

The flicks

Silence is golden in the terrifying new thriller *A QUIET PLACE*, while the elegantly crafted *PAUL, APOSTLE OF CHRIST* breathes fresh life into an often stale genre

**LEIGH
PAATSCH**
MOVIE REVIEW



A QUIET PLACE (M)

Director: John Krasinski (*The Hollars*)
Starring: John Krasinski, Emily Blunt, Millicent Simmonds, Noah Jupe.
Rating: ****1/2
For whom the decibel tolls

The wrong advance knowledge about *A Quiet Place* can crush its chances of shocking, surprising and subverting the expectations of viewers.

Should you experience *A Quiet Place* with nothing more than your guard down, eyes up and ears open (trust me, this last condition is of the utmost importance), then you will have witnessed one of the most unforgettable and best movies of 2018.

The movie opens with a title card informing us it is 'Day 89'. Some kind of catastrophic event has all but emptied the world as we know it. On the main street of a small town, a family of survivors is quickly gathering supplies.

It is not the urgency with which the clan is collecting food and medicine that gets your attention. It is their desperate determination to complete their mission without making a sound. Any sonic activity beyond the faintest whisper has the father (John Krasinski) of the clan staring daggers at his wife (Emily Blunt) and three young children.

Another title card comes up on screen. It is now 'Day 472'. Remarkably, the family have struck upon an organisational alchemy that has allowed them to go on living almost normally amid such abnormal adversity.

Their eldest child (played by young hearing-impaired actor Millicent Simmonds) is deaf, so everyone can communicate via sign language.

Everyone gets around in bare feet, walking only on ground carefully layered with sand to muffle their steps. The micromanagement even extends to mealtimes. No crisp food can be



Noah Jupe, Millicent Simmonds and John Krasinski and Noah Jupe in a scene from the thrilling *A Quiet Place*

consumed. As for cutlery, forget about it.

How long can this all go on, you might well ask, when as much as a single cough can seal several fates?

An answer is not too far away, and we will begin to dread its arrival. The mother has fallen pregnant, and shall be giving birth in a matter

of weeks. A baby cannot be trained to zip up. So how can the family prevent a terminal slip-up?

The exacting construction of this seemingly simple premise — and the astonishing sound design holding it firmly in place — is as impressive as it is effective. The bulk of the plaudits must to Krasinski, not just for a fine

performance (the entire small cast is brilliant) but also for his consummate control as director.

The end result is nerve-shredding, spellbinding and compellingly impossible to turn away from. You might be able to handle what you see in *A Quiet Place*, but what you hear will take some time to get over.

PAUL, APOSTLE OF CHRIST (M)

Director: Andrew Hyatt (*Full of Grace*)
Starring: James Faulkner, Jim Caviezel, Olivier Martinez, John Lynch, Joanne Whalley.
Rating: ***
Putting on a brave faith

The default setting for many people faced with sitting through a religiously inclined movie is to run for their lives. Perhaps even making a mocking joke or two as they do.

Fair enough, too. Most of these productions in the modern era — particularly those torn from the pages of the Bible — are way too worthy, far too dull and unintentionally silly (hello, Mary Magdalene!) to connect with the unconverted.

So let the record show this well-crafted dramatisation of the last days of the Apostle Paul is a cut above the generic results usually found in the genre.

James Faulkner (aka Randyll Tarly from *Game of Thrones*) brings both airs of fierce intelligence and noble resignation to the role of Paul, coming to the end of his time in a Roman prison on orders of a Christian-hating Emperor Nero.

While his brethren are dragged from their homes and thrown to the lions, Paul is paid regular visits from his good friend, the physician and scholar Luke (Jim Caviezel from *Passion of the Christ*).

The deep, meaningful and sometimes rather strained theological exchanges between Paul



Jim Caviezel as Luke and James Faulkner as Paul in *Paul, Apostle of Christ*

and Luke form a surprisingly warm and engaging nucleus for the movie.

Though there are a few subplots involving healing, miracles and First Century Roman politics which usher in some dodgy acting, the

substance to be found in the main story (especially Paul's recollections of his days as a man of violence) is undeniably of interest.

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CINEMAS CASUARINA**

**ALSO
SHOWING**

SHERLOCK GNOMES (G)

Case of the missing fun remains unsolved
US-UK, 86 min

A sub-so-so sequel to the 2011 animated hit *Gnomeo and Juliet*. Undiscerning preschoolers and unlucky primary schoolers will be delighted or distracted enough by the candy-coloured visuals and sketchy slapstick antics. Really, it's no better or worse than rival release *Peter Rabbit*, except that the title character is much less annoying. The story finds Gnomeo (voiced by James McAvoy) and Juliet (Emily Blunt) living in London, where they seem to have misplaced the whereabouts of their entire community of wacky garden gnomes. Enter the great detective Sherlock Gnomes (Johnny Depp) and his dutiful assistant Watson (Chiwetel Ejiofor) to crack the case. All the expected sights of modern London look great, but too many soundtrack songs from co-producer Elton John get to be grating. **