

## Fascinating Journey to ‘Prometheus’ Makes For Bumpy Ride

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 7, 2012 - 8:39am

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Ridley Scott’s “Prometheus” rides a wave of expectation, anticipation, hype, and an already-building backlash into theaters this weekend and all I have to say is something that most critics hesitate to do – you need to see this for yourself and make up your own mind. Is it the perfect blend of adult, intellectual science fiction and summer action that I was hoping for at the beginning of the season? No, it’s a flawed film. But not only does the film do enough right to warrant a recommendation, even where it goes wrong is in ways that can stimulate thought and provoke interesting conversation. The film’s not even out and I’ve already discussed it more than any other released this year. When’s the last time you could say that about a summer blockbuster? Isn’t that reason alone to see it?

Elizabeth Shaw (Noomi Rapace) and Charlie Holloway (Logan Marshall-Green) believe that a series of cave paintings around the world from vastly different civilizations point to the same solar system and possibly to man’s creator. At its very core, “Prometheus” is a film about going to meet God or whatever version of the divine deity in which you believe. Peter Weyland (Guy Pearce) finances the long journey and a crew is assembled.



Prometheus

Photo credit: Fox Pictures

Flash forward to a few years later as the human team lies in stasis on the interplanetary journey and android David (Michael Fassbender)

passes the time playing basketball and watching Peter O'Toole movies to mimic his mannerisms. He also watches Elizabeth's dreams. The team reaches their destination and their leader, Meredith Vickers (Charlize Theron), is the first to wake from deep sleep. Cold, calculated, and possibly even an android herself, Vickers is there to keep everyone on task.

Just what is that task? Well, here's where the narrative gets muddled and where a critic has a tough time continuing without something that could be considered a spoiler by the overly sensitive. The crew of the Prometheus reaches its destination to find what is clearly a structure created by a sentient being. Is it the being that created man? Is that being still alive? Is something else alive as well? Why haven't they made contact before? A crew investigates, things get crazy, and plot points start flying around like a mid-third season episode of "Lost."

The reference to the ABC show is not unwarranted as that program's creator Damon Lindelof co-wrote "Prometheus" (with Jon Spaihts) and the film definitely has his fingerprints on it as someone more interested in questions than their answers. Themes are raised and then discarded. Characters respond to situations in ways that feel far more necessary for the plot than the way anyone would naturally respond. A character returns seemingly just for a random action sequence with no real meaning. Big picture questions are raised and then seemingly forgotten. Is it all a thematic piece designed to raise discussion points instead of giving answers? More "2001" or "Solaris" than what audiences might expect? Or is it lazy writing? This is the core of the debate about "Prometheus" and it will get heated in coffee shops and bars for weeks and months to come.



Prometheus

*Photo credit: Fox Pictures*

If none of this sounds like "Alien," you're right. The film bears very little resemblance to the work to which it is, sorry if this is a spoiler, a very direct prequel. Whereas that film was about a creature and the people who fought it, it is not coincidental that this film is named after a ship and a Greek God. The people of "Prometheus" get lost in the storytelling and that's the film's biggest flaw. There's no Ripley. The protagonist, Rapace's poorly-drawn (and poorly-performed) Shaw, is the film's fourth or fifth most interesting character. And I think most of the people who are turned off by "Prometheus" will be so because of its lack of humanity. It's a movie David, Ash, and Bishop would love.

The cold, android feel of "Prometheus" is amplified by the fact that Fassbender gives easily the most interesting performance in the film. He's perfect as an android who seemingly wants to help prove that, like an android, man has a creator. What would that say about the chain of humanity and what would it say about androids? Fassbender completely embraces this interesting thematic material and delivers in every way. I imagine even people that hate "Prometheus" won't be able to find fault in what one of our best working actors does in the film. Theron is very good but under-utilized and Elba finally shows a bit of that small screen charisma that he's been tough to translate to the big one.

As flawless as Fassbender's performance is every element of the design of Scott's meticulously crafted film. "Prometheus" looks absolutely amazing. Cinematographer Darius Wolski ("Dark City," "Sweeney Todd") does an award-worthy job of finding the shadows and light on the other end of the universe. His cinematography has a beautiful, majestic tone, the polar opposite of "Alien," but something that works perfectly here. The art direction, the score, the editing – it's all of a consistent vision and elevates the film to one that is arguably worth seeing just for its technical accomplishments (and, of course, Ridley Scott deserves credit for directing these elements to a coherent whole). It's the best looking film so far this season (and arguably this year).



Prometheus

Photo credit: Fox Pictures

There was one press screening of “Prometheus” here in Chicago and I really wish I had the chance to see it again before passing judgment. It is the kind of film that inspires heated debates (I’ve already been in a few) and I think it will play very differently a second time, away from expectation and hype. It’s not a perfect film as too many of the themes with which Lindelof and Spaihts are playing feel half-baked and the overall film is missing that grit, that humanity that would have made it more relatable. However, I think time and repeated viewing may change my opinion of “Prometheus”...for better or worse.

I’ll leave you with a few quotes that sound like they could be pulled from this review:

*“There is very little involvement with the characters themselves...”* – Variety

*“ An overblown B-movie... technically impressive but awfully portentous and as difficult to sit through as a Black Mass sung in Latin.”* – The L.A. Herald Examiner

*“ The roles might have been written by a computer.”* – The New York Times

Every one of those quotes is about “Alien” and was written back in 1979. Whether or not time will be as kind to “Prometheus” is open for debate but it’s a conversation of which you’re going to want to be a part. Drown out the hype, ignore the backlash, and decide for yourself.

*“Prometheus” stars Noomi Rapace, Logan Marshall-Green, Michael Fassbender, Charlize Theron, Idris Elba, and Guy Pearce. It was written by Jon Spaihts and Damon Lindelof and directed by Ridley Scott. It opens on June 8, 2012.*



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