

= Superman Returns =

Superman Returns is a 2006 American superhero film directed and produced by Bryan Singer . It is based on the DC Comics character Superman and serves as a homage sequel to the motion pictures Superman (1978) and Superman II (1980) , ignoring the events of Superman III (1983) and Superman IV : The Quest for Peace (1987) . The film stars Brandon Routh as Clark Kent / Superman , Kate Bosworth as Lois Lane , Kevin Spacey as Lex Luthor , with James Marsden , Frank Langella , and Parker Posey . The film tells the story of the title character returning to Earth after a five @-@ year absence . He finds that his love interest Lois Lane has moved on with her life , and that his archenemy Lex Luthor is plotting a scheme that will destroy Superman and the world .

After a series of unsuccessful projects to resurrect Superman on the screen , Warner Bros. hired Bryan Singer to direct and develop Superman Returns in July 2004 . The majority of principal photography took place at Fox Studios Australia , Sydney , while the visual effects sequences were created by a number of studios , including Sony Pictures Imageworks , Rhythm & Hues , Framestore , Rising Sun Pictures , and The Orphanage ; filming ended in November 2005 .

Superman Returns received positive reviews , with critics praising its story , visual effects , musical score , and style . However , it received mixed reviews from audiences , who criticized the film for its length , the story , and lack of action sequences . Warner Bros. was also disappointed with the worldwide box office return . A sequel was planned for a summer 2009 release , but the project was later canceled . The Superman film series was rebooted in 2013 with the film Man of Steel , directed by Zack Snyder and starring Henry Cavill as Superman .

= = Plot = =

For five years , Superman (Brandon Routh) has abandoned his adopted home of Earth while on a journey to visit the remains of Krypton . His seemingly selfish decision has ruined his image in the eyes of many , including journalist Lois Lane (Kate Bosworth) , who writes a scathing article claiming that the world " doesn 't need Superman " . Scientist Lex Luthor (Kevin Spacey) , who lost his fame and fortune after being exposed as a criminal by Superman , secures an early release from prison and marries an old heiress , whose subsequent death makes him wealthy once again . Upon returning to Metropolis , Superman , in his human identity of Clark Kent , is shocked to discover the consequences of his disappearance . While covering the launch of a space shuttle , he narrowly saves a plane carrying Lois and other observers from crashing after a mysterious power failure , an act that earns him much goodwill . Unbeknownst to anyone , the accident was triggered by Luthor using Kryptonian technology stolen from the Fortress of Solitude .

Clark tries to fix his relationship with Lois , but soon learns that she is engaged to Richard White (James Marsden) , nephew of Daily Planet editor @-@ in @-@ chief Perry White (Frank Langella) , with whom she shares a young , asthmatic son , Jason (Tristan Lake Leabu) . Luthor has his aide Kitty (Parker Posey) distract Superman , allowing Lex to steal a sample of kryptonite from a museum . Suspecting his involvement , Lois requests an off @-@ the @-@ record interview aboard his private yacht . Luthor admits that he is indeed responsible and reveals his true plan : to create a new continent modeled after Krypton that he can shape in his image , while triggering massive tsunamis that will wipe out the nations of the world and force humanity to turn to him for survival . Jason has an asthmatic attack when Luthor reveals the kryptonite , but has no subsequent reaction when Luthor holds the stone near him .

Jason is sitting by the piano and the Yacht starts to rock from the waves . When one of Luthor 's henchmen threatens Lois , Jason pushes the piano towards the henchmen showing Lois that Jason is Superman 's son . Luthor and his thugs escape by helicopter as the new landmass emerges from the ocean . While working to contain the damage to Metropolis , Superman learns from Richard that Lois is in danger and saves her and Jason seconds before the yacht sinks .

Superman tries to apprehend Luthor , but the kryptonite @-@ poisoned atmosphere quickly strips him of his powers . After letting his men beat him into submission , Luthor stabs Superman with a Kryptonite shard and leaves him to die . With Richard 's help , Lois gets him to safety and removes

the shard . Fueled by the sun 's radiation , Superman defeats Luthor 's gang and covers the landmass with soil , allowing him to safely throw it into space . While helping Luthor escape , a disillusioned Kitty allows the helicopter to crash on a remote island , trapping him . Complications from Kryptonite exposure cause Superman to fall into a coma , and while doctors are able to remove most of the fragments , they cannot revive him . Lois visits him and whispers something into his ear while glancing at Jason , after which Superman comes to . Acknowledging that he has a much greater responsibility than himself , he recalls Jor @-@ El 's (Marlon Brando) last speech to Jason as he sleeps . Lois starts writing another article , titled " Why the World Needs Superman " . Superman reassures her that he is now back to stay , and flies off into space , where he gazes down at the world .

= = Cast = =

Brandon Routh as Clark Kent / Superman : The Kryptonian superhero who disguises himself as a journalist . Stephan Bender portrays the teenage Clark Kent in a flashback scene . Director Singer believed only an unknown actor would be suitable for the part . Routh was chosen from thousands of candidates interviewed at casting calls in the United States , United Kingdom , Canada and Australia . He had coincidentally auditioned for Clark Kent in the television series Smallville , but lost to Tom Welling . Routh had also met director Joseph " McG " Nichol for the role during pre @-@ production of Superman : Flyby . Dana Reeve , wife of Christopher Reeve , believed Routh 's physical resemblance to her late husband was striking . To obtain the muscular physique to play Superman convincingly , Routh underwent a strict bodybuilding exercise regimen . Prior to Routh 's casting , Singer had X2 actor Daniel Cudmore audition .

Kate Bosworth as Lois Lane : A reporter who works with Clark Kent at the Daily Planet , and former lover of Superman . Spacey recommended Singer to cast Bosworth in the role because she co @-@ starred with Spacey in Beyond the Sea (2004) as Sandra Dee . Claire Danes and Keri Russell were reportedly considered for the role . Amy Adams , who would later be cast as Lois Lane in the 2013 reboot Man of Steel , confirmed in an interview that she had also auditioned for Lois in 2005 . Adams had previously auditioned for Lois in 2003 when Brett Ratner was planning to direct Superman : Flyby . Bosworth studied Katharine Hepburn 's acting for inspiration , particularly in The Philadelphia Story (1940) and Guess Who 's Coming to Dinner (1967) , as well as Julia Roberts in Erin Brockovich (2000) .

Kevin Spacey as Lex Luthor : An evil sociopath armed with vast resources and an extensive knowledge of science who is Superman 's nemesis . Because of his Academy Award @-@ winning performance in Singer 's film The Usual Suspects (1995) , and friendship with the director , Spacey was the only actor considered for Lex Luthor . The writers specifically had Spacey in mind for the part when writing the script . Spacey 's version of Luthor has the same comically exaggerated vanity and pompous arrogance of the earlier Gene Hackman version as well as the same strong interest in real estate , but Spacey 's version is far less campy and more serious . Spacey later said that director Singer told him to play the character as " darker and more bitter " compared to Hackman and not to use the earlier portrayal as an inspiration .

James Marsden as Richard White : The nephew of the Daily Planet editor @-@ in @-@ chief Perry White and fiancé to Lois Lane . Marsden said Richard acts as an emotional challenge for Superman , since the hero comes back to find that " Lois Lane picks somebody who 's very Supermanesque " .

Parker Posey as Kitty Kowalski : Lex Luthor 's henchwoman . She served as a prison nurse and would give Lex his examinations . The character is based on Eve Teschmacher from the 1978 film , portrayed by Valerie Perrine . Posey was the only actress considered for the role .

Marlon Brando as Jor @-@ El : Superman 's biological father . Brando (who died in 2004) reprises his role from the 1978 film through the use of previous footage combined with computer @-@ generated imagery . This required negotiations with Brando 's estate for permission to have his footage used . Singer explained , " We had access to all of the Brando footage that was shot . There was unused footage that had Brando reciting poems , trailing off subject and swearing like a sailor .

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Tristan Lake Leabu as Jason White : The son of Lois Lane and Superman . The question of whether Superman or Richard is Jason 's father is initially unclear . He suffers from asthma and other ailments , but it is later revealed that he is the son of Superman , when he displays superhuman strength and discomfort around Kryptonite .

Other cast members include Frank Langella , who plays Daily Planet editor Perry White , a role originally attached to Hugh Laurie ; Sam Huntington as Daily Planet photographer Jimmy Olsen , Eva Marie Saint as Clark Kent 's adoptive mother Martha Kent , and Kal Penn as one of Luthor 's henchmen , Stanford . Jack Larson , who portrayed Jimmy Olsen in the 1950s television series Adventures of Superman , makes a cameo appearance as a bartender . Noel Neill ? who portrayed Lois Lane in the television series and the film serials Superman (1948) and Atom Man vs. Superman (1950) -- appears as Luthor 's elderly wife Gertrude Vanderworth . Richard Branson cameos as the engineer aboard the space shuttle . Another of Luthor 's henchmen (Riley) is played by former Australian Rugby League player Ian Roberts .

= = Development = =

Director and producer Bryan Singer conceived the storyline of " Superman returning to Earth after a five @-@ year absence " during the filming of X2 (2003) . He presented the idea to Lauren Shuler Donner and her husband Richard Donner , director of Superman (1978) . Donner greeted Singer 's idea with positive feedback . In March 2004 , Warner Bros. was commencing pre @-@ production on Superman : Flyby , which had a target theatrical release date of June 2006 . McG was signed to direct with a script by J. J. Abrams , but dropped out in June 2004 . That same month , Singer was approached by Warner Bros. to pitch his idea for Superman Returns , as he was preparing to leave for Hawaii on a short vacation with his X2 writers Michael Dougherty and Dan Harris . While in Hawaii , Singer , Dougherty and Harris began to outline the film treatment . In July 2004 , Singer signed on to direct and develop Superman Returns .

Although he was not a comic book fan , Singer was most impressed with Donner 's 1978 film , citing it as an influence of his , Dougherty and Harris 's writing . With Singer 's hiring , he dropped out of X @-@ Men : The Last Stand (2006) and also had the Logan 's Run remake pushed back . Superman Returns was financed 50 / 50 between Warner Bros. and Legendary Pictures , and pre @-@ production began in November 2004 . By February 2005 , Dougherty and Harris had written six drafts of the script . Early versions of the script contained references to the September 11 attacks before they were removed .

= = = Production = = =

Warner Bros. considered shooting Superman Returns at Warner Roadshow Studios in the Gold Coast , Queensland , Australia . After filming , this could have been used as an attraction for the adjoining Warner Bros. Movie World theme park , but the idea was scrapped for being too expensive . Set construction started in January 2005 at Fox Studios Australia for the film 's 60 setpieces , while the start date was pushed back for two weeks . In an attempt to avoid public attention , Superman Returns carried the fake working title of Red Sun during filming . Starting in late March 2005 , principal photography lasted until November . Filming of Superman Returns in New South Wales constituted hiring thousands of local workers , generating over \$ 100 million into the local economy . 80 % of filming took place at Fox Studios Australia , occupying all nine sound stages . Scenes set in Smallville were shot at Tamworth , while the Australian Museum doubled for the Metropolis Museum of Natural History .

= = = Design and effects = = =

Superman Returns was shot using Panavision 's Genesis digital camera . Production designer Guy Hendrix Dyas was influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright 's Johnson Wax Headquarters for the design of

the Daily Planet . ESC Entertainment was originally set to design the visual effects sequences , but Warner Bros. replaced them with the hiring of Mark Stetson from Sony Pictures Imageworks as the visual effects supervisor . A total of 1 @, @ 400 visual effects shots were created . The script required a scene of Superman safely delivering a Boeing 777 in a baseball park where computer @-@ generated imagery was used as it would have been impossible to assemble the number of extras for the shots . A second unit crew traveled to Dodger Stadium to photograph elements that were composited into the final images . The scenes of Metropolis was actually a modified version of the skyline of Manhattan . Using footage from the original Superman (1978) film as a reference point , Marlon Brando was re @-@ created by Rhythm & Hues using CGI . The opening credits for Superman Returns are presented in an intended recreation of the style used for Superman , again to the accompaniment of John Williams 's theme music .

= = = Music = = =

Singer hired regular collaborator John Ottman as editor and film score composer months before the script was written . Ottman said in past interviews that John Williams , who composed the 1978 film , had influenced his decision to become a musician . He was both cautious and enthusiastic to work on Superman Returns . " Bryan [Singer] said he wouldn 't even greenlight the movie if he couldn 't use the John Williams music . " Ottman continued , " it was important for me to preserve the Williams theme right down to every single note for the opening titles . " Ottman referred to his work on Superman Returns as a homage to , not a ripoff of , Williams .

= = = Budget = = =

Originally budgeted at \$ 184 @. @ 5 million , Warner Bros. placed the production cost at \$ 204 million , after factoring in tax rebates and incentives . Taking into account the development costs since the early 1990s , total expenditure is estimated to be around \$ 263 million , with up to a further \$ 100 million spent on worldwide marketing .

= = Release = =

= = = Marketing = = =

Warner Bros. promoted Superman Returns at 2005 San Diego Comic @-@ Con International . Singer and screenwriters Michael Dougherty and Dan Harris came up with the idea of publishing a prequel limited series , spanning four comic book issues . The stories were written by Jimmy Palmiotti , Marc Andreyko and Justin Gray , with artwork by Karl Kersch and Matt Haley . During production , a series of " video diaries " on the Internet were released at BlueTights.net , showing behind @-@ the @-@ scenes work being done . After 27 installments , the video diaries stopped for a while shortly before the teaser trailer debuted on November 17 , 2005 . The main theatrical trailer premiered online on May 2 , 2006 . The trailer appeared in theaters on May 5 , with prints of Mission : Impossible III , while the international trailer came with The Da Vinci Code and X @-@ Men : The Last Stand . DC Comics published a comics adaptation by artist Matt Haley and writer Martin Pasko , Marv Wolfman wrote a novelization , and Electronic Arts developed a video game based on both the movie and the comics .

The estimated budget for Superman Returns marketing campaign was \$ 45 @. @ 5 million , the second highest of the year behind Disney 's \$ 53 @. @ 5 million campaign for Cars . Warner Bros. made tie @-@ in deals with General Mills , Burger King , Duracell , Pepsi , Doritos , Papa John 's Pizza , 7 @-@ Eleven and Colgate . The film was also advertised with Red Bull Racing Formula One cars at the 2006 Monaco Grand Prix . David Coulthard managed to get the team 's first top three finish that day ; on the podium , he wore a Superman cape in celebration of his achievement . NASCAR Sprint Cup champion Jeff Gordon also sported the " Man of Steel " look by promoting the

movie on his # 24 Chevrolet Monte Carlo in the 2006 Pepsi 400 at Daytona International Speedway . Troy Bayliss appeared in promotional " Superman " leathers and sported a cape on the podium following a win and a 2nd place at the 2006 Brands Hatch Superbike World Championship round on his way to winning that year 's championship . The National Geographic Channel released The Science of Superman on June 29 , 2006 : a television special that studied popular science analogies with the Superman mythos . Singer admitted at 2006 Comic @-@ Con International that he was dissatisfied with the marketing and promotion . " A lot of people did their job , and a lot didn 't " .

= = = Box office = = =

Bryan Singer convinced Warner Bros. not to experiment with test screenings . In addition , Singer removed 15 minutes of footage from Superman Returns after showing it to some of his " trusted associates " . The final theatrical time length ran at 154 minutes . Warner Bros. originally slated the movie for release on Friday , June 30 , but moved it up to Wednesday , June 28 . Superman Returns was released on June 28 , 2006 in the United States and Canada in 4 @,@ 065 theaters . The film ranked at the top in its opening weekend , accumulating \$ 52 @,@ 535 @,@ 096 . Within five days , Superman Returns took in \$ 84 @.@ 2 million , a new record for Warner Bros. , beating out The Matrix Revolutions (2003) , which has since been surpassed by The Dark Knight (2008) .

Superman Returns : An IMAX 3D Experience was released simultaneously in 111 IMAX format theatres worldwide , which included 20 minutes of converted 3 @-@ D film material . It was the first Hollywood full @-@ length live @-@ action film to be released in this combined format . One of the key scenes Singer took out was " the Return to Krypton sequence " . \$ 10 million was spent on this sequence alone , but it was deleted . Singer noted that it could not be released as part of a DVD featurette because it was converted to IMAX 3D . He hoped it could have appeared in an IMAX reissue . The film 's second week gross rapidly declined from the first week , due to the presence of Pirates of the Caribbean : Dead Man 's Chest and The Devil Wears Prada . Superman Returns went on to gross \$ 200 @,@ 081 @,@ 192 in North America and \$ 191 million internationally , earning \$ 391 @,@ 081 @,@ 192 worldwide . Domestically , the film was the sixth @-@ highest grossing film of 2006 . In worldwide totals , Superman Returns was ninth @-@ highest .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Superman Returns received mixed to positive reviews from film critics . Based on 258 reviews collected by Rotten Tomatoes , 76 % of the reviewers enjoyed the film . Metacritic gave the film a score of 72 / 100 , based on 40 reviews , indicating " generally favorable reviews " . Richard Corliss of Time praised Superman Returns , calling it one of the best superhero films . He was mostly impressed with Singer 's direction and the storyline . Joe Morgenstern from The Wall Street Journal also gave a positive review , but observed Routh 's and Bosworth 's acting was " somewhat dead or super average . Nothing special . " Morgenstern believed Lex Luthor 's characterization was " well written by the writers and well played by Kevin Spacey " . He also praised Newton Thomas Sigel 's cinematography and Guy Hendrix Dyas 's production design .

Peter Travers , writing in Rolling Stone , felt the film " perfectly updates Superman for the modern audience " . J. Hoberman of The Village Voice called it " surprisingly well made " . It 's a summer blockbuster filled with mythology and sensitivity . " James Berardinelli reacted positively to the movie , comparing it favorably with Richard Donner 's 1978 film . He felt Spacey was better than Gene Hackman as Lex Luthor , describing him as " more cruel and less flippant " than Hackman . " There are no miscasts to be found in the supporting cast , either , " Berardinelli said . " Superman Returns is near the top , if not at the top of the superhero movie pile . It offers nearly everything : romance , action , humor , and plenty of goose bumps . "

However , Roger Ebert argued the film was a " glum , lackluster movie in which even the big effects sequences seem dutiful instead of exhilarating . " He also felt that " Brandon Routh lacks charisma as Superman " , surmising that he " may have been cast because he looks a little like Reeve " . Mick LaSalle of the San Francisco Chronicle felt that Warner Bros. should have rebooted the series along

the lines of Batman Begins . He also felt Bosworth , at 22 years old , was too young to portray Lois Lane , and the climax did not " match the potential of the tiring 154 minute long film " .

Superman Returns was nominated for both the Academy Award for Visual Effects and BAFTA Award for Best Special Visual Effects , but lost to Pirates of the Caribbean : Dead Man 's Chest . The film was successful at the 33rd Saturn Awards , winning Best Fantasy Film , and categories for Direction (Bryan Singer) , Best Actor (Brandon Routh) , Writing (Michael Dougherty and Dan Harris) and Music (John Ottman) . Kate Bosworth , Tristan Lake Leabu , James Marsden , Parker Posey , and the visual effects department were nominated for categories . However , Bosworth was also nominated a Razzie Award for Worst Supporting Actress .

On May 3 , 2009 , almost three years after the debut of Superman Returns , the Academy Award winning filmmaker and screenwriter Quentin Tarantino declared his appreciation for Bryan Singer 's directorial work on Superman Returns and that he would write a 20 @-@ page review about Superman Returns .

On January 9 , 2012 , more than five years after the movie was released , the independent film community daily news site indieWire released a two @-@ part video essay that probes the melancholic nature of Superman Returns . Produced by Matt Zoller Seitz and Ken Cangelosi , the critique was inspired by a review that Seitz wrote for the New York Press in 2006 , in which he stated that " From the moment its hero returns to the sky to rescue Lois Lane from a plummeting jet , Superman Returns flirts with greatness . "

A critical commentary of the film written in English around the time of its release by a Pakistani columnist , Dr Haider Mahdi , accused the film of being " American propaganda " and portraying opponents to the United States as evil , while defending American foreign policy . It claims previous adaptations of Superman advocate American aggression and coincided the films release with America 's war in the Middle East and South Asia . It alleges that American society has always needed an " external threat " to justify invasions and aggression and the portrayal of Superman in film glorifies him when he eliminates these " external threats " .

In 2013 , Singer stated that Superman Returns was made for " Perhaps more of a female audience . It wasn 't what it needed to be , I guess . " Singer stated that he would have cut about the first quarter off of the film and started it with " the jet disaster sequence or something . I could have grabbed the audience a little more quickly . I don 't know what would have helped . Probably nothing . If I could go again , I would do an origin . I would reboot it . "

Empire Magazine ranked the movie 496 on its " The 500 Greatest Movies of All Time " list . Stating that " It may have been a slighter return than some people had hoped for , but Singer 's vision of the Man Of Steel is an heroic effort . Plenty of spectacle and a lot of heart helps Kal @-@ El soar . "

= = = Awards = = =

The film received eleven nominations in the 33rd Saturn Awards including categories of Best Fantasy Film , Best Direction (Bryan Singer) , Best Actor (Brandon Routh) , and Best Actress (Kate Bosworth) . The results were the following : four nominations and five wins . These are the results :

= = = Home media = = =

Superman Returns debuted on DVD on November 28 , 2006 in two versions , one with a single disc , and a double @-@ disc edition which featured over three hours of behind @-@ the @-@ scenes features . That same day , a 14 @-@ disc DVD box set titled Superman Ultimate Collector 's Edition was released , containing special editions of all five Superman films , as well as the documentary Look , Up in the Sky : The Amazing Story of Superman . It debuted at the top spot of the DVD charts , and also generated \$ 13 million in rentals during its first week . The film was also released in both high definition formats , HD DVD , which featured both standard and high definitions on the same disc , and Blu @-@ ray . It was the best @-@ selling title on both formats in 2006 , and was among the best @-@ sellers of both formats of 2007 .

= = Unproduced sequel = =

In February 2006 , four months before the release of *Superman Returns* , Warner Bros. announced a mid @-@ 2009 theatrical release date for a sequel , with Bryan Singer reprising his directing duties . Brandon Routh , Kate Bosworth , Kevin Spacey , Sam Huntington , Frank Langella , and Tristan Lake Leabu were to reprise their roles . Due to his commitment , Singer dropped out of directing a remake of *Logan 's Run* and an adaptation of *The Mayor of Castro Street* . Writer Michael Dougherty wanted the sequel to be " action packed " , featuring " other Kryptonians " with Brainiac and Bizarro also considered for primary villains . The " New Krypton " landmass floating in space at the end of *Superman Returns* would have served as a plot device . Although *Superman Returns* received mostly positive reviews , Warner Bros. and Legendary Pictures were disappointed by the film 's box office return . Warner Bros. President Alan F. Horn explained that *Superman Returns* was a very successful film , but that it " should have done \$ 500 million worldwide . We should have had perhaps a little more action to satisfy the young male crowd . " Singer reacted incredulously to the studio complaints , saying , " That movie made \$ 400 million ! I don ' t know what constitutes under @-@ performing these days ... " \$ 175 million was the maximum budget Warner Bros. was projecting for the sequel , as *Superman Returns* cost \$ 204 million .

Filming for the *Superman Returns* sequel was to start in mid @-@ 2007 , before Singer halted development in favor of *Valkyrie* . Filming was then pushed to March 2008 , but writers Dougherty and Dan Harris left in favor of other career opportunities . The 2007 ? 2008 Writers Guild of America strike pushed the release date to 2010 . Singer still listed the sequel as a priority in March 2008 , saying that the film was in early development . Routh expected filming to begin in early 2009 . Paul Levitz , president of DC Comics , expected Routh to reprise the title role from *Superman Returns* before his contract for a sequel expired in 2009 . However , with Warner Bros. deciding to reboot the film series , Singer dropped out in favor of directing *Jack the Giant Slayer* . In August 2008 , Warner Bros. President of Production Jeff Robinov reflected , " *Superman Returns* didn ' t quite work as a film in the way that we wanted it to . It didn ' t position the character the way he needed to be positioned . Had *Superman* worked in 2006 , we would have had a movie for Christmas of this year or 2009 . Now the plan is just to reintroduce *Superman* without regard to a *Batman* and *Superman* movie at all . "