniently she hooks him up with a breakthrough technology that will allow our protagonist to speak. All they need now is a willing voice. This brings us to Bachchan's character,

Amitabh Sinha, a cranky all-round failure and compulsive drunk. The old man reluctantly agrees to 'give' him his voice without anyone suspecting. This conceit lends itself to some entertaining scenarios where the pair struggles to make their 'arrangement' work.

Balki brings conflict into this seemingly perfect set-up through the ever-reliable device of ego. As Shamitabh's star rises rapidly, the actor and the 'voice' clash repeatedly, each insistent that he is the true talent.

The film's script, however, runs out of steam after the first half, quickly repeating the same ideas over and over again, and throwing new ones that don't always work. The same can be said for Bachchan's multiple drunk scenes that get tiring after a point.

Brimming with smart ideas and powered by the performances of its two principals, it's a shame this promising film comes undone by the Curse of the Second Half. Watch it though for bravely treading new ground.

Reviewed by S.M. INTISAB SHAHRIYAR

CLASSIC REVIEW

THE THIRD MAN (1949)

Director: Carol Reed
Writer: Graham Greene
Stars: Orson Welles, Joseph Cotten, Alida Valli
Runtime: 93 minutes

PLOT: Pulp novelist Holly Martins travels to shadowy, postwar Vienna, only to find himself investigating the mysterious death of an old friend, black-market opportunist Harry Lime.
REVIEW: In this Cold War spy classic, Holly Martins (Joseph Cotten), a third-rate American pulp novelist, arrives in postwar Vienna, where he has been promised a job by his old friend Harry Lime (Orson Welles). Upon his arrival, Martins discovers that Lime has been killed in a traffic accident, and that his funeral is taking place immediately. At the graveside, Martins meets outwardly affable Major Calloway (Trevor Howard) and actress Anna Schmidt (Alida Valli), who is weeping copiously. When Calloway tells Martins that the late Harry Lime was a thief and murderer, the loyal Martins is at first outraged. Gradually, he discovers not only that Calloway was right but also that the man lying in the coffin in the film's early scenes was not Harry Lime at all - and that Lime is still very much alive.

The cast includes Joseph Cotten as the American who blunders upon mystery and romance, Alida Valli, the cool Italian actress, who plays the refugee girl of the "dead" man, Trevor Howard as a British police major, Bernard Lee as his capable sergeant. Orson Welles does a great job of

shaping a dark and treacherous shadow as the "third man."

Many consider The Third Man to be the best British post-World War II film noir, while others consider it one of the best-ever examples of film noir to come out of Europe. It has all the right ingredients: an engaging, twisty storyline; one of the most diabolical and charismatic villains to grace the screen; crisp, innovative directing; a soundtrack that's completely unique; and cinematography that uses the black-and-white medium to its fullest. This movie is an unquestionable must-see for all film noirs.

Reviewed by S.M. INTISAB SHAHRIYAR

