



Spider-Man: No Way Home, Your Friendly Neighborhood Box Office Smash

Miranda Connolly, Senior
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Marvel has recently released the third installment of the Spider-Man series starring Tom Holland, Zendaya, and Jacob Batalon. I myself had the pleasure of watching this movie in theaters, and have spent a surprising majority of my time thinking about the movie since then. That being said, here is my review of *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. Warning: Spoilers ahead.

Spider-Man: No Way Home is the highest grossing movie to be released during the pandemic, and it is officially the fourth highest grossing film of all time. The highly anticipated release of this movie was only spurred on by the rumors that previous Spider-Man actors, Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield, would also be in the film. I grew up on Tobey Maguire's Spider-Man, and I remember when the trailer for Andrew Garfield's first Spider-Man movie was released, so when I heard the rumor that all three of the Spider-Man actors were going to be in the movie, I knew that it was going to be an epic for our generation.

The first 30 minutes of the movie are the funniest of any Marvel movie I have seen (yes, even funnier than *Thor Ragnarok*). The film sets up its main conflict in alliance with what many teenagers experience themselves at Spider-Man's age (in this movie he is a high school senior). I think the way the college application, rejection, and acceptance process was portrayed was hilarious, I could barely contain my laughter for the entire first act of the movie. Watching Peter trying to juggle his relationship, superhero job (I guess it counts more as volunteering, since he isn't getting paid), and school is incredibly relatable since I too struggle with my own superhero work-life balance. During the college plot line of the movie, Peter, MJ, and Ned (our three heroes!) all decided to apply to MIT, yet all of them were rejected. Peter decides the reason for their rejection was because they are associated with him. At the moment no one likes Peter because his identity as Spider-Man has been revealed, and he is being accused of killing Mysterio (hero/villain of the last film) by The Daily Bugle. Peter decides that the only way for him and his friends to get into MIT is if the entire world forgets Peter Parker is Spider-Man. This leads to him asking Dr. Strange to cast a spell, which is cast incorrectly. The spell pulls all the cool villains from the other Spider-Man movies into this Spider-Man's universe. I think many people found this plot point frustrating since it could have easily been avoided if Peter had just simply communicated with Dr. Strange before the spell had been cast, but I don't think there has ever been a Marvel movie without plot holes.

As the movie goes on, it becomes very clear that Peter is still trying to figure out who he is and make a name for himself outside of the identity he found with the Avengers and Tony Stark. I think bringing the other two Spider-Men and their villains into this universe really demonstrated the key differences between The older Spider-Men and the new one. Peter Parker, in this universe, has experienced the world in a very different way than the other two Spider-Men have, and it changes the way he reacts in situations. He demonstrates his leadership ability, and many people have theorized that he will lead the Young Avengers in the next movies he stars in, which I don't think is a stretch.

This movie laid the groundwork of who Peter Parker is in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. In the comics Peter is a high school/college student struggling to keep up with schoolwork, while also fighting crime. I think that Spider-Man is mostly on his own with his struggles, and he always manages to get through them. In the new Spider-Man movies there was always someone helping Peter along the way, until now. By the end of the movie Peter is left completely alone, and for the first time he will need to do everything by himself. Peter has become what the other two Spider-Men always were: alone. I think that this is the most tragic part of Spider-Man.

Although he saves lives and the city of New York, he has no one to share his life with. Throughout almost every Spider-Man comic, movie, or TV show, Peter struggles to keep his identity as Spider-Man a secret, but by the end of *Spider-Man: No Way Home* that's all that he has left. Peter Parker has fully become Spider-Man, and there is no true identity left to hide. Even though this would seem to be a huge burden to have lifted off of one's shoulders, Peter has never been completely alone before. Peter, in order to uphold the belief that "with true power comes great responsibility," has to give up his own identity to save his world. He became invisible to the outside world and, in a way, I think that's a more tragic ending than if he had died.

Spider-Man: No Way Home starts out comedic, but ends leaving the audience heartbroken (quite vocally at my theater). This was the best Marvel movie I have seen, but I still believe that Tobey Maguire's *Spider-Man 2* is the best Spider-Man movie overall. I give this Movie 4.5 stars and am extremely excited to see where Tom Holland's Spider-Man takes us next!

Movie Review: Steven Spielberg's *West Side Story*

Benji Boyd, Freshman

For experienced film critics and recreational movie-goers alike, hearing the word "remake" and the name of a timeless classic such as *West Side Story* together in the same sentence often has the effect of instilling instant panic.

Anyone who has seen the 1961 adaptation of the *Romeo and Juliet* inspired stage play featuring central characters Tony and Maria, who fall in love despite their connections to rival gangs vying for control of New York City's West Side, will know that the 2022 adaptation of *West Side Story*, starring Ansel Elgort and Rachel Zegler, has massive shoes to fill in every department, from acting to choreography to the storytelling behind the exciting musical numbers. Skeptics would say that it's a suicide mission to even attempt to recreate such an iconic moment in time.

Yet, Spielberg has pulled out all the stops, delivering to us a movie that is both visually stunning and brimming with talent both on screen and off. Spielberg's reimagining manages to capture the spirit of a neighborhood at war, adding a new layer of depth to the social dilemmas our characters face as they navigate a world that is slowly leaving them behind. A major contrast between the 1961 and 2022 versions is the attention given to the inner struggles of the inhabitants of the neighborhood: the West Side's story. Whether the story is being told from the eyes of a member of the Jets, a gang of troubled caucasian youths who let their anger towards their situation manifest into prejudice against their Puerto Rican neighbors, or the Sharks, a gang not so different from their Irish and Polish counterparts save their ancestral origin, the hate-filled world reflected around them doesn't look so different.

Tony and Maria's romance is about breaking down the walls of hate and prejudice both groups have built around themselves, and longing for a world in which they can simply exist without turning the world upside down. The new release has drawn the focus away from a romanticized split-second love story and put more attention on the twisted world that can turn love into violence, which I can't help but feel is what Shakespeare would have wanted. Morals and social commentary aside, the sights and sounds that made *West Side Story* so iconic in the first place have been done immense justice by its updated cast. And it isn't only new faces to grace the screen this time around. Rita Moreno, who played the pivotal role of Anita back in 1961, has returned to the spotlight to take on the role of Valentina, an elderly Puerto

Rican shopkeeper who acts as a mentor figure to Tony throughout the movie. Her character is a fascinating reimagining of the previously unimportant character of Doc, and Valentina's past romance with a white man provides an interesting parallel to Tony and Maria's dilemma. She even delivers the number *Somewhere*, which is originally sung by Tony and Maria as they wish for a world where they are free to love each other. The song is rebranded as she reminisces about her own romance, and expresses sympathy for what Tony and Maria are now going through.

Speaking of fascinating changes, Doc/Valentina isn't the only character who was given a new layer of depth in the remake. If you've seen the stage play or the original version, you may remember a scrawny tomboy by the name of Anybodys who hangs around the Jets at the beginning of the story, constantly pleading to be included in their brotherhood and be made a member. The purpose of Anybodys' character in the original is up for debate. Perhaps it's to highlight the fragile masculinity of the West Side gangs, or maybe to serve as a sort of comic relief. However, the remake has taken a deeper look at Anybodys' character, and decided to rewrite them as a trans male living in an era of non-acceptance and misunderstanding. Lines like, "I ain't no goddamn girl," leave no room for doubt of the intention to portray Anybodys as a trans man wanting to be included in the activities of his cisgender counterparts. Though the Jets are hardly the best people to be looking for approval from, they are perhaps the only family Anybodys can hope to have or hope to find, and their misguided attempts to be included add another layer of complexity to the already beautifully complex story of this moment in time.

All in all, Spielberg's remake not only holds a candle to the original, but burns just as brightly, if not brighter. While the two movies are vastly different, the spirit of the original Broadway production is alive in both, and certain not to fade from memory anytime soon thanks to its brilliant update. If you were wondering whether it's worth a watch, the answer is yes. Whether you're a fan of the 1961 version, or never heard the name *West Side Story* before this article, I would heavily recommend it for the captivating filmmaking and incredible talent on display. Start the year with a bang with this epic film, or rather, a long, slow, whistle.

Make Your Valentine's Day Sweeter With Stowaway Sweets

This Valentine's Day, support the MHS Freshman class by purchasing your favorite sweet delights from Stowaway Sweets, the Marblehead chocolate shop known for its delectable confections.

Order your chocolates online at stowawaysweets.com under the MHS FUNDRAISER tab.

Order chocolates and candies from 1/30 through 2/8. Pick-up will be at MHS on 2/9 from 4 pm to 6 pm.

Headlight Staff 2021-2022

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Miranda Connolly

ASSISTANT EDITORS: Ila Bumagin and Mona Gelfgatt

TECHNOLOGY EDITOR: Talia Schwartz

SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR: Martha Heffernan

REPORTERS: Sydney Armini, Nora Bekkai, Sofia Bottari, Benji Boyd, Elise Burchfield, Benny Burns, Alison Buxbam, Saylor Caruso, Olivia DiGiovanni, Alexis Earp, Aislin Freedman, Olivia Gardner, Julia Greenway, Katherine Jenkins, Nina Johnson, Anya Kane, Angelo Knight, Georgia Lloyd, Madison Lofmark, Madeleine Molinari, Evangelia Nickolas, Leroy Njoroge, Michael Piper, Lilah Siegel, Katherine Simcoe, Olivia Spell, Alex Thibodeaux, Katherine Twomey, Amira Warab, Nadia Warab

FACULTY ADVISOR: Thomas Higgins