

MORGENSTERN ON FILM



REVIEW | By Joe Morgenstern

New 'Star Trek': A Splendid Enterprise

Franchise restarts at warp speed; soccer sibling saga 'Rudo y Cursi' is a comic kick

DVD FOCUS

ALL TOO OFTEN the trailer is better than the movie, but not, it turns out, in the case of "Star Trek." If you want to know why this huge production will be a huge success—and why it deserves to be—you can find the answer in the terrific trailer that's been showing for many months. It's in the first sequence, when a classic red Corvette hurtles down a dirt road, followed by a robocop in a 23rd-century hover-car. The Corvette goes over a cliff, but not before the preteen driver bails out, claws his way back up to level ground and, responding to the cop's demand for an ID, says, "My name is James Tiberius Kirk."

"Star Trek" goes back to the legend's roots with a boldness that brings a fatigued franchise back to life. It feels exactly right that Captain Kirk should have been a rebellious Iowa farm boy with a passion for antique cars, a gnawing sense of purpose and a penchant, as the new movie soon reveals, for barroom brawls. ("The only genius-level repeat offender in the Middle West," someone calls him.) It also feels right that he's played as a young man by an appealing actor, Chris Pine, who bears a more-than-passing facial resemblance to Montgomery Clift.

There is going back, and there is going back. Last week "X-Men" went back to the roots of Wolverine's distress and, finding nothing new, became a crashing, clanking bore. (Though don't tell that to the millions of fans who went to see it.)

"Star Trek," which was elegantly directed by J.J. Abrams, goes back with the express purpose of providing delight, and despite inevitable lapses it delivers the goods, starting with interstellar action at supernova intensity and a splendid Romulan villain, Captain Nero, who's played by Eric Bana.

Each one of the now-iconic members of the USS Enterprise's crew gets rising-star treatment. That includes, of course, a young Scotty, played with irresistible verve by Simon Pegg; an extremely young Ensign Chekov (Anton Yeltsin) and an extremely alluring Uhura (Zoe Saldana), along with Karl Urban as "Bones" McCoy (artfully prefiguring the late DeForest Kelley), John Cho as Sulu and Bruce Greenwood in the smallish but significant role of Pike, the Enterprise's first captain. Yet the main source of delight is the evolution of First Officer Spock, and the tangled roots of his fraught relationship with Jim Kirk.

The young Spock is played by Zachary Quinto, who makes the most of the adroit writing. Far from remaining confined by the steely Vulcan logic that came to dominate Spock's



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Joe Morgenstern says the 'Star Trek' reboot is a splendid enterprise **W3**



MUSIC
A new way to buy Beethoven (and the other classic greats) online **W8**



THE HOME FRONT
A former bad boy of fashion finds a new outlook—and a townhouse **W10**

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personality, the script, by Roberto Orci and Alex Kurtzman, revels in Spock's all-too-human emotions—the grief he harbors for the human mother he lost (she's played by Winona Ryder, while Ben Cross plays his Vulcan father), the anger that fuels his sometimes violent rivalry with Kirk, the passion he feels for Uhura (who says ever so sexily, as he's taking his leave of her, "I'll be monitoring your frequency.")

That evolution doesn't stop at Spock's youth. In the best of the production's bold strokes, Leonard Nimoy closes the circle by giving a lovely, layered performance in the role he said he'd never play again. Thanks to the intricate manipulation of time (which I found barely fathomable) the elder Spock, dubbed Spock Prime, does not merely come on board, but serves the movie as its heart and soul.

In a marketing move that's shrewd and amusing in equal parts, today's opening of "Star Trek" will be followed by next Tuesday's DVD rerelease of "Galaxy Quest," an inspired "Star Trek" parody. The plot of the

1999 feature film turns on a cosmic joke. A desperate band of Thermians, the last survivors of a distant planet, come to Earth seeking help from the washed-up actors of a worn-out TV series called "Galaxy Quest." They've been watching the series from its inception, and have mistaken the tacky episodes for historical texts. From the perspective of pop culture, though, it's not a mistake at all. For generations of Earthlings, and not just the Trekkies among us, all those endless iterations of "Star Trek"—tacky or taut, stylish or silly—have become personal history. That's why it's so stirring to see old Spock on the same big screen as the ardent kids who grew up to be his peers. We've traveled light-years in their company.

'Rudo y Cursi'

"Rudo y Cursi," a fable of two poor brothers who become soccer sensations, reunites three alumni of the now-classic Mexican movie "Y Tu Mamá También"—the co-stars Gael García Bernal and Diego Luna, and the writer, Carlos Cuarón, who makes his directorial debut, working from