

'Star Trek Beyond' – out of this world

By **Howie Nave**

The filmmakers had to know there'd be a lot riding on the latest "Star Trek" reboot because of director J.J. Abrams setting the bar so extremely high with his first two installments (turning over the directing helm to Justin Lin).

With the death of the original Mr. Spock (Leonard Nimoy) diehard Trekkies and sci-fi fans in general were probably going to be very critical on how this film would address the loss seeing that Nimoy was in the first two outings. However, what nobody expected was the untimely passing of Anton Yelchin (who played Russian navigator Chekov) who died at 27, barely two months before the movie was to open, making this his last in the reboot franchise, which is horribly sad. There's talk already that in the next sequel the filmmakers are already writing in how his character will be killed off.

That said "Star Trek Beyond" offers up some pretty amazing special effects. Even though there were some poignant moments of sentimentality to offset the wild ride in space, I wish just for once the storyline wasn't centered so much around humans in conflict with one another but more about species from other worlds having issues with one another and maybe include our species as part of the problem but not the main story.

The title may say "Beyond" but it's more like a "Throwback Thursday" from a Federation that apparently has screwed things up once again. That aside, I really enjoyed that the characters of Captain Kirk (Chris Pine) and Spock (Zachary Quinto) have a lot more depth to them. And yes, the relationship between Spock and Uhura (Zoe Saldana) is the most

human that “Star Trek” fans (hate to always say “Trekkies”) will be surprised given his Vulcan species. Spock is actually more human than he is Vulcan at times.



Oh, and speaking of all things sentimental, pay particular attention when the crew of the Starship Enterprise takes a break from outer space docking at the spaceport known as Yorktown where we see what I believe is an inside nod to the original Sulu, George Takei, where the rebooted Sulu (John Cho) shares a hug with his husband and their daughter. Nice touch.

Fortunately, when the action kicks in (and man does it ever) it literally goes over the top thanks to director Justin Lin who directed four of those “Fast & Furious” movies. What he did with wheels on the ground he does even better in outer space. As far as evil alien characters go, the one known as Krall (Idris Elba) is a formidable foe who hates humans and the Federation so he wreaks havoc on the Enterprise, stranding the crew on the alien planet of Altamid. Again, proving I’m probably the biggest sci-fi geek out there, the makeup of Krall looks a lot like Louis Gossett Jr.’s Jeriba Shigan from the 1985 movie “Enemy Mine.” Maybe it’s a nostalgic nod to that sci-fi flick too since “Star Trek Beyond” tends to go retro throughout.

Oh, one more observation: The crew’s chemistry between one another is really phenomenal and seeing the interaction between Dr. Bones McCoy (Karl Urban) and Spock taking jabs at one another is hilarious. And Scotty (Simon Pegg who also co-wrote the script) is a delight to see as he matches wit with a friendly female alien Jaylah (Sofia Boutella) who Scotty calls “lassie.” Would we expect anything less?

"Star Trek Beyond" clocks in at two hours and is rated PG-13 for sequences of sci-fi action and violence.

Howie Nave is host/emcee/manager of The Improv at Harveys. You can hear him Monday-Friday 6 to 10am on KRLT FM-93.9.