

Darkness of 'Harry Potter' No. 7 illuminates big screen



'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows'

Rated PG-13

4 bagels out of 5

By Howie Nave

It dawned on me a few days ago that an entire generation has grown up experiencing the Harry Potter series on the big screen. For those who started reading the books first it must have been an eager anticipation waiting to see if their imagination from the popular books would mirror (hopefully) the imagery captured from one's mind.

What's also amazing is that the filmmakers were able to keep Daniel Radcliffe (Harry Potter), Rupert Grint (Ron Weasley) and Emma Watson (Hermione Granger) together to make this a truly amazing franchise ride. To think we've seen them literally grow up before our eyes in the theater makes it that much harder to say goodbye. Of course all of them are now very well off and probably don't have to ever do another movie again. Yet, I will say this though – the filmmakers and all involved have truly saved the best for last.

Part 1 of "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" brings the

seventh and final book in the J.K. Rowling series to an end. (Part 2 will open July 15, so we'll still have something to look forward to). It opened in theaters at midnight.

I was taken aback at how much the cast had aged into young adults and also how dark this movie was. In fact, the Minister of Magic proclaims that, "These are dark times. There's no denying it." Boy is he correct.



Daniel Radcliffe's Harry Potter gets ready to cast a spell on theatergoers.

And the friendship between our three principle wizards will be tested. Harry has been marked for death and the stress on them shows. Unlike past Potter movies there isn't any time for clowning around or participating in Quidditch matches, oh no. It's one thing when a fellow student attacks you because generally you're both at the same experience level in wizardry, but when an adult wizard makes you a target, it's more than a little unnerving.

Lord Voldemort is a sinister adversary and has more experience as a wizard, plus some powerful allies. He's after the Elder Wand which is one of three Deathly Hallows that allow the bearer to conquer death. So the stakes are high this time out and he certainly has no problem eliminating Potter and his

friends. For those who are loyal book readers you already know the battle and its outcome between Potter and Lord Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes), but for those of us who haven't read the final chapter, but have only experienced the franchise on-screen it gets intense. Really intense.

I can't even tell you how many times when I see a dark formation of clouds I'm wondering if Voldemort's Death Eaters have been sent my way. The cast (as always) is solid with stand-out performances that include Bill Nighy (Scrimgeour), Rhys Ifans (Lovegood), Helena Bonham Carter (Bellatrix) and two of my favs, Robbie Coltrane as Hagrid and Alan Rickman as Professor Snape.



Director David Yates will be the final one to close the entire franchise and at first I was somewhat concerned. I mean, I would have thought Chris Columbus would have been brought back to bring everything full circle as he directed the first two, setting the table, so to speak. Now after seeing Yates' work it makes sense. He directed 2007's "Harry Potter and the Order of The Phoenix" and 2009's "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" where the franchise had turned much more serious by then. Yates is definitely the one to conclude the final chapter (or in this case, chapters with part 2 being the finale next year).

Yates is brilliant at making you feel uncomfortable and not just because of Harry's enemies, but the location scenes. Much of the story is not only set in the dark, but the somewhat safe haven of Hogwarts is not nearby, leaving Harry, Ron and Hermione very much out in the open. It's a strange feeling, trust me. And even though the movie has been given a PG-13 rating, there are plenty of scenes that may be too intense for the younger sect, so parents be forewarned. Fans of book and movies will not be disappointed.

"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1" is rated PG-13 for some sequences of intense action violence, frightening images and brief sensuality with a running time of 145 minutes.

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.