

‘Immortals’ is Model of a Modern Major Epic

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 11, 2011 - 7:27pm

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – The sword and sandals epic has been around since the costume department fashioned the first toga. A modern take on this tried-and-true story line is “Immortals,” using the latest computer generated imagery to create the gods of Mount Olympus, the mortals of ancient Greece and their severed heads in 3D.

Despite the laughable and stiff dialogue, “Immortals” succeeds through casting and action, all of which spins a nice eye candy to the seen-it-before parts of the typical breastplate genre. Director Tarsem Singh (“The Cell”) has a keen perspective on what makes this type of film work, and uses the latest tools in the database to render the fantastical time and place. The cast is sincere and gives the surface silliness some gravitas, with the exception of the scenery-chewing Mickey Rourke.

Theseus (Henry Cavill) is a well trained soldier in his small Greek village. A fatherless child, he has been mentored through his life by an old man (John Hurt), who has taught him the right moves for both war and sword-to-sword combat. It turns out the old man is Zeus, the main god of Mount Olympus. He is training Theseus to protect the earth, after the gods had defeated and imprisoned the immortal Titans years before.



Henry Cavill as Theseus, Freida Pinto as Phaedra and Stephen Dorff as Stavos in ‘Immortals’

Photo credit: Relativity Media

Then there is King Hyperion (Mickey Rourke), a power mad ruler who is amassing a giant army to overrun the land. He searches for Phaedra (Frieda Pinto), an oracle who can tell him the location of the Epirus Bow and Arrow, which has the power to release the Titans. Theseus gets involved when Hyperion kills his mother, and hooks up with Phaedra when both are enslaved at a monastery that Hyperion captures. With help from fellow soldier Stavos (Stephen Dorff), the god Zeus (Luke Evans) and Phaedra, Theseus is ready to be a hero.

Squinting through optional 3D glasses, it's easy to see this film the same as the 1950s sword-and-sandal movies of sweaty muscle men and diaphanous damsels. But in this new age, the canvas of computer generation provides more scope, and the damsels are as important as the muscly men. The vision of Tarsem Singh provides scenic energy that becomes as prevalent as the characters, and the use of the maiden oracle provides a twist that keeps it interesting.

If the target audience of 15-year-old boys sneaking into "R" rated movies is to be satisfied, then the chop and blood quotient is right on in "Immortals." Both fast and slow motion decapitations are highlighted, and plenty of stakes though the guts are realized. And Frieda Pinto satisfies the hormonal flow with a 3D nude scene, that even in 2D would be spectacular. She lays with Theseus to obliterate her oracle visions, that must have been some great oracle.

The cast makes the story work, even working around the hammy (and somewhat tiresome) Mickey Rourke scene stealing gymnastics. The Mickster is at his most eccentric must be impossible on a set, as each of his lines are drawn out in multi-syllabic mumblings. Main heroes Cavill and Dorff save the day, taking the action and roles seriously, and aiding the story by following through on the heroics. Veteran actor John Hurt is also game as the Old Man who is actually Zeus. There is something about his presence that is perfect for this mythical story.



Canned Ham: Mickey Rourke as King Hyperion in 'Immortals'
Photo credit: Relativity Media

There is some real fun with shot transitions – a mask morphs into a boat on the water – and special effects. When Poseidon comes down from Mount Olympus, which is costumed and set designed like a gay bar theme party, his raging journey and resultant ocean wave is the definition of epic. And despite the slow set-up in the prologue, the expectations for a movie called "Immortals" is delivered.

There is so much to see and absorb in this film even the humble 3D glasses can't drink all of it in. As the severed head and guts float by, and the arrows pierce the very popcorn boxes, the 15-year-old boy in us all can't help but feel satisfied.

"Immortals" opens everywhere on November 18th. See theater listings for 3D showings. Featuring Henry Cavill, Mickey Rourke, Stephen Dorff, Frieda Pinto, Luke Evans and John Hurt. Screenplay by Charley Parlapanides and Vias Parlapanides. Directed by Tarsem Singh. Rated "R"



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