

‘Star Trek Beyond’ is a Blast of Starship Adventure

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 21, 2016 - 10:04pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – In the equation of the Star Trek universe, what works best is the emotional connection to the iconic crew. Co-screenwriter Simon Pegg – also portraying Scotty – knew this, and saved the rebooted series from its bloated second film. A magnificent adventure awaits with ‘Star Trek Beyond.’

The relationships and friendships are intact, even in the midst of a pretty complex mission. The genius of Star Trek are always the themes, and this story it’s about unity, transition, unfathomable evil and forgiveness. When you put such connective tissue through the crew genius of the Starship Enterprise, then a high-level space opera ensues, and it is done here with a passion and energy that the series desperately needed. Chris Pine solidifies his Captain Kirk and makes the character his own, and steers the rest of the seasoned cast, doing their all to make sure that the creation of Gene Roddenberry lives long and prospers, “beyond” the digital age.

The voyage of the Starship Enterprise is in the third year of a five year mission, and the days are starting to wear on the crew. Captain Kirk (Chris Pine) dutifully fills out his captain’s log, but the progressively stagnant journey is affecting his main crew, Helmsman Sulu (John Cho), Ensign Chekov (Anton Yelchin), Chief Engineer Scotty (Simon Pegg), Communications Officer Uhura (Zoe Saldana), Ship’s Doctor McCoy (Karl Urban) and Commander Spock (Zachary Quinto).



Iconic Poster Image from ‘Star Trek Beyond’

Photo credit: Paramount Pictures

Relief comes via a shore leave on Starbase Yorktown. Here it is learned that Kirk has put in for a Vice Admiral position, and Spock is feeling a need to return to the New Vulcan colony, especially after he learns his parallel universe Ambassador Spock (Leonard Nimoy) has died. When the Enterprise turns out to be the only ship that can navigate through a difficult nebula field, it flies anew, but is waylaid by a surprise attack. It is a new evil named Krall (Idris Elba), and his past has implications for the entire Federation of planets.

The genius of the screenplay (co-written with Pegg by Doug Jung) is that the crew is separated in the initial attack, and their coming together is the way the problem will be solved. Kirk and Chekov are on their own, Spock and McCoy (naturally) are together, Scotty discovers a way out – with the help of stranded warrior Jaylah (Sofia Boutella) – and Sulu/Uhura have to deal with the imprisonment of the rest of the Enterprise’s survivors. Another connecting element is that each of these main crew members are the best of the best. They solve their situations with both physical war and logical intellect. Simon Pegg knew that, and brought it to this story.

The standout was that story, and Kirk’s steering of it. Pegg and Jung love the Star Trek universe, and pours that love into the small touches that the rest of the fans really appreciate. The Federation has a whole history, and the reboot of the series allowed that the new franchise to exploit that history, especially in association with an old Starship they find on the planet, ready to explore again. We feel the zeitgeist through these touches, and we feel the emotion of the crew as they navigate through the situation. It’s a lot of fun for everyone.

Chris Pine is my homeboy, and he really brings his Kirk into focus with this film. He owns the role now, just as assured as William Shatner, but with a flair that expresses his ultimate loyalty to the right outcome and the protection of his crew. Zachary Quinto takes a bit of back seat as Spock, but has some great moments with the always welcome Karl Urban as Bones McCoy. Quinto also adds real emotion, as he mourns Nimoy’s Spock, and it feels nicely authentic.



McCoy (Karl Urban) and Spock (Zachary Quinto) in ‘Star Trek Beyond’

Photo credit: Paramount Pictures

The film falls a bit in two categories – the direction (by Justin Lin of the “Fast and Furious” franchise), which uses too many close ups during action sequences, kind of blurring these sequences, plus the first quarter of the film is a bit complex, before settling down. There was a rush to get the crew into the teeth of the story, and that rush caused some confusion. However, once we all got there, it became one of the Star Trek universe’s best movie experiences.

As Simon Pegg knows, it’s all about the crew and our affection towards them. The audience clapped at the simplest repartee between Bones and Spock. They cheered the heroics of Captain Kirk. They marveled at the moral balance of the villain and his motivations. They went, once again, to the final frontier.

“Star Trek Beyond” opens everywhere in regular, 3D and IMAX 3D screenings on July 22nd. See local listings for 3D & IMAX theaters and show times. Featuring Chris Pine, Simon Pegg, John Cho, Zoe Saldana, Anton Yelchin, Zachary Quinto, Karl Urban, Sofia Boutella and Idris Elba. Written by Simon Pegg and Doug Jung. Directed by Justin Lin. Rated “PG-13”



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