entertainment

Adaptation of "Watchmen" is just shy of greatness

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When a film adaptation of Alan Moore's groundbreaking graphic novel Watchmen was announced, the fan community exploded with a volatile combination of excitement and skepticism. Watchmen had long been considered impossible to adapt to film and Moore's two previous film adaptations were less than stellar: "V for Vendetta" was decent, though heavily changed, and "League of Extraordinary Gentlemen" was so awful that the film's star, Sean Connery, retired immediately afterward out of frustration. In light of this, "Watchmen" is the best Alan Moore film adaptation ever made; but does that mean it's the classic everyone was hoping it would be?

For the uninitiated, "Watchmen" is a story set in an alternate 1980s where the United States won the Vietnam War, Nixon is in his third term as president, and superheroes roam the streets fighting evil. Most of these superheroes are just average people with costumes and random social disorders that prevent them from realizing just how ridiculous they are being.

Despite their awkward personas at times, these masked vigilantes have had a significant enough impact on society to become a perceived threat and President Nixon signs a bill effectively banning them from doing what they do. Now living as regular people, these former vigilantes appear to be the targets of a secret organization and are being picked off one by one. It's up to the remaining members of the failed super group The Watchmen to put a stop to the bloodshed.

The film version of "Watchmen" is an extremely dense story with multiple subplots and characters to follow: borderline psychotic Rorschach stalks the night looking for the people responsible for the murder of his former associate

The Comedian, retired Daniel Dreiberg, also known as the Nite Owl, is living in the shadow of his former self while pining for Silk Spectre II and Doctor Manhattan (who is practically a god) hurriedly works to prevent a possible nuclear war between the United States and the USSR. The themes here are much more mature than the average comic book movie with serious social commentary and characters that are less than perfect; in some cases the super heroes are downright evil. There is rarely a moment where the film isn't speeding along and that turns out to be its biggest problem. The plot is so dense that the characters get lost in it, which makes identifying with them nearly impossible


despite the great performances. The only one to really get any characterization is Daniel who is a pathetic shell of a man before donning the Nite Owl suit once again and truly coming alive. The rest are very cool characterizations but overall seem pretty hollow.

One thing that will never disappoint is the look of this film. Director Zach Snyder has crafted a world that seems like a comic book while also having the gritty nature of reality. Every shot is gorgeous and every action sequence is intense. This strange, yet familiar world shows an epic reality that is rarely seen in movies anymore with massive themed skyscrapers, temples, and a giant glass clock floating above the Mars surface. The film's greatest triumph is Doctor Manhattan. Billy Crudup's performance was perfectly built into Manhattan's design and, though you know he's CG, it's easy to simply accept him as another character in the film; the greatest achievement that special effects strive for. Other small details such as Rorschach's constantly changing mask also add a lot to the world of Watchmen, a world that you'll rarely question and simply enjoy.

One of the biggest problems of "Watchmen is that it feels

incomplete; you'll leave the theater with a sense that you didn't get the whole story (a surprising shortcoming considering the film runs north of three hours). This is an understandable pitfall of adapting a graphic novel (let alone Alan Moore's intimidating work) but the filmmakers should have taken that into account. It seemed as though they were more concerned with accuracy to the source material than they were about making a self-contained film. Another problem "Watchmen" had is the fact that it came out less than a year after The Dark Knight; another dense, mature look at the superhero genre that outshines "Watchmen" in almost every way. Chris Nolan balanced his plot and characters much better than Snyder does and the whole movie felt more self-contained.

Overall, "Watchmen" is a very good movie that is just shy of greatness. Had this film been release nine years ago it would have been received as a classic of the genre, but the comic book adaptations have come a long way since then. As it stands, this is a super hero film that any fan of the genre should check out as it's nearly a classic if it weren't for all the nagging little flaws.
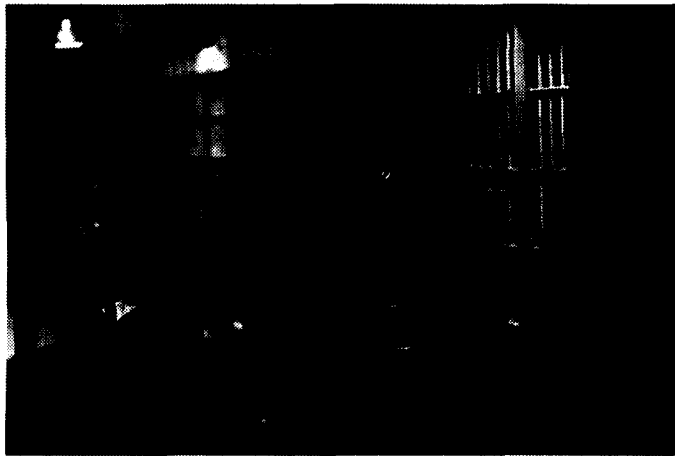
Street Fighter IV revives fighter genre

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As video games began their rise in popularity, video arcades became the sanctuary for those who wanted to experience this cutting edge technology. Many genres of gaming can be found at an arcade but many will agree that the king of these has been the fighting game, and no fighter has ever had such an enormous impact as Street Fighter II. Capcom released the game in 1991 featuring a revolutionary fighting system involving 6 attack buttons and a joystick. Players had 8 characters to choose from, and if a friend (or even a rival) was nearby, a few quarters could buy a chance to battle your opponent in all of the game's pixilated glory. Sadly, the arcades have slowly faded away, though Capcom continued to release Street Fighter

games. Approximately 10 years after the last Street Fighter game, the newest entry in the series was revealed: Street Fighter IV. It was released in arcades in 2008 and arrived on the Playstation 3 and Xbox 360 consoles on February 17. Does this newest entry in the series revive the franchise's glory or is it KOed in the first round?

Story: Fighting games are rarely, if ever, known for their stories. Street Fighter is an exception to this rule. All of the fighters have their own motivations to enter the tournament, whether for glory, closure, revenge, business, or pleasure, and it is interesting to see each fighter through to the end, discovering their destiny written in punches and kicks. Granted, the development of the story is limited, but it is sufficient.
9.0/10

Gameplay: In addition to all 12 characters from Street Fighter II (Ryu, Ken, Blanka, Chun-Li,

Dhalsim, E. Honda, Zangief, Guile, Balrog, Vega, Sagat, and M. Bison) Street Fighter IV includes four brand new characters: Abel, an amnesiac from France who fights using various grapples and throws; Crimson Viper, an undercover CIA agent outfitted with a special battle suit which allows her to use various shock and flame attacks; Rufus, a portly American kung fu devotee who is surprisingly nimble; and El Fuerte, an extremely fast luchador from Mexico. A lot of time and effort has been put into making all characters well balanced; with practice, any player can win with any fighter. In a world of unbalanced fighting games, it is a relief to see such a revamped fighting system. This, and over a half dozen hidden characters from other Street Fighter games, make sure there is plenty of variety.
9.5/10

Visuals: Street Fighters I, II, III,

and the Alpha series were all done in two-dimensional styles. The Street Fighter EX series attempted three-dimensional visuals, but not only did the characters look terrible, the game's graphics became confusing to the actual game-play. Street Fighter IV solves this problem by pairing three-dimensional characters in two-dimensional game-play. The game also boasts a beautiful hand-drawn look. In addition, each fighter has an animated introduction and epilogue video to provide insight to their story, which is a nice touch. Perhaps the most glorious visuals in the game involve the Super and Ultra moves that can be executed, making a character perform an absolutely brutal technique on an enemy that is stunning to behold.
9.25/10

Sound: While there are a few good remixes of the original themes of the fighters the new

stage themes, for the most part, do not carry the same impact as the original games. The menu screen music, "Indestructible", is inexcusably bad. The voices are done quite well in this installment for most of the fighters. Sound effects are adequate.
8.0/10

Multiplayer: This is where Street Fighter IV's forte lies. The fighting genre has been on a steady decline for many years, yet this game reminds us all how fun it is to sit down with a friend and beat the snot out of their fighter. Fights are engaging and genuinely satisfying.
10/10

Overall: Fighters are certainly not for everyone but this entry in the series makes the game accessible and fun to beginners and experts alike. I highly recommend this game.

Final Score: 9.15/10