

Film Review: Hollywood's 'Godzilla' Misses, Mocks Ishirô Honda's Main Warning Message

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on May 17, 2014 - 2:42pm

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CHICAGO – Except for the clear purpose of cashing in on yet another “Godzilla” remake, everything is happening for no reason. Worst of all, what is ensuing misses and even *mocks* the reason why Ishirô Honda originated 1954’s “Godzilla” in the first place.

Since then, times have dramatically changed and blockbuster Hollywood movies have a new boss to answer to: the box office. Still, we can’t forgive a film that focuses on CGI and big-city destruction while assuming we don’t care about a story and the honesty of where that plot needs to have its roots. The original “Godzilla” is an understandable outpouring from Japan when it was suffering in real life. America isn’t traumatized here.



Rating: **2.5/5.0**

It’s insulting to audiences to think the eye candy fed to the two holes above our nose is more important than the brain that sits atop our head. Our minds have to be equally satisfied. Whether or not you’re a longtime “Godzilla” purist who wants each incarnation to have some of its original authenticity, it’s just too easy to fault Gareth Edwards’ 2014 version for what this film isn’t.

“Godzilla” is a “kaiju” (a “strange creature” in Japanese) that refers to a genre of “tokusatsu” entertainment (Japanese special effects). Ishirô Honda’s intention was to signal a loud warning about the dangers of nuclear bomb testing at the Bikini Islands in 1954. His response was his 1954 “Godzilla” film, which was designed to shed light on the dangers of atomic warfare so they’d be convinced to cease production.

Edwards’ 2014 version of “Godzilla” – from Warner Bros. Pictures and Legendary Pictures (which brought us “The Dark Knight”) – is the 30th Godzilla movie made. Towering over large skyscrapers, Godzilla is unsurprisingly even bigger than we’ve seen him before. A previous American version was made in 1998 by TriStar Pictures starring Matthew Broderick from director Roland Emmerich.



[Read Adam Fendelman's full review of "Godzilla".](#) [20]

But before these two American films, Japan has been all about Godzilla – having released an incredible 28 Godzilla films all produced by one Japanese studio: Toho Studios.

Interestingly, Godzilla is to Japan very much like James Bond is to the United Kingdom. With nearly the same amount of movies and originating around the same time period from a single studio, there have been 25 James Bond films since 1953. Only two of them weren’t made by Eon Productions.

“Godzilla” stars Elizabeth Olsen, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Ken Watanabe, Bryan Cranston, Sally Hawkins, Juliette Binoche, David Strathairn, Patrick Sabongui, Victor Rasuk, Richard T. Jones, Carson Bolde and CJ Adams from director Gareth Edwards and writers Max Borenstein and Dave Callaham. The film is rated “PG-13” for intense sequences of destruction, mayhem and creature violence. It opened on May 16, 2014 and has a run time of 123 minutes.

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A scene from 2014’s “Godzilla”.
Photo credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

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