

TENET

UK/USA | 2020 | 150' | Action, Sci-Fi | Rated PG-13

Directed by

Christopher Nolan

Written by

Christopher Nolan

With

John David Washington
Robert Pattinson
Elisabeth Debicki
Kenneth Branagh

Original Music by

Ludwig Göransson



Première:

22/08/2020
(preview screening)

World release:

26/08/2020

REVIEW

Protagonist, our main character with no specific name, is involved from the very beginning in a very peculiar mission for an organization named 'Tenet': prevent a catastrophic event that would cause the world from being devastated in un-specified events. In order to do so, he will have to travel onward and backwards in time, battling against 'inverted' weapons and people through a technology yet to be fully understood...

Nolan has always been a peculiar narrator, from - let's say - forever; his very own creative desire is to tell us stories, sometimes ordinary ones, sometimes more complicated ones, in brand new ways. From his first "Memento" to Interstellar, time has always been a factor that had to be treated, as well as any other feature of the movie, in an original and personal way, reaching peaks of full accomplishment of the narrative (the mentions titles) or leaving some freedom for interpretation to the audience (does "Inception"'s spin ring a bell?).

This time, Nolan stumbles against his own brain and his desire to mark new levels of narrative hurdles. It would be nearly impossible to structure a complete analysis of the plot in a few lines, so I'll just point out how, despite a quite simple main story, the narrative flow goes too many times back and forth losing some grips for the viewer to follow everything smoothly. An unfortunate screenplay that struggles with the exquisite perfection of the photography (Hoyte Van Hoytema, yet DoP of "Interstellar" and "Dunkirk" just to mention Nolan's filmography) and the technical awesomeness of the scenes where the timelines nearly collapse on each other but, at the same time, stay clearly distinguishable by the viewer's eye.

If something, I finally got to change my mind about Robert Pattinson, a surprisingly good co-protagonist that helps John David Washington's character shine even more. After the melodramatic character in "BlackKklansman" under Spike Lee's sapient guide, Washington gets in touch with Nolan's great skills in directing, acting beside some extremely skilled colleagues that must have helped in the process.

Something that triggers the plot in so many ways, though, is Kenneth Branagh, AKA Sator. The antagonist of the story truly makes the magic work, both literally through the time-inverting machine and metaphorically

creating that pattern of mystery and clarity that makes the story go. Wherever you put him, Branagh has always a enviable charme and an intense character possession which, at times, outshines his co-stars (most unfortunate, in this case, for Elizabeth Debicki, maybe the only one out of tune).

Can't say much about the music this time: the absence of the long-lasting music associate of Nolan, Hans Zimmer, leaves Ludwig Göransson an ungrateful position. And if we had some doubts about the Academy Award won by the Swedish composer last year for "Black Panther" ... well, I'll just have to suspend my judgment to some other works: this time he gets no more than a bare passing grade for me.

Too much, my dear Nolan; this time, you truly outranked yourself in the prize for the most intricate and - slightly unnecessary - complex narrative. Although he remains one of my favorite film-makers and even if I find his need for experimentation praiseworthy in a time where real 'authors' are rare enough to find, I'll catalogue "Tenet" in one of my least appreciated in his filmography (even if just being in this restricted list makes the vision worth a shot anyway!).

ASSESSMENT

POSTER

92%

TAGLINE

78%

TRAILER

75%

SATISFACTION

70%

DIRECTING

92%

SCREENPLAY

76%

PRODUCTION DESIGN

88%

CINEMATOGRAPHY

95%

CAST

88%

MUSIC

60%**TOTAL****83% = B**