

Short Review: “Star Wars: Episode I-The Phantom Menace” (1999) by Dr. John L. Flynn



Star Wars: Episode I-The Phantom Menace (1999). 20th Century Fox, color, 133 min.

Director: George Lucas. Writer: George Lucas. Producer: Rick McCallum. Cast: Liam Neeson, Ewan McGregor, Natalie Portman and Jake Lloyd.

When the new saga from far away and long ago opens, the Trade Federation is threatening the planet of Naboo, ruled by Queen Amidala (Portman). Jedi Knight Qui-Gon Jinn (Neeson) and his squire Obi-Wan Kenobi (McGregor) enlist a youthful Anakin Skywalker (Lloyd), before he becomes Darth Vader, and fight against an evil Sith Lord who is working for a galactic senator behind the scenes. Jinn sees great things in Anakin's place in the Force, but a big space and land battle with an android army breaks out, and things become dire for our heroic companions. This first prequel in the “Star Wars” saga was not very well received by critics, but did bang-up business at the box office. We could do without the pod race and the wooden acting of Jake Lloyd, but Neeson looks great as Jinn and Portman is hot as Luke and Leia's future mom. See “Star Wars” (1977) and sequels and prequels.

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