

Film Review: 'Shang-Chi' Proves to be a Master of Multiple Genres

Submitted by [JonHC](#) [1] on September 4, 2021 - 4:41pm

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CHICAGO – There is an undeniable pleasure in watching films that don't take themselves too seriously. Nothing against the Nolans and Snyders of the comic book universe because they provide an essential service to the film community with their more grounded, dramatic approach.



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

Even so, there is something about the Gunns and Waititis that reminds us that these types of films should be fun, even if they have little to no significance in a real-world setting, mostly leaving any social or political commentary buried in subtext if it's even present at all. In most cases, this approach is the safe one, even if it sometimes robs a film of the potential to be more. In this case, *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* toes the line carefully, delivering exactly the energy we expect from a Marvel film and more, even if it leans too much into the humor at the expense of real depth.

In many American-led film productions that center around martial arts, there is a pitfall that often presents itself in what feels like fetishization. It usually appears in the form of focusing on the fighting to the extent that it becomes the only trait explored for certain, mostly Asian characters. Sure, it's only one step above Tom Cruise playing a samurai, or Matt Damon defending the Great Wall, but it's still a fairly common occurrence in today's media. Going into the film with this skepticism in mind, imagine my shock to see that within the first 5 minutes all of my concerns seemed to have been for nothing. From the very beginning, you can note the respect and reverence in the tone, showcasing several references in both storytelling and visual execution. While no specific cultures are pointed out, the Asian influences are abundant and appropriate.

"Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings" in theaters on September 3rd. Featuring Simu Liu, Awkwafina, Michelle Yeoh, Tony Leung, Meng'er Zhang, Fala Chen, Wah Yuen, Florian Munteanu, Benedict Wong, and Ben Kingsley. Directed by Destin Daniel Cretton. Written by Destin Daniel Cretton, Dave Callaham, and Andrew Lanham. Rated "PG-13"



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