

Great Directors: Kubrick

2001: A Space Odyssey 1968

Saturday, November 1 - Thursday, November 6, 2008



Film Information

Directed by
Stanley Kubrick

Language
English

Running Time
141 minutes

Film Notes

Steven Spielberg tells a story about conversations he had with Stanley Kubrick in the years preceding the director's death in 1999. The two filmmakers had known each other for nearly twenty years—their careers first crossing paths as Kubrick wrapped *THE SHINING* and Spielberg prepared to enter production on *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*—and had in the decades since shared a mutual admiration. After *FULL METAL JACKET* (1987), some observers had wondered if Kubrick was done with filmmaking, but what Spielberg heard in those conversations was a restless creativity and passion for the medium that consumed the legendary director to the very end. “I want to make a movie that changes the form,” Kubrick kept telling Spielberg during those final years.

“Well didn’t you with 2001?” Spielberg asked.

“Just a little bit,” Kubrick replied. “But not enough.”

In fact, Kubrick’s *2001* altered the form in more ways than one, and it speaks to the director’s vision—a collaboration with writer Arthur C. Clarke—that audiences still puzzle and debate over its intentional ambiguities today. It’s also a tribute to Kubrick that the film, while among the most iconic and identifiable ever made, considered by some to be the very best of cinema and by others to be the most frustrating, doesn’t exactly eclipse the rest of his output. It is, as Andrew Sarris once wrote, “a major work by a major artist,” and yet ask a group of people to name the first Kubrick film that comes to

mind and the answers will surely differ. That’s not a knock against *2001* but a testament to Kubrick’s career—to say nothing of his knack for shifting gears. Prior to the nearly wordless spectacle of *2001*, Kubrick made a brilliant, dialogue-dominated dark comedy in *DR. STRANGELOVE* (“You can’t fight in here! This is the War Room.”). Following the G-rated *SPACE ODYSSEY*, he made *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, a treatise on violence so graphic it landed an X-rating in the United States. The one thing you could expect from a new Kubrick film was that it wouldn’t be like the last.

“When you look at all of his films, they all have one thing in common, for me anyway,” Spielberg once said. “The craft is impeccable. Every film he’s ever made, the craft is impeccable. The lighting, the dolly shots, the crane movement, the zoom ins...just the compositions. The exact compositions... Impeccable. The best in history. Nobody could shoot a movie better than Stanley Kubrick.”

—Casey



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“I’m sorry Dave, I’m afraid I can’t do that.”

More Information

Screenplay by
Stanley Kubrick
Arthur C. Clarke

Featuring
Keir Dullea
Gary Lockwood
William Sylvester
Daniel Richter
Leonard Rossiter
Margaret Tyzack
Robert Beatty
Sean Sullivan
Douglas Rain
Frank Miller
Bill Weston

Cinematography by
Geoffrey Unsworth

Production Design by
Ernest Archer
Harry Lange
Anthony Masters

Film Editing by
Ray Lovejoy

Country of Origin
UK / USA

“You’re free to speculate as you wish about the philosophical and allegorical meaning of the film—and such speculation is one indication that it has succeeded in gripping the audience at a deep level—but I don’t want to spell out a verbal road map for 2001 that every viewer will feel obligated to pursue or else fear he’s missed the point.”

—Stanley Kubrick

Also Recommended

Solaris 1972 (Dir. Tarkovsky)
Close Encounters of the Third Kind 1977 (Dir. Spielberg)
A.I. Artificial Intelligence 2001 (Dir. Spielberg)
Solaris 2002 (Dir. Soderbergh)