'Spectre' can't duplicate intensity of 'Skyfall'

'Spectre'

3.5 out of 5 bagels
Rated: PG-13

By Howie Nave

Daniel Craig returns for the fourth time as 007 in "Spectre" and it could be his last time playing the iconic spy, James Bond. If Craig is truly going to make this his last outing as Bond, it'll make sense when you see it for yourself.

While not my favorite Bond, flick it does deliver but drags at times. Not so with his last (and my favorite Bond movie), "Skyfall" — yes, even if you include the original Bond, Sean Connery.

It's not that "Spectre" was horrible (as any Bond flick is worth seeing, even the cheesy Roger Moore incarnations) but the bar was set pretty high with "SkyFall". "Spectre" and "Skyfall" were directed by Sam Mendes. "Skyfall" was electric right from the very beginning hearing Adelle's Oscar winning theme song by the same name setting up the mood. I guess it's just tough to capture that same chemistry twice even if you have the same players.

In a way I think the filmmakers were preparing themselves for Craig's exit because the overall feel throughout "Spectre" is that James and the 007 program are a relic of the past and about to get scrapped which was echoed in "Skyfall." And yes, there is a new M (Ralph Fiennes), a new Moneypenny (Naomie

Harris) and a new cyber genius, Master Q (Ben Whisaw). The main villain this time is Franz Oberhauser, played to perfection by the cryptic Christoph Waltz. Oberhauser is more a psychological terror for Bond, playing on his past and his mind but is also adept at playing with drills.

It's a good idea to refresh yourself watching Craig's prior outings as Bond because there is a callback from those films which will help you piece together the global organization that Spectre is and a reminder that you're not only being watched and videotaped every second, but someone out there is going to use that info against you when you least expect it (hence the psychological link to Bond's past via Oberhauser). Waltz's evil character and world domination of information reminded me of Pierce Brosnan when he played 007 and was up against villain/media mogul Elliot Carver (played by Jonathan Pryce) in 1997's "Tomorrow Never Dies." For fans of that villain it was no coincidence that Carver's character was modeled in part after real life media mogul Rupert Murdoch.

And what would a Bond flick be without the requisite Bond girl, eh? This time around I have to admit they picked not only stellar (and hot looking) challenge for James, but one who is intelligent enough to not fall for his charms but dare I say the other way around that could well make this Bond's final film (with Daniel Craig that is)? The Bond girl (Is that sexist? If so I don't care it is a Bond film after all.) is French doctor Madeleine Swann (Léa Seydoux) who quite frankly would rather have nothing to do with James because she is not only smart, but reminds her of the past she had to grow up with. There's more reasons as to why but not going to go there so see it for yourself. It's a long one, clocking in at 2

hours, 30 minutes with a rating of PG-13 for intense sequences of action and violence, some disturbing images, sensuality and language.

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.