

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT FOR THE JAMES BOND PHENOMENON...

By Anders Frejdh, proprietor and editor of the only bi-lingual website in the world in both Swedish and English - FROM SWEDEN WITH LOVE - www.jamesbond007.se

The wait is over; James Bond is back after the fantastic film in 2006 - CASINO ROYALE – which gave the phenomenon an exceptional kick forward never seen before. This year's film – QUANTUM OF SOLACE – is the 22nd in the most successful film series of all time and James Bond is played for a second time by the Chester-born actor Daniel Craig. The rest of the cast include experienced actors from many different countries. A Swede even appears briefly in one of the scenes.

The title QUANTUM OF SOLACE comes from the name of one of the short stories in Ian Fleming's short story collection FOR YOUR EYES ONLY. It was first published on April 11, 1960 by the British publishing house Jonathan Cape. (The collection was first published in Sweden by Albert Bonnier in 1962 but QUANTUM OF SOLACE is not in the Swedish translation.)

The film continues more or less right after the final scene of the last film bit except for the title, QUANTUM OF SOLACE has no connection with Ian Fleming's short story. Without revealing too much it starts with a car chase which ends when "James Bond" and "M" interrogates "Mr. White" (again played by the Dane, Jesper Christensen) which Bond just about had traced down when CASINO ROYALE ends. It is clear the 2nd unit team, with director Dan Bradley and production manager Terry Bamber at the front, has done a remarkable job with this car chase despite the problematic shooting which involved a totally demolished brand new Aston Martin DBS with an estimated value of around €250 000.

The continuity from the previous film is much stronger than the car chase mentioned above. James Bond, the human being, gradually becomes stronger after losing the woman he loved. After that tragic event, Bond psychologically evolves his inner strength which then gives him the dedicated focus and self-preservation that later becomes Bond's strongest and most distinguished feature and strength.

QUANTUM OF SOLACE has a running time of 106 minutes and is the shortest James Bond film so far (the previous film CASINO ROYALE is the longest with 144 minutes). It features top class high speed action packed sequences and is exceptionally exciting for a Bond film. Still lacking the famous character "Q" (which the beloved and dearly missed actor Desmond Llewelyn played in 17 previous Bond epics), but his absence does not affect the pace or story line. On the contrary, this fact will give the audience a feeling that is much more than a typical Bond film. Perhaps an odd film in that sense but it is still very much James Bond, to discover how his earlier life experiences affect him as a person is genuinely interesting. Like with "Q", M's secretary "Miss Money Penny" is not in the film but it does not spoil the story. Dame Judi Dench, who plays the role of "M" in her sixth Bond film, gives the character a lot of weight with much charisma and authority. The relation between her character and Daniel Craig's James Bond deepens even further in this film.

"The Bond girl" this time is played by the Ukrainian actress Olga Kurylenko. Her beauty is evident in more than one way and her character "Camille" has a background similar to Bond's which make her really special. Bond's friend "René Mathis" (again played by the Italian and Oscar-nominated actor Giancarlo Giannini) has an important part in the film which leads to unexpected consequences. The villain ("Dominic Greene") is played by the acclaimed French actor Mathieu Amalric who makes a memorable performance showing elements not previously distinguished for a Bond villain.

Director Marc Forster's first James Bond film is hopefully not his last. The visual views are spectacular and his talent to tell a story is remarkable with the use of a new camera technique never seen before in

films. The first and second assistant directors, Michael Lerman and Toby Hefferman, have had an important role for the film supporting Forster throughout the production.

With Tom Ford, Bond has been given a 60's look. Bond's "return" to South America in the film series (MOONRAKER being the first Bond to be shot there in 1979) is wonderful and adventurous, the fact that he actually speaks a bit of Spanish is a new but not a very surprisingly ability. South America could be a very intriguing continent for future Bonds to explore.

The screenplay this time is originally written by the English writers Neil Purvis and Robert Wade. They are being credited as screenwriters to a Bond film for the fourth time although Paul Haggis (as for CASINO ROYALE in 2006) was hired to adapt their original work with a few adjustments.

The accompanying film music is composed by Englishman David Arnold and this is the fifth Bond film for him being the original soundtrack composer. The theme song "Another way to die" is created by the American artists Alicia Keys and Jack White. The first time I listened to the song it felt wrong and not very Bondian. But, after seeing the film and hear the song where it is supposed to be I think it is not that bad. It gives a sense of the 60's with typical Bond elements included that makes it memorable. The pre-credit titles are designed by MK12.

The film producers and heirs after Cubby Broccoli, Barbara Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson, has yet again proven that their intention of revitalize the film version of James Bond is successful. Their choice of Daniel Craig as agent 007 is even more confirmed and strengthened after this film. The British actor gives Bond a deeper description than seen before going beyond Ian Fleming's creation. With Craig as Bond he is being interpreted as a more brutal and ruthless human being than for example Roger Moore's, but the humoristic side of it is not missed, James Bond in the novels possessed more than that.

Principal conclusion, one should have seen CASINO ROYALE before QUANTUM OF SOLACE but it would be wrong to compare them. There is a unique continuity in between them that previously has not appeared in the film series. An intelligent choice by the producers as I personally think it will lead towards a bright future for the James Bond phenomenon.

Shooting for the film began in London on January 7th 2008 after which production then continued in Chile, Italy, Mexico, Panama and Austria.

QUANTUM OF SOLACE has its world premiere in France, Sweden and United Kingdom on October 31st 2008. The Royal world charity premiere in London takes place on October 29th with the principal film cast attending.

Finally a note about the Swedish person mentioned above. Yours truly were unexpectedly chosen as one of 4 500 people that attended the casting of extras in January in Austrian Bregenz. To be able to act in the background during several scenes down there was a fantastic experience. The shooting was done during two weeks in April/May. Anyone who wishes to look out can detect me when James Bond, in the form of Daniel Craig, follows one of the villain's henchmen in a scene from Bregenz. It is really amazing that I was not cut out and actually ended up in the final film.

© Anders Frejdh, 2008. All rights reserved.