

**TRANSCRIPT**

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Cinema Review
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Angels and Demons

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I gave this review the title *Angels and Demons* after the title of the movie which I am going to talk about. However, that same title could equally well apply to another matter which I will also discuss later.

But first, *Angels and Demons* the movie. You're probably somewhat surprised to hear me talking about this movie given that it is a kind of sequel to *The Da Vinci Code* - a movie which I have often said on this program is one of the worst movies of all time.

What could he have been thinking, you might say? Why would he bother to see a sequel to that load of old cobblers?

Well it was you, dear listener, that led me to do this thing. I had your interests at heart because I knew that you would be subjected to a tsunami of publicity in relation to this movie and that you would pretty soon be left wondering whether or not you should spend some of your hard-earned cash to go and see it.

Well the short answer is: probably not. You notice that I was hedging a little here and that's because *Angels and Demons* is not *quite* as bad as its forerunner. The movie has a few quite good twists and turns to the plot and some of the characters are reasonably well-disguised enough for much of the movie to have us wondering whether they are what they seem to be. All that is good.

Another positive is that most of the action takes place in Rome and so we get to see more great Eternal City scenery than we've had on screen since Audrey Hepburn took her *Roman Holiday*. There's even a longish sequence located in and around the Pantheon - that two-thousand year old church that was originally built as a temple to all the Roman Gods. The Pantheon is one of my favourite buildings. Its domed roof is said to have inspired Michelangelo for Saint Peter's Basilica. So any movie that provides me with some fine images of this magnificent structure can't be all bad.

And then there's the Hans Zimmer music. You might recall me enthusing about Zimmer's Wagnerian-style music for last year's Batman movie - *The Dark Knight*. Well he's pulled out all stops once again for *Angels and Demons*, but this time using a suggestion of Gregorian chant as the appropriate basis for his luscious, rhythmic combinations of orchestra and voices. At times, it's music to get your pulse racing, and has the ability to persuade you that there is something happening on the screen even when there's really not much going on at all. The music is also played behind the closing credits right to the end and I would urge you to sit there - even though everyone else leaves the theatre - and enjoy the Zimmer music in surround-sound without having to be distracted by action on the screen.

However, even great music can't save a movie which is let down by a silly plot and a bland central character. *Angels and Demons* requires us to believe that a secret society of scientists, called the Illuminati, who were persecuted by the Catholic Church many hundreds of years ago has re-surfaced, stolen a weapon which is more powerful than several atomic bombs, and is now threatening to wreak vengeance on the Church by blowing up Rome just when the College of Cardinals is meeting to elect a new Pope.

Wow! You can either see this as pretty heavy stuff – or you can see it as something rather like the plot of a Saturday matinee serial from the 1940's.

Enter our hero, Professor Robert Langdon – the Indiana Jones of the Harvard Faculty of Theology. He's a symbolist who is called in to interpret all the tricky clues which the bad guys have deliberately left behind so that the good guys can find their way to where the bomb is hidden. Why do bad guys choose to leave deliberate trails of signs which lead the goodies straight to them? You might well ask.

Professor Langdon is again played by Tom Hanks whose facial expression throughout the movie flickers between puzzlement and bemusement. Perhaps he was wondering why he accepted the role. Langdon's character must surely be one of the most bland and un-engaging action heroes ever to stumble across the screen. In place of dialogue he spouts dissertations, like paragraphs taken at random from musty old lectures.

Given the irritating nature of his character you would think that the bad guys would do their darndest to try to knock him off. However, they don't really seem try very hard to do this because Langdon's role is merely that of an adviser to others. This role has the effect of making him something of an onlooker rather than a genuine participant in the action and we, the audience, therefore feel that he's rarely exposed to any real danger. It's the hero as consultant.

In a movie which purports to be a thriller, the absence of significant threat to the safety of the hero has the effect of reducing the dramatic tension to about zero.

So, should you go and see *Angels and Demons*? Well, yes, - provided you have nothing better to do. I gave it one and half stars – mostly for the scenery and the music.

Now for some Angels and Demons of a different kind. I'm referring here to the people on either side of the divide in the on-going battle to save the Chelsea cinema.

I attended the public meeting held at the cinema itself on Monday, May the eighteenth and, on that occasion, the drama in the theatre took place not on the screen but in the stalls.

It was a stormy meeting attended by about three hundred and fifty people, including several state Members of Parliament and it was clear from the outset that almost none of those present agreed with the Council's proposal to sell off the Chelsea. The meeting was chaired by Burnside City Council Mayor, Wendy Greiner and, as the evening progressed and the angry crowd became more vocal, there were numerous calls for the Mayor to resign.

After two and a half hours of often fiery rhetoric, the meeting unanimously endorsed a resolution condemning the Council for initiating the sale process and demanding that the Chelsea remain in public ownership as a cinema in perpetuity.

The assembly was told that the resolution would be put before the Council at its next meeting on June the sixteenth. I will be going along to that meeting too because, while the skirmish at the Chelsea was comprehensively won by the power of the people, I sense that the battle itself is far from over yet.

So, I'll say goodbye for now. I'll see you in the back stalls – or perhaps even at the Council Chamber.