

A Year of Movies - 2009

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2009 was a decent year for movies. I watched about 20 percent of every movie released this year, and the year isn't quite over, so I may slip Sherlock in before midnight tonight. [Note: I did not slip it in] With each, I'll attach a little mini-review and a 1 to 10 rating based on what I remember. Of course, it's not fair to really compare two movies of different genre's on the same numeric scale, when a comedy can get away with loose camera work, where the best drama's can't (and that's just one example of the differences), but it's standard usage, so we'll avoid recreating a new system for judging movies and stick to convention.

By order of release date:

Paul Blart: Mall Cop

4 of 10

Silly, but a little too silly. Lotsa physical comedy, if you're into that.

Underworld: Rise of the Lycans

4 of 10

Cheesy, non-sensical stylized werewolf-on-vampire violence. Might be fun if you don't want to think too much.

Taken

5 of 10

I had high expectations from the commercial ("I can tell you I don't have money. But what I do have are a very particular set of skills; skills I have acquired over a very long career. Skills that make me a nightmare for people like you.") If the movie had lived up to the quote, it would have been a 10. Sadly, the action was just ok and never really felt like Liam was in danger. And the ending was SO goey and contrived. Weak sauce.

Coraline

7 of 10

This started slow, so I wasn't expecting much, but it got more interesting and demented later in a way that more than made up for it. Good fun, a little scary for younger kids.

Fanboys

4 of 10 (7 of 10 for Star Wars Geeks)

I love Ernie Cline (in an unhealthy way), who wrote the script for this. I just wish it was a little more consumable by non-geeks. Great cameos, though.

The International

3 of 10

Weak, one-man-against-the-world, disillusioned former interpol (I think?) guy stumbles upon a worldwide conspiracy to control everything. Yawn.

Gomorrah

8 of 10

Gritty and gruesome tale of life in warring Italian slums. No glorification, no hyperbole. A picture of gangsters as it most likely is versus what 13-year-olds imagine them to be.

Watchmen

9 of 10

I loved almost everything about this movie, and I've since watched it several times since I saw it in the theater, my admiration is even stronger.

I Love You, Man

6 of 10

Pretty standard fare from the Apatow/Rudd camps. Some funny stuff, syrupy ending. Role Models was better.

Monsters vs. Aliens

5 of 10

Right down the middle. Everything you'd expect from this movie you could assume from seeing the trailer. I was disappointed to hear they cut out the subplot of the giant rapist that was plaguing the main character throughout the movie. If they had left that in, it would definitely add 3 more stars.

Adventureland

4 of 10

The commercial set this up to be a comedy, but I'd really call it a coming of age drama, with some funny scenes. Bill Hader & Kristen Wiig aren't in it nearly enough compared to the time they get in the commercial.

Fast & Furious

4 of 10

This was pretty weak, even for an installment in a pretty weak series. The re-introduction of the original two main characters (after their movie careers have begun to flounder, by my read) was so convoluted and, well, just weird. The best part of the movie was the almost immediate death of Michelle Rodriguez.

Observe and Report

5 of 10

WOW, was this dark. It was funny, and much longer than I'd have predicted. And dark. Not the cup of happy you might think from the commercial.

Battle for Terra

6 of 10

This is an animated version of Avatar without the Native Americans. Weirdly similar. It's a better equation than the Fern Gully one that's constantly being made.

X-Men Origins: Wolverine

7 of 10

Everything you expect from a movie about Wolverine. Killing Deadpool was a mistake, but I'm a comic book geek so take that as you will.

Star Trek

8 of 10

I'm curious to see how much further they take the characters in their new directions in upcoming installments (which I predict will be financially unavoidable). Good flick.

Angels & Demons

7 of 10

Not as compelling a plot as the first, but still had enough to keep me interested, though I did see through to the ending pretty easily.

Terminator Salvation

5 of 10

Well, it was a pretty movie. I didn't see it as much of an addition to the series. If you like big booms, this is for you.

Up

6 of 10

Critically acclaimed, but not as great as some of the earlier Pixar works (Incredibles, Toy Story, Monsters Inc.). I liked the unusual story and characters, but that alone does not a great movie make. Worth a watch.

The Hangover

9 of 10

I came into this movie with high expectations, and, suprisingly, wasn't disappointed. A steady amount of funny and surprise. I'm dreading part 2 (being filmed now - no, really), but I doubt will be able to recapture the magic of the first, but who knows. Maybe I'll be wrong again.

Moon

8 of 10

Stark and slow paced, it introduces the mystery pretty early and it stays pretty interesting through-out. Considering it stars Sam Rockwell and the voice of Kevin Spacey, a nicely executed feat. Oh, and my props to soundless space. Yay science!

Brüno

6 of 10

ARGGHHH! Some things can't be unseen. If you liked Borat, you'll probably like this.

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince

7 of 10

If you were going to see it, you'd have seen it. It doesn't stand on its own, so we'll have to see how the last two (well, ONE) chapters are.

(500) Days of Summer

8 of 10

I loved this movie from the opening moment of text upon a black screen. I would have preferred to see Zoey get violently murdered, but I think that might have been received poorly.

Funny People

5 of 10 (Well, 7 of 10 & 3 of 10)

This was two different movies. The first one was decent, lots of behind the scenes comedy stuff. The second, not so much.

G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra

8 of 10

I wasn't expecting much from this movie, but it surprised me, developing characters well and putting a pretty good story together.

Julie & Julia

7 of 10

Julia's story was more interesting than Julie's story, but it was ok.

District 9

5 of 10

My christ did this movie have potential. Lots of plot holes and unexplainable coincidences left a bad taste in my mouth, though I get almost universally shouted down whenever I mention that in public, so don't take my word for it.

The Goods: Live Hard, Sell Hard

3 of 10

This tries WAY too hard. I love most of the people who are in this movie, I just don't like them in this movie.

Inglourious Basterds

8 of 10

This is like a two and half hour lesson on how to setup tension in 20 minute chunks. Beautiful as it is violent, it helps further cement Tarantino as a great director.

Big Fan

7 of 10

My high opinion of this film is probably colored by my love of Patton. Not as interesting a character study as the Wrestler, which should have won Best Picture for 08, but still interesting.

Extract

5 of 10

It has some funny moments. Lots of awkwardly paced spots.

9

6 of 10

Atmospheric, beautifully rendered, and directed, I really felt the ending was VERY lacking, and with any thought given to the fate of these automotons after the credits roll unavoidable ends in despair, though the director/writer thought this was a joyful and to be celebrated. He's wrong.

Capitalism: A Love Story

7 of 10

Good. It's a Michael Moore movie. Full of sarcasm and stunts, with a few good pieces and points. Particularly poignant in our current state of global financial collapse.

Zombieland

9 fo 10

The exceeded my expectations on almost every front. I recommend anyone who's a fan of zombie flicks see it, and invite those that aren't to see it as well, as there is very little extreme violence or gore (compared to other Zombie flicks).

Good Hair

8 to 10

For me, a caucasian male, this was highly educational. I've read criticisms about the lack of a conclusion, and others which accuse Chris Rock of the sin of ommision. I didn't get that, though I did walk away with a definite opinion about natural hair styles for black women (and some men).

Collision

6 of 10

This is a movie which covers a speaking tour of Christopher Hitchens and Douglas Wilson, during which they debate the proposition: Is Christianity Good For The World?, but the debate/tour is barely covered, and it's more a profile of Chris and Doug. Douglas Wilson was a wonderful adversary for Chris as he knew his views and could articulate them very well.

Law Abiding Citizen

6 of 10

This would have been much better if the bad (arguably, good) guy won.

The Blind Side

6 of 10

Very little character development, obvious story (yeah, I know it's a true story, so what? Where do you think clichés

come from?) Still, it's good hearted and cute (SJ was a little TOO cute).

Planet 51

5 of 10

Some cute references to other films & genres, but otherwise pretty uninspired.

The Road

9 of 10

Do not see this film if you have any instances of suicidal tendencies in your past or family history. Very dark, but an almost perfect reflection of the lovely Cormac McCarthy book. Of course, the book was more an exercise in atmosphere and style than a story, and the movie translates this as well as it can.

Invictus

8 of 10

Well told story of Mandela's South African presidency and how he depended on the national Rugby team to help him bring the country together post-apartheid.

Avatar

9 of 10

See it. See it in 3D. Simple story - Heartless hero learns to care about the civilization he previously helped undermine and destroy - but that doesn't take away from the majesty and beauty in which that story is told.

And we go onward into 2010!