

This film is flexible. No, perhaps the word is versatile. "V for Vendetta" just may be the one film from 2006 that has the most varied interpretations, the one film that will stir more thought and debate than any other. It is so much more than the typical comic-book / graphic-novel adaptations that over-populate the cinemas and video stores. This one has ideas, pertinent and timely ideas, written by and for a complex mind



V for Vendetta

V FOR VENDETTA

★★★★★

Directed by James McTeigue

Written by the Wachowski Brothers

Starring Natalie Portman, Hugo Weaving, Stephen Fry, John Hurt

Distributed by Warner Brothers 2006

132m

Rated 15

It is thrilling. It is entertaining while still offering new avenues of thought. It keeps the engine in constant motion while still delivering dialogue that waxes poetic about the nature of government, art, revolution, rebellion, fear, terror, war, trust & courage.

V (Hugo Weaving) is the codename for a masked and cloaked man hell-bent on being noticed by the people and by the government. He practices vigilante justice, whether rescuing a damsel in distress on the future streets of London, blowing up a governmental building, or killing off those who wronged him in the past. Depending on your point of view, he is either a revolutionary or a terrorist.

Evey (Natalie Portman) is that damsel in distress, rescued by V when she breaks curfew and runs into an unseemly band of law enforcement agents. The two of them are bound

together by circumstance and ideas. There is an undeniable connection of fate between the two.

The plot is counting down to "Remember, remember,

"People should not be afraid of their governments, governments should be afraid of their people."

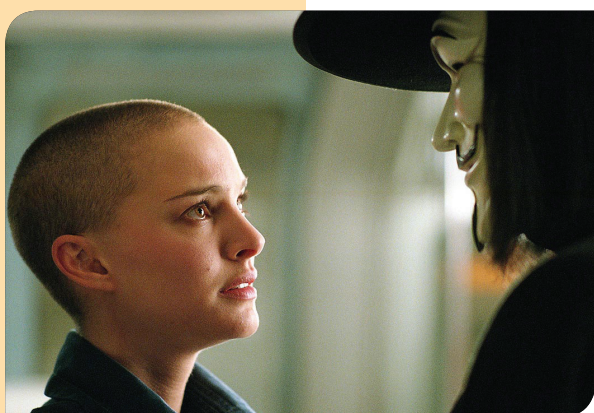
the 5th of November", a reference to Guy Fawkes' attempt to blow up the Houses of Parliament some 400 years earlier. On the next anniversary of that date, V has vowed to exact his vengeance by finishing the act thwarted all that time ago.

The similarities and references to our time, our government and our current world climate will not go unnoticed by anyone. It is quite obvious why this film is being made now. There are clearly messages to be heard here. Written in the early eighties, some may say the graphic novel has minimal relevance to our time, as it was written solely with allusions to the Nazi party.

However, this film was released in 2006 with direct references to terrorism, the war in Iraq, the fight over the right to privacy, the torture and murder of civilians, the hunger for power and control by the use of fear, the idea that government may not always be on our side... all of these themes and many others point an accusing finger directly at a certain American politician.

The cast is very good, with an especially nice turn by Stephen Fry in a small role. V's is hard to judge because of the mask, although Weaving is tremendous at delivering the lines with conviction. Portman has overcome the rather embarrassing inclusion in the disappointing "Star Wars" debacles to emerge clean on the other side with a sublime résumé for any actress, let alone a 24 year-old one. As Evey, she proves that she can command the screen with emotion so raw and intense that it guarantees to transpose itself to the audience.

The Wachowski brothers (The Matrix) have produced a fine film here, one that will merit all the conversations heard as the closing credits



roll. They have redeemed themselves from the obscene disappointment of the "Matrix" sequels, which seemed to land on audience eyes with a dull thud. However "V for Vendetta" is a gorgeous example of the possibility of their talent. Director James McTeigue has taken their vision and crafted a fine first feature.

"V for Vendetta" compels us to compare, to judge and to answer the questions and dilemmas it poses. It does so with a flare and grandeur that will make you edge closer to the screen, if only to immerse yourself further. This film is about ideas. Granted, they aren't new ideas, but they are ideas that we occasionally need reminding of in times like these.