

Movie Review:

'Twelve Years A Slave' composed of dark, poignant scenes

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I like to review bad movies. I prefer to describe the quality of the fake blood and plastic limbs sent flying past the faces of giant robots. Every now and then though, I can be talked into a 'good' movie, the kind that will make me think about the artistry involved and its reflection on humanity; so this week I will put aside my glowing review for "Machete Kills" and implore you all to go see "12 Years A Slave."

It becomes apparent from the very first scene that when director Steve McQueen decided to adapt the memoir of the same name he knew what a large task he was undertaking; and he rose to the challenge with gusto. Every set and costume was flawless and detailed from the ruffles on wealthy women's trims to the cravats of the landowners. The music was all made from acoustic instruments and many of the songs were sung by the actors in the scenes. The combination of all of these details, the finely crafted metal coins the slaves were given to identify themselves when they left the property and the spirituals sung by the actors as they worked made this intense film a fully immersive experience.

The film follows Solomon Northup, a free man played by Chiwetel Ejiofor, a violinist from upstate New York who is sold by his business associates into slavery. The film alludes to the common nature of this practice as Solomon finds himself with other black people, some of whom were already slaves some who weren't, who have been kidnapped and are about to be brought to the south to be sold as

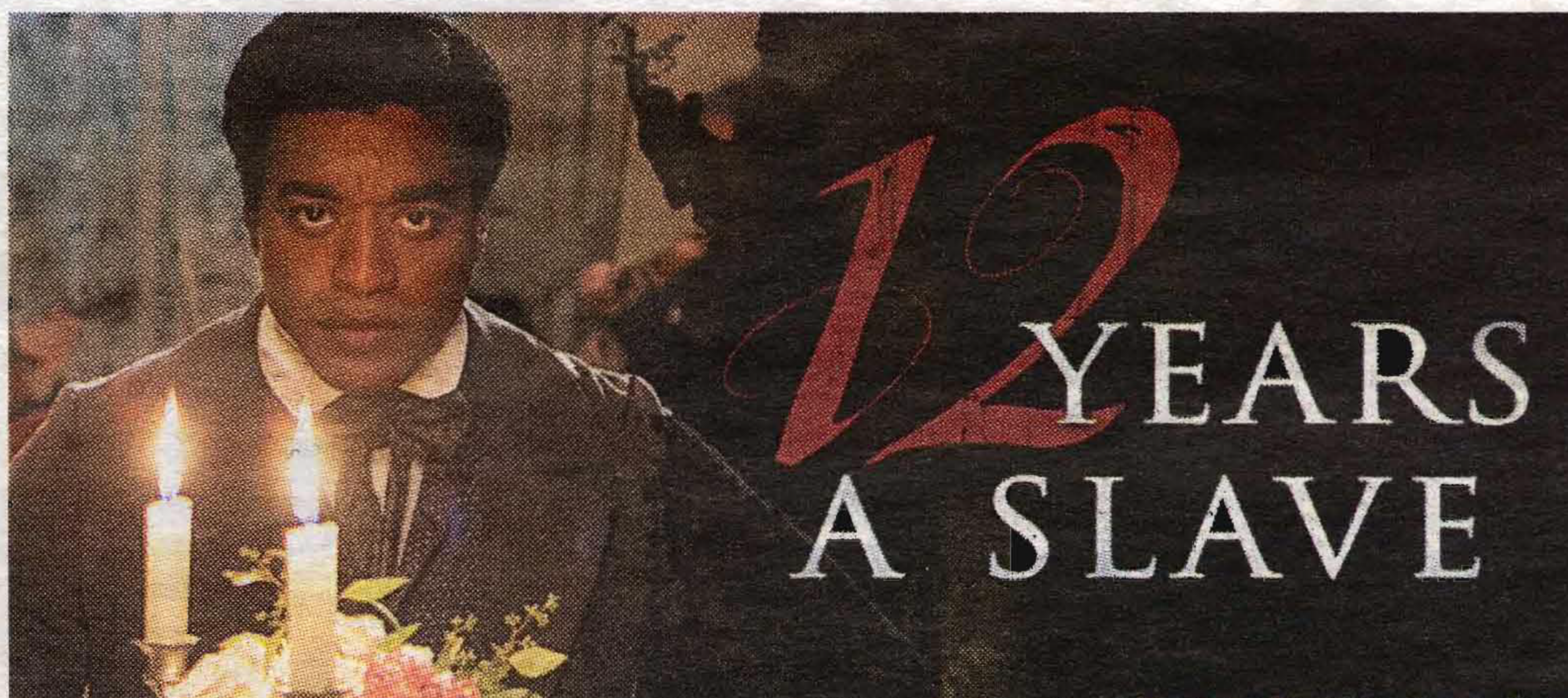


Image courtesy of schoolrack.com

slaves again. Early in the film one of Solomon's fellow captives is freed from their captivity by his owner who has come to 'rescue' him from being sold.

As the man that spent weeks in darkened cells and locked under board on a slave ship with Solomon is taken away he never gives Solomon a parting glance, unable to feel anything but relief that he is no longer in danger. This act will be repeated multiple times throughout the film as it goes into the true dehumanizing nature of slavery. Where people are kept afraid for their lives at every turn they lose all ability to offer each other compassion; they might sneak one another a drink of water and tend each other's wounds but they become less and less likely to speak out of turn on another's behalf as they are brutalized again and again. McQueen worked his hardest to provide as realistic a view of slavery as possible with long and lingering shots on hanged men and flesh ripped open. The end result is difficult to

watch but impossible to turn away from.

The story is told by some of the best actors McQueen could find. Benedict Cumberbatch plays Solomon's first owner Mr. Ford, who is offered up as a best case scenario for a slave. Not a master that will free you but at the very least not want you brutalized without reason. In an effort to save Solomon's life he passes him on to Edwin Epps a cotton farmer. Michael Fassbender's turn as Edwin Epps is one of the darkest and most chilling portrayals of human cruelty I have ever seen.

Lupita Nyong'o plays Patsy, the young slave that Epps harbors a deep obsession with; her performance alone is a powerhouse and combined the two of them are electric. When she pleads with him your heart breaks, when he beats her in response it's almost more than can be born. Solomon befriends Patsy in a way. They are often paired and at times he is held responsible for her but still there is only so much compassion he has to offer her. Solomon who

vowed to not let his sorrow consume him but to always work towards his freedom draws further and further into himself as each year goes by, learning how to play the role of a good slave right before our very eyes. Chiwetel Ejiofor's Solomon is one of the most nuanced and beautifully acted characters you will ever see.

Ejiofor's ability to capture despair and the breaking of his spirit done in most scenes in complete silence shown only through his eyes is beyond masterful. The story, already so hellish and difficult to watch, requires a strong and sympathetic lead Ejiofor

gives the audience that in droves as a man who has had his basic humanity stolen from him at a moment's notice. When he begins to refer to himself only as his slave name and tell only the lie his slaver told him about his past, you realize that you are watching the breaking of a good and talented man.

This movie is dark. It will offer many squeamish moments and the type of agonizing silences that most go to movies to avoid. But if you have the stomach, and the two and a half hours to spare, this movie will completely entrap you in its world and leave you blinking on the sidewalk unable to move on from its dramatic images. To say it is moving would be an understatement. And with awards season right around the corner it's safe to say that Nyong'o deserves a nomination at the very least. Ejiofor on the other hand WILL receive an Oscar for his performance even if I have to make him one out play-doh and mail it to him.

Spring Cleaning

including Electronic Waste

ALL DAY

October 24-25 Open to the community for limited hours on October 26

laptops · computers · tablets · televisions · cellphones · printers
monitors · DVD players · video game consoles · scanners · wood
computer mice · fax machines · keyboards · scrap metal · furniture

If you're not sure if an item can be recycled, bring it anyway!

DROP OFF LOCATIONS:

All drop off locations are outdoors unless otherwise specified

E1 • Back Hallway (North Exit) **Perlstein** • North of Building
MTCC • North Dock **LSR** • "Gun Room" (by roll-up door)
Hermann Hall • North Dock **Galvin** • Northwest Dock
Stuart • Left of Entry (Indoors) **Keating** • East Stairs
Tower • West Lobby (Indoors) **MSV** • Dock (north of main entrance)

OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY

October 26 9am-1pm

Electronic Waste Only: laptops · computers · tablets · televisions ·
cellphones · printers · monitors · DVD players · video game consoles
scanners · computer mice · fax machines · keyboards

DROP OFF LOCATION:

A truck will be parked on the street between MTCC and MSV
at the intersection of 33rd and Wabash on the IIT Campus

CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY@IIT.EDU

It is the responsibility of the parties dropping off electronics to ensure that they have removed and wiped clean all personal information from the devices. IIT will not be undertaking such efforts and assumes no liability for the disclosure of any personal information left on devices that are dropped off.

ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Office of Campus Life

Happy Fall!

Don't forget to attend the Health Fair!
Thursday, October 24 from 10 am—2 pm
on the MTCC Bridge!

Daniel Trust, a Rwandan Genocide Survivor
and GLBT Advocate will be speaking on
campus on Thursday at 7:00 pm in the
MTCC Auditorium. Come hear his story!

Wicked & Fright Fest tickets will
be on sale soon!

Visit tinyurl.com/IITticketsales
To see when you can sign up!

Have you been reading "The Meaning of
Matthew" with us? Come to the book club
wrap-up on 10/29 @ 7 pm in MTCC Aud.

The Search is

ON!

Spring 2014

Orientation Leaders & Peer Mentors!

