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said to his friend when he was picked to play the Terminator, "they want me to play as some robot from the future in this weird sci-fi movie." His friend said, "take it." Schwarzenegger is perfect as the Terminator, no fear, no love, no remorse, no emotions. None could have pulled it off as well as he did. Even the machines showed no emotion with still showing true evil. Michael Biehn is just the opposite. A man sent from the future to stop this machine. He plays his part as perfect as Schwarzenegger plays his. A perfect cast of characters for an all star movie! Plenty of action, story here, plot, character interaction, low story, and romance. Everything is tied into this movie that possibly could be, making it a 3 star movie. Only drawback is it's a little dragged out at parts and gets slightly boring from time to time but it's so minor that one would have to think about it to care. A truly awesome movie.behamutSep 21, 1998PermalinkI can definitely understand why this is such a popular movie and it was AMAZING for its time. I do think it's a little basic and predictable HOWEVER that's not entirely the movies own fault because this movie is what made the basics. It is what inspired great things in the future. And I definitely appreciate it for what it did but stand alone I can't give it all that much credit it's a great movie yeah but there's nothing that really stood out to me. Maybe I'm hard to please but I'm gonna stick to my guns here and say although it was great I can't really give it any rating above a 7 personally.perky Dec 2, 2023PermalinkCandid admission time: despite selling myself as a fan of action cinema there are two classic genre films I've neglected my whole life. Predator is one, and The Terminator is another. Recently because of this blog I decided to watch both in the hopes of giving a fresh review from a new perspective. Alas, I couldn't finish Predator. I didn't think it was particularly entertaining in the action department. I cared little for the characters, the Predator itself was threatening but not enough for me to be glued. I considered it more a slasher film with buff men in lieu of stupid teens.The Terminator falls into the same boat in a way. It's a horror film more so than action, a kind of slasher/chase movie where we follow our heroes in their escape from the monster. Unlike Predator which hides the creature from us, The Terminator focuses on the cyborg hit-man and makes sure we know what he looks like and how daunting he can be.Sarah Connor is a waitress in Los Angeles when her life is shattered by the appearance of two men from the future, one a resistance fighter, another a Terminator, a cybernetic organism. The future is bleak with nuclear holocaust caused by the rise of the machines sending humans underground. With the machines ruling, a resistance fighter named John Connor has become a hero, throwing a monkey wrench into the inorganic creatures plans. Facing defeat thanks to this man, the machines send a Terminator into the past to eliminate Connor's mother and reset the timeline. Somehow one of the resistance managed to go through as well to protect Sarah Connor.Despite the futuristic ideas and plot the movie itself is very light science fiction and operates more in the horror genre. Sarah Connor is completely unprepared for what she is about to face and Arnie's Terminator is like Friday the 13ths Jason, an unstoppable brute who is seemingly unkillable. It makes for some compelling sequences of destructive action, the Terminator shooting up a police station being a particular highlight.As this is a site dedicated to action critique, I'd be remiss not to mention the editing making many action sequences quite awkward. The very first series of murders has the Terminator kill a trio of punks. What could have been a quick and effective assault is a jankily edited nightmare that hardly makes sense. As the movie progresses, I found the editing got increasingly better but overall it's another case of overediting ruining the effectiveness of action.Another reason I wasn't as enthralled by the action as others is my disdain for what I call "Industrial Action". These movies are typically dark, ugly affairs that focus on abandoned places and industrial areas for settings. Cannon Films was a constant perpetrator of making films that felt inorganic purely because of the settings. Cobra is a prime example and even a film like Robocop, which I do quite enjoy, comes across as bland and uninteresting because of the setting. All of these films take place in metropolitan areas but nothing feels lived in or real. Even in Terminator, the chase sequences aren't as compelling as they could be purely because of how staged it all seems. I don't care how late at night it is, there would be a lot more cars on the streets than the movie portrays. It pulls me out of the action.The other facets of The Terminator are just as artificial in my eyes. The plot is interesting as a concept but goes nowhere interesting. I'm sure T2 will expand upon the mythology built up in this first outing, but as a stand alone product The Terminator doesn't invest me in the film's world. The stakes feel nonexistent because Sarah Connor is so removed from the future war against the machines and there isn't enough of a connection thematically. We see the war and its effects, but they aren't tied into the events of 1984 enough.What ties the past and future together is Kyle, the resistance fighter protecting Sarah. The problem here is that Kyle is a weak character and the romance that buds between himself and Sarah is poorly executed and extremely two-dimensional. Sarah, for her part, has some character development but she doesn't exactly feel well-rounded and isn't interesting either. When the artificial killing machine antagonist is the most compelling character in your film, you're missing the point.I don't have a lot to say about The Terminator because I didn't feel it provided me with anything to really talk about. And that's the sign, to me, of an average film. I don't think The Terminator is bad but I do think it's two-dimensional and lacking in a lot of departments. I mentioned with Speed that you can turn your brain off and enjoy it. That was a fast paced, dumb action movie though. This is trying to have a little more gravitas and meat on the bones and I really do not think it works.hatsunemiku-27340Sep 10, 2017PermalinkThe Terminator is one of the best action movies of all time in my opinion. It doesn't set a single foot wrong and it also kicked off a wonderful saga. Without this, there would be no Terminator 2. Think about that. As such, this movie is fondly remembered by many people and it has been the subject of many quotes and spoofs over the years. Why doesn't it set a foot wrong? It is thrilling, almost always entertaining and filled with insane explosions, which more or less makes a good action movie. But 'The Terminator' stands head and shoulders above the rest of it's genre, because of it's well thought-out plot, splendid acting and an eerily memorable music score which gives you a reason to watch the credits at the end.Now to analysing why the plot is so well-thought out. Well, for one thing, the concept of preventing or setting in stone the future by going back in time was one which wasn't really explored in those days. By exploring it, the Terminator was offering something different, something which has inspired films such as Back to the Future (read the plot synopsis for that film, there are a few similarities). The notion of the final battle of a future war being fought in 'our present', not in the future, between one member of opposing sides, in this case a man and a machine, is also an intriguing one and sets the stage for an exciting battle royale.I'll run down the plot while I'm here. Sarah Connor, a young woman in her 20's, is the protagonist of the film and our two from the future, Kyle Reese and the Terminator, revolve around her. Reese, who is a battle-hardened soldier who has led a hard life in the wasteland which is the future, must protect Sarah, while the Terminator, an unstoppable cyborg, must kill her, in order to kill her unborn son, the leader of the future resistance.All of this leads to some thrilling action scenes and insane explosions, topped off by music scores which add to the tension and excitement. The movie purrs into action quickly, but really kicks off at a disco, where Reese and the Terminator have a shootout, resulting in a city-wide drive-by chase involving the police which doesn't really let up until Reese and Sarah are arrested. During the lull in the chase scene, Reese tells Sarah about himself, the Terminator and their general predicament, which is fairly realistic. The next action scene is the infamous police station massacre which everyone seems to talk about whenever they discuss this movie. I can understand why, too. The Terminator pretty much kills every cop in his path with the greatest of ease, either with the AK-47, his shotgun, or both. He also ends up cutting the power and setting the station on fire, again adding to the tension and excitement. The last action scene which, like the one in T2, is a chase which leads to a final showdown in a building. It is a slight letdown, but it is still an intense scene. I will refrain from spoiling the ending, as this is too good a movie to be spoiled.All of the acting fits the bill perfectly. As in T2, there is not a single bad performance to be found. Michael Biehn delivers a remarkably intense performance as Kyle Reese, acting like a typical human would in his situation. He displays his range of emotions at the right times, from passionate to worried to unyielding. It is a wonder that his only other major movie is 'Aliens' and that he is starring in stuff like 'Clockstoppers' these days. Linda Hamilton again does well as Sarah Connor, displaying an innocent woman who shows over the course of the film why she is John Connor's mother, displaying previously unheralded steel at the crunch. The support cast isn't too bad either (Dr. Silberman makes his first appearance). But again, the best performance in the film belongs to the bad guy, in this case, Arnold Schwarzenegger. He acts like a killing machine should; incredibly cold, sterile, soulless and unyielding. His facial expression never changes throughout the film and his physical appearance makes him slightly more imposing and intimidating than the Liquid Terminator. He also commences his famous one-liners which have been the subject of many a spoof, including (no, especially) "I'll be back." This is undoubtedly his best performance, even though it is not his only good one.I will compliment all involved on making a movie which still manages to look good despite having a low budget. I've seen pretty bad-looking movies with fairly high budgets (read: Scooby-Doo), but never good-looking movies with low budgets.In the end, The Terminator is a masterful action movie which laid the groundwork for the equally brilliant Terminator 2. If you asked me whether I preferred The Terminator or T2, I would say T2 because I am more familiar with it, otherwise, these two would be on a level footing. If you haven't seen this movie and are an action movie fan, then see it immediately. You won't be disappointed. Trust me.5/5 starsDaRick89Jan 21, 2006PermalinkIn the future, the world has been taken over by SkyNet, a computer AI that achieves sentient and launches a global nuclear holocaust, in a bid to wipe out humanity. One man John Conner leads the human resistance. They are on the verge of destroying SkyNet when it sends a Terminator (Arnold Schwarzenegger) back in time to the present day to kill John Conner's mother. Conner sends soldier Kyle Reese (Michael Biehn) to save his mother Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton) from the killer machine.This is director James Cameron's first at bat, and he hits it out of the park. It is near perfection that started a franchise. First the story is perfectly constructed. All those hours of writing and rewriting during his deliveries really helped. Second the choice of Schwarzenegger is inspired. He is the perfect terminator. Third the intensity doesn't relent. It is a sci-fi horror that doesn't let go. It has the production of a much bigger action movie. It is a signpost for a genre, for a cultural touchstone, and for an era. It transcends being simply a movie.SnoopyStyleSep 28, 2013PermalinkPhillipJames1980Feb 24, 2005PermalinkTerminator is an extremely low budget movie. In fact, just about everything used in it didn't cost much at all, but it is a very effective movie. Back in the '70's and 80's, movies could be very low budget, but still be great(think of John Carpenter's Halloween). The Terminator is a story about how nuclear war causes the end to mankind and the end result could be the start of an even greater tragedy than the war its self. The entire message of The Terminator is an anti nuclear war message. Many people think that a few parts in the beginning of the movie are just some random things thrown in. I can understand why, but these seemingly random scenes actually do have a lot to do with the story.Arnold does a great job as the cyborg who is programmed to kill without mercy or remorse. For those who don't know, this is the movie where the line "I'll be back" was spoken. The other actors do a good job at a good job in this. Linda Hamilton made a great choice doing this movie and she really improved her career through it(the movie she made before this was the horrible Children Of The Corn).This is better than Terminator 2(which is still great by the way), because this movie has more of a story and is more involved. I would recommend watching this movie at any time, it is very well paced and never gets boring, and if you have the time, watch T2 right after this.FrankBooth_DeLargeJan 29, 2005PermalinkFor the gift of ' Aliens' and ' The Terminator' I am willing to forgive Cameron's ' Titanic'. The key plot concept is beautifully simple - machines take over the earth in the future. Machines are eventually over thrown by one man. Machines travel back in time to kill man's mother, thus preventing him being born and stopping their own defeat. One human also travels back to stop the machines from killing his leader's mother. 'The Terminator' is a classic good versus evil struggle, with little in the way of greys clouding the issue. The terminator is an unstoppable brutal remorseless killer, and it perfectly suits Arnold Schwarzenegger's limited acting abilities. His few lines, including the infamous 'I'll be back' are all well judged and timed, and give a great feeling of precision and inhumanity to his character. Coupled with his chiselled features, he's the best choice for the role. Michael Biehn is playing a character type that he'd reprise two years later in Cameron's ' Aliens' - the human tough guy: he's got the fight, but still the ability to love and care for people. His features are well chosen for this and although his delivery of lines is hardly exceptional - they tend to come out in the same tone of voice - he's able to carry his part. Linda Hamilton is the woman-thrown-into-chaos, somewhat reminiscent of Sigourney Weaver's Ripley character in ' Alien', although Hamilton doesn't have Weaver's strength of presence. All the actors are, for an action science fiction, above average and so never distract. It's the script, with Cameron's force behind it that lifts the movie from mediocrity. Yes, there's a certain amount of corniness - the ' we loved a life time' element for example - but the movie has a real sense of conviction present. The movie believes in itself and, through its passion, will make you believe too. There's a general sense of darkness in the movie - rarely do we see daylight, and, when we do, it's often the soft light of dawn. There's a nice sense of tension in the action scenes, helped not only by Cameron's camera work but also by an excellent electronic score (including a fantastic brooding credit sequence). Sure some of the SFX look clunky in these days of ' Attack of the Clones' and ' The Fellowship of the Ring', but they still work. There's a certain sense of inevitability, intertwined with hope, permeating the picture that creates a mood I particularly enjoyed and that's harder to find in the current crop of science fiction movies. 'The Terminator' is not a perfect picture. The movie lags in some parts, and the romance element is fairly contrived. Despite all that the movie brims with energy and promise, a script that mostly delivers, characters you can enjoy, and the ultimate Arnie role. Well worth catching. 8/10.Aidan McGuinnessJun 23, 2002PermalinkTimBoHannonAug 27, 2003PermalinkYou can run, but you can't hide, your existence amplified, where you go, it will go too, sensors focused just on you, nothing can get in its way, you can shoot, or burn, or pray, as sure as day will follow night, the binaries, will take a bite.An ontological, paradoxical and dystopian forecast of a future world that probably won't have time travel, but may well see machines used to ill affect - we are, after all, our own worst enemies.An outstanding piece of film making that perpetually stands the test of time.KstaAug 4, 2022PermalinkEntertaining sci-fi action-drama.Revolutionary special effects are what makes this movie special. The effects, from 1984, are still good even by today's standards. The plot is not bad either. Unlike most of James Cameron's movies, which are purely style over substance (yes, I'm thinking of Titanic and Avatar in particular) this movie has a decent plot, not entirely watertight, but it exists and is reasonably coherent and plausible and not merely a medium for linking action scenes.Though he had done the two Conan movies before this, it is this movie that made Arnold Schwarzenegger a star. Not there for his acting abilities, or linguistic skill, he was every bit the action figure (not quite action hero...). Linda Hamilton was solid in her role (though her hair style shows this movie was made in the 80s...). Michael Biehn was OK, though sometimes came off as too over-the-top in his performance.grantsMay 9, 2014PermalinkThere are actors, and there are movie stars.Arnold Schwarzenegger is without question a movie star,because every time he is on screen, he is,well,Arnold.There is a different Arnie in this film,and this is what I like about it.He,for once,is playing the villain,and to perfection,I might add.He makes for one of the best screen villains ever in cinema history.It's a pity that his "good guy" image won't allow him to play the bad seed more often,but that's Hollywood, I guess.Aside from the thrilling sequel,this is perhaps Arnold's best work.SmileysWorldFeb 25, 2002PermalinkA killer cyborg is sent back from the future to "terminate" a young woman in modern day US.In many ways this is dated. It looks so 1980's, the film technology and special effects in particular look clunky and dated.Arnie was obviously made for this role.A visionary plot, more relevant today than ever. While the concept is still fresh, the technology and style are not.CrazyArtyFeb 23, 2022PermalinkNote: My first time watching this film was in 2019.Taking off the rose colored glasses, this would be a B-list action flick that would be quickly forgotten if it were released today. It brought a new level of thought into blockbuster action flicks, but there have been successors that use time travel in an action movie much more effectively. Also, the premise was well thought out with few plot holes, but it was always explained in a way that seemed to highlight a lull in the action rather than build tension for the next scene. The acting was very minimal and forgettable, reminiscent of acting in B-list action films today.Saving the most obvious for last, the effects were very dated. The computer generated effects have aged the worst. The clothes and hairstyles are a close second, but they can be forgiven as accurate for the 80s. However, the future costumes can't be forgiven. Everyone literally wearing burlap sacks with faces covered in dirt is both cliched and unrealistic.Finally, the music screamed 80s, not only in style, but also with the disconnect between the score and what's happening on the screen. Movie scores have been one of the slowest film aspects to consistently make progress, and this film is a good example of the inconsistency that remained in the 80s. It's just becoming common to see scores written to evoke emotion for the film's specific scenes, but movies like The Terminator still miss the mark by under- or overplaying the emotion in the scene.All-in-all, it seems like it has all the makings to be an 80s classic, and I can see why it became as popular as it is today. Although I can also see that if it were released today, it would not be nearly as innovative or memorable, and I can certainly see why young Arnold thought this movie wouldn't amount to anything. Perhaps that is why the Terminator reboot series has been performing poorly in the box office.JakeBrinkmanJun 25, 2019Permalink

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