

Film Review: 'The Amazing Spider-Man 2' Can't Find Its Swing

Submitted by [SpikeHC](#) [1] on May 3, 2014 - 2:38pm

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CHICAGO – “The Amazing Spider-man 2” continues what has become the J.V. Team of super-hero film franchises. The building blocks are there for success, but the talent on the field isn't capable of pulling it off. Like it's predecessor, this sequel does not aim to entertain and create a lasting impression, instead it aims to stave off boredom for just long enough.

With two films now under his belt, Andrew Garfield has been given ample time to grow into the role. But he continues to wear Peter Parker/Spider-Man like an ill-fitting suit. He seems unsure of how to balance Parker's teenage angst, with the super-hero crime fighter quips which almost uniformly land with a thud.

The script by (Transformers and Star Trek) veterans Roberto Orci and Alex Kurtzman and Jeff Pinker does him no favors. It's a strictly by-the-numbers bit of comic book world building that spends so much time setting up future comic book movies it never really develops a story of its own.

The movie picks up shortly after the last installment (as if any of the audience can actually remember when that was.) This time Spidey is chasing a hijacked armored car and nearly missing his own high school graduation. His web of constant danger, not to mention the glowering mug of Denis Leary (as his girlfriend's dead police commissioner dad) pushes his relationship with Gwen Stacy (Emma Stone) to the breaking point.

But the needs of the plot soon intrude on these young lovers- in the form of electrically charged Villain Electro. Jamie Foxx is horribly miscast as the Oscorp office drone who longs to be noticed and then falls into a vat of electric eels. He becomes a pulsating monster with electricity flowing through his body, and skin the color of a blue raspberry Slurpee.



Max (Jamie Foxx) encounters Spider-Man (Andrew Garfield) in “The Amazing Spider-Man 2”.

Photo credit: Columbia Pictures

For a character infused with electricity- he's surprisingly dull. Amid the orgy of CGI mayhem onscreen, I found myself wondering about what properties he actually possesses. He seems to be able to disappear into an electrical outlet, but helpfully becomes a human form in order to act out the film's fight sequences. He also can mysteriously float and fly on his own, but can be brought to earth with a dash of water.

As if one Villain wasn't enough, the filmmakers feel the need to bring Harry Osborne back into the mix as well. The world certainly didn't need another Green Goblin, but Dane De Haan at least takes a fresh approach to his character. Gone is James Franco's charismatic pretty boy who's coasting on charm. De Haan plays Osborne as a sniveling trust fund rat seething with hatred and jealousy at the father who never had much use for him. Add in a mysterious genetic disease and he's got real things at stake in his battle with Spider-Man.

The bright spot in this whole rebooted franchise continues to be Emma Stone. Where in nearly every scene Garfield seems like a confused student grasping at straws during a multiple choice quiz- Stone seems to know exactly how to play things. She is just the right combination of charm, humor, and plucky go-getter. The film is strongest whenever she is on-screen showing Garfield and the rest of the cast how it should be done. And anyway you look at it she represents a big step up from Kirsten Dunst.

Director Marc Webb stages the big super-hero set-pieces competently but unimaginatively. He gets the job done like a journeyman, but lacks an auteur's touch to create something memorable. The Spider-Man series has now spanned 5 films, and Webb's two swings at the Spidey Suit make Sam Raimi's problematic but still relatively distinctive "Spider-Man 3" look good by comparison.

"The Amazing Spider-Man 2" opened everywhere on May 2, 2014 in 3D and 2D. The film stars Andrew Garfield, Emma Stone, Jamie Foxx, Dane DeHaan, Felicity Jones, Paul Giamatti, Sally Field, Campbell Scott and Stan Lee. The screenplay is by Alex Kurzman, Roberto Orci and Jeff Pinkner. The film is directed by Marc Webb and is rated "PG-13".



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