

Film Review: Chaos of Power in Hilarious ‘The Death of Stalin’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on March 22, 2018 - 8:43am

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CHICAGO – If you want a film to take your mind off the current American power structure, that at the same time provides some truth to the situation, you won’t do better than “The Death of Stalin.” A monster comedic cast – including Steve Buscemi and Jeffrey Tambor – is assembled for this hilarious farce.



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

The setting is the Soviet Union in 1953. Josef Stalin, the Premier of the State, continues his iron-fisted rule of the region. When he drops dead, the “Central Committee” of the Communist Party must deal with the transition, which includes a funeral, relatives and their own lust for power. The film is done in the King’s English, with Buscemi and Tambor adding some American flavor, and no attempt is made to have Russian accents. It escalates into a swear-word-filled chaos, an obvious satire and symbol of modern authoritarianism. Using this horrible monster’s death (he executed 600,000 of his own people, the so-called enemies of the state) as an allegory for the pettiness of humankind – especially in the quest to “get ahead” – the film is creative and laugh-inducing cinema anarchy.

On the night before the death of Soviet Premier Josef Stalin (Adrian McLoughlin), the usual lists are made to capture and/or kill the “enemies of the state.” These orders are given by the head of the state security, Lavrenti Beria (Simon Russell Beale) and carried out by the NKVD, a secret police under his command. After Stalin suffers a stroke and dies, the Central Committee gathers to figure out what to do.

This included Georgy Malenkov (Jeffrey Tambor), deputy and next-in-line as Premier; Nikita Khrushchev (Steve Buscemi), head of the Soviet Communist Party; Vyacheslav Molotov (Michael Palin), another deputy; and Beria. This committee is charged with setting up the state funeral, plus corralling Stalin’s children Svetlana and Vasily (Andrea Riseborough and Rupert Friend), while fulfilling their own ambitions.

“The Death of Stalin” is currently in release nationwide and in Chicago. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Steve Buscemi, Jeffrey Tambor, Simon Russell Beale, Michael Palin, Jason Isaacs, Andrea Riseborough and Rupert Friend. Screenplay adapted by Armando Iannucci, David Schneider, Ian Martin and Peter Fellows. Directed by Armando Iannucci. Rated “R”



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Assembled Cast of ‘The Death of Stalin’

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