

DVD REVIEW

The Fast Hack On:

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull

2 Disc Special Edition DVD

By Jeremiah Johnson

The 2 Disc Special Edition of *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008) is Paramount's take home version of it's summer blockbuster and it comes with all the frills and features that you'd expect from a special edition DVD set.

Disc one holds the 122 minute feature length film presented with excellent detail in widescreen standard definition. The original score is brilliantly presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound and the heavy computer graphics are masterfully blended.

Harrison Ford *is* Indiana Jones, and no amount of George-foolery can ever change that. At 65 Ford is just as physical as ever and somehow manages to make that fedora look even cooler than I remember. Indy's true love is back and the return of Karen Allen as Marion Ravenwood is a real treat for longtime fans.

The sequel starts 19 years after the last film and the feisty shot-for-shot Marion that we knew from "*RAIDERS*" is now a mom and, yes, in trouble once again. Racing to Marion's rescue is her switchblade-wielding, hair-obsessed son, Mutt, played by Shia LeBeouf.

Cate Blanchet plays the villainous Soviet Colonel, Dr. Irina Spalko, and while Blanchet's Russian accent is convincing I did have a hard time believing that Indy and friends were ever in any real danger.

This movie stinks. So for real fans the true pull of this Special Edition is all it's extra goodies. If what you need is another fix from Dr. Jones, then skip the film and jump straight to the extras.

Disc One's *Special Features* menu treats you to the first two bonus features: *RETURN OF A LEGEND* and *PRE-PRODUCTION*. *LEGEND* is an 18 minute production back story that features Director Steven Spielberg firmly pointing the finger at Executive Producer George Lucas - apparently those aliens aren't really aliens - they're multidimensional beings - um, thanks for the heads up George.

Next is the 12 minute featurette, *PRE-PRODUCTION*, which really belongs with Disc Two's 80 minute behind-the-scenes mini-epic, *PRODUCTION DIARIES*. *PRODUCTION DIARIES* is just what it sounds like, and it really does pay a sincere homage to a dedicated cast and crew.

You'll also find the usual sketches and production photos and a complete set of theatrical trailers. And just to punctuate the "*special*" in Special Edition, Lucas Arts thoughtfully dropped an XBOX 360 demo of their new game *LEGO INDIANA JONES: THE ORIGINAL ADVENTURES (WTF George?)*.

True Believers and Keepers of the Lucas Faith will get a lot out of this release, but there are some things a man just can't let go:

This movie just plain left a bad taste in my mouth. As far as escapist entertainment, goes *CRYSTAL SKULL* is about on par with Gary Goddard's vision of HE-MAN in *MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE* (1987). It really made me wonder what the hell George and his Ewoks have been up to over at Skywalker Ranch. But it also confirmed what my heart already knew: however bad this movie might be - it isn't Indy's fault.