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Berlinale FILM CAPSULE: Logan (Mangold, 2017): USA

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson.

Writer/Director James Mangoldâ??s *Logan* is hot out of the box! Making its World Premiere last night, February 17th, at the 67th Berlin International Film Festival, *Logan* brings back Hugh Jackman as the Wolverine and has blockbuster written all over it!

Set in 2029, the film opens in low-key lighting as a band of Latino roughians are in the process of stripping tires from Loganâ??s (Wolverine) small limousine. Unfortunately for the desperadoes, the vehicle has chrome plated lug nuts and even more so, the Wolverine is coming to after having tied one on.

This scene sets the tone for the film as the Wolverine winds up taking a beating but still manages to fend off the aggressors. Logan looks haggard and worn. This scenario is carried out repeatedly in several action sequences *Logan* without it getting old.

Patrick Stewart returns as an ailing Professor X with his now mind control registered as a weapon of mass destruction. The albino, Caliban, played again by Stephen Merchant, reprises his mutant tracker role. Newbie Dafne Keen plays young mutant, Laura Kinney/X-23, to great affect. Laura appears as a fugitive pursued by dark forces led by Boyd Holbrook. Sheâ??s a showstopper with plenty of moxie!

Logan is the tenth installment in the *X-men* series of film and the third and final installment of the Wolverine franchise following the successes of *The Wolverine* (2013) and *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* (2009). Both films grossed in excess of $130,000,000 at the box office. *Logan* is sure to match and/or surpass this figure. All three films are big-budget film. While budget numbers for *Logan* are not made readily available, the film boasted it created 15,000 jobs in its production.

In addition to the hand-to-hand combat fighting scenes with the Wolverineâ??s wielding his bristling, shimmering trademark claws, the narrative in *Logan* has a slightly familiar feel as the mutants are portrayed as very open and loving towards one another. And, again, they are portrayed primarily social outcasts pursued by predators for diabolical purposes. Thereâ??s also a new twist added to the story.

Nevertheless, Mangold manages to keep it fresh. Just when situations seem to be hopeless or on the verge of becoming mundane, Mangold injects a new catalyst propelling the film forward in dramatic fashion. Costumer Daniel Orlandi does excellent work keeping characters believable while imbuing them with just enough complementary edginess to enhance the narrative. Director of Photography of John Mathieson teams up with Editors Michael McCusker and Dirk Westervelt to unveil some wickedly fun action sequences.

Unfortunately, Jackman has said this is his final go with the Wolverine character. Quite frankly, itâ??s a shame. But, to have had one of the worldâ??s great, great actors â?? onstage or on the big screen â?? portray a comic book action/adventure character for the films spanning just over a decade has been an unexpected delight.

While Jackman tends to carry most scenes, young Dafne Keen gave the audience quite a thrill with her own acting chops and sharp-witted quips. Hats off to screenwriters Mangold, Michael Green and Scott Frank for keeping any semblance of staleness at bay. Newly added character, Donald Pierce, played by *Narcos* star Boyd Holbrook, brings an energetic, counterbalancing dynamic to offset the mind-boggling powers of the mutants consistent with the previous Wolverine films.

Granted, *Logan* has the look and feel of the previous two *Wolverine* films. For fans of the previous *Wolverine* prequels, *Logan* is a must-see. For anyone not seeing the prequels, *Logan* stands on itâ??s own merits and is sure to make a believer out of the uninitiated . Highly recommended!

The film is scheduled to open in US theaters this Friday, March 3rd, 2017.

Logan was produced by Marvel Entertainment, TSG Entertainment and Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation and employed over 15,000 personnel in its production.

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