

Miscast Crew Spoils Christopher Nolan's Epic 'Interstellar'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 5, 2014 - 10:17am

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Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Interstellar” is easily director Christopher Nolan’s worst film. It contains much of the ambition and striking visuals that have endeared him to audiences, but for large chunks of the movie his own worst tendencies towards bombast, self-importance, and hippy dippy dialogue threaten to overwhelm his dandy space sequences entirely.

Filmed beautifully in 70mm, “Interstellar” takes its own sweet time getting going. In the seemingly interminable first act stuck on Earth, Matthew McConaughey plays Hollywood’s second most unlikely farmer slash mechanical engineer this year after Mark Wallberg’s turn in Transformers 4. McConaughey plays a former NASA pilot in a kind of futuristic dust bowl, where crops are dying, farms are failing, and the world’s 6 billion people are trying to find a way to sustain life on a planet that doesn’t seem capable anymore.



Matthew McConaughey in 'Interstellar'

Photo credit: Paramount Pictures

He's also a widower raising a teenage son, and a daughter named Murph who shares her father's fascination with space and is convinced a poltergeist is haunting their house. Through a sequence of events that involves reading lines of dust on the floor during a dust storm, He and his daughter stumble upon the coordinates leading them to the secret underground headquarters of NASA – now a top secret government program – led by one of his old professors (Michael Caine).

NASA is now dedicated to exploring other worlds and finding a new home for the human race through a wormhole out near Saturn. In about the time it takes to make a pot of coffee, McConaughey gets drafted to lead the mission, much to the chagrin of his science loving daughter Murph, and is off into space. And when Nolan tugs at the heartstrings with a moment practically lifted from "Shane" it's too self-consciously artsy and unearned to be effective.

Watching "Interstellar," I was reminded of just how essential the right cast is to pulling off Nolan's difficult high wire act. Even in his best films, Nolan's dialogue can get a little loopy. The right actor like Michael Caine can still sell it, but Anne Hathaway and Matthew McConaughey can't. McConaughey's easygoing charms and Nolan's highfalutin technical dialogue don't mix very well. Hathaway in particular is dead weight aboard the mission playing the one of the dopest scientist in Hollywood history. Speaking of which, the spaceships come equipped with robots so deliberately clunky looking they look like rejects from "Lost In Space."

It finally gets better once McConaughey and his team blast off into space, but not before reaching an absolute nadir with Anne Hathaway's monologue about how love transcends space and time, as she tries to convince the crew to travel to a desolate planet an old flame of hers might have landed on. Nolan's strong supporting cast – including Caine, John Lithgow, Wes Bentley, and Matt Damon – is able to bail him out sometimes, but despite her best efforts Jessica Chastain seems out of place as McConaughey's now adult daughter.



Anne Hathaway in 'Interstellar'

Photo credit: Paramount Pictures

That said, Nolan's worst is still better than the best efforts of many directors, and he has not lost his ability to craft some memorable and beautifully constructed images once the mission heads into the final frontier and beyond. His sequences in space rival Kubrik's "2001: A Space Odyssey" in their breathtaking imagery, and there are some very awe-inspiring action set pieces too, although sadly nothing that holds up to dynamite opening act of last year's "Gravity."

And while "Gravity" took just 90 minutes, "Interstellar" runs an epic 169 minutes. Eventually Nolan's scrip, co-written by his brother and frequent collaborator Jonathan Nolan, presents so many problems and becomes such a drag that it brings the whole movie crashing down back to earth.

"Interstellar" opens in select IMAX theaters November 5th, and everywhere on November 7th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Matthew McConaughey, Anne Hathaway, Michael Caine, Matt Damon, Jessica Chastain, Wes Bentley, Mackenzie Foy, David Gyasi, Bill Irwin, Topher Grace, and Casey Affleck. Written by Christopher Nolan, and Jonathan Nolan. Directed by Christopher Nolan. Rated "PG-13"



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