

**CLASSIC REVIEW**

# THE TRAGEDY OF OTHELLO THE MOOR OF VENICE (1952)

**Director:** Orson Welles  
**Writers:** William Shakespeare  
**Stars:** Orson Welles, Suzanne Cloutier, Micheál MacLiammóir  
**Runtime:** 90 minutes

**PLOT:** The general Othello is manipulated into thinking that his new wife Desdemona has been carrying on an affair with one of his officers Michael Cassio when in reality it is all part of the scheme of a bitter lieutenant named Iago.

**REVIEW:** To be completely forthright about Mr. Welles, he has a wonderful skill at image-making but a blind spot where substance is concerned. For instance, he makes of the murder of Desdemona a chilling nightmarish display of stark faces, frenzied movements, architectural compositions, and shifting lights, cut into a montage with accompanying music and screams. But he backs up this hot, erratic action with little feeling for character



or regard for the genuine human torment that is implied in this melodramatic display.

It would be hard to improve upon this rendering of Othello for sheer mise-en-scène. Mr. Welles has got Venice and Cyprus down to the ground. All the urbanity and stony beauty of the great Adriatic port and the island of Othello's triumph are made sharply visual in this film. Suzanne Cloutier's Desdemona is a beautiful, frail, and gauzy girl who might be tremendously moving if you could sense her in relation to her man. But Mr. Welles has kept her an image of feminine anguish and nothing more. There are flashes of brilliant suggestion in this tumbled, slurred, and helter-skelter film with a little Shakespeare and a lot of Welles.

Reviewed by Mohaiminul Islam



# JAZBAA

**Director:** Sanjay Gupta  
**Writer:** Robin Bhatt, Sanjay Gupta  
**Cast:** Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Irrfan Khan, Shabana Azmi  
**Strength:** Acting, Plot  
**Weakness:** Too focused on Aishwarya  
**Runtime:** 119 minutes  
**Rating:** 3/5

**PLOT:** Tensions arise when the daughter of nation's best lawyer is kidnapped. Now she'll have to save a rapist from death sentence, as ransom, within 4 days.  
**REVIEW:** Inspired by the South Korean thriller Seven Days, Jazbaa revolves around a divorced lawyer, who dotes on her pre-teen daughter. With a 100 per cent success track record, she knows how to get any criminal 'justice'. However, her world crumbles when her daughter goes missing. The kidnapper makes it clear that he is not interested in money. Rather, he tells her that the only way she will ever see her child again is

to free a felon (Chandan) who faces rape and murder charges.

She enlists the help of Inspector Yohan (Irrfan), a decorated but suspended police officer, whose heart beats for this lady-lawyer. He accompanies her on her mission to ferret out missed clues and check out alibis.

Jazbaa's narrative has pace and power. From screeching car sequences to emotionally-charged showdowns between his accomplished lead cast; the film throbs. Which is not to say that there are no flaws. The green hue overshadows Mumbai's skyline. Aishwarya is rusty at the start but eventually takes charge of the dual aspects of her character. Once in the groove, her eyes breathe fire. Irrfan breezes past with clap-trap Kamlesh Pandey dialogues. Go watch it now if you already haven't.

Reviewed By Intisab Shahriyar

# THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.

**Director:** Guy Ritchie  
**Writers:** Guy Ritchie, Lionel Wigram  
**Stars:** Henry Cavill, Armie Hammer, Alicia Vikander  
**Strengths:** Acting, Comedy  
**Weakness:** Story  
**Runtime:** 116 minutes  
**Rating:** 4/5

**PLOT:** In the early 1960s, CIA agent Napoleon Solo and KGB operative Illya Kuryakin participate in a joint mission against a mysterious criminal organization, which is working to proliferate nuclear weapons.

**REVIEW:** The first thing to note about this movie is that it's actually based on a popular US TV show from the post-World War II era. Back then, the spy genre seemed especially relevant given the tensions between the USA and the USSR and so, made great fodder for primetime TV. However Guy Ritchie has now updated the story line and infused it with a wry and dry sense of humour along with a generous dose of wittiness, all the while keeping the Cold War backdrop as a present-but-distant sideline.

Cavill is a former rogue-turned-CIA operative who has to work with KGB sleuth Illya to thwart race car driver Alexander (Calvani) and his impossibly beautiful wife Victoria's (DeBicki) radioactive ambitions, so to speak.

The movie borrows from the buddy cop genre too, in the sense that you have two very competent but rival individuals who find themselves stuck together to achieve a common objective.

Ritchie lets Cavill and Hammer have their day in the sun, with the film being buoyed by a slick script and hyper-stylish visuals. Hugh Grant - that master of dry Brit wit - as a spy boss is also delightful here.

Illya, every inch the ruthless Russian tough-guy spy is initially at loggerheads with his political rival but soon develops a healthy respect for Solo. They realize that they can achieve more while working in sync, in an atmosphere devoid of mutual suspicion.

It's worth clarifying, though, that the nostalgia here isn't for the U.N.C.L.E. TV show so much as a dated style of movie-making and also movie-watching - Ritchie's film wants to remind you, albeit with a little scattering of Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels' visual spins and snaps, that the pleasures of an old-fashioned spy or wartime movie can still thrill in the superhero age. It succeeds admirably on its own terms - more so than his two Sherlock Holmes films - and while it never really transcends pastiche, its ambitions don't lie in that direction.

Reviewed by Intisab Shahriyar

