

# The bottom line

By Morgan Hughes-Davies

## 3:10 to Yuma

**Starring:** Russell Crowe, Christian Bale

**Directed By:** James Mangold

When I watched 3:10 To Yuma, there was a brief period before the film began when I took the opportunity to observe the age demographic that the film had attracted by watching the people that came into the theatre.

The result was mixed: some teenagers, a few adults, and a smattering of seniors. The western genre, more than any other movie genre, has proven time and again to be stubbornly resistant to change or innovation.

This lack of innovation is both an asset and a liability to the genre; it is an asset because the genre evokes a feeling of nostalgia, and

therefore appeals to those who seek escapism as it used to be in the early days of cinema. It is a liability because after a while the plots and settings of the western genre become predictable and stale.

Nevertheless, my experience at the theatre seems to prove that westerns will always find an audience with people who simply want to enjoy a good story without having to exercise their grey matter too hard.

This particular western is actually a remake of another film of the same name from 1957. The plot of the film is based on a story by Elmore Leonard, who wrote many a story in the western genre.

3:10 To Yuma tells the story of the outlaw Ben Wade (Russell Crowe, who performs admirably, and seems well suited to the western genre,) and an impecunious rancher named Daniel Evans (Christian Bale, who acts well, but doesn't warm to his role as Russell

Crowe does.) The action begins immediately with an entertaining battle between Ben Wade's gang of outlaws and a group of Pinkerton's Agents transporting a large sum of money in an armoured carriage with a Gatling gun mounted on top.

Wade's gang wins the day and the cargo, however, Wade is later captured while in an inn. Meanwhile, Daniel Evans is a farmer struggling to make ends meet; unable to pay the rent, and with his landlord threatening to seize his land, he volunteers to escort the captive Wade to Yuma to be sent by train to prison in exchange for two hundred dollars. However, Ben Wade's gang is still free, and determined to free their boss from his escort.

Occasionally, the film shows signs that it is attempting to convey a more subtle message underneath all of the explosions, gun-fights, and invectives. But, in the end, no grander purpose emerges

from it all, and the film never seriously taxes the intellect. Even so, it is best not to view a western through any kind of critical lens, and simply enjoy the action. Still, the movie is presented well: the acting is solid, the script is well-written, the plot is decent and makes sense, and the action is consistent.

From a technical standpoint, the film does everything well, but there is nothing new or unexpected on display here. Director James Mangold sticks to the tried and true western formula and takes no chances whatsoever.

### *The Bottom Line*

3:10 To Yuma doesn't take the western genre in any new directions, but it is passable entertainment thanks to fast pacing, competent storytelling, and excellent performances by Russell Crowe and Christian Bale.

## Don't let the Superbad's title fool you

By John G.

It's hard to come across anyone who hasn't already witnessed the masterful comedy genius that is 'Superbad.'

It appears near anyone who has ever decided to spend the ludicrous amount of money to step into the theatre is more than willing to reach into their pockets for the movie of which is nearly impossible to find anyone who can say something bad about it. It's a standard buddy tale. Two best friends about to be taken apart by the graduation of high school and about to move on to college. The story follows the two embracing their departure to different cities and the realization of their lives changing more quickly than they anticipated. And, of course, as any modern movie featuring teenagers is based around, the possibility of gaining access to the fairer sex's pants.

Possibility of this is found when word of a party reaches the proverbial door of the boy's homes. The scrawnier, more quiet friend, Evan, played by Michael Cera, finds opportunity knocking when a pretty little Philly, who many would recognize as Martha MacIsaac from *Emily of New Moon*, starts showing interest, while Seth played by Jonah Hill, the sex-driven, outspoken friend is confronted



by a girl after she discovers Seth has the sources to get alcohol, the life-blood of any party and the elixir of love, at least temporary love, in any teenager-based movie. Entertaining as it is to this point, I am bold enough to say I found the movie almost mediocre until the entrance of the two police officers, played by writers Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg, who add a sense of comedic timing and absolute hilarity which is so hard to find in even the most enjoyable comedies released these days.

These two officers of the law are anything but law-abiding. We meet them in a liquor store where the boys intention to buy alcohol became distorted because of the dorky third friend Fogell (Christopher Mintz-Plasse), better known as the cock-sure, Casanova-in-his-own-mind, McLovin bringing a more than obvious fake ID, seemingly hindering any chance of purchasing alcohol, and therefore, terminating any chance of getting a girl to show them their happy parts.

While I can't see this movie being remembered along the same lines as such memorable films such as *Animal House* or even (I'm sorry to say) *American Pie*, the movie is clearly in it's own way something you should look forward to watching, and learning even the biggest geek has his day.