

007 series 'never dies'

By Kristy Kyriazoglou
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Rider News
Movie Review

Agent 007 returns with *Die Another Day*, his 20th Bond film since the 1962 original, *Dr. No*.

Bond's witty charm and flair for disregarding rules and regulations have given the classic hero-versus-villain story the necessary ingredients for surviving 40 years and five actor changes. Indeed, audiences can't seem to get enough of this suave British secret agent with a license to kill, who always gets the bad guy and, of course, the girl.

Die Another Day is no exception to the classic formula, with its exciting plot twists, sexy "Bond girls" and an evil villain with a mind for world domination.

The film pays tribute to previous Bond adventures by quoting memorable moments and has a more traditional feel, as opposed to some of the more recent installments.

This is not to suggest that the movie does not have its fair share of special effects that are, much to the dismay of traditional Bond fans, at times a bit overdone. However, many of the action sequences are visually breathtaking thanks to director Lee Tamahori (*Along Came A Spider*) who brings a much welcomed artistic flair to the film.

The charming Pierce Brosnan once again stars as James Bond for the fourth time in a row. However, although he has

been signed for a fifth outing, his involvement thereafter is currently unknown.

Madonna can be seen making a cameo appearance in the film with a bit part as a fencing instructor. She also sings the theme song for the movie, which recently came under controversy with the Jewish community for her use of sacred Hebrew prayers and garments.

Good judgment in terms of casting is particularly evident in the case of Academy Award-winner Halle Berry, who has a perfect combination of sex appeal, attitude and intelligence to make a good "Bond girl." This is a huge improvement from previous "Bond girl," Denise Richards, whose flighty rendition of a nuclear physicist in *The World Is Not Enough* was downright distracting and unintentionally hysterical.

Unlike Richards' character, Dr. Christmas Jones, Berry's Jinx definitely knows how to hold her own, an important Bond girl characteristic.

Die Another Day is complete with fascinating gadgets. Including a lethal English Aston Martin with the power of invisibility to replace the German-made BMWs Bond was equipped with in the last three films.

The film is definitely an enjoyable two hours and 15 minutes in the theater, and a must see for all die-hard Bond fans who will enjoy spotting the tributes and references to previous films.

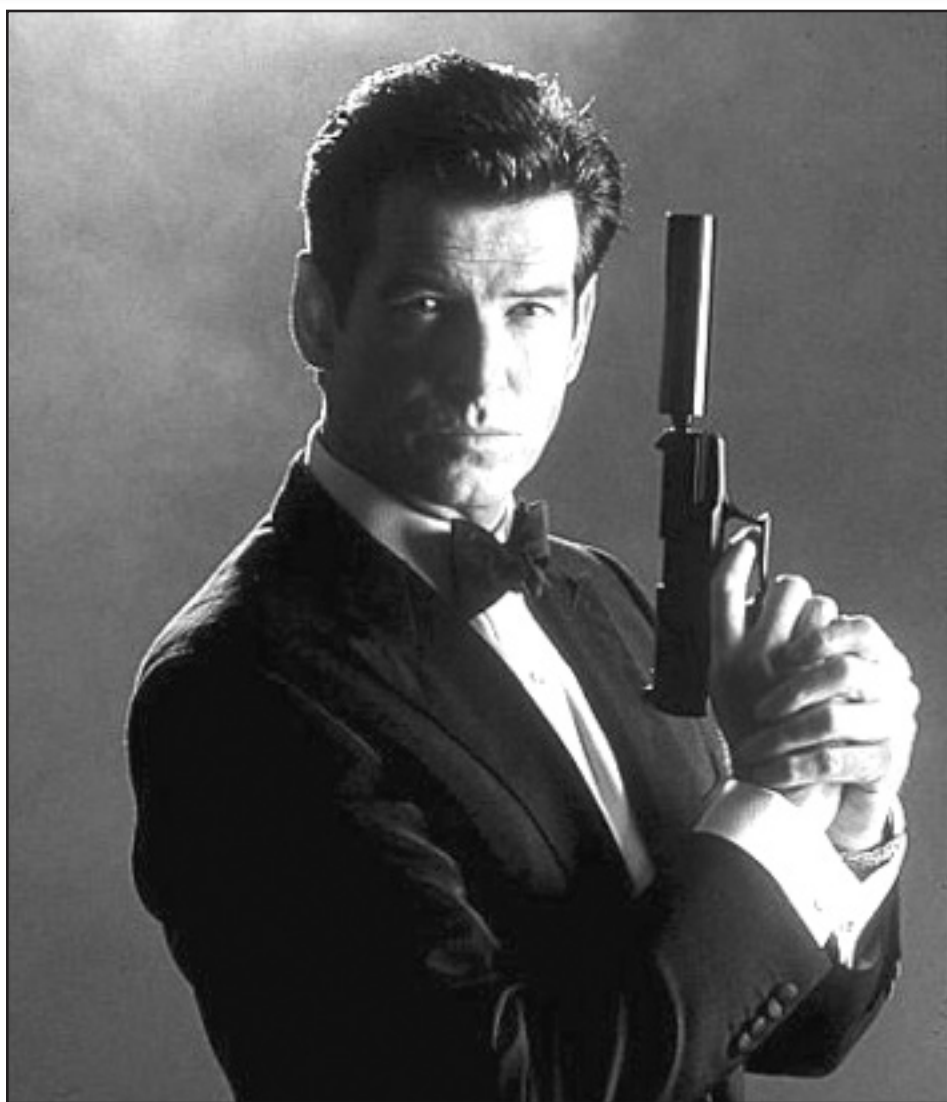


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Pierce Brosnan reprises his role as James Bond in *Die Another Day*. In the movie, Bond embarks on an adventurous journey around the world to seek his revenge and regain his status as an MI6 agent.

Student Center feature presentation: 'Signs'

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After a slow-paced *Unbreakable*, M. Night Shyamalan returns to the big screen with *Signs*, a clever suspense/horror movie about faith, and losing it, that also brings back the fear from horror movies of old.

Signs is the story of Father Graham Hess (Mel Gibson) who wakes up one morning to find large crop circles in his cornfield. Believing local troublemakers are the culprits, Hess informs Officer Paski (Cherry Jones), who in turn describes weird events happening around their hometown in

Bucks County, Pa.

Hess, along with his two children, Morgan and Bo (played by Rory Culkin and Abigail Breslin, respectively) and brother Merrill (Joaquin Phoenix of *Gladiator*), begin to see weird events, mainly crop circles, appearing everywhere around the globe. While his family believes something is happening with these events, Hess remains skeptical, mostly due to his lost faith. After losing his wife in a car accident, Hess left the church, and his faith, behind.

As the movie progresses, Hess begins to believe something truly odd and frightening

is happening, and his faith is put to the ultimate test.

The acting in *Signs* is top notch. Gibson plays the family patriarch as he deals with the problems of the death of a loved one, raising the family, and trying to protect them, even though at first he does not share their belief in what is going on, with the ease of an experienced actor. Phoenix plays the younger brother of Hess and gives a great performance. The children are excellent and act as if they have been doing so for years. It would be hard to imagine anyone else playing these roles.

M. Night Shyamalan does a wonderful job directing for his third major movie. Although he still has a slow moving pace for the movie comparable with *The Sixth Sense*, it is not as slow as *Unbreakable* and manages to keep the audience spellbound throughout the entire show, which runs for one hour and 45 minutes, with rarely a dull moment. The directing keeps the audience involved in the story, on the edge of their seats, and at times, jumping out of them.

An eerie score composed by James Newton Howard (*The Fugitive*) helps the movie. The best and most effective tool the film uses to scare the audience is its use of a person's imagination. Like the early horror films of the 1930s and 40s, such as

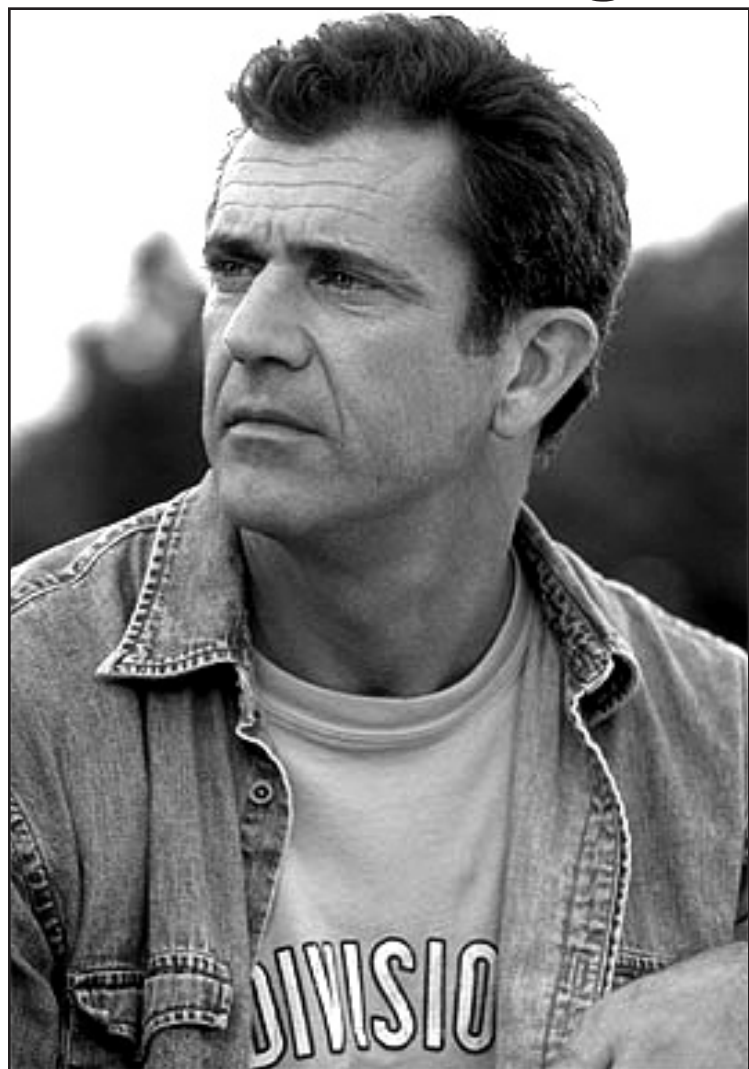


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Mel Gibson plays Father Graham Hess, father of the terrified family in *Signs*. In the movie, Graham (Gibson) portrays a caring father who is struggling with a frightening reality as he is faced with protecting his family from a possible alien attack.

Dracula and *Frankenstein*, *Signs* does not give the audience more than a mere shadow or a sound at times to scare people. This tactic requires a person's imagination to help fill in what is not seen, but in a good way.

Signs is truly one of the best films of the year. A solid story and a return to the imagination-provoking styles of yesteryear, makes it one of the scariest movies in recent memory.



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Hess' children (Rory Culkin and Abigail Breslin) watch television with their uncle (Joaquin Phoenix) in a frightened daze while waiting for aliens to arrive at their house.