BIZCOMMUNITY

Dead Man Down

By Daniel Dercksen

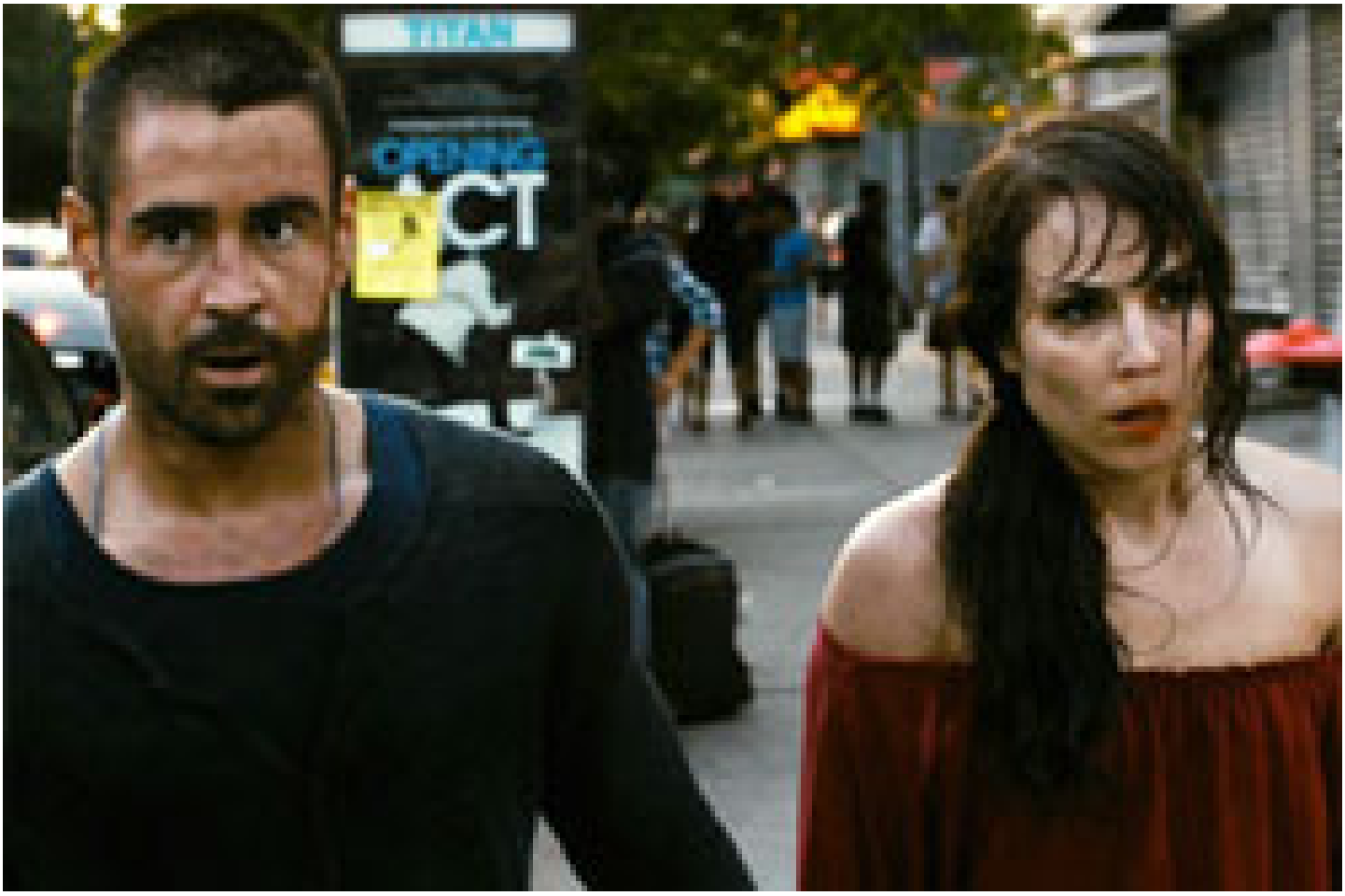
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If there is one film that everyone will be talking about, it's Danish-born director Niels Arden Oplev's entrancing and not-to-be-missed Dead Man Down. Oplev stunned the world with his adaptation of Stieg Larsson's The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo and with Dead Man Down, his craft as a filmmaker and vision as a storyteller are irrefutable.

Based on an original screenplay by JH Wyman (who produced and wrote The Mexican), Dead Man Down is a soulful journey into the criminal underworld of New York City, where violence destroys families and broken lives are redeemed through a romance unlike anything you've seen before.

A warning: try to know as little as possible of what Dead Man Down is about and avoid any behind-the-scenes footage as it will most definitely spoil the striking resolution.





It is one of those remarkable creations that offers a great story that is well told and is guaranteed not only to keep you on the edge of your seat, but also delivers an equally life changing encounter of the human kind.

Colin Farrell is sensational as Victor, the right-hand man of an underground crime lord, Alphonse, featuring an equally brilliant Terrence Howard as a troubled man faced with someone systematically killing members of his gang and sending him taunting and threatening notes.

A life shattered by a tragic accident

Noomi Rapace, who made a tremendous impact with her performance in Oplev's The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, will break your heart with her passionate performance as Beatrice, a woman whose life is shattered by a tragic accident and whose life changes radically when Victor enters her life.

Beatrice lives in the high-rise apartment building opposite Victor's. When they meet, Victor soon finds out that Beatrice is not the woman she seems be, but rather a crime victim seeking retribution for which she needs Victor's help. And Beatrice finds out that Victor isn't the man he seems to be either. And when these two wounded people, each obsessed with retribution, get together, their chemistry and intense relationship leads them to execute a violent and cathartic plan for revenge. The story of Victor and Beatrice is unforgettable; when these two strangers are united through fate, it is an encounter that will always be remembered as one of the greatest cinematic romances.





A powerful film about friendship

Besides its potent and heartbreaking romance, Dead Man Down is also a powerful film about friendship, with Dominic Cooper delivering a stunning performance as Darcy, Victor's friend, who also works for Alphonse and becomes obsessed with finding out who the killer is in order to curry Alphonse's favour and rise in the organisation.

A further bonus for discerning audiences looking for a human drama with great performances, is French actress Isabelle Huppert as Beatrice's mother, and F Murray Abraham (best known for his Academy Award-winning performance as Salieri in Milos Forman's Amadeus).

The gritty world of Dead Man Down is perfectly captured by cinematographer Paul Cameron(who was recently the director of photography on Lens Wiseman's Total Recall, which starred Colin Farrell), and Danish production designer Niels Sejer (who has created the production design for over 20 feature films and TV series in the Scandinavian countries, including The Girl With the Dragon Tatoo).

French editor Frederic Thoraval (who most recently worked on Safe) contributes to the rapid pace and tempo of the action sequences, and equally contributes to the suspense of the drama.

In contrast to big-budget commercial films Dead Man Down is a significant independent film, which offers meaningful and insightful entertainment that will be remembered long after you leave the cinema.

Behind the scenes

Dead man down is a film project that the filmmakers and actors were passionate about and determined to bring to the screen from the moment each of them read the script.

Following the international critical acclaim and commercial success of the Swedish film The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, its Danish-born director Niels Arden Oplev was immediately courted by Hollywood studios, sending him countless scripts to read. But Oplev didn't come close to committing to any of them - and then he read Dead Man Down. As Oplev recounted: "The thing about Dead Man Down is that it had a good script; that's the difference between this one and the other 250 scripts I read - it's a fantastic mixture of something that should work for a wide audience but at the same time it has a good `artsy' side.

"The characters have great emotions and depth. And it's a script that has my favourite theme, which is redemption of the heart, redemption of your destiny. In the sense that whenever everything in your life looks the bleakest, the darkest, somebody or something will grant you a second chance to redeem yourself and get your life back on track. This is very much the story for Victor and the story for Beatrice. And it kind of happens because they meet in this `heart of darkness' they're both in. Their meeting and all the crazy things that happen enable them to redeem themselves to a point where they're granted a second chance. It has all the ingredients of a classic American film, entertainment-wise. It has revenge, action, an interesting, mysterious plot that unravels as we go through the story. The film has all those fantastic, interesting characters and great production values, all of those things. And then inside the whole package there's this odd love story, really a love story between a man and a woman in a way that you have not seen before. And those elements for me were, of course, very attractive to work with."

Read more at www.writingstudio.co.za/page4634.html.

ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za
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