



Trekkies applaud 'Star Trek' cast in screen version

To the everlasting joy of millions of Trekkies, "Star Trek - The Motion Picture" (G) has finally lifted off. Loyal fans of the three-season television series, as well as those who became hooked on the reruns, have been waiting a decade for this event.

Gene Roddenberry, the producer, and Robert Wise, the director, somehow managed to reassemble the original cast, consequently, watching the movie unfold is like meeting old friends after a long absence.

Enthusiastic audiences have demonstrated their appreciation for the familiar faces with bursts of applause at the appearance of each of the old regulars: William Shatner as Admiral Kirk (promoted from captain), Leonard Nimoy as Spock, DeForest Kelley as Doc McCoy, James Doohan as Scotty (still insisting from the engine room that he's giving it all the power he can), George Takei as Sulu, Nichelle Nichols as Uhura, Walter Koenig as Chekhov and Majel Barrett as Dr. Chapel (formerly Nurse Chapel).

To this core group, two new, complementary personages have been added - Stephen Collins as Commander Decker and Persis Khambatta as Ilia, a striking, bald Delta navigator.

A SUBPLOT focuses on friction between Kirk who "hasn't logged a single star mile in two years," and Decker who has been commanding the Enterprise and now must step aside for Kirk to lead a vital mission.

Otherwise, the characterizations are much the same. Spock is imperturbable, McCoy emotional and Kirk confident. Humor percolates through their verbal skirmishes and surfaces again in an unusual cosmic put-down, when the Enterprise's crew is referred to as "carbon infestations," like a fungus defiling an immaculate ship.

The Enterprise itself is both old and new. The spaceship has been refitted, made faster, more complex and, of course, more visually exciting than ever before. Its new engines mean greater warp power for its crucial mission.

An unknown and powerful force, destroying everything in its path, is headed toward earth. The Enterprise is sent to investigate the threat and stop it.

Th story is slim - a one-hour television show expanded to two - but who cares when there is so much to see? The scale, the imagery, the special effects are spectacular - dazzling geyzers of light, bursts of color and awesome settings all worked out by technical wizards Douglas Trumbull and John Dykstra.

THE ALIEN FORCE, an ominous cloudlike formation, utilizes some type of plasma energy never encountered before. Even Spock is puzzled about its nature.

The problem is not too unlike those encountered in the television series. Is there a mind directing the force? How can it be reached when it doesn't acknowledge any communications? And even if it can be reached, how can it be diverted from its deadly course by a relatively weak spaceship?

"Star Trek," the TV series, often had unusual and thoughtful endings. "Star Trek - The Motion Picture" does no less. The conclusion is a masterful twist, a witty and provocative comment on man's inventiveness.



Just for fun

New movie comedies include "Scavenger Hunt," (above), with Ruth Gordon fusing over Willie Aames in this scene. The Melvin Simon Production released by 20th Century Fox also stars Richard Benjamin, James Coco, Seattian Crothers, Cloris Leachman, Cleavon Little, Roddy McDowall, Robert Morley, Richard Mulligan and Tony Randall. (Below) more laughs are coming with "Going in Style," a Warner Bros. release. Art Carney (left) and George Burns live it up at a Las Vegas casino, trying to "break the bank" with money they just got by robbing a bank, in New York. "Going in Style" also stars Lee Strasberg.



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