

FURIOSA: A Mad Max Saga Review.

“You Fabulous Thing.”



Anya Taylor Joy as Furiosa (image: NextBestPicture)

Director George Miller had set his bar for *Mad Max* quite high after the success of *Mad Max: Fury Road*, and yet, he managed to meet it with *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga*, an exceptional odyssey into the Wastelands.

This 5-chapter revenge saga was an entirely new and uncompromising direction for the *Mad Max* collection that Miller had created half a century ago. *Furiosa* has proven itself as a prequel for the ages, a biblical backstory that is both mournful and brutalizing, and an absolute spectacle of action to witness on screen.

I believe a key element to understanding the mind of Miller is knowing he originally came up with the idea for *Mad Max* during the 1973 Australian Oil Crisis, witnessing firsthand the physical tragedies it had on Australians as a medical school student at the time. The unbelievable practical effects in this film are reminiscent of his understanding of the human body as a fragile thing, enhancing the brutality of his storytelling. *Furiosa* is as loud and fun as it is invigorating and gory, creating a near 3-hour adrenaline rush for the audience.

At its core, however, *Furiosa* was an emotionally rich story. Title character Furiosa (Anya Taylor Joy) has minimal dialogue throughout the film, yet the audience is never left wondering how she

feels. Taylor-Joy's performance was nothing short of phenomenal, with her emotions conveyed in only her eyes and face. As she is playing the same character portrayed by Charlize Theron in *Fury Road*, Taylor-Joy has done the character absolute justice and ultimately brought the epic revenge tale to life through her performance.

On the topic of performance, Chris Hemsworth's chillingly fun portrayal of Dementus is arguably his best work to date. It isn't easy to write or play a character who seamlessly blends traits of silliness and cruelty, but Miller and Hemsworth have managed to pull it off. It isn't often you're met with a villain you enjoy so much that you're not keen on witnessing his downfall – but Dementus is one of those brilliantly written villains that you can't help but like, regardless of the savage horrors he brings upon the Wastelands.

The final *Mad Max* film takes the previous release *Fury Road* and turns it on its head – trading in the opera of bloody steel and vengeance for a new, emotional and quiet pathos, pivoting dramatically from its predecessors. The chapter breaks throughout the film set the pace, and is visually elegant with seamless CGI and beautiful colour grading. Whilst it isn't as action-packed as previous films in the franchise, it absolutely has its moments of viciousness – but the ultimate focus on the emotionally charged revenge plot was executed magnificently.

As an unexpected turn of direction for Miller's *Mad Max* franchise, *Furiosa* really proved that Miller wasn't yet finished playing in the sandbox he created so long ago – and has managed to chronicle one of the greatest myth-making pieces seen in cinema.