

## Film Review: ‘Poltergeist’ Remake Has a Soul of Its Own

Submitted by [NickHC](#) [1] on May 22, 2015 - 5:30pm

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CHICAGO – Whether it’s the 1982 original or the remake just released in theaters today to the wrath of numerous fans, the lesson of “Poltergeist” remains the same: Don’t do a half-assed job when relocating skeletons for corporate greed, or suffer the supernatural consequences. Fear not, however, as this is one remake that doesn’t just dress up a nostalgic skeleton for the modern horror crowd, but one that reminisces, and looks forward, with a mostly intelligent, genuine heart.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

Produced by Sam Raimi and crediting its story to the one made Steven Spielberg, this remake of the 1982 Tobe Hooper film involves a new family, the Bowens, as they move into a house with its own bad mojo. There's a weird electric air in their new home, which husband Eric (Sam Rockwell) and wife Amy (Rosemarie DeWitt) have brought young Madison (Kennedi Clements), son Griffin (Kyle Catlett), and older daughter Kendra (Saxon Sharbino) into. At first it’s a zapping stair rail, and later it’s a closet that won’t open, but it has a strange case of static electricity.

Push comes to shove, and in fact the Bowens’ new home is charged by evil spirits, who want nothing less than to terrorize the family and find a way out of their purgatory. The youngest, Madison (Kennedi Clements) is sucked into her bedroom closet, leaving the family to consult paranormal experts (Jane Adams and Jared Harris) who tell them that they’ve got a poltergeist.

Keen with its doses of horror and comedy, “Poltergeist” has a tender grip on its audience, enough to keep them involved with these characters, but nothing too ridiculous where a viewer feels to recoil and laugh at it in defense; the expected jump scares are not overzealous. It’s all about the atmosphere created by Kenan, which intelligently sticks to a blatantly Spielberg-ian sense of youthful wonder as it goes hand-in-hand with nightmarish terror. Even the forces of evil do their part to keep the film alive, acting out in specific bursts, never becoming predictable, and not blowing their cool when it comes the denouement most films stumble at (Re: “Insidious,” “Sinister,” etc.)

Kenan directs this haunted house story well within the appeal of a family’s shared nightmare. As visual entertainment, it’s an accomplished, slick package with floating cameras that make the 3D into a treat, as it welcomes audiences to its first-person creeping. Like the drone that provides a POV in the third act, the top-notch horror cinematography creates its own tension in displaying a fluidity and physical freedom. It keeps us close to the family’s personal space, and the spirits that lurk even closer.

*“Poltergeist” opens wide on May 22. Featuring Sam Rockwell, Rosemarie DeWitt, Kyle Catlett, Kennedi Clements, Saxon Sharbino, Jared Harris, and Jane Adams. Written by David Lindsay-Abaire, based on the story by Steven Spielberg. Directed by Gil Kenan. Rated “PG-13”*



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‘Poltergeist’

Photo credit: MGM



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