



The Main Feature

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Top Gun Maverick

US, 2022

131 mins, Certificate PG-13

Director	Joseph Kosinski
Writers	Jim Cash, Jack Epps Jr, Peter Craig
Cinematography	Claudio Miranda
Music	Harold Faltermeyer, Lady Gaga, Hans Zimmer

Cast

Tom Cruise	Capt Pete 'Maverick' Mitchell
Val Kilmer	Adm Tom 'Iceman' Kazansky
Miles Teller	Lt Bradley 'Rooster' Bradshaw
Jennifer Connelly	Penny Benjamin
Bashir Salahuddin	CW04 Bernie 'Hondo' Coleman
Jon Hamm	Adm Beau 'Cyclone' Simpson
Charles Parnell	Adm Solomon 'Warlock' Bates
Monica Barbaro	Lt Natasha 'Phoenix' Trace
Lewis Pullman	Lt Robert 'Bob' Floyd
Glen Powell	Lt Jake 'Hangman' Seresin



Top Gun: Maverick is a 2022 American action drama directed by Joseph Kosinski which is a sequel to the 1986 film *Top Gun*. At the insistence of Tom Cruise, it was released in cinemas only in America on May 27 2022. The main character of both *Top Gun* films is Maverick himself, Pete Mitchell, played by Tom Cruise. Maverick started as a loose cannon who marched to the beat of his own drum. After the death of his best friend, Goose, Maverick learned to grow up and become one of the best aviators in the Navy. When we meet Maverick in the *Top Gun* sequel, he is still as stubborn as ever, but now he's often fighting for others. Once he's tasked with returning to Top Gun, Maverick's top priority is making sure the pilots return home from their mission with zero casualties.

The film also stars Miles Teller, Jennifer Connelly, Jon Hamm, Glen Powell, Monica Barbaro, Lewis Pullman, Ed Harris and Val Kilmer, who reprises his role as Iceman. The story revolves around Maverick confronting his past while training a group of younger Top Gun graduates, including the son of his deceased best friend, for a dangerous mission.

Development of this *Top Gun* sequel was first announced in 2010 by Paramount Pictures. Tom Cruise, along with producer Jerry Bruckheimer and director Tony Scott were asked to return. Peter Craig wrote a draft of the screenplay in 2012, but the project stalled when Scott died later

that year; *Top Gun: Maverick* was later dedicated to Scott's memory. Production resumed in 2017, after Kosinski was hired to direct. Principal photography, which involved the use of IMAX-certified 6K full-frame cameras, took place from May 2018 to April 2019 in California, Washington and Maryland. Release of the film was delayed by the Covid pandemic but it stormed the box office and broke records as it collected US \$ 1.4 billion worldwide and was hailed as the movie that saved Hollywood.

Cruise has described making a *Top Gun* sequel as being like trying to hit a bullet with a bullet – which is *exactly* the kind of thing that Maverick would say. Yet working with director Joseph Kosinski and scriptwriters (including Christopher McQuarrie), he has done just that.

If you saw the 1986 *Top Gun*, *Top Gun: Maverick* is packed with nostalgia and call-backs to the original movie, including some legacy characters and familiar scenes. A cameo from Val Kilmer's Iceman proves unexpectedly affecting. You will also notice that the love interest character has changed. Maverick, now decades into his career, woos a bar owner (and daughter of an admiral) named Penny Benjamin. Penny, played by Jennifer Connelly, is not physically in the first *Top Gun*, but she does exist in it, though only mentioned in passing.

Penny owns a bar that is the downtime destination of choice for the *Top Gun* crew. She's less than thrilled when Maverick shows up again, and their dialogue definitely implies that they've had a bit of an on-and-off romance throughout the years between the two movies. In the earlier film, Maverick's past exploits are said to include "a history of high-speed passes over five air-control towers and one admiral's daughter," and Maverick's best friend Goose mutters Penny's name under his breath — making her the "admiral's daughter" in question. That's later confirmed when Goose's wife, Carole, teases Maverick about his romantic history, telling her that Goose "told me all about the time you went ballistic with Penny Benjamin."

The stunts are finely choreographed. Cruise didn't fly the F-18 while shooting *Top Gun: Maverick* due to Navy restrictions, but was piloting in the P-51 Mustang during the scene in which Maverick flies with Penny. It's not surprising he was flying the plane, given how well-known Tom Cruise is for doing his own stunts

Top Gun: Maverick retains the nail-biting aeronautics and emotional punches that made the original film a defining hit in the 1980s. From the opening shots of planes taking off from an aircraft carrier to the iconic "Danger Zone" soundtrack, the movie delivers the adrenaline rush fans expect. The film combines nostalgia, high-flying action, and Cruise's enduring charisma, making it a thrilling ride for fans and newcomers alike.

Let's see if Woking Film Club's audience agrees.

Mike Widdup



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Club website: www.wncc.org.uk. Prefer to leave your comments on the film and your score online rather than on paper? Email to reactions@wncc.org.uk by Wednesday 17 April 2024
Discs of previous shows are available to hire for a modest fee.

How Many Remakes?

The Saturday edition of my newspaper contains a quiz by Thomas Eaton. It has two parts: some general questions and then a section called What Links? A few weeks ago, it asked for the link between: Katharine Hepburn; June Allyson; Winona Ryder; and Saoirse Ronan. After some head-scratching, I was forced to look up the answer – which was that these actresses had played Jo March in films of *Little Women* made in 1933, 1949, 1994 and 2019. Three remakes sounded a lot to me, so I wondered which other films matched or exceeded this (to simplify matters, I am excluding silent films, shorts, made-for-TV films and franchises). With thanks to the website screenrant.com, here's a selection.



A Star is Born was originally made in 1937 with Janet Gaynor and Frederic March, then remade in 1954 with Judy Garland and James Mason, again remade in 1976 with Barbra Streisand and Kris

Kristofferson and the last remake was in 2018 with Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper (who also directed).

The first *King Kong*, with innovative stop-motion animation, was made in 1933 with Fay Wray starring in the ape-meets-girl fable. In a 1976 remake, the Fay Wray role is taken by Jessica Lange; and a decade later a sort-of sequel was directed by



John Guillermin ('This couldn't be any worse' opined Radio Times). A better effort was directed by Peter Jackson in 2005, sticking closely to the original plot (this time Radio Times called it 'sensational entertainment').

Adapted from a strip cartoon which began in the New York Daily News in 1924, *Little Orphan Annie* was made in 1932 with Mitzi

Green, thought too 'big and buxom' by some critics. The 1938 version, starring Anne Gillis, was scarcely better received ('stupid and thoroughly boresome'). So perhaps it's no surprise that the next remake awaited the Broadway musical version staged in 1977. The 1982 film *Annie* starred Albert Finney as 'Daddy' Warbucks and Aileen Quinn as Annie; and in a further remake in 2014 Quvenzhané Wallis was Annie (now living in foster care rather than an orphanage) and Jamie Foxx was 'Will' Stacks, a development of Albert Finney's character.

But the winner is *A Christmas Carol*, with



seven remakes in 74 years. The original, *Scrooge*, in 1935, starred Seymour Hicks, with remakes in 1938 (Reginald Owen) and 1951 (my favourite, with Alistair Sim as Scrooge). In 1970,

hard on the heels of *Oliver!*, there was a musical version *Scrooge* scored by Leslie Bricusse with Albert Finney as Scrooge, Alex Guinness as Jacob Marley, Edith Evans as the Ghost of Christmas Past and Kenneth More as the Ghost of Christmas Present. In 1984, George C Scott took the title role; *Scrooged* with Bill Murray followed in 1988,



with *The Muppet Christmas Carol* in 1992. Disney made an animated musical version in 1997, with the vocal talents of Whoopi Goldberg, Michael York, Ed Asner and

Tim Curry. The latest version starring Jim Carey as Scrooge was made in 2009.

Michael Hipkins

Comments and reactions to: **Parallel Mothers**

No of reaction slips received = 26

Average score = 6.84

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	~	~	~	~	~	4	3	11	7	~	~

The early parts of the film were too fast to follow the sub-titles and the movie but did not detract from an enjoyable evening. I did enjoy it! *Twisting plots like a soap drama but in a good way*

Interesting film. Loved the acting and location

Good focus on motherhood. Well acted

Intriguing story but sometimes hard to follow with the white sub-titles on white background!!

Penélope Cruz was excellent and so was the music which was subtle and sparing

An engaging piece of film making

Visually fascinating - plot felt too "busy"

Great storytelling, but I found it hard to link the two main elements in the narrative

Very powerful. An interesting development from the personal to the universal

Improbable situations (would Ana really have wanted to care for a new baby when hers had just died – would seem like self-torture) and a mixed-up two-story film, saved by the luminous presence of the wonderfully photogenic Cruz in almost every scene. But we wouldn't watch it again.

I enjoyed the film and was surprised by the twists.

Position	Film	Average score
1	Where the Crawdads Sing	7.83
2	Living	7.62
3=	Mrs Harris Goes to Paris	7.58
3=	Downton Abbey – A New Era	7.58
5	Empire of Light	7.46
6	The Lost King	7.38
7	Dog Day Afternoon	7.15
8	The Banshees of Inisherin	7.06
9	Parallel Mothers	6.83
10	Rams	6.40
11	Three Colours: Blue	6.18
12	Vagabond	5.88
13	Decision to Leave	4.59

Forthcoming attraction: 25 April 2024 – **Till**



On 28 August 1955 in Money, Mississippi, Emmett Louis Till, a 14-year-old African-American, was abducted, tortured and lynched for seemingly offending a white woman in a grocery store; his dead body, mutilated and unrecognisable, was discovered in the Tallahatchie river three days later. It is to the credit of filmmaker Chinonye Chukwu that Till has no truck with depicting and therefore sensationalising the heinous crime. Instead, Chukwu reframes the story through the prism of Emmett's mother Mamie's fight for justice. It's a smart move, finding hope in a tragedy without cheapening it, while playing out the narrative on a bigger civil-rights canvas — one that provides a subtle but stunning showcase for Danielle Deadwyler [as Mamie] ... who transforms Till from a good film into a gripping one.

Empire