

Star Trek

Boldly Going...and Beyond

By Mark Edgemon

How do you make something old, new again? First, you create a plot for an alternate universe reality, then you change the nature of the space time continuum so your present self can be influenced by your future more experienced self and finally, infuse the cast with vibrant, youthful versions of the characters from the iconic original series and you have a formula for warping into new adventures throughout the next 7 to 8 star trek movie installments, while reliving the past all over again in a new and exciting way.

This has got to be the greatest origins/prequel movie since the beginning of filmmaking. The task set before the Star Trek franchise was as vast as space itself; recapture the Star Trek fan base, while opening up the characters and storyline to a whole new generation. They did it!

The writers Roberto Orci and Alan Kurtzman (who teamed up previously with the television series, "Xena: Warrior Princess) had a balancing act I would not wish upon any writer, staying true to the continuity of the Star Trek lore established through 5 television series, 10 feature films, dozens of novels and comic books and oh yes, 1 short lived, animated cartoon series produced in the 1970's. Add to that; making the story interesting and relevant to today's culture with plenty of action, drama and comedy, painting a picture of what it was like during the time of the original series, while refreshing the technology from the more outdated version was an epic undertaking. After all, even a basic cell phone today does more than an original Star Trek communicator.

Director J. J. Abrams wipes the slate clean by ripping the fabric of time through the alternate universe premise and yet begins a process of tying the character backgrounds in with earlier references to previous Star Trek history and merging them with new character experiences.

In this reality, Ambassador Spock, now in the remaining years of his life, is on a mission to save Romulus from a volatile Super Nova by depositing a substance known as "red matter" (which is processed from a rare mineral called Decalithium) into the gaseous, soon exploding star in order to create a black hole, thereby imploding the Super Nova and saving the planet Romulus from destruction.

But something went terribly wrong and the star exploded before Ambassador Spock could complete his mission and ultimately Romulus is destroyed along with the planet's population. A new villain emerges, Captain Nero of a Romulan mining vessel whose ship, along with ambassador Spock's ship is caught in the black hole's event horizon and sent 154 years into the past with the Romulan captain arriving first, followed by Spock's ship 25 years later. Seconds can translate into years when dealing with time travel. Captain Nero intends to cause the same fate to the planet Vulcan as happened to Romulus, so he captures Spock and maroons him on the

planet Delta Vega for the purpose of making him witness the same destruction to his home planet of Vulcan.

As Captain Nero enters the past, a lightning storm causes the Federation ship; the U. S. S. Kelvin led by Captain George Kirk to investigate and is crippled by Captain Nero's more advanced weaponry. As his ship is being destroyed, George saves the lives of the 800 members of his crew and his wife, who is in the process of having a son in the midst of all the chaos. As seconds tick away before the destruction of the Kelvin, George decides with his wife on audio communication who is on an escaping shuttle, to name his son's first name after her father and his middle name after his father, James Tiberius Kirk. Wow, what an entrance!

As a young man, reckless and yet highly gifted, Jim Kirk is mentored by a friend of his father, Captain Christopher Pike and is influenced to enter Star Fleet and focus his energy into a worthwhile purpose. The movie sets the stage for each of the main characters relationships as the young Kirk discovers his destiny through experience and unparalleled bravery.

Chris Pine makes a believable James T. Kirk without capturing the mannerisms or speech patterns of William Shatner's Kirk and yet personifies the three main attributes of the character; instinct, decisiveness and a over abundance of self confidence.

Zachary Quinto is a carbon copy of the original Mr. Spock, except much younger and still developing the acceptance of his duality of perspective, being half human and half Vulcan. The relationship between Kirk and Spock are hostile at first, but develops as they are forced to work together to save Earth and the crew of the Enterprise.

Karl Urban also previously worked on "Xena" as the characters Caesar and Cupid, brought Leonard McCoy to life, with even his appearance mirroring the late doctor's image. Dr. McCoy has more comic undertones in this send up which is well played by Urban. Karl made you forget you were watching him instead of the original actor in younger form.

Zoe Saldana was an even more exotic Lt. Uhura if that is possible than the original Nichelle Nichols. Her acting was believable and may I say...she is HOT! In the alternate universe, she has a love affair with Mr. Spock, which fathoms the mind. We always thought there was an underlying interest in Captain Kirk in the original series, but she spurns him time and again in this version of events.

John Cho as Sulu, Simon Pegg as Scotty and Anton Yelchin as Chekov were all believable and yet they added new dimensions to each of their characters.

After the last remaining credit faded from the screen, the theatre janitor approached me and wanted to know what I thought of the movie. I told him it was incredible. He said, "I have never seen the other Star Trek movies, but I loved the movie and have seen it 3 times. These are now my characters. You can take it from me, this is the best movie of the summer!"