

Terminator 2: Judgment Day ★★ ★½

Year of Release: 1991

Review by Randy Parker

Country: USA

Verdict: See It

1984's *The Terminator* is generally regarded as one of the most influential films of the '80s, which gives its sequel, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, gigantic shoes to fill. *T2* simply could have been a re-hash of the first film, but, happily, writer-director James Cameron has come up with an inventive story line which cleverly continues the plot of part one. Given the sorry state of most sequels, *T2* is 100 times more creative—and more satisfying—than we had any right to expect. The movie has all the ingredients of a classic sci-fi thriller, and Cameron combines and seasons them to near perfection.

His recipe starts with 215 pounds of prime Schwarzenegger, who returns triumphantly to his breakthrough role as a devastatingly lethal cyborg. Schwarzenegger's T-800 model Terminator is back and battle-ready, but this time he has new programming—a plot twist which breathes new life into the character and allows Schwarzenegger to give a surprisingly rich performance.

Linda Hamilton's character has also undergone radical changes since the first film, in which she was fairly helpless against the Terminator's vicious attacks. It has been ten years since Hamilton first encountered the cyborg, and in that time she has become tough as nails, amassing muscles and

an arms supply in anticipation of his return. Hamilton is remarkably convincing in the gritty role of a disturbed woman desperately fighting for her life and for her sanity.

The new spice in the mix is Edward Furlong, who shows natural charisma as Hamilton's son, the disturbed 12-year-old juvenile-delinquent who is the assassination target in *T2*. Furlong's interactions with Schwarzenegger give the movie heart, soul and—most impressively—psychological depth.

Of course, Cameron's concoction wouldn't be complete without his special sauce: whirlwind action and new technology. The movie's amazing state-of-the-art special effects (which feature the most advanced computer animation ever captured on celluloid) boggle the mind and dazzle the senses. And with his vigorous direction, Cameron clearly reestablishes himself as a true master of action, even if the tumult is not quite as intense as it was in the original.

More than anything, however, it's *T2*'s riveting story line and unexpected humanity which make it not only a smashing piece of science fiction, but also one of the year's best films.