

SHUTTER ISLAND (PUBLISHED IN TIME OFF MAGAZINE, BRISBANE)

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Directed by: Martin Scorsese

Starring: Leonardo Di Caprio, Mark Ruffalo, Ben Kingsley, Michelle Williams, Max Von Sydow

Reviewed by: Vicki Englund

When you're Martin Scorsese, there's a huge expectation that any film you direct will somehow be a masterpiece of its kind. Maybe that's too big an expectation of Shutter Island, which while it certainly has a lot to offer, isn't completely satisfying.

Based on the novel by Dennis Lehane - who also wrote Mystic River - the film suffers moving from its literary roots to a cinematic setting. Sure, it looks amazing and Scorsese injects a deeply unsettling mood from the outset - the overwrought soundtrack borders on being a send-up of 1950s B movies - but it lags in the middle and there's a bit too much explanation required at the end.

Di Caprio is utterly convincing as usual, and it's a shame the movie has come out too late to allow him an Oscar nomination, which he surely deserves. He plays U.S. Marshal, Teddy Daniels, who along with partner, Chuck (Ruffalo), arrives on an imposing windswept island housing the criminally insane, to investigate a patient's disappearance.

The Marshals meet up with the resident psychiatrists, played by consummate actors, Kingsley and Von Sydow, and we're gradually sucked into a disturbing web where Daniels believes he's stumbled onto some very frightening goings-on. All the while, he's haunted by memories of the sights he saw when he helped liberate Dachau Nazi camp.

This is one of those films where you're not sure what's going on, and it's probably just best to go along for the ride and enjoy the quality of the acting and filmmaking. It won't go down in history as one of Scorsese's best but it's nice to watch a film that requires all your attention.