



SILVERSCREEN
PRIMARY
EDUCATION

The History of Science Fiction Cinema

By Adam Pepper

Session 9:
1980s – 1990s: Part 2
Dinosaurs, meteorites,
'Welcome To Earth!'
Bullet Time & 'Get Your
Ass To Mars!'



Welcome to Session 9 of this 'History of Science Fiction Cinema'! Just two more to go, space cadets!

Over these last few weeks, we have journeyed through space and time to uncover the secrets behind some of the greatest science fiction stories, movies, directors and characters, and tried to uncover what science fiction really is, and where it blurs with our reality today.

Session 9:

As the testosterone and steroid-fuelled 80s showed us, Sci-Fi is often best served with an oily bicep, a delightfully cheesy one-liner and a cool pair of sunglasses! But did Sci-Fi's move to the mainstream, blockbuster-style of movie really signal the end of intelligent science fiction thought and ideas?

With directors like Cameron and Spielberg offering us spectacle and heart respectively, as we made our way through the 80s, us cinema-goers really could choose our own brand of sci-fi, and whatever we wanted, there was plenty to go around; and often numerous sequels to keep our appetites sated.

But as we head into the 90s, we are about to be hit with not one, but two, major game changers in the world of sci-fi cinema. And, just like Melies back in the 1900s, these iconic movies are all about special effects and bringing impossible things to life.

With our journey almost done, we still have so much of this universe to explore.

Useful information for Session 9:

Sam Raimi

Samuel M. Raimi (born October 23, 1959) is an American film director, screenwriter and producer. He is best known for directing the first three films in the *Evil Dead* franchise (1981–present) and the *Spider-Man* trilogy (2002–2007). He also directed the superhero *Darkman* (1990), the revisionist western *The Quick and the Dead* (1995), the neo-noir crime-thriller *A Simple Plan* (1998), the supernatural thriller *The Gift* (2000), the supernatural horror *Drag Me to Hell* (2009), the Disney fantasy *Oz the Great and Powerful* (2013), and the Marvel Studios film *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* (2022).

His films are known for their highly dynamic visual style, inspired by comic books and slapstick comedy. He founded the production company Renaissance Pictures in 1979 and Ghost House Pictures in 2002. Raimi has also produced several successful television series, including *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*, its spin-off *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *Ash vs Evil Dead* starring long time friend and collaborator Bruce Campbell reprising his role in the *Evil Dead* franchise.

Raimi became fascinated with making films when his father brought a movie camera home one day. He began to make Super 8 movies with his friend Bruce Campbell, whom he met in 1975. In college, he teamed up with his brother's roommate Robert Tapert and Campbell to shoot *Within the Woods* (1978), a 32-minute horror film which raised \$375,000, as well as his debut feature film *It's Murder!* During that time, he also shot the seven-minute short film *Clockwork* (1978), starring Scott Spiegel (who had appeared in *Within the Woods*) and Cheryl Guttridge. Through family, friends, and a network of investors, Raimi was able to finance production of the highly successful horror film *The Evil Dead* (1981) which became a cult hit and effectively launched Raimi's career.

Paul Verhoeven

Paul Verhoeven (born 18 July 1938) is a Dutch filmmaker. His films are known for their graphic violence and sexual content, combined with social satire. After receiving attention for the TV series *Floris* in his native Netherlands, Verhoeven got his film breakthrough with the romantic drama *Turkish Delight* (1973), starring frequent collaborator Rutger Hauer. The film was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film and later received the award for Best Dutch Film of the Century at the Netherlands Film Festival. Verhoeven later directed successful Dutch films including the period drama *Keetje Tippel* (1975), the war film *Soldier of Orange* (1977), the teen drama *Spetters* (1980) and the psychological thriller *The Fourth Man* (1983).

In 1985, Verhoeven made his first Hollywood film *Flesh and Blood* and later had a successful career in the United States, directing science fiction films such as *RoboCop* (1987), *Total Recall* (1990), *Starship Troopers* (1997) and *Hollow Man* (2000), as well as the erotic thriller *Basic Instinct* (1992).

He later returned to Europe, making the Dutch war film *Black Book* (2006), French psychological thriller *Elle* (2016) and the religious drama *Benedetta* (2021), all receiving positive reviews.

The Wachowskis

Lana Wachowski (born June 21, 1965; formerly known as Larry Wachowski) and Lilly Wachowski (born December 29, 1967; formerly known as Andy Wachowski) are American film and television directors, writers and producers.

Together known as the Wachowskis, the sisters have worked as a writing and directing team through most of their careers. They made their directing debut in 1996 with *Bound* and achieved fame with their second film, *The Matrix* (1999), a major box office success for which they won the Saturn Award for Best Director. They wrote and directed its two sequels, *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions* (both in 2003), and were involved in the writing and production of other works in the *Matrix* franchise.

Following the commercial success of the *Matrix* series, the Wachowskis wrote and produced the 2005 film *V for Vendetta*, an adaptation of the graphic novel by Alan Moore and David Lloyd, and in 2008 released the film *Speed Racer*, a live-action adaptation of the Japanese anime series. Their next film, *Cloud Atlas*, based on the novel by David Mitchell and co-written and co-directed by Tom Tykwer, was released in 2012. Their film *Jupiter Ascending* and the Netflix series *Sense8*, which they co-created with J. Michael Straczynski, debuted in 2015; the second season of *Sense8* ended the series in 2018 and was Lana's first major project without Lilly.

Since the series finale of *Sense8*, the Wachowskis have been working separately on different projects.

Films to look out for:

Tron (1982)

Dune (1984)

Robocop (1987)

Total Recall (1990)

Jurassic Park (1993)

Apollo 13 (1995)

Twelve Monkeys (1995)

Ghost In The Shell (1995)

Forthcoming Session:

- 2000s – Worlds of Wonder

Independence Day (1996)

Starship Troopers (1997)

Contact (1997)

Event Horizon (1997)

The Matrix (1999)

Spiderman (2002)